Welcome to the third issue of our newsletter this year. We’ve been hard at work and we’re looking to the last quarter of the year with much optimism.

In this issue we celebrate the opportunity to do even more for displaced people through an upcoming partnership with USAID. We also share the great work we are already doing with a specific focus on our Burkina Faso, Chad and Tanzania programs. World Humanitarian Day was celebrated recently—see why we believe it matters. Then have a quick look at how we are planning for a successful future through our organisation’s strategy update, and with an introduction to our new board chairperson. Last but certainly not least, meet one of our wonderful drivers and appreciate what life is like on the road.

Thank you for opening up this issue. Enjoy!

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• World Humanitarian Day—Why It Matters
• Meet our People
• New Strategy Update

Celebrating New Partnerships - USAID and AIRD DRC

Our AIRD Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) program was recently awarded the opportunity to partner with USAID to construct over 800 transitional shelters to house displaced people in the area. The importance of decent accommodation for those who have been forced to flee their homes cannot be overstated, and we have all the confidence in the world that our DRC program will deliver excellently to ensure dignified living spaces for those in need. Pending confirmation of funding, we look forward to working with USAID in providing these much-needed services.
Delivering Amidst Insecurity- Mentao Refugee Camp in Burkina Faso.

Our different country programs deliver many critical services in the areas that they work in. Here we highlight some of the great work and initiatives undertaken by some of our programs to positively impact the lives of displaced people.

The mission of the AIRD/UNHCR WASH project in Djibo is to guarantee access to drinking water and sanitation to Malian refugees in the Mentao camp. This targets the provision of clean water and sanitation for all, in line with Goal 6 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The Mentao refugee camp is located in the province of Soum, about 200km from the capital Ouagadougou. It covers an area of about 21 square kilometres, and is mostly occupied by Malian refugees as well as host populations.

Despite a year marked by the resurgence of attacks by unidentified armed individuals and a significant increase of insecurity in the locality, the AIRD Djibo team did not abandon its tasks and remained determined and committed to achieve the objectives of providing assistance to Persons of Concern. Consequently, in June 2019, AIRD as the WASH and logistics partner for UNHCR, installed two tanks of a capacity of 45m3 (45000 litres) for the benefit of Malian refugees in the camps of Mentao and Goudebo to improve, in qualitative and quantitative ways, the water availability in the camps.

“I am grateful to AIRD and UNHCR for making every effort to provide us with drinking water in sufficient quality and quantity. Despite the security situation and the risks that prevail, the camp does not lack water and we salute the dedication of the personnel in charge of the water activities in particular. Since the installation of the tank, women have easy access to water and can take better care of their homes and water their animals in the camp because we all know the importance of water for hygiene and sanitation. We do say that water is life.” Wallet Abnadil Almadinet, 54-year-old Malian refugee living in Mentao camp

“We do say that water is life.”
The Power of a Drop - a Water Initiative in Chad renews Hope

Having found that the water requirements around their AIRD base were not covered by the Farchana Atlafog drinking water distribution plan the Sub-Office Manager, Mr Halidou Zakaria, took the initiative of bringing together neighbours and friends (including the Sub-Prefect of Molou) to not only reduce this gap but to also create the right conditions for market gardening through access to tillable land.

Following discussions, they drilled two boreholes with a depth of 6 metres containing clear water that residents, for whom the need had been urgent, immediately began to harvest. This initiative was proof of sufficient water within a 4-metre depth of the Wadi bed. The community had up to this point, however, not been trained to extract it during the dry season. After seeing the possibility of undertaking this drilling by hand, AIRD received 15 requests from neighbouring groups to drill for water for gardening purposes, and from 7 villages who requested drilling support for drinking water. AIRD hopes, with additional funding and resources, to be in position to fulfil these requests as there is a great need in the area.

With the availability of more water, Halidou Zakaria then further proposed for the development of a market garden about half a hectare in size, fenced in to protect against stray animals. He requested for the participation and cooperation of neighbours and the wider community. A committee was formed for the successful management of the garden. The land owner of the designated half hectare planted millet and realised a harvest so successful that he was able to store it, in preparation for leaner times. This land owner, an elderly disabled gentleman, was especially pleased as the successful harvest allowed for the return of his son who had left to search for work, as many young men in the area do.

Gardening resumed after winter and turnips, potatoes, onions, garlic, tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, beets, peppers, okra and other local products were planted.

This project enabled achievement of the following:

- 7 households having taps
- 38 households having water within a 100 m radius
- 48 other households able to receive water quickly
- 101 households harvesting green vegetables for 4 months

All the above was achievable thanks to the availability of 24,000 litres of water to support a thriving garden, and for use by the community in their everyday needs. This small project has attracted a lot of interest from the authorities and local people, and has filled a gap that raises hope for the community. AIRD funded this initiative with US $14,000 to strengthen existing activities, while allowing other refugees and host populations to benefit from it.
AIRD/UNHCR’s shelter project’s goal in Tanzania is to ensure that Persons of Concern in refugee camps live in dignified conditions through established and maintained shelters.

Nyarugusu refugee camp is one of three refugee camps in Kigoma Region, North West Tanzania, where refugee shelters have been provided and maintained by AIRD. Nyarugusu camp accommodates significant populations of both Congolese and Burundian refugees unlike the other camps, Nduta and Mtendeli, which are more homogeneous in terms of the countries of origin of their inhabitants.

In 2018, AIRD as the shelter and logistics partner for UNHCR, installed a total of 378 Refugee Housing Units (RHUs), of which 142 RHUs were installed in Nyarugusu camp for Persons with Special Needs (PSNs). In 2019, AIRD’s target is 2,000 RHU installations, including 1000 RHUs in Nyarugusu and 1000 in Nduta camp.

