



News

Issue 1 - 2011

Exciting prospects
for peace in 2011


Peace through Partnership

Welcome/

The first anniversary of the tragic earthquake in Haiti has revealed some sobering realities about the world's response and the effectiveness of the 800 aid agencies that sped to provide humanitarian aid.

A lack of foresight in coordinating the multi-billion dollar mission and of involving the Haitians in the decision making are being blamed for the fact that thousands of people still live as refugees, in abject conditions without even basic amenities like water and toilets.

The quake also brought hundreds of individuals to the scene from across the globe

anxious to play their part in the rescue and aftermath. Unfortunately many found themselves out of their depth, or simply complicating an already highly complex emergency relief effort.

Accusations fly that the NGO (non governmental organisations) world has now become an industry, with larger bodies competing for 'market share'.

Cord is, of course, a part of the NGO community and we believe accountability and 'effectiveness' is vital. The 'effectiveness' in meeting short term needs in the immediate aftermath of a crisis is a different effectiveness to tackling the longer term systemic problems in a nation.

The challenge is that the former mustn't undermine the ongoing process of tackling the latter.

In the case of Haiti where ongoing civil conflict and extreme poverty are the backdrop and reason for such devastation, the challenges of the medium and long-term perspectives are tough to incorporate. The destruction was wrought on Haiti by the earthquake, but the devastation was caused by years of neglect of a suffering people by the international community.

What remains essential at the heart of humanitarian work is the necessity to embrace the ideas and support of those we seek to

'help'. Developing the capacity of government and local people to cooperate, hold each other to account and open dialogue with those they oppose or don't fully understand is essential. As an agile organisation working at grass roots level, Cord is well placed to work in this way.

We've always believed that the long term view should be dominant if the ultimate aim is to be achieved - to enable people successfully to run their own lives, communities and countries for themselves - and for Cord to retire gracefully, job done.

To explore these issues further, follow this shortened link to our website: <http://bit.ly/fkdsu>

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Cord UK Office | 1 New Street | Leamington Spa | CV31 1HP
01926 315301 | info@cord.org.uk

www.cord.org.uk

Voices of Peace/

Luisa Peticucci, Cord Laos

Luisa Peticucci is Cord's Senior Advisor in Laos. She grew up in New York but considers San Francisco her home. Here she explains why she made a major career change to become a peace builder.

I've been drawn to the mystery and richness of Asian culture from a very young age. My grandmother lived in China and I grew up with her stories about her experience and saw how she integrated elements of Asian culture into her life back in the US. It wasn't just in her house furnishings, but in her commitment to spiritual reflection, mindfulness, the importance of appreciating this moment.

I started my career in the business world but about 10 years ago it became painfully clear to me that not having my work and personal values more intimately

aligned was a source of sadness and pain. The last decade has been a journey, first working at new and innovative social enterprises, and later more focused on development. I had a lot of incredibly lucky breaks along the way.

I impulsively got a job at a social enterprise based in Cambodia and Laos. I saw hundreds of young people, many disabled or suffering from long held trauma, hold down a full time job, frequently financially supporting a large family while completing their degrees. Often they were the only people in their families to even complete school.

I've been deeply moved by the incredible passion, appreciation and commitment that those most in need bring to the very limited opportunities they are offered.

I have wanted to find better ways of unleashing their untapped

potential; positive, skilful ways to help them create better lives and better communities. I have learnt that those affected by poverty, social unrest and violence do hold the answers to solving their own problems. They simply need help in facilitating ways to let those solutions emerge. It's both humbling and inspiring.

Someone I know describes coming from Cambodia to Laos as like going from overdrive into first gear and it really feels that way. Lao people still dress traditionally; they typically speak softly compared to most westerners, are very

friendly and warm and have a real appreciation for enjoying the moment and genuinely wanting to share it with others.

Cord's vision and mission align so beautifully with my personal ideals that I couldn't help but want to join. I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity to work here in Laos which is at a very critical and hopeful time in its history. For the first time in many years, there is an opportunity to help the government and its people shape an open and free, stable civil society and Cord can play a special role in that process. Anything is possible. /





Housna Breaks the Mould/

Kasongo Mutshila
Cord Chad

Cord is always keen to promote women's rights in our projects, but it's not easy to empower women in some communities. Men tend to maintain a status quo, and keep women in a culture of silence.

The Sudanese refugee camps in the eastern Chad are generally traditional, Islamic and male dominated societies. Women produce children and care for the family, there is no room for them in terms of leadership, planning, organising and controlling which remain male domains.

