

issue 4 - 2009

cord/news

inside...

Escaping the poverty trap

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cord

new life after conflict

welcome...

to the autumn edition of CORD News, where there has been no let up over the past three months in our work across Africa and Asia.

The work of our team in Phnom Penh has taken on fresh momentum, our Ugandan partnership with KITWOBEE reports some outstanding results, while CORD's innovative Toilet Twinning Campaign for Burundi has received worldwide support.

Meanwhile the problems of the Chadian community remain a challenge for our team in country, where the main focus of work within the Sudanese refugee camps continues to be our first priority. Despite the difficulties, we

are committed to making headway with the host community which has borne so much in recent years and where the need is just as great as that of the refugees.

As Christmas approaches we hope you will once again support all our programmes by browsing and buying from our new Alternative Gifts catalogue. Every item remains a real need if our work in the field is to be truly effective – so please do give generously, knowing that your shopping will make a difference!

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Rest In Peace, Live In Peace

Only 41% of people aged 65+ have a Will and only 12% of those people have included a gift to a charity (Source: Charity Monitor).

To help people live in peace when you rest in peace, please contact us +44 (0) 1926 315301 for information.



reflections



“It’s too difficult Dad”- a phrase I have heard a few times this holiday from my children having faced new challenges, though their fear and frustration passes with each step of success.

In honesty it’s a prayer I have prayed as we hear news of worsening situations in Chad, or greater complexities to a conflict emerges as we understand another piece of the global matrix of actors in Cambodia, or any of the other places we work.

Talking with leaders in our partner organisations or our Country Directors, the strain they feel is from constantly challenging the status quo and perceived wisdom around them. This, while maintaining enough curiosity, courage and conviction to find innovative solutions that will yield a peaceful future.

Opposition is not only from guns but from people who have become cynical and no longer believe that good can come.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.” Matthew 5 v9

At CORD we work with people leading organisations like KITWOBE - Kitgum Women’s Beekeepers Association - and SCC- Salvation Centre Cambodia - to help their leaders realise their dreams of a more peaceful and just future. We mentor and coach, put groups in touch with one another to learn together and to be inspired by each others’ successes and thereby reduce some of their fear and frustrations, in seeing people’s hope and faith grow.

So while peace is perhaps the most difficult challenge to our world, let’s pray for these leaders to have God’s grace and his people’s support that together nothing will prove too hard to overcome.

Brian Wakley
Chief Executive



CORD's Ugandan partners KITWOBEE are having a record breaking year - producing a quarter of a ton of honey a month against a target of half a ton a year.

From just seven founder members the Kitgum Women Beekeepers' Association had 35 signed up at the beginning of 2009 - and in the past six months this has expanded across the region to involve no fewer than 307 beekeepers.

This huge growth in the organisation has seen the area designated Beekeeping Country, the not for profit company holding its first annual general meeting - and the founding of the Kitgum Agricultural Stakeholders' Platform - involving all those in the honey chain.

'CORD has been working alongside the KITWOBEE ladies to develop their business and realise their potential,' said Country Director Dennis Bailey. 'What's exciting is not just to see so many children supported through school thanks to the Association, but that we now have nurseries in four primary

schools where the pupils are nurturing the seedlings and young plants we need to make the Savannah honey have its unique taste. We hope they will become the beekeepers of the future.'

The impact on the environment is also being addressed, with the local district council setting new strict policing rules about setting the low bush alight - a common practice of hunters flushing out cane rats and other small animals. The smoke deters the bees and destroys their nectar.

New signs are being erected saying "Shhhh... Beekeeping Country" - to warn motorists to reduce their noise levels, another thing honey bees find annoying.

'The priority has to be more vital equipment if KITWOBEE are to continue their rapid expansion,' said Dennis. 'They urgently need more of the best hives and another processing machine to help speed up production.'



