



Above: Displaced Kachin children stand next to the blackboard in their makeshift school

A Kaleidoscope of Pain, Passion and Celebration

Featured in this issue:

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- Burma: visit to Kachin state
- Dates for your diary
- Swim for Change
- The battle against child malnutrition in Timor Leste

HART's mandate to support partners in forgotten places brings an inevitably challenging emotional roller-coaster. At the same time as we celebrate the achievements of our partners we are deeply disturbed and saddened by the suffering they endure and the challenges which confront them.

This Newsletter reflects this emotional dichotomy: we experience deep grief for the plight of ethnic national peoples in Burma, suffering continuing oppression at the hands of the Burmese Government and Army, while we celebrate the achievements of our partners in Timor Leste and the generous funding from the Isle of Man Overseas Aid Commission. This funding will guarantee them the resources to continue their transformational programme for the relief of child malnutrition for the next three years.

Burma: All is not well in this beautiful land, where oppressive military regimes have inflicted incalculable suffering on their citizens. Many will remember the 'saffron protests' in which the traditionally quietist and apolitical Buddhist monks were so desperate over the plight of the people that they undertook a massive demonstration; many were subsequently killed. Since then there have been some very welcome

developments, including the release of the renowned democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, after years of house arrest, with freedom to travel and to play an active role in Burmese politics. Several hundred political prisoners have also been released. These reforms have received international acclaim with visits by world leaders and the opening up of massive opportunities for investment in Burma's resource-rich land.

However, beyond the celebration of reforms and the easing of tensions in Rangoon, there lies the tragic hinterlands of the ethnic national peoples such as the predominantly Muslim Rohingya in Rakhine State, the predominantly Buddhist Shan and the predominantly Christian Kachin peoples.

In Western Burma, the Rohingya are suffering intense oppression, with attacks on their communities, burning of villages and destruction of mosques and homes. At least 125,000 have had to flee as IDPs (Internally Displaced People) into overcrowded, squalid camps where many die from lack of essential supplies of food and medical care; tens of thousands more have fled across the border into comparably dire conditions in camps in Bangladesh.

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In the northern tribal homeland of Kachin State, in June 2011, the Burmese Army broke a seventeen-year long ceasefire with military offensives against the Kachin people. This has been accompanied by a catalogue of violations of human rights, including extra-judicial killings, rape and torture. HART visited Kachin State in February and saw the suffering of the people: 100,000 have had to flee from aerial bombardment and ground offensives. We visited some of those living in destitution in makeshift camps along the border with China and we heard gruesome accounts of brutality inflicted on civilians. In one village, a young mother who was working in the paddy field was abducted by Burmese soldiers and taken to their camp on the hill above the village. All the villagers, including her husband and child could see her fate: visibly tied to a post, taken away at intervals for predictable purposes, and then returned to the post. This heart-breaking scene continued for several days until she disappeared, never to be seen again.



Above: Refugee camp on the Kachin border

In Shan State, visited by HART last year, fighting continues in the north and exploitation continues throughout the resource-rich land. In February, we met our partners, the courageous and highly professional Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN). These incredible ladies continue to provide much-needed aid for those inside Shan State who have had to flee their lands because of military offensives by the Burmese Army, or because of expropriation of their land in deals made by the Burmese Government with foreign investors. One example is the oil and gas pipeline being built from China which has driven thousands of Shan civilians off their lands with derisory compensation – or no compensation at all. We met one lady in a camp for Shan IDPs who had lost absolutely everything: all she had left were the ragged clothes she was wearing.

HART has been joining with other advocacy groups to raise these concerns and to urge the international community not to respond to the reforms in Burma

Below: Children in Timor-Leste where 50% of children suffer malnutrition



with unconditional lifting of sanctions or investment which may lead to yet more exploitation of the ethnic national peoples. They comprise 40% of the population of Burma but, as we have seen with our own eyes, they are suffering. Many feel that the international community is leaving them vulnerable to the Burmese Government's continuing policies of oppression and exploitation.

One of the leaders of the Shan people graphically expressed their fears:

'When the lights went on in Rangoon, all the world rushed there – and nobody stopped to see us in the darkness'.

Therefore, there is still much work for HART in Burma: with our Aid remit, continuing our support for our partners in Shan State, Karenni State and Chin State and with our Advocacy remit, urging the international community to call the Burmese Government to account for their continuing oppression, indeed slaughter, of many of their ethnic national peoples.

