



Newsletter

“Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere. Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights and keep them. Our strength is our unity of purpose. To that high concept there can be no end save victory.”
Franklin Delano Roosevelt

October - December 2019



Above: Recent repatriation exercise for Central African refugees at the Maya-Maya airport in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.

The last quarter of 2019 marked the end of a decade and a time to reflect on the successes and challenges this period has brought. As we enter a new decade, we recognise that although tremendous efforts have been made towards making the world a better place to live in, particularly for those displaced, there is still much to be done. And we also recognise that this new decade will require radical new thinking to solve some of the pressing issues we face globally such as climate change. Protecting our environment for future generations must be a priority. Many of the people who will be the most affected by climate change and environmental degradation are the displaced people and host communities we serve. The way we work must not exacerbate the problem, but must leave the world a better place, even as we continue to provide a wide range of short, medium and long term solutions for People of Concern across different sectors.

We welcome you to read this issue where we highlight the work being undertaken in some of our country programmes and also share an update on our recently concluded 2020-2024 strategy review exercise.

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Celebrating continuing partnerships - AIRD and UNHCR

We are pleased to announce the signing of renewed Project Partnership Agreements with UNHCR across all our countries of operation for the year 2020. The much needed services that AIRD has been able to provide for Persons of Concern since 2007 has been largely due to our partnerships with UNHCR. We are honoured to have been entrusted once again with delivering humanitarian logistics, construction and infrastructure services across all our program operations for UNHCR. We look forward to continuing to work together to shape a better world through empowering communities.

Highlights from our Programs

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 our teams in Niger, Cameroon, ROC and Tanzania to positively impact the lives of displaced people.

AIRD Niger one year in - what has been achieved *(by Laye Diawara)*

At the end of 2018 AIRD in Niger was officially established, and in 2019 officially began its operations. The establishment of this program was critical following an influx of refugees from Mali resulting from armed conflicts in 2010. Since then, it has continued to receive refugees of other nationalities, such as Nigerians, in addition to migrants from its neighbors to the north and north-east. These migrants are concentrated in the areas of Niamey, Diffa, Agadez, Tahoua, Tillaberi, Maradi and Ouallam.



*Left: Some of the AIRD Niger team
Right: The Niamey Coordination Office*

UNHCR reports that the population of Persons of Concern in Niger as at December 2019 is 439,686 individuals present mainly in the Tillaberi, Tahoua, Maradi, Agadez, Diffa and Ouallam regions. These include an estimated 180,000 refugees as well as other beneficiaries including asylum seekers, Internally Displaced Persons and returnees. Most of these refugees hail from Nigeria, Mali, Chad, D. R. of Congo, the Central African Republic and Côte d'Ivoire. AIRD Niger operates in these regions which share borders with countries experiencing internal conflicts. These areas of operations have often recorded several armed attacks, as in Diffa and Tillabery, resulting in several casualties. These situations make these areas risky for humanitarian workers, host populations and displaced people. Since establishment and signing of a partnership agreement with UNHCR Niger, the program has assisted in the provision of services to UNHCR and its partners related to; Transport Management, Warehousing, Workshop Management, Fleet Management and Fuel Management.

The garage ensures the regular maintenance and upkeep of a fleet of machines consisting of 17 trucks, 174 light vehicles, 30 motorcycles, 50 generators, 8 hydraform press-to-brick machines. Over 1,000 maintenance services were carried out between January and December 2019. And with a storage capacity of 9,870 m³, the warehouses in Niamey, Diffa, Maradi and Agadez receive, store and ensure delivery of items wherever required.

As part of the emergency response in the Maradi Region, AIRD accompanies UNHCR and its operational partners in the transportation of staff, beneficiaries, drinking water and Non Food Items using a fleet of 15 trucks and 2 water tanks. Since taking over this component of the partnership in March 2019, AIRD Niger has been responsible for receiving more than 200,000 liters of diesel and distributing approximately 180,000 liters for these vehicles. The Diffa Logistics Base has, for this purpose, two 25,000 liter capacity tanks of gas oil for distribution to partners. Discussions with UNHCR to expand this activity to the other 5 Logistics Bases are in advanced stages.

