



Above: A woman in Man-Angui IDP camp, South Sudan

Sharing the Darkness

Featured in this issue:

- HART's latest visits to Burma, South Sudan and Uganda
- Our campaign for Genocide Prevention Month
- The winners of our Scholarship Competition
- An update from the Rehabilitation Centre
- Volunteering and Fundraising

This Newsletter should perhaps begin with a 'Health Warning'.

It contains heart-breaking reports of the suffering of our partners and the communities they serve, especially in South Sudan and Burma. HART's staff have recently visited them and returned profoundly challenged with a kaleidoscope of emotions: anguish, having witnessed raw suffering on a massive scale; a passionate desire to be able to do more to help with aid and advocacy; and poignant admiration for the courage and dignity of those whom we met. Therefore this Newsletter presents some of that suffering in ways which are inevitably disturbing. But we hope that also there will be messages of hope shining through the darkness as well as cheerful reports of other achievements of many kinds.

South Sudan: A HART team visited South Sudan in February/March, focusing on places 'off the radar screen' of western media coverage of the recent horrific fighting. Our first destination was Agok, near Abyei: an epicentre of political and military conflict. Continuing disputes (fuelled by oil) over the crucial border between Sudan and South Sudan have been associated with

bitter fighting between the Government of Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

The Governments of both South Sudan and Sudan have signed agreements pledging to demilitarise the area; the Government of South Sudan had withdrawn their armed forces yet clashes continue, exacerbated by growing intercommunal tensions. Atrocities perpetrated by armed militias such as the Murahaleen exacerbate the terror. And the murder of the Paramount Chief of the Ngok Dinka people, with impunity, has left deep scars.

The roots of this fighting and suffering can be traced back to the continued failure to address Abyei's unresolved final status. We met the local leadership who powerfully conveyed the continuing suffering of their people, their deep dismay and frustration over the lack of recognition of their long-promised Referendum and their pleas for help.

We subsequently visited some of the many Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who have fled the recent fighting, atrocities and massacres in South Sudan.

Their plight is desperate: many are reduced to living in cardboard or plastic makeshift shelters, which will not withstand the first heavy downpour of the imminent rainy season. There is such a drastic shortage of food that many are reduced to eating leaves. There is no healthcare for many IDPs, so much suffering is unalleviated and many pregnant women have no antenatal care and nowhere to go for help with delivery.

Yet in the midst of this 'heart of darkness' we encounter inspirational people who humble us with their courage and dignity, such as Laurel Makacht, a Dinka from Bentiu, whose husband was killed. She told us:

'You see me as if nothing happened. I appear normal so that I do not have to remember what happened; and for the sake of the children. My husband was killed. When we were there, we saw 43 killed with my husband on December 18th 2013. ...We want to put God ahead of us – and we need a church here so we can take courage through the church. We don't know when we will return.'

Finally, one of HART's partners, Bishop Moses Deng, told us how he had just come from a village where a number of people had been killed and several hundred cattle stolen. His message to them was the same as he gives everywhere: please do NOT retaliate.

When he accompanied us to visit the camp for IDPs, we heard him repeat the same powerful message to a vast crowd. Such a clear call to peace and reconciliation is a sign of hope and a ray of light in a very dark place.

Burma: All is not well in the beautiful land of Burma (Myanmar – we use the name 'Burma' as this is the wish of the local people). Despite some reforms, such as the release of political prisoners, the Burmese

Government continues to use the Army to undertake military offensives against ethnic peoples, especially in the predominantly Muslim Rohingya, predominantly Buddhist Shan and predominantly Christian Kachin States. Here atrocities, including extra-judicial killings and rape, are used as weapons of war.

Hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians have been forced to flee from their homes to live in destitution in camps for IDPs or to flee into neighbouring countries, where they suffer incredible hardship as illegal migrants or are subject to the deprivations of overcrowded refugee camps without healthcare, food or education for their children.

During the recent visit, the HART delegation crossed into Shan State where we met local leaders and heard their deep concerns over the international community's failure to call the Burmese Government to account. HART has given voice to these concerns in its advocacy work, in parliament and elsewhere, urging the British Government not to prioritise trade and investment while the Burmese Government continues to perpetrate massive violations of human rights.

In addition to their profound concerns for the suffering of their people subjected to such brutality, the ethnic national leaders also highlight anger and dismay over the expropriation of their lands and expulsion of their people with no (or derisory) compensation.

"Natural resources in our state are very rich. This is why they want to come in and occupy, they keep fighting, killing our people and committing human rights violations" (woman from Kachin state).

The often vaunted Ceasefires are also used by the Burmese Army to strengthen their grip and expand their territory; and by the Burmese Government to allow foreign investors to extend their exploitation of natural resources such as teak and minerals.