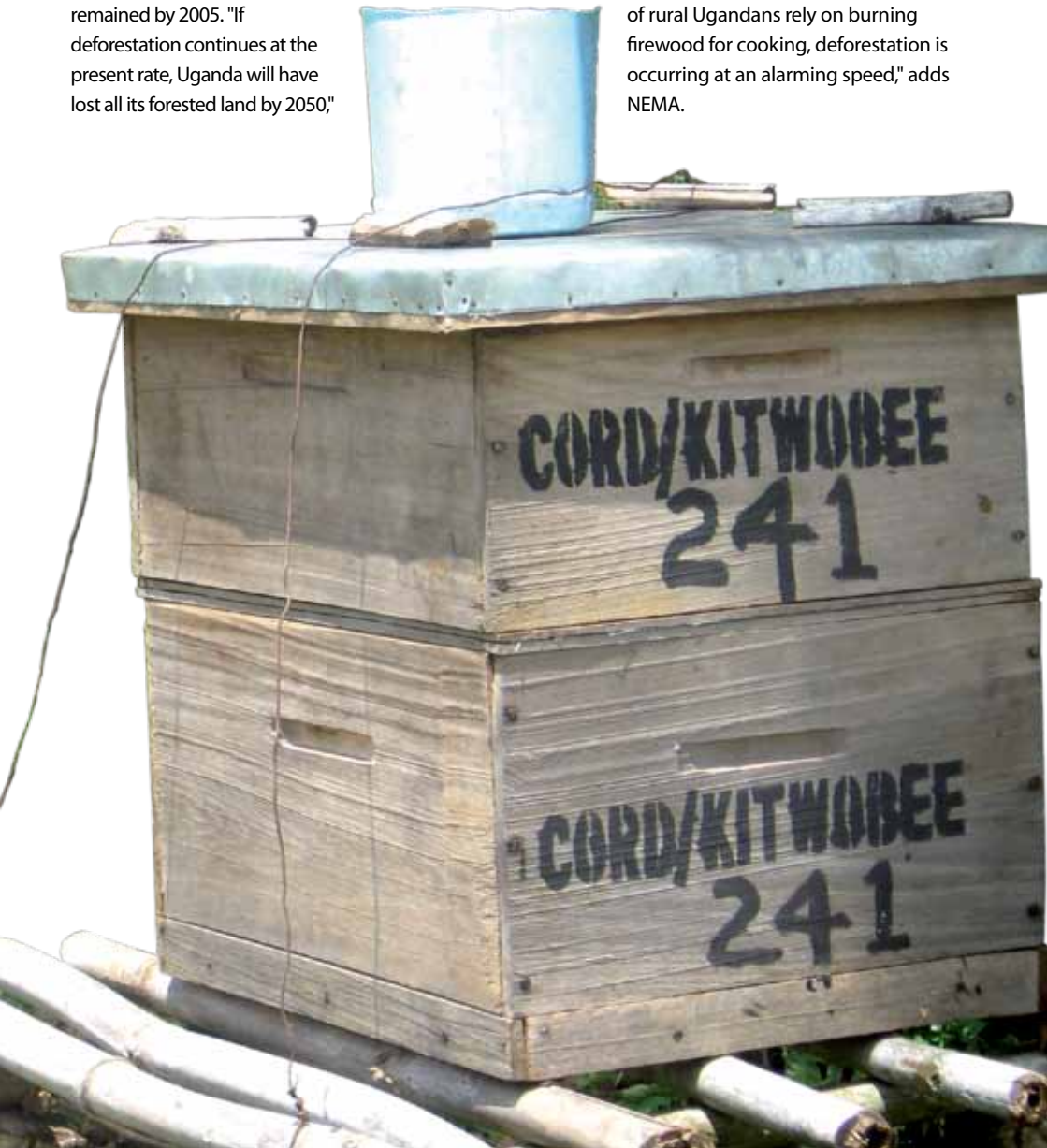
KITWOBEE's bid to nurture the environment comes at a vital time for Uganda, which has lost nearly a third of its forests in the last two decades- and could lose most of its tree cover in about 40 years unless measures are quickly taken to reverse the situation.

The country had more than five million hectares of forest in 1990, but only 3.5 million hectares remained by 2005. "If deforestation continues at the present rate, Uganda will have lost all its forested land by 2050,"

warns the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA).

Executive Director Aryamanya Mugisha says Uganda will suffer dire environmental effects if no immediate remedial measures are put in place.

'Only 10 percent of Uganda's population has access to electricity and because 89 percent of rural Ugandans rely on burning firewood for cooking, deforestation is occurring at an alarming speed,' adds NEMA.



NEW THREATS TO CHILDREN IN CONFLICT NEED NEW RESPONSES SAYS UN

The changing nature of conflict, including the use of children in terrorist activity, poses new threats to children and international agencies must do more to respond says the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy.

'Armed conflicts today often feature small, ill-trained and lightly armed groups and civilians, especially children, are increasingly targeted and bear the brunt of consequences,' according to the communiqué. Ms Coomaraswamy called for agencies to take special measures to protect children, whilst acknowledging that some progress has been made in areas such as the

recruitment of child soldiers, sexual violence and exploitation, forced displacement, killing and maiming, separation from families, child trafficking and illegal detention.

'But awareness, better mechanisms and legal tools do not necessarily translate into change on the ground,' she commented. *'We have created international and national frameworks to protect children's rights – now we need to implement them.'*

More focus should be placed on the, often-overlooked, ways that conflict ruins children's lives, such as blocking them from attending school, eating nutritious food or accessing basic healthcare.