Cord's Chad team work closely with the associations of parents at all of the 23 schools we run in four refugee camps. These

APE's are involved in the day to day management but where women have become involved in a committee they continue to play their traditional roles, welcoming visitors and cooking for them etc. We are very far from empowering them.

In Bredjing Camp one woman is a remarkable exception/

Housna Souleyman is the Deputy Chairperson of Aboubakar Primary School Parents' Association. She is leading people, both men and women. She is a key person in that camp, she speaks and contributes with rational ideas, and she is fully involved in the decision taking and making process.

Who is Housna Souleyman? She fled from Darfur with her husband and seven children. Back home, she had some secondary education.

'Education is a light in the dark,' say Mrs Souleyman. 'Someone with no education is living in a dark place and can fall down. That's why I am totally involved in promoting the need for girls to be educated.'

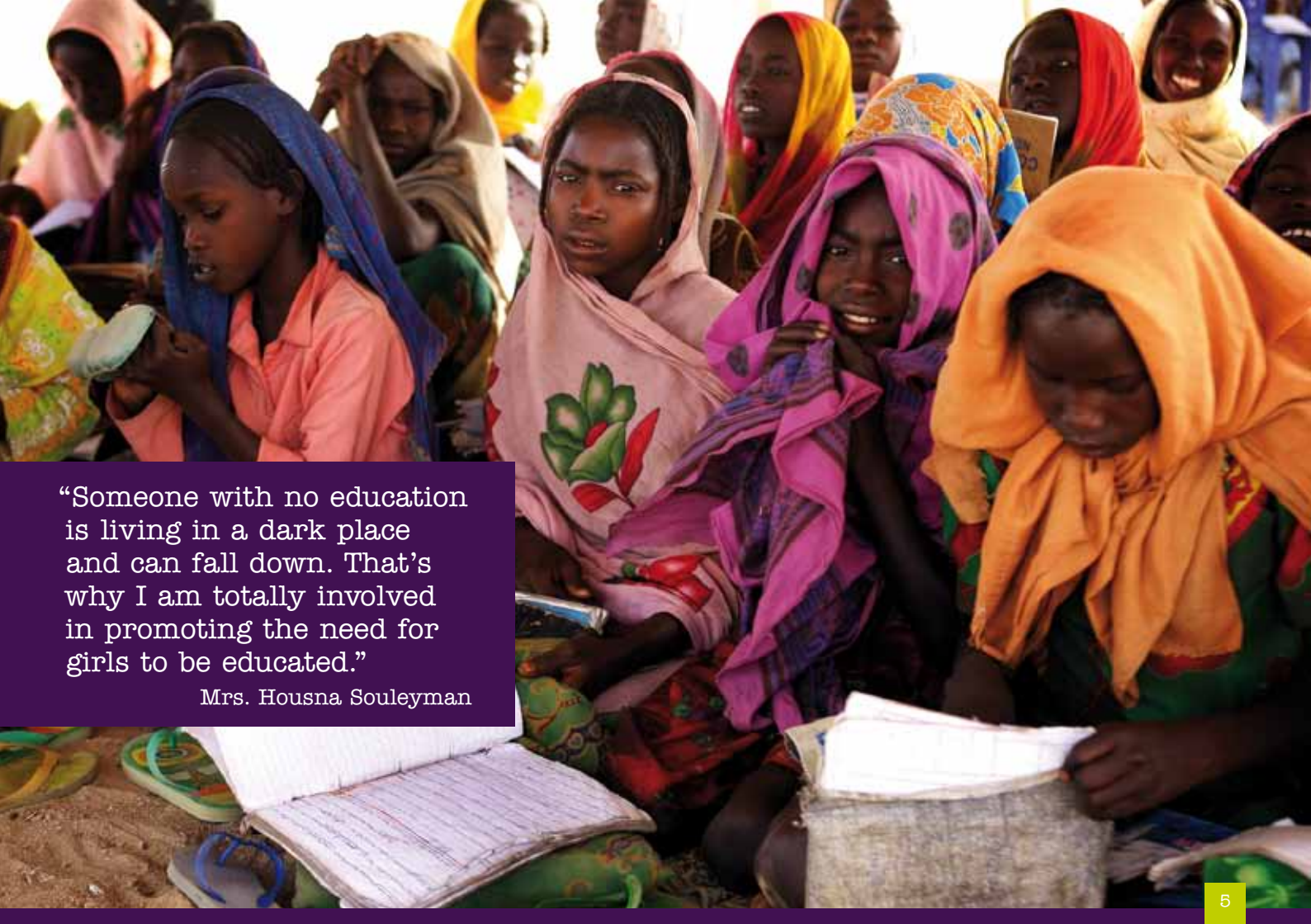
Cord offers equal opportunities for schooling to boys and girls. Since girls tend to be kept at home for domestic work, our strategies put a particular emphasis on girls' education.