"When they [the Burmese Army] go into a village they rape the women, have forced labour, take food from the villagers. They live in fear." (Woman from Shan State.)

As a senior officer in Shan State Army ruefully said: *'When the lights went on in Rangoon, all the world rushed there – and no-one stopped to see us in the darkness'.*

We witnessed that darkness first-hand, visiting people suffering the harsh conditions of displacement and exile. But we have also seen how our valiant partners SWAN (Shan Women's Action Network) strive to alleviate the suffering of their people. They always inspire us with their initiative, dedication and professionalism, bringing hope, health and healing to civilians living in deprivation inside Shan State and to those forced to flee into exile. It is HART's privilege to support partners such as SWAN as they bring light to some of Burma's darkest places.

Caroline Cox



Above: Makeshift home in Man-Angui camp, which will collapse with the first heavy rain

Below: Laurel Makacht recounts her story



Visit to northern Uganda

3-7 March 2014



By David Thomas, HART Projects Coordinator

To see a people stand proud, regain their confidence, go out and do and initiate things for themselves, rebuild their communities: it's one of the joys of being involved in HART. Helping people use their creativity and energy, particularly before they have a chance to establish a "track record" to impress big agencies, is one of the characteristics of HART. The HART team saw all this on the visit to northern Uganda in the early days of March at the paediatric HIV Centre PAORINHER.

The people of northern Uganda have been largely ignored and side-lined by their own government. They were terrorized for twenty years by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). 90% of the people were forced to live in camps. In 2005, it was described by a UN agency as the worst place in the world to be a child. HART began its involvement in 2006 by helping local people to set up a home for orphans and vulnerable children during and following the LRA reign of terror. With HART's support this developed in 2010 into the present paediatric HIV centre. Across the world, the diagnosis and treatment of HIV amongst children falls far behind that amongst adults. And here the need was clear. The Ugandan average HIV rate is 7.2% but in the north, where stands PAORINHER, the rate is 11%.

The centre encourages the local population to test for HIV. Diagnosis takes place at two Health Centres. PAORINHER then takes over: monitoring compliance with medical treatment, teaching good nutrition and providing nutritional support, carrying out CD-4 testing, sensitizing the community and reducing stigma. A school set up by the Centre teaches and feeds HIV-infected and non-infected children together, breaking down barriers between the groups.

Attitudes among many men are a problem. Slower to come forward for testing, more constrained by shame and ready to blame the women for the infection, staff fear they take their wives' medicines and rip up their wives' teaching materials. But the staff continue to spread the message that HIV need not be a death sentence; not if people come forward and take their treatment conscientiously.

Formally, funding ran out in August 2013. HART has enabled the centre to continue through to April 2014. But regular funding is now urgently needed.

Throughout the town and community where PAORINHER is situated we saw a fresh sense of confidence. New developments over the past three years are attributed by locals to the new spirit fostered by the Centre.

To see such a restoration of confidence and dignity amongst a people, as they do and achieve things for themselves, is one of the distinctive characteristics of involvement in HART. It is part of life for all who support HART.

*Above and Below:
students at
PAORINHER*



HART Visit to SOUTH SUDAN

By Alice Robinson, HART Advocacy and Communications Coordinator



708,900

The number of people who have been displaced within South Sudan since 15 December 2013

222,000

The additional number who have fled to neighbouring countries

4.9m

The total number of people in need of humanitarian assistance across South Sudan

23%

The current level of funding secured for the UN's Crisis Response Plan, aimed at reaching 3.2 million of those in need

0.5

The number of months to go before the rainy season brings flooding, disease and further starvation

You could be forgiven for thinking that the situation has improved in South Sudan since fighting broke out in December 2013. It hasn't. People have just stopped talking about it.

Conflict erupted in Juba on December 15th, 2013, following months of growing political tensions within the ruling party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), and rapidly spread across the country.

Since then, global interest has waned and the international media has moved on, but for those living in South Sudan, their daily reality remains one of conflict, displacement and harrowing humanitarian need. Atrocities, including extra-judicial killings, torture and sexual violence, are being committed by both sides with impunity.

Comboni Missionary Sister Elena Balatti, based in Malakal, recently reported: *"Violence against women has become a very common crime... I brought a 12-year-old girl who was part of a group of 9 young girls who had been raped in the church of Christ the King to the Red Cross hospital. According to the testimonies of people who had taken refuge in the church, on the evening of 25 February, the rebels came to kidnap the 9 girls three times."*

When the HART team visited Man-Angui camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Warrap State, currently home to over 4800 people, we heard stories of indiscriminate violence, chaos and fear. One young woman who had fled Bentiu, one of the focal points of the fighting, said: *"We came here because we feared for our lives. Many people were killed in the town.... we did not know who the killers were, we just ran"*.