CHADIAN CHILDREN BOTTOM OF THE EDUCATION LADDER



A new index ranking how well-prepared children are to succeed in school puts Chad last among 100 countries - followed by Afghanistan and Burundi.

It is the indigenous Chadian children who fair the worst in the developing world, with dire poverty, lack of public services and conflict stacking the odds against the youngest children, says the report commissioned by Save the Children.

Approximately one child in five in all three countries does not survive to age five, and those who do often suffer from cognitive and physical impairments that limit their development.

In Burundi, a quarter of primary school aged children do not attend school while in Chad it's 40 per cent.

More than 80 per cent of women are illiterate in Chad with the average woman having six or more children in her lifetime, so few children get the kind of care, encouragement and stimulus they need at home in their early years.

In both countries CORD is trying to address these issues: in Chad by extending our education programme from the Sudanese refugee camps out into neighbouring Chadian villages and offering literacy classes to young adults; while in Burundi there is an ongoing programme of rebuilding and refurbishing schools left derelict after the lengthy civil war.

'The future of humankind will be defined by how well mothers today are able to raise the next generation,' concludes the report. 'Mothers around the world are solving child care challenges as best they can, but millions of the poorest mothers and caregivers need help to access tools, information and support to give their children the best possible future.'

Twenty of the bottom 31 countries in the School Success Index are either currently experiencing armed conflict, emerging from conflict or hosting large refugee populations from neighbouring conflicts.

ESCAPING THE TWO WOMEN TURN T

CORD Cambodia has joined three of the country's major networks: the NGO Forum, the Cooperation Committee of Cambodia and the National Education Partnership. Together with the Cooperation Committee the team is exploring the concept of a CORD centre of excellence for capacity development - initially in Cambodia and then in the region - involving accredited training, mentoring, coaching, sharing experiences and learning.

'Last year the CORD team of ten supported twelve NGOs, although if we had the man power that number could have been up to 30 such was the level of interest,' says Regional Director, Noel Matthews.

Building on the obvious demand for such partnerships, CORD is investigating extending the programme into Laos PDR, Burma/Myanmar [and the Thai Border], Timor Leste, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Pich Sou

is a 55 year old widow who lives with her two sons in Beik Touk village, Prey Veng province.

A single parent for the past 20 years, Pich Sou can read and write, but had a limited education and was finding it hard to grow enough rice on her small plot of land to feed her family, or to pay for them to go to school. Two years ago CORD's partner PNKS helped the women of Beik Touk to start a Women's Association, and as a volunteer Pich Sou learnt about farming, growing vegetables and sugarcane, raising livestock as well as becoming aware of her rights as a woman and those of her children.

Borrowing from the Association meant Pich Sou could begin growing sugarcane, which now gives her a healthy income alongside her vegetable crops- as much as 1,640,000 Riel (US\$400) a year.

'Now my family has enough food to eat and my grandchildren can go to school,' says Pich Sou. 'They are quite helpful and enjoy watering the plants in the garden.' This year Pich Sou has been elected to the Village Development Committee. 'I want to see the next generation having a bright future' she smiles.



POVERTY TRAP THEIR LIVES AROUND

Por Phat

and her husband live in Samrong Takok Village with their two children.

Por Phat was very sick and was diagnosed HIV positive after CORD partners SCC encouraged her to go for a test. Her husband and their eldest child, aged five were also found to be HIV positive.

SCC staff and volunteers visited the family twice a week, teaching them about nutrition and the importance of taking their medication and encouraging them not to feel stigmatised. Por Phat joined a local self help group of HIV positive people, and was encouraged to share her experiences.

After a while her health improved and she asked the home care team for financial support. Her idea was to sell Kralan – a popular Cambodian snack of sweet or salty rice stick in bamboo cane - from her bicycle. She started her business with a US\$30 loan and advice from SCC.

Por Phat's health continues to improve. Nowadays she and her husband are able to supplement their income with other part time jobs: during the harvest season her husband works on a rice field while she cuts bamboo canes.

Last year, Por Phat earned as much as 10,000 Riels(US\$2.4) every day- well above the average daily wage - from her own business so that despite her condition, she is able to help support her vulnerable family.



Lighting up Learning

Mahamat Nourein suspends a solar light, one of several being tested in Bredjing refugee camp as a potential light source for **CORD Sudanese students keen to extend the learning day beyond nightfall. The trial lamps have been donated by the **Book Wish Foundation** as part of their continuing support for **CORD's** education programme in Chad.**

Mahamat Nourein is the inspiration behind the Unity English School, which meets daily during term time with approximately 600 young adult refugee students, all determined to improve their English and hopefully gain a place at university in Juba, Southern Sudan . They meet in Osman Primary School before school starts from around 5.30am and again in the evening. As well as teaching full time in the primary school, Mahamat Nourein is tireless in his enthusiasm to get an English language system that is balanced, with exams and graduation ceremonies.