It's thanks to women like Housna Souleyman that after six years in Chad an impressive 49% of students in the camps' schools are girls.

The number of young women attending literacy centres to learn and write has also increased; out of 1,815 adults no fewer than 1,045 are women. Girls' committees have been set up our schools, monitoring the girls' school attendance and encouraging others to return to school.

This trend has enabled girls with babies to go back to school.

All of which is proof that 'educating a woman is educating a nation'. It's true that when girls and women are educated it is a key to the development of a community. /



“Someone with no education is living in a dark place and can fall down. That’s why I am totally involved in promoting the need for girls to be educated.”

Mrs. Housna Souleyman

Cambodia Goes Green/

Samnang Chum
Cord Cambodia.



Cord Cambodia's involvement in a major climate change project is reaping rewards in helping the country's poorest rural communities understand the issues they face.

'Climate change issues are new for Cambodia, it's a hot topic here and I wanted to explore different ways of helping the poor to cope with the dilemmas it raises,' said Vansak Vay (pictured) of Cord's partners, the 'Non-Timber Forest Products Organisation', (NTFP) based in Ranakiri.

After participating in the Joint Climate Change Project (JCCP) over 18 months with 8 workshops held in Phnom Penh and various provinces across Cambodia, Vansak Vay found himself becoming more and more actively involved and understanding the concepts of protecting the environment.

Mentoring and coaching from Cord's advisors helped him with the complexities of writing proposals, and after the workshops and two field research studies in two provinces, he helped develop the

NTFP's climate change proposal.

Vansak Vay has passed on his knowledge to colleagues and via NTFP he is part of the Climate Change Community Network, which aims to share best practice with other members within Cambodia, and internationally via their website. An NTFP report on the impact of drought and flooding in local forest communities is an example.

To the organisation's delight their climate change project has been financed by UNDP Cambodia with \$50,000 over the next 18 months; a

substantial outcome from the Joint Climate Change Project in which Cord was a major player.

'NTFP is committed to playing a more active role at national level in representing minority groups in fighting climate change and sharing our experience with other NGOs and partners working in Ranakiri province,' said Vansak Vay. /

Chad's Capital Bans Plastic Bags/

Chad's capital city N'Djamena - base for Cord's in country team - has joined the move towards an Africa-wide ban on plastic bags in an effort to eliminate the billions of throwaway sacks that are marring its cities and landscapes.

Region by region, Africa has had its share of grief caused by the plastic bag outbreak. South Africa alone once produced 7 billion bags a year, with plastic sacks typically wreaking havoc in the landscape, blocking drains and sewage systems and affecting ground water, soil, and native plants. The troublesome bags can kill valuable livestock and foraging animals that ingest them. They are also known to be instrumental in the spread of malaria - creating pools of warm water that allow mosquitoes to breed rapidly.

Rwanda and Eritrea have already banned the bags outright and N'Djamena has followed suit. The city's Mayor is using sanctions and fines against people and traders who do not comply.

Cord Chad say the change is very noticeable: the trees lining the Chad capital are not scarred by plastic bags; in supermarkets cashiers simply leave goods on the counter for the customer to take away, while in the market people use old newspapers in place of bags and traders are importing paper bags from Nigeria. The country's international airport is also subject to rigorous checks and the ban is reported to have spread to the town of Abéché, near the refugee camps. /



Historic Vote for Sudan/

As we go to print the result of southern Sudan's referendum on secession from the north should be announced.

The poll was agreed as part of the 2005 deal to end the two-decade civil war and the turnout well exceeded the 60% of the four million registered voters required to pass.

Despite a deadly attack on a convoy of south Sudanese civilians near the north-south border returning home and clashes in the disputed oil-rich region of Abyei - where a separate referendum on whether to join north or south Sudan was postponed indefinitely because of disagreements over eligibility - the mood throughout the voting process was jubilant.