This statement was echoed by others we met; one young boy, separated from his family by the fighting, said he did not know who was involved with the killing because *"everyone wore the same uniform"*.

Such confusion allows perpetrators to carry out atrocities with total impunity, and illustrates the immense challenges to justice, accountability and peace.

Humanitarian Crisis

The speed with which conflict has spread in South Sudan is staggering, and has created a large-scale humanitarian catastrophe. The decades of war that birthed a desire for independence left South Sudan one of the poorest countries in the world. There is therefore little capacity to support the hundreds of thousands of newly displaced persons. A total of **4.9 million people are estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance across the country.**

The numbers are vast, but they are impersonal. In Man-Angui camp, we met just a fraction of those affected by the current conflict. We were surrounded by people wanting to tell their stories, which would otherwise be subsumed in these immense statistics.

When large numbers are broken down into stories – one mother with nothing to feed her children but leaves, one pregnant woman fearing giving birth in a remote camp, one family without shelter – you can begin to comprehend what *4.9 million in need of humanitarian assistance* really means. We can't tell all their stories here, but we can show you a few.

Mary Nyangua Gadang, aged 25 years old, said: *"I am from Bentiu, but it was too dangerous for me to be there. There has been a lot of violence, and a lot have died. We spent ten days travelling here. We were running barefoot.*

We are hungry. Some food is distributed [in the camp], but it doesn't manage to feed all the group. People are dying of hunger. Elderly women and men died on the journey while they were coming here. Whenever someone gets sick, the last point is just to die, because there is no health care."

Abuk Deng is heavily pregnant. She believes her baby will come in just a few days. Her husband was killed in the recent fighting, leaving her alone with their three children.

"There are many problems here: lack of provision of maternal and child health care; a need for tents for pregnant women as it is so hot; also there are no clothes and blankets for children. We also need medicines for pregnant women. We do not know



Left: A woman in the IDP camp demonstrates her food supply: leaves.



when to expect our babies. There is no transport to the hospital a long way away. There is no qualified midwife and no NGO to provide care. We can show you women recently delivered, who have nothing. The only clothes we have are what we ran with. We left everything behind.”



Awan Akuen Malual is 55 years old. He has no way to feed his large family. “Since I have been here, I have buried two children, one woman and one old man. They died because they have no shelter and sleep under the trees.

The rains will come soon, and we need to have proper shelters that will prevent the rain from coming inside, and prevent disease.”



Kuat Khoth Chuol Deng is a local Chief from Bentiu. He fled on the 1st January. 10 members of his group have died from hunger so far. “We have been feeling drops, we think the rain will start in mid-March. We worry where the children will sleep. The children start coughing in the night – they are suffering from pneumonia. The land is waterlogged in the rain, so it will flood, and then we will have no possibility to search for food.

Our priority is to see that sleeping materials are provided, mosquito nets, food.”

The rainy season in South Sudan usually begins in April and can last until November, but this year it is coming early – already camps in Juba have flooded.

With the rainy season comes a whole host of new challenges: the rapid spread of disease; contamination of water sources; widespread flooding and the destruction of the flimsy shelters which thousands of IDPs call home.

It also creates significant barriers to humanitarian access: during the heaviest months, from July onwards, up to 60% of the country can be cut off.

Funding is critically needed **before the rains** to reach currently unreachable IDPs, who will be cut off by floods until the end of the year – by which point, for many, it will be too late.

The situation is now falling off the radar of the international media. The humanitarian response remains drastically underfunded, preventing the preparation and distribution of aid in advance of the rainy season. There is little pressure on politicians to engage and respond.

For many of those we met in the camp – whose stories are echoed across the country – the international community’s continued failure to respond adequately is a death sentence.

One of our partners said: **“We were hopeful after independence – that there would be investment, development, jobs, and we could improve health and education. But now yet again we find ourselves in conflict. We will not hope again.”**

However, in the work of our partners, we saw many reasons for hope. Bishop Moses and his team are travelling from village to village, bringing together divided communities and counselling on the consequences of retaliation and the risk of escalation. In a context of inter-communal violence and deeply entrenched conflict, this is a radical message.

We saw first-hand the emotion and hope with which long-suffering communities responded to the Bishop’s call for peace and reconciliation. The international media may have moved on, but we can still choose to be part of South Sudan’s evolving story. We can keep listening, speak out for political solutions and a lasting peace – and keep the situation on the global agenda.



To support HART’s response, through advocacy or fundraising, please contact alice.robinson@hart-uk.org.