Timor Leste (formerly East Timor): Although oppression and violence inflicted by Indonesia ended when Timor Leste gained independence in 2002, the little nation was left with a devastated infrastructure, massive unemployment and an acute shortage of essential services, especially health care. Particularly disturbing was the level of child malnutrition: approximately half the children were malnourished, many with stunted physical and mental development. Although many international aid agencies are now working on the island, the rate of child malnutrition has reportedly increased. Therefore, the work of our partners in HIAM Health is much needed, with their innovative programme 'From the Ground to the Table'.

Our partner, Rosaria Martins Da Cruz has established a holistic programme which not only provides nutrition to restore babies and children to robust good health, but also provides attractive residential accommodation for family members to stay with their children during the period of care. While staying at the HIAM Health Centre, the adults are taught how to grow nutritious foods, prepare organic fertilisers and pesticides and use the produce to cook delicious meals. When they return to their villages with healthy, well-nourished children, they establish family gardens and farms, spreading the know-how throughout their communities. This programme therefore should eventually help to diminish – perhaps even eradicate – the problems of malnutrition in Timor Leste.

These vignettes from Burma and Timor Leste illustrate the ever-changing emotions for HART personnel, ranging from joy of our partners' achievements and delight when funding becomes available, to the inevitable pain and anguish when we witness the suffering of so many victims of oppression and persecution.

But underpinning the day-to-day challenges is the never-changing gratitude to all who make our work possible: thank you all.

Caroline Cox

'You may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know': Unveiling modern Slavery by Megan Rowland

On 26th July 1833, the Abolition of the Slave Trade Bill, for which William Wilberforce and others had worked tirelessly, was passed. However, you would be mistaken to think that slavery is a thing of the past.

Today it is estimated that there are 27 million slaves in the world. This figure is greater than the total number of people enslaved throughout the course of the transatlantic slave trade, which Wilberforce and his contemporaries worked so hard to end. Behind this figure are 27 million individuals experiencing lives of abuse and exploitation.

Modern slavery takes on many forms. There are those who are trafficked; trapped into bonded labour; ritual slavery or forced labour. All are linked by one thing: their vulnerability, often caused by severe poverty, which results in their being trapped, tricked or sold into slavery.

Many of the places HART works are affected by modern day slavery. The projects which we support diminish the effects of this form of exploitation.

In India, for example, HART supports Operation Mercy, which works to rescue and rehabilitate women who have been dedicated to the Hindu Temple as Devadasi - an illegal system of ritual sex slavery.

In Burma, ethnic national peoples are frequently forced to work constructing dams and pipelines, as army porters and human minesweepers.

It is estimated that there are 5000 child soldiers in Burma today. HART continues to advocate for the rights of Burma's ethnic nationals, as well as supporting partners in ethnic national states.

Thousands of men, women and children were taken from South Sudan as slaves during the long civil war. Many of them remain enslaved in Sudan. HART continues to advocate for the people of the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile State, where conflict continues, as well as supporting partners in Sudan and South Sudan.

Slavery exists because extreme forms of poverty exist. Preventing, and ultimately eliminating slavery depends on empowering vulnerable communities and giving them choices. By fighting poverty, providing education and reducing the vulnerability of marginalised communities, we contribute to the fight against slavery.

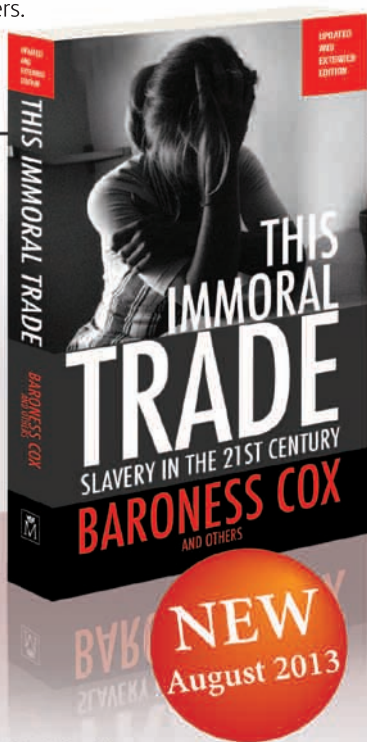
In the same way, reducing the demand for slaves depends upon educating people to make better choices. As consumers demand cheaper and cheaper products, international businesses seek cheaper labour and raw materials. The mundane choices we make on a daily basis, such as which chocolate to buy, or where to shop for clothes, become choices, not just of personal preference, but of whether to invest our money in slavery.