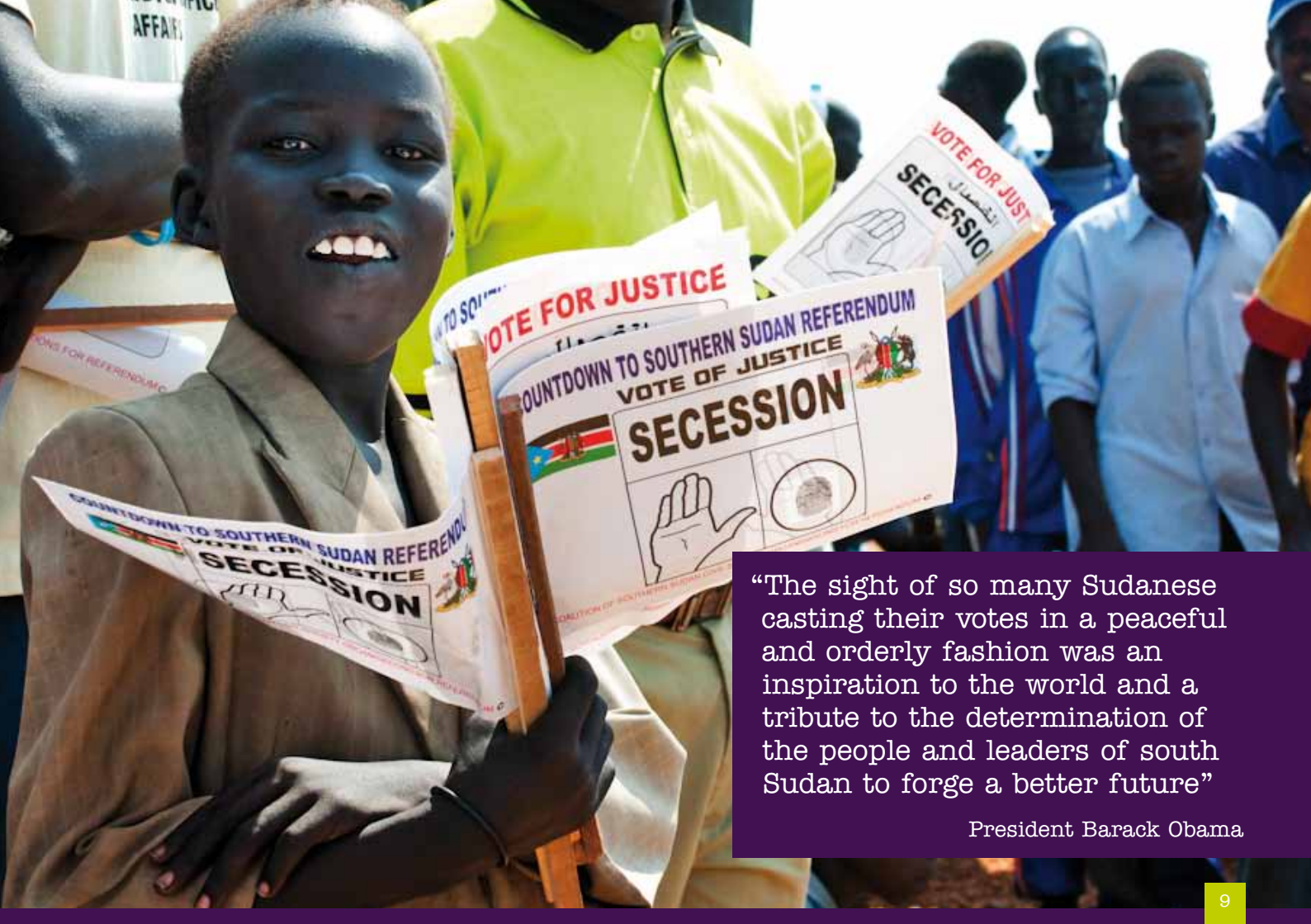
The referendum could divide Africa's largest country with the south becoming Africa's newest nation on 9 July 2011, the 193rd nation if you count UN membership. Most northerners are Arabic-

speaking Muslims while most southerners are non-Arab Christians or follow traditional religions.

The challenge in the south will be balancing huge expectations and managing the tribal rivalries over the oil revenues they'll control but, which to date, have not delivered the infrastructure development or seed investment. Negotiating sufficient time and space to develop the government's capacity while aid flows have reduced will be a huge challenge for south Sudan's leadership.