Read the full report at www.hart-uk.org/locations/south-sudan

APRIL IS GENOCIDE

Genocide in Sudan: Act Now

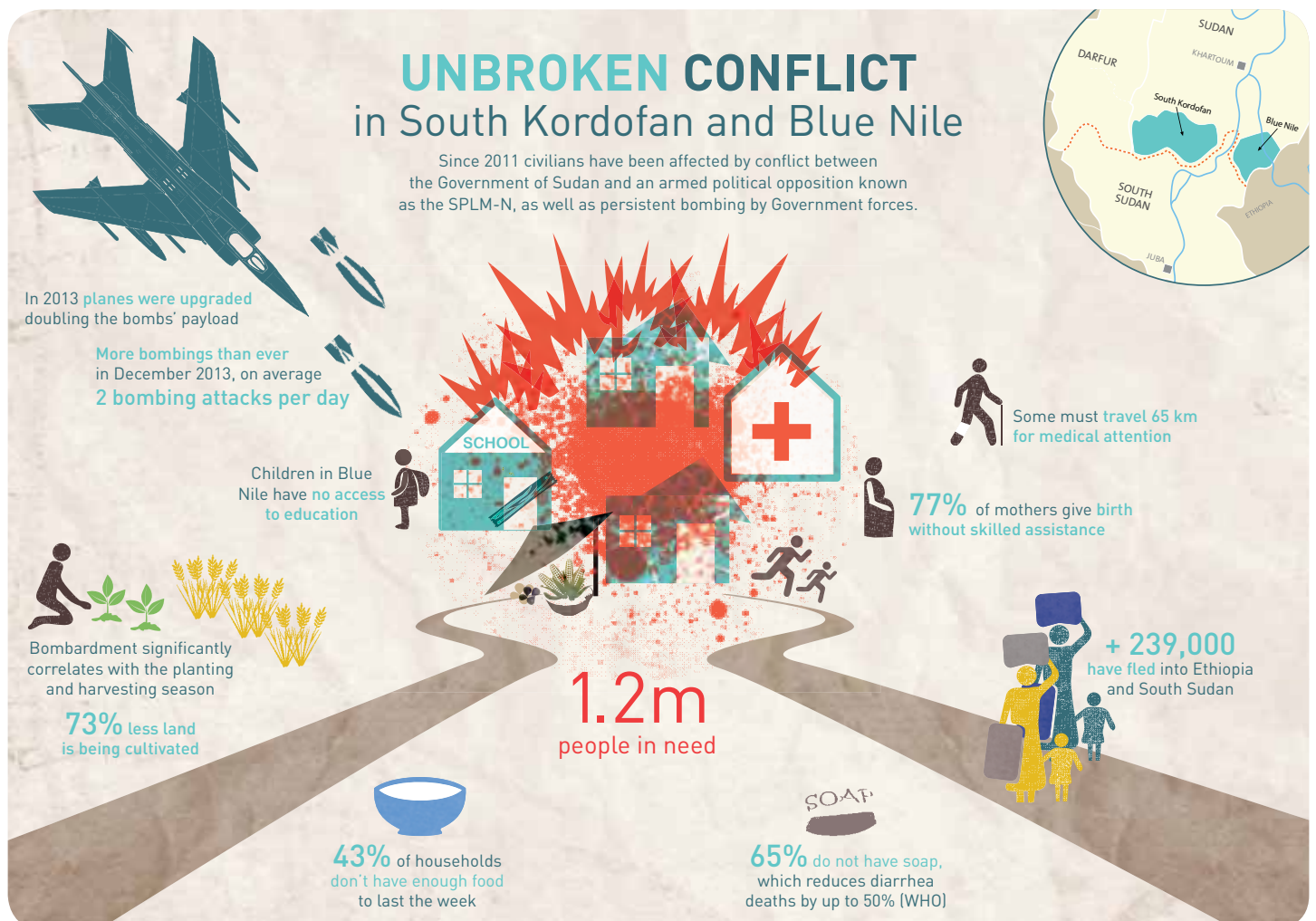


It is easy to think of genocide as a tragic historical event. But for those living in Blue Nile and South Kordofan, Sudan, it is a daily reality. Civilians are struggling to survive a concerted effort by the Government of Sudan to cleanse them from the region, with aerial bombardments of populated areas, deliberate starvation and the denial of humanitarian assistance.

In the Nuba Mountains, the sound of an aircraft overhead sends terrified civilians fleeing for the mountains, where they crouch in caves and hope for protection from the bombs which come almost daily. This has generated a climate of constant fear. One of our partners from the Nuba Mountains said in February: *"It is terrible, they can come at any time. The worst is at night, because the children wake up terrified"*. Some people have stopped leaving the caves altogether, living their lives in dark, snake infested holes. The mountains are their lifeline and their prison. In the words of our partner: *"We should have been extinguished from the face of the earth, but because of the mountains, we were not"*.

Around 680,000 people have been internally displaced and are almost entirely reliant on food coming in from outside. Another 230,000 have fled into South Sudan, where they are now vulnerable to the renewed fighting. The conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan are deeply interlinked, with displaced people trapped between escalating conflict on both sides.