A Devadasi lady in south India

"Those of us who have the privilege of living in freedom have a duty to use freedom to try to achieve the freedom of those who call out for help"

Baroness Cox,
'This Immoral Trade'



Slavery remains rampant worldwide. It is estimated that more than 27 million slaves exist today, from those trafficked into prostitution in London to slavery as a weapon of war in Sudan and indentured workers in Burma and India.

"This book demands the attention of all who would seek to follow in the footsteps of Wilberforce and to be the change they want to see in the world."

- The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon Dr. John Sentamu, Archbishop of York.

Available online and from all good bookshops
ISBN: 978 0 85721 444 7 £9.99 UK

www.lionhudson.com



So what can we do to end modern slavery?

1. Learn about slavery: The more you know the better equipped you will be to do something about modern slavery. The new updated version of 'This Immoral Trade' is a good place to start.
2. Support organisations like HART that work to combat oppression in the world today. Sign up to campaigns or provide financial support.

Twenty years ago Abraham's brother and sister-in-law were captured as slaves by Arab raiders from north Sudan, their son who was 3 years old was not captured but was separated from his parents. Many of the couple's friends and neighbours were killed during the raid. Five more children were born into slavery and Abraham's brother 'suffered with his wife through the difficulties of raising young kids through the hardship of working as the slave to the enemies.'

HART recently received an email from Abraham with some wonderful news. Through selling cows, Abraham and his family were able to pay to redeem his brother's family and secretly transport them home. Abraham describes the reunion: 'We welcomed them and kissed them with flowing tears of Joy and great happiness as it was like a dream.'

In the HART office we were incredibly moved by this news and are so happy for Abraham, his brother and their families. It is always wonderful to hear individual stories of hope from the areas in which we work. HART's remit is to support forgotten people in their suffering, but we also love to celebrate alongside them in their triumphs!

HART Highlights

Caroline Cox, HART CEO



An unsolicited endorsement of HART's fulfilment of its mission and mandate, from a senior community leader in South Sudan: "For the sake of human rights, peace and equal rights you have ventured to places where even our soldiers would not venture to go."

David Thomas, Logistics Manager:

The dynamism, creativity and self-reliance of our partners, and HART's nurturing relationship with them: these have always been the greatest highlights for me in working for HART. These qualities are exemplified in Bishop Elias Taban in South Sudan. No longer a partner because HART has enabled him to move on to funders much larger than itself, he said, "without HART, none of this would have been possible. You supported me when others would not. You placed your faith in me when others demanded a track-record I could not provide."

Bishop Taban is a motivator unsurpassed. He will be starting something, have people up-and-doing, believing in themselves, while others are still sitting around discussing what to do next. A wealth-creator for his community and country; this is a man who has not the least intention of lying down and dying, nor of allowing his people to lie down and die. It is partners such as this that HART supports; and it is a privilege to be their friend and to tell of their achievements.



Trevor Currie, Finance Officer:

True to form perhaps, as Finance Manager for HART, my highlight involves cash . . . or rather the delight I take in seeing people willing to hike, busk, bake or engage in other fundraising activities on behalf of HART. Such fundraisers should not underestimate the boost to staff morale, as their commitment reflects the trust they have in our work and ultimately the work of our partners abroad.

As someone who really enjoys swimming, I have to mention the forthcoming Swim For Change channel swim. If it were not for a combination of age and injury I too might have taken the plunge (so to speak) and spent an evening or two sitting in a cold water bath (you know who you are) in an attempt to acclimatise myself to July sea temperatures. Good luck to HART's Swim For Change team and many thanks to all volunteer fundraisers. Thank you!