Cord is monitoring developments to assess the implications for the 85,000 Sudanese refugees with whom we work in the camps of eastern Chad, many of whom have been in exile since 2004. /





“The sight of so many Sudanese casting their votes in a peaceful and orderly fashion was an inspiration to the world and a tribute to the determination of the people and leaders of south Sudan to forge a better future”

President Barack Obama

Challenging Perceptions/

Simon Vasey, Cord Supporter

When Cord supporter Simon Vasey made his first visit to Africa recently his expectations were confounded by what he found in one of its smallest, landlocked countries, Burundi:

It can take over two hours to buy a bottle of beer in Bujumbura. That is if you are a 'Muzungu' - a white man - have only US dollars and are looking to purchase some 'Primus', the local brew.

Beer is a big industry in Burundi and the Bujumbura brewery is supposedly the largest employer of talent from the capital city's university. Serge is the Country Director for Cord and the brewing company is where he did his early training as an accountant. It was Serge who drove Brian Wakley, Cord's Chief Executive, and me around the remote provinces of south and east Burundi.

You don't become an expert on Africa in a week. After my first seven days I knew for certain that reading

about the continent was not the same as understanding it. Much of Burundi had been a surprise, but it was my own feelings that were the most unanticipated challenge. Four days before, sitting in the back of a Cord utility truck, I had experienced a disturbing feeling of faint disappointment

It felt like I was in the wrong place/

We were passing slowly through a small remote village; the main road was excellent, there were crops growing on every available hillside. The village itself was teeming with people and everywhere there were signs of trade in food and drink and charcoal and bricks. People were talking on mobile phones. Everyone looked happy.

And that was the problem. Shamefully, had I in some way looked forward to confirming for myself the extremes of human suffering? Was I frustrated at being

denied my own selfish 'Comic Relief' moment?

Four days had passed and Burundi had started the process of educating me out of a shocking ignorance.

I learned to distrust my first impressions. These people are so friendly and beautiful that you can be blinded to the suffering.

There is indeed great suffering in Burundi. It's among the three poorest countries in the world and the statistics are brutal. Burundian children are not born with an inherited immunity to the effects of poverty.

And Cord simply doesn't waste time or take needless risks helping you deliberately experience the dark side. The hungry and diseased and injured and scared are not usually in the fields or walking the roads. And they are not obviously to be found amongst those you travel with, nor in the public administrators you shake hands with, nor amongst the

other NGO workers you meet. I got a glimpse, but that's all.

I also learned how important it is to see the whole journey/

Many of those we met fled the Burundian conflict; they'd spent years in exile in Tanzanian camps and had returned only in the last few years to their destroyed homes and villages.

It was the camps of course that were the image in my head; of families walking for weeks to reach a place which itself would be a fight for survival. It is the pitiful and desperate struggle for life in the refugee camps that is the first image to emerge out of the conflict zone. They are the front-line of aid work, with food drops, doctors and medicines, tents and clothing all providing hope.

But I don't think there is any victory in surviving the camps. There is hope, but no victory.

Cord was in the camps to plan

“I learned to distrust my first impressions. These people are so friendly and beautiful that you can be blinded to the suffering”

for what was going to happen afterwards, when there is a peace-treaty but no peace. The odds were not good. Countries emerging out of violence are highly likely to re-enter conflict within a few years.

Yet here I was in Burundi. I had seen water and sanitation schemes, new community-based businesses, schools being constructed, new housing, education programmes and women's rights being reinforced. These things had all made a tremendous difference to whole communities. Each scheme had been considered and executed in a way that would ensure it became a milestone on a journey to lasting peace. And a vindication of the hope delivered in the camps.

Continues over...



Cord asked the hill villagers of Rutana, who are part of our programme in Burundi, to tell us how their lives had changed in 2010 and to share their hopes for 2011. This is what they told us:

Niyonzima Jnanvière, 33 and mother of seven



'The achievement I am most proud of is to have a brand new house covered with iron sheeting and a decent latrine. It's made a huge difference to my every day life. I still walk 6 kms to get to the nearest water spring, but the spring is protected and I am sure to use clean drinking water. I hope I get a piece of land in the coming months so that I can be independent, produce crops and feed my children.'

Karenzo Jean, 42 and father of five



'Now we have clean water my life and the lives of the children are different in a positive way. I am most proud of having a good house. I hope that in the future I will have some fertilizers and that I can grow more food.'

Tuyisenge Jean, 26 and mother of three



'We were living in dirty houses covered with grass and conditions were so bad. I am proud of having a good home and a latrine for my family, it's meant a new life for us.'

