



Monthly CEO Message

May 2025

Dear Team,

Warm greetings to each of you. I hope and pray this message finds you well.

This month, I begin with a heavy heart as we mourn the loss of our colleague, Martin Upenytho, a dedicated driver from the Headquarters. As shared earlier via email, Martin passed away on May 22, 2025, after a brief illness. His sudden departure has left a deep void in our hearts and within the AIRD family. Let us continue to uphold his family, friends, and colleagues in our thoughts and prayers during this incredibly difficult time. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Update on AIRD multi-purpose skilling centre in Mbarara

In line with its mission to empower refugees and host communities, AIRD established the multi-purpose skilling Center in Mbarara using its funds and investments as a pilot program. In this regard, AIRD is currently undertaking a transformative 6-month vocational training course in Mbarara District, Western Uganda, in collaboration with UNHCR and CFAO Mobility. The program, hosted at the multi-skilling Center, is designed to equip refugees and host community members with critical skills in motor vehicle technology, paving the way for employment and self-reliance. The initiative targets Level One Motor Vehicle Mechanics/Technicians, offering theoretical and practical instruction. The training covers essential service operations including engine maintenance, transmission system servicing, brake system repairs, wheel and tyre servicing, suspension system maintenance, and steering system servicing. Participants also gain a solid foundation in periodic vehicle maintenance, understanding service types, and required actions. In addition to practical skills, the course emphasizes theoretical knowledge in automotive fundamentals, including an overview of vehicle systems, parts, and consumables. Of particular significance is the integration of modern automotive technology into the curriculum. On April 10th, a specialized training session on hybrid vehicle technology and maintenance was conducted by CFAO Mobility, exposing students to innovations shaping the future of the automotive industry.

Eighteen students, eight refugees from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and ten Ugandan youth from the Mbarara community, are currently enrolled in the program. These participants form a diverse yet united group working towards a common goal of employment and income generation, and improving their livelihoods. The students thereafter sit for the national exam administered by the Directorate of Industrial Training of Uganda. This evaluation assesses their competencies but also provides formal recognition of their newly acquired skills. We wish them the best of luck.

The new cohort of 18 students started their journey.

The broader objective of this program extends beyond skill acquisition, it's about empowerment. With these practical automotive skills, graduates are expected to successfully integrate into the job market or start their ventures. The program serves as a beacon of hope, providing a pathway to independence and community contribution for individuals who have often faced displacement and hardship.

This initiative highlights the power of collaboration in transforming lives. Through AIRD's operational expertise, UNHCR's commitment to refugee welfare, and CFAO Mobility's technical support, a model for sustainable skill development and community resilience is being realized, one engine at a time. This will undoubtedly provide AIRD a possibility for scale-up, primarily in our country programs, based on the lessons and best development practices to be gained as we go through testing, piloting, and experimentation.

Spotlight on Excellence – Faraja Felleshi

This month, we proudly highlight Faraja Felleshi, Workshop Foreman in Kibondo, AIRD Tanzania, for his outstanding leadership and technical expertise.

In April 2025, Faraja was transferred from Dar es Salaam to Kibondo to tackle significant operational challenges, where vehicle and generator downtimes greatly affected essential services. Within just one month, under his leadership, the team successfully repaired two grounded generators and two trucks. These efforts restored power to the Maloregwa Technical College and enabled critical medical services at MSF hospitals in the Nduta Refugee Camps.

Faraja's sharp diagnostic skills, hands-on leadership, and mentorship of newly hired mechanics have played a crucial role in this rapid turnaround. Despite facing challenges such as shortages of spare parts, he has led with steadfast resilience and professionalism.

His outstanding work has drawn well-deserved commendation from UNHCR and partners, who have praised the efficiency and responsiveness of the workshop team. With additional technical training planned, Faraja's positive influence will continue to build a stronger, more capable workshop.

Faraja exemplifies AIRD's core values: commitment, adaptability, innovation, excellence, and service. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to him and the entire Kibondo team for their inspiring contribution.

Recognition – AIRD Burkina Faso

I would also like to extend sincere congratulations to AIRD Burkina Faso on being appointed as a Humanitarian Focal Point within the humanitarian coordination platforms of Djibo Province. This recognition is a testament to our credibility, integrity, and the trust we have built among partners. It also enhances AIRD visibility and reinforces our commitment to collaboration, influence and humanitarian service.

Please take a moment to read this inspiring story from Burkina Faso, recently published on our website. It's inspiring to see the continued impact we're making in the lives of refugees. Let's keep up the great work and stay committed to making a difference. Follow the link to read the story.

To all AIRD staff, thank you for your continued dedication, hard work, and commitment to the people and communities we serve. Your efforts do not go unnoticed and are deeply appreciated.

My Best Regards



The first cohort of trainees at the multi-skilling Center during the vocational training course.



Faraja at the workshop expertly repairing a generator alongside other essential machines and equipment that keep our operations running.

Fikru Abebe Abebe
CEO