With 98 national staff and 7 expatriates in 6 offices, we are confident that our Niger program will deliver to the highest levels of professionalism and make a true difference in the lives of those they serve.



Transportation of refugees, Warehouse Management of NFIs and Fleet Management are just some of the activities the AIRD Niger operation handles.

Camp Coordination and Management in Cameroon *(by Herve Nyoth Nleng)*

Providing displaced people with the necessary basics to survive is vital. But beyond these basics is also the importance of ensuring that displaced people are able to live dignified lives. In Eastern Cameroon, AIRD is helping to do just that through Camp Coordination and Management (CCM). Through CCM, AIRD in partnership with UNHCR is working to improve the living conditions of Central African refugees in the Ngarissingo, Timangolo, Mbile and Lolo camps. Altogether, these four camps consist of about 35,934 refugees, most of whom were displaced by conflict that broke out in the Central African Republic in 2014. This project has been running since August 2019.

Camp management involves several aspects but a key way is through the involvement of the local governance committees in the different camps. The input of the People of Concern is critical in ensuring that they receive the services they truly require through sharing of challenges and understanding what opportunities might be available. It has therefore been important to bring together as many people as possible on a monthly basis in these camps in open discussions. A few of the challenges that refugees are met with in the camps include; not enough shelters, strained social cohesion, WASH challenges such as drainage issues, low access to quality education, Sexual and Gender Based Violence, access to adequate healthcare, protection of children and few opportunities for employment. In order to improve the general conditions brought about by the issues mentioned, AIRD works to address them through:

- Establishing governance and community participation mechanisms (e.g. creation and coordination of committees)
- Collecting and maintaining data to identify gaps in assistance and protection and to avoid duplication of activities
- Monitoring and coordinating the delivery of services provided by other providers in accordance with agreed standards
- Establishing effective monitoring mechanisms in all sectors of the site to assess the impact of the interventions
- Advocating for, or providing, services in areas where gaps remain

Through CCM, lives of refugees in camps can be greatly improved and they can move past basic survival and begin to realise opportunities to grow and thrive. AIRD hopes to support displaced people throughout this journey.



Left and Centre: Governance committee meetings in Mbile, and meeting the refugee community in Timangolo camp. Right: Completion of drainage activities at the Lolo site

Improving Construction through Hydraform Bricks in Tanzania *(by Joanitha Kazimoto)*

Construction is a keystone activity that AIRD undertakes in all its operations. Finding new ways to improve how we do things better, faster and more cost effectively is always welcome. In Tanzania, a new way to better construct buildings is underway thanks to the introduction of Hydraform bricks. Hydraform bricks are made with murram and cement and interlocked with each other in a way that minimizes the need for mortar mix (cement, sand and water). This can cut the costs of building projects by up to 25%.



Above: The interlocking nature of hydraform bricks that minimises the need for mortar mix.

As of 2019, AIRD Tanzania has been incorporating this new method of building in refugee camps. Completion of a registration main building, two waiting sheds and a staff toilet are some of the works that have been successful. In the host community as well, there have been benefits realised through training of individuals in the manufacture and use of these bricks.

Following a training on the manufacture of Hydraform bricks, UNHCR plans to donate the Hydraform machines to host districts. It is hoped that the trainees will be able to continue in the manufacture of these bricks and will also impart this knowledge to others. The government, through host districts, can also earn an income through loaning out of the brick making machines. Government buildings can also be rehabilitated using Hydraform as opposed to burnt bricks.