Between December 2013 and January 2014, the Government of Sudan **tripled the aerial bombardment of Southern Kordofan**, with 56 separate bombing raids targeted at civilian areas. This trend continued into February, when more civilians were killed or injured than at any other point since the current conflict began in 2011.



PREVENTION MONTH



As a result of intense aerial bombardment, severe famine is developing in the area, exacerbated by a limited rainy season. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSN) has projected that in SPLM-N controlled areas of **South Kordofan**, the situation will reach Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity by March/ April 2014. The Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (SRRA) have warned that the situation in **Blue Nile State** is also grave, and that if food and medicines are not delivered immediately to the **100,000 IDPs in the State**, hundreds more will die of hunger and disease in the coming months. However, with Blue Nile State almost entirely cut off from aid, this support is unlikely to come any time soon.

A rapidly developing famine and increasing civilian casualties reinforce the urgent need for peace and humanitarian assistance in the region. However, talks between the Government in Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Army-North (SPLA-N) continually break down. The people of Blue Nile and South Kordofan feel that they are victims of a process through which agreements are regularly signed but never implemented. In the words of one man from the Nuba Mountains: *"They are very good at signing. We need the international community to follow up on what both sides have committed to."*

President al-Bashir has already been charged with crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide for his actions in Darfur. Not only is he continuing his attacks in Darfur, but he is expanding his campaign of persecution to those in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan.

If we are serious about preventing genocide, the plight of the people of the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile State must be a national and global priority. We need to raise awareness about this genocide: it must not be carried out without rebuke, for us to look back later and say "if only we had done more". We need to build public and political momentum around these issues, to keep them on the international agenda and to ensure the voices of civilians in these closed areas are heard. We must ensure the British Government takes every possible step to alleviate the suffering in Blue Nile and South Kordofan, both through provision of life-saving aid and through helping to foster a lasting, inclusive political solution.

What can you do?

Throughout April, we are running a campaign to raise awareness about what is happening in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States. We are calling for an **end to the impunity** which President al-Bashir enjoys, as he increases the bombing and starvation of civilians. We are urging a stronger response from the international community. **For this campaign to be successful, we need your help. We need to build a movement of people who are well informed about the situation in Sudan and are willing to speak up for the people of South Kordofan and Blue Nile.**

- **Assess the evidence for yourself.** Inform yourself about what is happening. Find out about genocide and the commitments our Government has made to prevent it. Visit www.hart-uk.org to find out more.
- **Get involved.** HART are running a number of activities throughout April, including a petition, a launch event in Parliament, film nights, a quiz night and a competition, amongst other things. Visit our website to find out more.
- **Check out our information pack.** Designed for anyone interested in advocating on these issues, this pack will equip you with the information, ideas and advice you need to run effective events. You can find this on our website.
- **Spread the word.** Tell your friends, family, colleagues, classmates, about what is happening. Post a tweet or a Facebook status. Create spaces for dialogue. Organise a film showing, a speaker event, a debate, a conversation dinner.
- **Speak out.** Tell the world what is happening in Blue Nile and South Kordofan, and make sure President al-Bashir knows that we will not stand by while he commits genocide. Tell your government you expect them to speak out, too. Sign our petition, write to your MP, and join our campaign. Help us to amplify the voices of those trying to show the world what is happening to their communities.
- **Donate or fundraise.** HART's partners can get emergency assistance into the region, but we need your help to raise the funds to do so.

To get involved with any of these activities – big or small – or to discuss an idea, please contact alice.robinson@hart-uk.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

HART Visit to Shan State, Burma

11-18 February 2014

By Alice Robinson, HART Advocacy and Communications Coordinator

A man living in an IDP camp looks out across Shan State

A recent HART visit took us over the Thai-Burma border into Shan State, where we saw the reality behind the Burmese Government's promise of reform, and met the health workers who are transforming communities caught up in the world's longest running civil war.



Above: A mother and her disabled child. SWAN helps to meet the child's health needs.

“Natural resources in our state are very rich. This is why they want to come in and occupy, they keep fighting, killing our people and committing human rights violations.”

— woman from Kachin state

Below: SWAN health workers measure a child for malnutrition in Shan State.



The prevailing international narrative about Burma is of a country opening up, lifting the veil of secrecy, fear and oppression which characterised much of its recent history.

However, conversations with members of Burma's many ethnic groups reveal a very different story. On our recent visit, we heard one word repeated again and again: fear. The persecution of ethnic nationals continues, but is increasingly hidden behind the story of Burma's reforms. While Governments and companies flock to engage and to trade, the suffering continues.