Ms Joseline Njimbele has been in Nyarugusu refugee camp since 2015 when many Burundians fled to Tanzania due to political instability. She is now a mother of five, and a single parent in zone 8. She is also a Person with Special Needs (PSN). In 2015, she arrived in the camp and lived with fellow women. She was already a mother of two. In 2017 she was married, later divorced, and was allocated a plot of her own. On 19th March, 2019 Nyarugusu refugee camp was severely affected by strong winds and heavy rains which left a number of residents’ shelters damaged. Joseline was one of the affected refugees who lived in self constructed shelters. Following the heavy rains, she sought refuge with her neighbours until AIRD installed an RHU for her and her family in zone 8.

“AIRD I lanfanshinje c’ane, imvula ya nsanze munzu ndikumwe na bhana, umuyagawalasaluye inzu yose, mulivyose abha bho muri AIRD bhanfashije ni yi nzu ya bhazungu.”

“AIRD has helped me very much, heavy rain and strong wind had affected my shelter as I was with my kids inside it. The shelter was severely affected. All in all, my thanks to AIRD who helped me with this modern house as I was still living in my neighbour’s shelter”.

Joseline is very grateful for the shelter and appreciates AIRD for the great work done in the installation of the RHUs across the camp, as well as UNHCR for providing them.
World Humanitarian Day

A humanitarian is a person who is involved in or connected with improving people’s lives and reducing suffering. At AIRD, we are proud to say we are all humanitarians.

World Humanitarian Day is celebrated every year on 19 August, and the theme this year was #WomenHumanitarians. The work done by humanitarians across the globe is truly remarkable, and this year was a chance to especially recognise the work undertaken by women humanitarians and highlight some of the unique challenges they face. These challenges include higher risk of robbery, sexual assault and other violence. We salute all the women working to improve humanitarian situations globally, in every capacity, many with very little recognition. We remember the words of celebrated woman humanitarian, Mother Teresa, who said “If you can’t feed a hundred people, feed just one.”

We celebrate the #WomenHumanitarians at AIRD. Here are just some of the wonderful women from across our programmes.
Meet our Driver - Ogwang Tony Deyoks

When Deyoks first introduces himself, it sounds as though he has said “The Ox”. And it’s not hard to understand why one might think this. He is a tall, sturdy man that looks as though he really does have the energy and strength of an ox. But he also has a charming personality and a very quick smile. And what great attributes for a driver whose job is to transport those who have been displaced and are seeking reassurance – he is strong enough to make them feel safe, and friendly enough to make them feel comforted.

Deyoks hails from Lira in Northern Uganda and is married with four children of whom he speaks of with so much fondness. His job as a driver at AIRD, where he has been since June 2016, means he is away from his family for long stretches at a time. He loves to visit his family and enjoys spending time with them. But perhaps it is this very love for his home and family that allows him to empathise strongly with the refugees he drives- people who have been separated from their loved ones and homes. He believes that the safety of the refugees he drives must remain his number one priority at all times, through the long journeys he has travelled throughout Uganda from Yumbe and Arua in the far north, to Kisoro in the south. He is especially appreciative of the team he works with as he undertakes these trips, some of which come with incredible challenges like very poor roads and sick refugees among others. He says that maintaining a positive team spirit during these times matters a lot.

After being a driver for 20 years, Deyoks says his dream is to eventually retire into farming to rear animals and grow some crops back home in Lira. At only 40 years of age though, retirement is still a long way off, and he looks forward to continuing to be of service. Thank you for your service Deyoks!

New Board Chairperson

The AIRD Board of Directors was recently pleased to welcome our new board Chairperson, Engineer Banteyehun Haile. Eng. Haile replaces Mr. Gizaw Shibru who served diligently as the Chairman of the Board of Directors since the inception of the organisation in 2006.

Eng. Banteyehun Haile has been on the AIRD Board of Directors since 2011 and brings with him a wealth of experience having served on several organisations’ boards, in addition to over 30 years in NGO and water resource management spaces. Banteyehun is the founder and current Managing Director of Vambeco, a company operating in East Africa which specialises in water works.

We wish to express our utmost appreciation for the time and effort Mr. Shibru gave, and heartily welcome Eng. Haile into his new role.
AIRD 2020-2024 Strategy Update

Delivering a solid strategy that will guide us over the next 5 years is absolutely paramount. It is exciting to see how far we have come, while making plans to go even further.

The nine working groups that were tasked with reviewing AIRD’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) have completed this exercise. Pulling together all the different analyses and presenting recommended approaches to the Managers and the Senior Management Team will be on going over the course of September. Discussions will critically comb through the proposed approaches to determine where we need to be as an organisation, how we can get there and, very importantly, what will be required practically on the ground to ensure success. Updates will be shared in subsequent issues as we get even closer to a final strategy and direction for the next five years.

For more information, or for any questions on the process, please contact the Director for Communications and Development on mark.b@airdinternational.org

We thank our AIRD family for delivering remarkably in all our areas of operation. We give a very special thanks to our donors for enabling us to do the work we do that changes the lives of refugees and their host communities.

In the next issue:
• Focus on Cameroon and Niger
• Key highlights of the year

Thanks to all those who have contributed stories and photos for this issue.

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For feedback/comments/queries on any of the articles in this issue, please send an email to communications@airdinternational.org

We would love to share your stories! If you would like to contribute an article or photos etc. to the next issue, send an email to communications@airdinternational.org