Louise presents a prize to a proud young refugee student in Gaga camp, Chad

Busy Time Out During Chad's Rainy Season

Meanwhile, it has been a summer of activity for Sudanese refugee school children and their families in the camps.

School parent associations attended a four day training course led by CORD staff, including sessions on education for peace and creating a learning environment without risk.

The annual joint celebration party for the 'Day of the African Child' and 'Refugee Day' was organised by a committee of refugees together with CORD and other partners - while this year our staff also ran a parallel Day of the African Child for the local Chadian village communities. The children made speeches, the boys held a football match while the girls enjoyed singing and dancing.

The fun followed the awards day at Gaga schools, with prizes given to the top 5-10 students from each year group following their exam results. The students were given small packs containing sweets, biscuits, exercise books and pens.

During the three month summer break many refugees try to find areas around and close to the border to farm, this being their main opportunity to supplement the food they receive in the camps. They have to travel a distance because land adjacent to the camp is used by the local Chadians.

Some refugees take the opportunity to try to visit family in other camps - they are often separated if family members arrive at different times and camps are closed to new entrants.

'As the new school year approaches we are trying to repair classrooms and latrines which have become badly damaged by years of use and the rainy season,' said CORD Programme Manager Louise Jarvis.

'I am working with some amazing people who are leading the community into the next phase of peace building, empowering the refugees to make decisions and implement ideas for themselves.'

Toilet Twinning Engages the World

Toilet Twinners from Sacramento to Tasmania, from Palermo to Kuwait have signed up to CORD's Toilet Twinning Campaign.

Some 500 twinners are now actively enrolled in this global initiative to improve sanitation for Burundian families returning home after years in exile, with visitors to the recent New Wine Festival engaging enthusiastically alongside individuals, families, businesses and office staff across the world.

Toilet Twinning has reached a world wide audience through the internet, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, proving that the serious issues around the lack of sanitation can be tackled via a fun message.

The next exclusive set of 600 latrines in the remote Giharo Commune are now available to twin.



'The response so far has been tremendous' said Richard Dickson, Director of Supporter Relations. 'If we can continue and twin 600 more loos then some 36,000 more Burundians will have access to a safe, private and hygienic place to relieve themselves. CORD can also extend its hygiene training programme so that fewer people become ill from amoebic diseases - and a healthy nation is more likely to prosper.'

As a Twinner you pay just £60 to receive a special one-off certificate to display in your smallest room picturing your twin, its exact grid reference. To find out more and to twin your toilet visit our micro-site www.toilettwinning.org

Burundi's Bright Idea...

On the first and third Saturday mornings of each month, every Burundian adult must take part in two hours of "travail communautaire" - work in the community.

The use of cars and motorbikes is forbidden whilst everyone completes some sort of community activity: extra adult education classes, clearing hedgerows, organising special baby clinics or repairing roads.

Despite all their recent suffering, everyone seems proud of what they're doing and Burundi takes more giant steps towards a peaceful and viable future.





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Tim Suffield, Martin Whitmore, Steve Shaw & Simon Barnard cycling from John O'Groats to Lands End - donate online [justgiving.com/Tim-Suffield](https://www.justgiving.com/Tim-Suffield)

Dr Jacquie Williams & Lindsay Poole of Wine Pool who raised £1,300 at the CORD Wine Tasting evening

ByBox & Modern Homes for Toilet Twinning endorsement & **Bishop Christopher of Coventry** for twinning five toilets

CORD volunteers and everyone we met at the New Wine conferences, Shepton Mallet

Warwick Racecourse for hosting the CORD Race Day & **Ricoh Arena** for sponsorship

Polished Hand Car Wash & Valeting, Wills in Warwickshire, Truly July, The Professional Woman's Coach & Business Coaching for supporting the CORD Golf Day

Southam St James & Lighthorne Heath Primary Schools, Malvern College & Kingsley School for fundraising

Churches in Southam, Offchurch, Coventry & Bunwell for welcoming a CORD speaker

Barbara & Tony Atcheson for donations from their Ruby Wedding and **Colin & Mary Waterman** for remembering CORD at their Golden Wedding party

Mrs Sally Hall of Boston, Lincolnshire would be interested to hear from other people in her area who support CORD. Call Sally on 01754 820495.

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CORD | 1 New Street, Leamington Spa | CV31 1HP
tel: 01926 315301 | e-mail: info@cord.org.uk

www.cord.org.uk

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