In Kachin and northern Shan states, increasing military offensives by the Burmese Army are accompanied by a litany of human rights abuses. A Shan woman said to us: “When they [the Burmese Army] go into a village they rape the women, have forced labour, take food from the villagers. They live in fear.” Cases of sexual violence in Burma have increased since 2010; a recent report by the Women's League of Burma stated that “sexual violence is used as a tool by the Burmese military to demoralize and destroy ethnic communities”.

Muslims (primarily the Rohingya) suffer violent persecution at the hands of the state, police and their Buddhist neighbours. They are segregated, vilified and denied citizenship.

Many ethnic nationals, including Karen and Karenni peoples, are being forced from their land to make way for large-scale investment projects. They receive derisory or no compensation, and do not have access to the benefits of the projects. In the words of one Shan woman: “The electricity flows through our village, but we have nothing but candles”. The confiscation of land is exacerbating food insecurity.

These abuses are causing on-going displacement into Thailand and China, where many refugees are unrecognised and highly vulnerable to exploitation.

The poverty in these areas of Burma is deeply entrenched,

caused by decades of conflict, oppression and exclusion from services and decision-making structures. There is little provision of healthcare or education.

Despite these huge challenges, local organisations are striving for change in one of the world's most enduring conflicts.

On our recent visit, we had the privilege of spending time with HART's partners the *Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN)*, who train women from inside Shan state to provide curative and preventative health care to communities in remote areas. They have had a dramatic impact on maternal mortality. This work is a lifeline for vulnerable communities deep inside Shan State, who often have no other access to health care.

SWAN's work is also transformative on another level. In a context in which “it is only men who are recognized as having leadership and decision making capabilities”, they are showing the potential for women to be leaders, bringing hope, healthcare and a better quality of life to their communities.

We were deeply inspired by their bravery, professionalism and dedication to improving life in Shan communities. They have an inspirational vision for change. However, without a long term, political solution to the oppression and persecution inflicted upon the Ethnic National peoples, the fear and suffering will continue.

SWAN and other groups are advocating for their rights and speaking out against continuing atrocities. We should add our own voices to their calls for peace and justice.

We need to remind the international community that the root causes of fear and suffering in Burma have not been addressed. In the words of a member of the Karenni ethnic group: “if there was really a political solution, no-one would need to be afraid”.

Read the full report from HART's visit at www.hart-uk.org/locations/Burma

HART 2014 SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION:

“Burma Unmasked”

By Elizabeth Stanton

On the 21st February 2014, HART was delighted to announce the winners of the 2014 Scholarship competition. Congratulations go to:

- Cara Williams – Winner of the Art Scholarship (16-17)
- Seren Hawley-Plows – Runner up of the Art Scholarship (16-17)
- Alys Baxter – Winner of the Art Scholarship (Senior)
- Cheyenne Applin – Runner-up of the Art Scholarship (Senior)
- Rebecca Thomas – Winner of the Essay Scholarship (University)
- Sophie Stollery – Runner-up of the Essay Scholarship (University)
- Isobel Thompson – Highly commended in the Essay Scholarship (University)

The annual HART Scholarship Competition aims to engage UK students with issues concerning human rights violations and with HART’s work to advocate on behalf of those who are ‘voiceless’. This year, the theme of the Scholarship Competition was ‘Burma Unmasked’, exploring the plight of the Burmese ethnic nationals at the hands of an oppressive regime. The theme was inspired by a quote from a Burmese Ethnic National whom HART met on a recent trip, who said: “[The Burmese Government] are playing a game like Chess: they take one piece at a time. While they sign a ceasefire with the Karen they launch major offensives in Kachin State. They wear a beautiful mask, but the original face, which is brutal, is hidden”.

Various art forms were used by students including canvas pictures, oil paintings, glassware and sculptures. Running alongside the Art Competition was an Essay Scholarship, giving students the opportunity to learn and write about human rights issues in any area where HART works. The winning essay was superb and of a very high quality, highlighting the human rights violations against those with leprosy in India. Other topics included the plight of the Rohingya Muslims and also the oppression of other Burmese ethnic national groups. A number of entries can be read on the HART blog.

Entrants have seen their work formally exhibited at our Burma Art Exhibition and Prize-Giving event in London, and published online, helping to raise awareness about HART’s work.

The Artwork has been on tour at various international development conferences around the UK to raise awareness of continuing human rights violations against Burmese ethnic nationals, and to engage new audiences with HART’s work. It is hoped that the students who participated in this scholarship competition will continue their advocacy and engage others in our work to become potential supporters of HART in the future.

We would like to thank all those competitors who gave their time and effort to take part in both the art and the essay scholarship competition. It was a privilege to judge such wonderful work and it was extraordinarily difficult to decide the winners!!