I have no land so my hope is to get access to food to feed my family.'

Nzitunga Joseph, 36 and father of two



'A quiet place to sleep even during the rain, this is the achievement I am most proud of this past year. Our personal and domestic hygiene has greatly improved because of what Cord has taught us and having better housing and a latrine. Now I need to have a piece of land to cultivate.'

Nahimana Melanie, 29 and mother of three



'I'm proud of having a clean place I call home. My children and their clothes are clean and we lead a better life. My hope is to put cement on the floor and the walls.'

Bigirimana Felizo, 35

'I am proud of having seeds and cassava cuttings and more importantly a house and a latrine. My hope is to live longer and provide for my family.'

Nyedetse Concilie, 70 and grandmother of seven



'I am proud of my new home. With water, sanitation and what we have learnt about hygiene, life is good. I would like to have constant access to food.'

The issue of access and entitlement to arable land for subsistence farming remains a major hurdle for returnees.

More than 20,000 disputes over land have been registered by Burundi's National Commission on Land and Other Properties, of which some 13,000 have been resolved. UNHCR January 2011. /

A Gift in Your Will Leaves a Lasting Legacy/

Cord has spent more than four decades helping people displaced by war and violent conflict to rebuild their lives. Sadly there are currently 42 million people around the world enduring the trauma and hardships that this can bring (UNHCR). Half of them are children. Their vulnerability is palpable/

Yet there is hope of a better future. Hope that Cord sees every day as we work with people who hunger for the security that only peace can bring. Their resilience is remarkable.

We are committed to enabling the poorest of the poor to regain a sense of self worth; ensuring that they are equipped to build a better future of hope and stability.

Make hope and stability a reality/

By leaving Cord a gift in your Will you will be helping us to build lasting peace; ensuring that a young generation who have known nothing but the brutality of war can reclaim their childhood; and develop their skills so they can prevent conflict from reoccurring.

Through your generosity you will be impacting the life of a child, family or a community long after your death. Bequeathing a lasting gift that really will make a difference to some of the most disadvantaged people in the world.

How your gift can build lasting peace/

- **£2,500** could educate 35 primary school children for one year in Chad.
- **£5,000** could pay for community association and local government leaders in Cambodia to learn the skills of non-violent communication.
- **£10,000** could support a month's work with a national womens' rights group who are supporting the victims of gender based violence, used as a weapon of war.
- **£30,000** could help us to work with local partners across Africa to develop their capacity to deliver high quality, well thought through programmes which make a lasting impact on their nation helping bring about long-term peace.

We hope this inspires you to support Cord's peace building work in a lasting way. To find out more and receive a legacy pack please contact Kit Lawry on 01926 315301 or klawry@cord.org.uk./



Giving regularly makes a meaningful impact/

Did you know that nearly half of the people who support Cord use Standing Orders to manage their giving?

Cord relies on the generosity of supporters old and new to fund our vital peace building work and we are enormously grateful to everyone who supports us financially, in prayer, or in other ways. It's the most efficient and effective way to give and compared to sending donations by cheque, it saves paper and money for both you and us!

We realise that times are hard/

We feel it too. Your support not only helps us to ensure that people affected by violent conflict can secure a peaceful life and a better future but it also really helps us plan for the future so that we too can be good stewards of our resources.

It's so easy/

A Standing Order is an instruction from you to your bank to make regular donations from your account to Cord. You can give as much as you feel able, and can choose whether your donation is made monthly, quarterly or annually. Even the smallest amount is valuable to us in our work with the world's poorest billion.

To give by Standing Order, fill in the form opposite and post it to us (we will forward it to your bank).

If you manage your finances online, you can set up regular payments via your bank's website. Also, if you're a UK taxpayer then you can make your Standing Order donations work even harder by allowing us to claim Gift Aid!

If you have any queries please call Angie Archer on 01926 315301. Thank you. /



Yes, I'd like to give regularly by Standing Order Mandate!

A Standing Order is an instruction from you to your bank. We will forward this mandate to your bank on your behalf. Please contact your bank in the first instance if you have any queries about your payments.

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Gift Aid is worth an extra 25p on top of every pound you give to us - and it costs you nothing!

To qualify for Gift Aid, what you pay in income tax or capital gains tax must at least equal the amount we will claim in the tax year. Please inform us if you change your name or address, or if you cease to pay enough tax to cover your donations.

You must provide your name, address, postcode and tick the box for us to be able to claim Gift Aid on your donation.

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