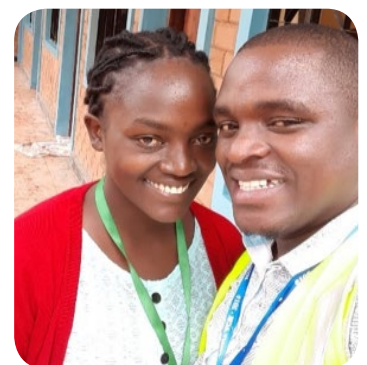


Mixing soil and cement for brick fabrication (left), putting up the walls (centre) and a completed registration building at Nduta camp (right).

AIRD Senior Construction Engineers in Kasulu and Kibondo, Ezrom Edward and Neema Lafunel *(both pictured below)* have been working in Nyarugusu, Nduta, Mtendeli refugee camps and the entire host community. Eng. Ezrom Edward explains the advantages of using this new technology in the host community.

“Hydraform brick technology has been an interesting and new technology to the host community. Generally, in the Kigoma region, a number of people have been interested in how soil and cement is mixed to make a very hard, durable and compressed brick cured in water. The trainees, as part of the host community, have learnt a lot and become part of the new solution.

Some of the advantages of the Hydraform bricks is that they use local soil with some fine gravel, use little water during production, become stronger the more it is cured and is therefore very impressive when used in construction of buildings. However, we recommend this technology to be given to more students in vocation training center of the region so as to spread this technology and to be used more widely in construction.”



Return to the Central African Republic (by Gelvy Massengo)

It remains a dream for many displaced people to be able to return to their home countries. When this dream becomes a reality, there can be many mixed emotions. On Tuesday, December 10, 2019 a voluntary repatriation of Central African refugees took place at the Maya-Maya International Airport in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo. A total of 61 families, consisting of 168 individuals were repatriated. We spoke with Josiane, one of the returnees.

“My name is Josiane Alingbialo. I was born on August 06, 1993 and I am 26 years old. I am from the Central African Republic, from the city Bangui. I have not married yet, but I’m engaged. God has given me three children. The oldest, Julius Fleury, is four years old followed by twin girls, Arielle and Précieuse, who are 11 months old.

Living in a foreign country is not easy especially with the economic situation in Congo.

It was a new experience for me but I remember having a good relationship with the Congolese. I even learned to speak Lingala fluently and God gave me twin girls in this host country.

It’s a great pleasure for me to go back to Bangui- it’s like a dream come true! My only fear is returning without the father of my twins. They are very attached to their father but he has stayed behind for study reasons. It’s sad and I pray God helps me.”

AIRD will continue to assist in repatriation and support those displaced to return to their homes well and prepared with the basics to restart their lives.



Josiane and her children ready to set off at Maya-Maya airport, Brazzaville

AIRD 2020-2024 Strategy Update

Following several months of discussion, introspection and deliberation, we finally have a plan that we feel will serve us well over the next five years. We are pleased to share that the Board of Directors are presently reviewing a final version of the 2020-2024 strategic direction. AIRD has done great work over the last few years, and we now envision a future where we can do more for those displaced. Over the next five years, AIRD hopes to achieve much more.

Specifically, AIRD’s work will be achieved through:

- **Operations** - continuing to provide the best humanitarian logistics, construction and infrastructure work in Africa and beyond, adapting and adjusting programmes to suit the working environment.
- **Expansion** - AIRD looks to broaden support to other countries with the same logistical, construction and infrastructure services, prioritising those that are proximate to existing countries of operation but also horizon scanning to see whether AIRD’s experience can be of assistance in other continents.
- **Development** - AIRD will focus on the long term support of host communities and displaced people from the initial point of contact. Seeking to bring community members into stronger positions of power and decision-making is a key foundation of AIRD’s approach. As experience gathers in working in camps and settlements, AIRD will look to develop and broaden their programming capacity to wider groups.

We are excited to continue working with our existing partners, while partnering with new institutions and organisations to collectively effect major positive change in all our areas of operation.

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 Uganda, ROC and C.A.R

Thanks to all those who 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