

CEO's Monthly Message

September 2025



Hello AIRD Team and Welcome,

I send you warm greetings from wherever you are and trust that you are in good health.

At present, I am working from our AIRD USA Liaison and Fundraising Office, where we are actively positioning AIRD to access diversified sources of funding, including foundations, private corporations, and individual philanthropists. As you are aware, our current funding landscape is under significant pressure, making it critical for us to pursue new funding opportunities, partnerships, and frontiers to sustain our mission, continue to grow and expand our reach and impact.

Importance of showing the reach and impact of our work

One of the most powerful tools in fundraising is showcasing the reach and impact of our work. Donors and partners want to see the positive difference AIRD makes in the lives of refugees and host communities. This is why our Communications Unit has been reaching out to you in your respective country programs, encouraging you to regularly and consistently share impact stories, photos, and videos in addition to the day-to-day representation, engagement, influence, advocacy, visibility, and branding work that you do.

This content is not only featured in our social media platforms (Twitter/X, LinkedIn, and Instagram), but also shared directly with potential donors and partners. When we highlight the tremendous work being done on the ground thanks to our dedicated and committed Team, we build credibility, legitimacy, and track record, and inspire trust in AIRD.

I, therefore, urge each of you to regularly and systematically document your work as a priority. Share your stories and visuals with the Communications Team, who will ensure they are refined and presented effectively for funding and partnership opportunities.

AIRD transforming Youth Through Vocational Skilling

At AIRD, we are deeply committed to empowering young people with practical skills that create pathways to self-reliance and brighter futures. Through our vocational skilling programs in mechanics and hands-on technical training, we are seeing remarkable progress in the lives of youth, their families, and communities.

I applaud the tireless efforts of our Uganda and Tanzania country offices, whose dedication has made the skilling centers in Mbarara (Uganda) and Kibondo (Tanzania) vibrant hubs of opportunity. These centers are equipping young people with the knowledge and confidence to build sustainable livelihoods.

- In Uganda, the second training cohort of 16 people is already underway, while the first, that had 18 members, continues their internships, gaining valuable real-world experience.
- In Tanzania, the first cohort of 16 people is progressing well and acquiring strong technical

foundations in different workshops

Upon completing their training, participants will receive certificates that open doors to employment or entrepreneurship, by joining the job market, starting their own workshops, or, where possible, being absorbed into AIRD's own workshops.

The ripple effect of these opportunities is clear: lives are being transformed, families uplifted, and communities strengthened. Many inspiring success stories are emerging, and we invite you to read more about them by following this link to our website:

<https://airdinternational.org/impact-stories-2/>

Business Development and Strategic Partnerships

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to our Cameroon and DRC Teams for securing significant projects and corresponding funding.

Early this year, WFP approved a Third-Party Monitoring (TPM) project along with a transportation project running for 10 months in Cameroon. This initiative, focused on transporting both food and non-food items for Livelihoods & Resilience beneficiaries, will greatly benefit refugees and their host communities. In addition, our ongoing partnership project with UNHCR, initially approved at USD 1 million earlier this year, is currently under revision with a potential increase of USD 200,000.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, AIRD has secured two shelter projects with UNHCR in North Kivu and Gbadolité, valued at USD 232,200, with additional in-kind contributions including kits, logistics, and technical support. In Goma and Kalemie, AIRD is also awarded two UNICEF WASH projects worth USD 84,623.11, with USD 79,338.10 funded by UNICEF and USD 5,285 supported by Hope Partners.

BIG congratulations are also in order to the AIRD Uganda Team for the appreciation and recognition by UNHCR Uganda, considering the legitimacy, track record, and centre of excellence exhibited by our Team. This has led to UNHCR granting us a special exemption, allowing us to continue our partnership in 2026 without going through the Call for Expression of Interest process.

As always, I am proud of the AIRD Team wherever I go: (a) Work 24/7 (like a military), (b) Go where nobody is going as long as there is a need to address, and (c) Love What they do.

These awards are a clear demonstration of the trust our partners place in us and a reflection of the commitment, hard work, and dedication of our teams on the ground. Congratulations to everyone involved, as this is a significant achievement for AIRD!

Yours sincerely

Fikru Abebe