A SWAN health worker describes her experience providing reproductive health services in a remote conflict area of central Shan State

“For the past two years my friends and I have made family planning services more readily available in our communities. This has within a short time greatly reduced the high levels of maternal, infant, and early childhood mortality in our villages. We are very proud of our accomplishment. We are also very happy to help empower local women to be able to decide, for themselves, the number of children that they wish to have, and the timing of these events. This enables women to become pregnant only when they wish to be, as well as avoid becoming pregnant if they are not ready to do so; whether for health or other reasons.

I think the most important benefit I have gained from working with SWAN is self-confidence. I used to be very shy, but now I am eager to ask questions at all times, and feel comfortable going before an audience of village leaders or community members, to talk to them about their health problems and discuss ways we can work together to resolve some of the important health and other development issues in our community.”

This is an extract from a recent SWAN newsletter. For a copy of the full article, please contact HART.

Help this work to flourish:

You can support the invaluable work of SWAN and other community-based organisations in Burma by donating to HART. A donation form can be found on page 12.



Cara Williams with her winning entry



Baroness Cox with the essay authors and their winning entries

A Vision for Excellence in Nagorno Karabakh

By Vardan Tadevosyan with Alice Robinson



Above: Art classes in the Centre

The Rehabilitation Centre in Nagorno Karabakh is HART's longest established programme. Over the years, we have seen it go from strength to strength, with our partners continually surpassing our already high expectations. 2013 proved another successful year, with the Centre's hard-working team offering hope to patients and ensuring consistently high standards of treatment and care.

The Rehabilitation Centre supports people of all ages and many types of mental and physical disabilities. The majority of patients are young adults and children.

One of the biggest strengths of the Rehabilitation Centre is the vision of its staff for excellence. They are constantly striving to learn more and raise the standards of care they offer to their patients. Last year, the Rehabilitation Centre collaborated with the French Physical Therapy Association to increase professional knowledge and the therapeutic repertoire. Speech and physical therapists came from France to Nagorno Karabakh, to work with the staff and to share expertise.

The centre provides holistic support; ensuring, in the words of the Centre's director, Vardan Tadevosyan, that *"in the centre, all our patients get not only treatment but hope for the future"*. In 2013, children were taken on holiday to Lake Sevan in Armenia. Closer to home, patients are given the opportunity to learn a new profession. The centre boasts a new pottery-ceramic studio and has obtained ceramic wheels and a kiln, so patients can make professional art work out of clay. In 2013, 200 young patients attended art classes.

The Day Care centre is widely acclaimed, providing holistic rehabilitative treatment for children with disabilities, integrating them with children without disabilities, thus breaking down stigma and increasing confidence.

[The staff] are constantly striving to learn more and raise the standards of care they offer to their patients.

The excellent reputation of the centre has brought an ever-growing waiting list; some patients must wait months to receive treatment. Others, once arriving, don't want to leave! Vardan, the director of the Centre, reports: *"Unfortunately still our rehabilitation center is unique in the country and most of patients don't want to be discharged after treatment. They feel really very well and safe with us."*

However, there is a vision to extend this life- and hope-giving work across the region, allowing more people with disabilities the opportunity to access a good standard of medical and rehabilitative care and to reach a higher quality of life.

2014 has been designated an Educational Year, used to share the philosophy and experience of the Rehabilitation Centre with other hospitals in Karabakh and further afield. Meetings have been held with all regional chief doctors and with the health minister for Karabakh. All were happy to welcome a rehabilitation team into their hospital. This will significantly reduce the pressure on the Rehabilitation Centre: making the waiting list shorter, ensuring the high-quality treatment of patients is not compromised by over-demand, and enabling care to be extended to more patients across the region.

We'll continue to update you with news from the centre. For long-term HART supporters, we know you'll be delighted to see how this much loved project is developing, bringing hope and light to a region still caught in a deeply entrenched, 'frozen' conflict. For those new to HART, we hope you'll come to learn more about the Centre and to love it as we do – and even to consider visiting, to see for yourselves. Then we know you will fall in love with it too!

2013 in numbers:

- 134 inpatients and 61 Day patients (who attend from 9am – 5pm) were cared for in the centre;
- 108 patients were cared for in their homes, comprising 2088 home visits overall;
- 121 patients received support from psychologists, with a combined total of 3684 sessions;
- 104 patients were treated by speech therapists, with a combined total of 3231 sessions;
- 284 outpatients received physical therapy treatment;
- 448 outpatients accessed hydrotherapy.



Above: The Hydrotherapy pool

VOLUNTEERING AND FUNDRAISING

Jump for Change!

On the 12th March, HART's new Director of Fundraising, Rob Chidley, along with two dedicated HART supporters, Hayk Petrosyan and Manuk Asatryan, undertook a Skydive to raise funds for HART!