Megan Rowland, Advocacy & Communications Intern:

My highlight was launching HART's *Remember Sudan* Campaign. In the last few months we have held several *Remember Sudan* exhibitions. At these events we encouraged those attending to add their face to our *Remember Sudan* photo petition. These photos will be collated and sent to William Hague and local MPs. To find out more about hosting an exhibition at your church, school, university or other venue, or to get involved with our photo campaign please visit: www.hart-uk.org/campaigns/remember-sudan



It has been great to be able to encourage others to speak out on behalf of those who are voiceless. Your MP cares about your good opinion; they want to keep their seat in Parliament and so by speaking out we create a ripple effect. By influencing our MP's actions we can influence the actions of our Government, who in turn can influence the actions of international bodies and other Governments. Simply by speaking out, we can change the lives of those across the world whose cries are being silenced by oppression and persecution.

Lydia Tanner, Advocacy and Communications Manager:

In late February, we crossed into Kachin State, Burma. Fighting broke out there almost two years ago and for most of the time since the Government has denied any access to foreigners and international aid. We met some of the tens of thousands of people who live in camps close to the border with China. Local groups provide the only humanitarian response for the IDPs and we witnessed the resilience of these communities despite the extraordinary pressure they face.

A couple of months later, I spoke to a group of students at Warwick University as part of our *Remember Sudan* exhibition. Once again, we were discussing an area of the world that has been closed off by its government. One of the things I love about HART is seeing how people engage with the issues facing our partners in closed off places. I was really encouraged by the response of these students and their eagerness to learn more about our Sudanese partners.



Supporter Highlights

King's College School, Wimbledon

"In February we organised a Valentine's charity day ('Have a HART Day') where we had love song busking around school and pupils bought heart shaped chocolate lollipops for each other with personalised message labels attached."



Downside School, Stratton-on-the-Fosse

In May, Baroness Cox gave a lecture on HART and its work at Downside School, "[Baroness Cox] has visited Downside before and on both occasions has given an interesting, inspiring and fascinating talk to the pupils about her work. The following day Upper Sixth pupils swapped uniforms, a brave move for the boys on a windy spring day but it certainly got them all noticed and it was all in aid of HART. Baroness Cox gave her seal of approval to the idea before she left."

Partner Highlights

Bishop Moses Deng of Wau, South Sudan:

In answer to us (HART) declaring how much we wished that we were big enough to give more, he replied, "Your little went a long way because it came in time. Others gave more; but it came too late."



Vardan, Nagorno Karabakh:

"The most success for me is that all children with problems, after graduating the day care centre, are going to the normal school. Before this project, the disabled children were getting home education without attending the school. Can you imagine? Total isolation. We can change people's mentality and attitude to the disabled. I love to spend time in this centre with autistic children, they are fantastic."

Updates

- A team from HART visited Burma in February, see page 6 for more information.
- Since our last newsletter Baroness Cox has spoken in the House of Lords on various issues including freedom of religion, FGM, as well as the humanitarian situations in Burma and Sudan. To find out more please visit www.hart-uk.org/news
- We recently launched our new website, visit it at www.hart-uk.org
- Also in April Baroness Cox visited HART-US and our supporters in America.
- In April, we also announced the results of our 2013 Scholarship Competition. Well done to winners Eloise Turner, Chris Jaffe, John Maier and Anna Carey, as well as runners up Iona Perry, Delyth Wyn Jones, Megan Brickley, Alexander Bryan and Hinal Patel.

News affecting our partners

In April, the EU lifted all sanctions against Burma, except for an embargo on arms. See page 8 to find out more about how this affects Burma's ethnic nationals and what you can do to help.

Also in April, a new refugee camp, Adjoung Thok opened in South Sudan, receiving refugees from the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile State. At time of writing the camp's population is just over 1000. UNHCR are hoping to relocate refugees from Yida to Adjoung Thok.

In May, President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in North-East Nigeria, following an increase in attacks by the militant Islamist group, Boko Haram.



Pictures top left to right and bottom left to right:
The Eyes of an Innocent child by Eloise Turner
African Tears by Iona Perry
Freedom by Delyth Wyn Jones
Trapped In Abyei by Chris Jaffe

Burma: HART visit to Kachin state

By Lydia Tanner and Megan Rowland



Above: Kachin child living in an IDP camp near the China border

Kachin State lies at the northern tip of Burma, along the remote border with China. Steep sloped, jungle covered, hills drop down into a network of rivers, which are the life blood of the people both physically and culturally. This part of Burma is rich in both legend and natural resources. The hills hide natural treasures, most famously Jade, and are home to some of the last remaining wild tigers. The Kachin people are a culturally proud and close knit ethnic minority. They are predominantly Christian with their own language, songs and customs.

