

Musicians and entertainers in Canada, following the lead of their counterparts in Britain and the USA, banded together to form the Northern Lights for Africa Society and through their song, television specials and film "Tears are not Enough", raised several million dollars for African relief and recovery. Generous donations were made by the people of Pangnirtung, Fort Smith, Frobisher Bay, Eskimo Point and other northern communities. School children throughout the country organized spellathons, bake sales, dances and other events to raise money for Africa. Business firms donated, or offered at discount rates, a wide variety of products and services, including foodstuffs, medical supplies, water drilling equipment, shelter materials and clothing. Transportation firms offered to ship almost anything anywhere. Hundreds of Canadians volunteered their professional services.

There were, inevitably, some disappointments. Some of the foodstuffs offered were unsuitable for distribution to people on the point of starvation or could not be used because of religious beliefs. Offers of personal services often had to be declined because voluntary agencies were inundated with such proposals, or because African governments placed restrictions on the number of outsiders who could work in the field. In some instances, Canadian equipment was too sophisticated or its operation relied too heavily on imported fuel. As the past year progressed, however, Canadians demonstrated a growing awareness of special African requirements.

In general, the response of the Canadian people to the needs of the African people has been unprecedented in its intensity and its generosity. Two out of three Canadian families contributed financially. Those who had experienced hardship themselves were often the first to respond. This solidarity with those in need should be the cornerstone of Canada's long-term support for Africa.

How Was The Money Used?

Along with emergency assistance provided through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the government created a Special Fund for Africa part of which was to match the contributions of Canadians and voluntary organizations. During 1984-85 these funds were concentrated on keeping people alive: 36 per cent was directed to food shipments by the Canadian government to Ethiopia, Niger, Chad, Mali and Sudan. Another 8 per cent was used in support of United Nations aid coordination, child relief