"I met Hayk Petrosyan for the first time earlier this year at a HART event and, before I knew what had happened, I'd agreed to jump out of an aeroplane with him. There are many things which should never fall from the sky, such as cluster bombs in Nagorno Karabakh or air-to-ground rockets in the Nuba Mountains, and in a small way I would include human beings jumping out of aircraft over a Cambridgeshire airfield.

Nevertheless, these things go on, and the absurd moment of voluntarily freefalling one mile in 30 seconds (with little more than a glorified umbrella to bring you down safely) certainly helped Hayk Petrosyan, Manuk Asatryan and me raise over £1070 for HART in its work to speak out against atrocity and to bring aid to the suffering. It was terrifying and exhilarating, and now more people know about HART than before. We called it *Jump for Change*, after the style of HART's 2013 *Swim for Change*; **what will you do for Change?"**

To discuss holding your own sponsored 'for Change' event, contact rob.chidley@hart-uk.org.



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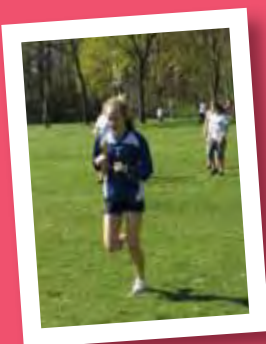
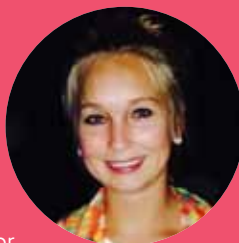


Run for Change!

HART intern Erika Nordblad is running to raise funds for HART and to help combat HIV!

"On the 31st of May I will participate in the ING Half Marathon in Luxembourg. I will be raising money for HART, who I have had the opportunity to intern with for 3 months. My internship has been eye opening and I am amazed how much of a difference such a small organisation can make for neglected communities around the world!

My goal is to raise £350 for HART's Paorinher project in northern Uganda. It is a paediatric HIV centre, which supports and provides medical care for young HIV-positive children. I know that all the funds raised will go straight to the project. Every donation will help the centre to reach more children living with HIV.



Some of the HART staff members recently came back from visiting the Paorinher project. They shared amazing stories, photos and videos of the children in the centres. Straight away I knew that I wanted to raise money to help keep the centre open, and to grow – so it can reach children who have not yet received treatment but are in desperate need."

Visit www.justgiving.com/Erika-Nordblad to follow Erika's progress and to help her reach her fundraising target!

Get Involved

The role played by HART volunteers is invaluable – like our partners, they enable us to multiply our small efforts many times over. With their time, ideas and enthusiasm, they enhance our capacity to raise awareness of human rights violations and to promote sustainable solutions.

HART volunteers contribute to our work in diverse ways, from blogging to bucket-shaking to sponsored bike rides. Whatever your skills and interests, there will be a way for you to get involved.

Visit www.hart-uk.org/about-you/volunteering, or get in touch with Alice, HART's Advocacy and Communications Manager, at alice.robinson@hart-uk.org to find out more. We look forward to hearing from you!

Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust



HART works to provide lasting change through aid and advocacy for those suffering oppression and persecution, who are often neglected by other organisations, or are largely out of sight of the world's media. Founded in 2003 by Baroness Cox, a human rights activist, HART makes every endeavour to be a 'Voice for the Voiceless' for those who may be unreached, unhelped and unheard.

HART relies on first-hand evidence of human rights violations as a basis for powerful twin-track programmes of international advocacy and aid. We believe that advocacy, combined with aid, is vital if we are to achieve sustainable community development, local ownership and empowerment for oppressed peoples.



YES!

I want to make a difference and be a Voice for the Voiceless!

At HART we see all the time how a little goes a long way – both in the way our partners abroad use the funds we provide and the difference our volunteers can make. There are many ways to support the work we do.

If you would like to donate to our work, you can do so in a number of ways:

I would like to make a one off payment towards the work of HART. A cheque is enclosed for £.....

I pledge to help HART's partners and their grassroot organisations on a regular basis with a

monthly quarterly annual gift of £..... (please tick one)

Please send me a standing order mandate.

**Text HART00
£10 to 70070
to make a £10
donation!**

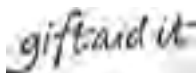
Title.....First Name.....Surname.....

Address

City.....County.....Postcode.....

E-mail address.....

Phone



I am a UK taxpayer. Please treat as Gift Aid all qualifying donations made:

Today In the past 4 years In the future (please tick all boxes you wish to apply)

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/ or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equivalent to the amount of tax that all the charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand that the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I gave on or after 6 April 2008 (28p) of tax on every £1 that I gave up to 5 April 2008).

**Please return to:
HART-UK, 3 Arnellan House, 146 Slough Lane, London, NW9 8XJ.
Tel: 020 8204 7336**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

For more information about HART or to make an online donation, go to
www.hart-uk.org