“Everything was burnt down. Since then, I have been here in the camp. I lost everything. I have to rely on assistance from the camp now.”

On 9th June 2011, the Burma Army broke a seventeen year ceasefire agreement with the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO). Since then, as many as 100,000 people have been displaced and civilians have faced human rights abuses at the hands of the Burma Army, including extra judicial killings, rape, abduction and torture.

More than 360 villages have been deserted and many have been burnt to the ground to prevent people from returning. IDPs told HART that some of the villages have been surrounded by landmines. People fear returning to their homes in case they step on a landmine or are captured by the Army. The atmosphere of fear amongst those displaced means that they chose to remain in the under-resourced IDP camps, rather than returning home.



Above: A Kachin lady living in an IDP camp near the China border



Right: Kachin children in a school for displaced people

In February, the HART team visited Burma, and was able to gain entry to Kachin state in order to bear witness to the desperate situation there. Reaching the Kachin people is not straightforward. For much of the two years since conflict broke out, the Government has denied access to foreigners, including international NGOs and journalists.

Seventeen camps line the far flung border with China, where at least 75,000 displaced people have made their temporary homes. No-one knows exactly how many thousands of IDPs are hiding in the thick jungle of Kachin State. Most have fled sudden attacks by the Burma Army and they arrive at the camps empty handed after many days of travelling by foot.

Humanitarian work is being coordinated by a local group, Relief Action Network for IDP and Refugees (RANIR). Working with civil society groups and local NGOs they have organised support for the camps. Yet with international assistance blocked, local groups lack resources. Agreements to allow unrestricted access to the UN have been denied and in the past two years only three UN convoys have reached the border refugee camps. According to a recent survey, 27.5% of

children under five are malnourished. 21% suffer from moderate malnutrition and 6% suffer severe malnutrition.

Conditions in the camps are worsening and local groups report problems with water and sanitation, healthcare and malnutrition. The IDPs are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and labour exploitation. The advance of the Burma Army into KIO territory makes the position of those living in IDP camps increasingly delicate.

This is especially true for those in Liaza, a small town around which many IDPs have gathered. Intense fighting in December 2012 and January 2013 around Laiza included the aerial bombardment and shelling of civilian targets. From the town, you can see the Burma Army on the surrounding hilltops. IDPs told us that when they leave the area to visit their farmland or collect firewood they fear being caught by the Burma Army, who would consider them members of the KIO. They fear torture and death. The refugees wait on a knife edge. Some have built fox holes in case of mortar fire. They have fled once already. Pressed against the border, there is not anywhere else to go.

For ethnic national groups like the Kachin, the future is precarious. Discrimination and atrocities continue daily. As one Kachin preacher HART met said:

“The future needs to be a Peace that is monitored by the international community; with an equal status for all the People. Burma is independent but its people are still not free.”

Our visit report is available to read at:
www.hart-uk.org/locations/burma

Advocacy in the House of Lords

After visiting Burma in February, Baroness Cox addressed the House of Lords, asking the British Government for its assessment of the current situation in Burma, with reference to the Kachin, Shan and Rohingya ethnic national peoples:

“Can the Minister give an assurance that Her Majesty’s Government, while welcoming recent reforms, will press the Burmese Government to protect and promote the rights of all ethnic national peoples?”

Baroness Warsi replied: *‘On every occasion... we have taken the opportunity to raise the issue of minority groups. All communities must deserve rights as Burma moves forward on its democratic journey.’*

The full text from Baroness Cox’s question can be accessed at:
www.hart-uk.org/news/burma-the-euphoria-is-premature-misplaced-and-profoundly-dangerous

“Now very heavily armed Burmese troops are taking place at our feet... As we are spiritually, mentally and emotionally wounded and broken, please come and rescue, help, heal and educate us.”

Kachin leader



Above: Children play in a Kachin IDP camp

What you can do

- Write to your MP asking them to press for unhindered humanitarian access and support for the Kachin. See page 8 for more information.
- Support HART’s partners in Burma. A donation form is included on page 12.



Above & below: Homes in a Kachin IDP camp



EU Sanctions and the plight of the ethnic nationals

By Megan Rowland

“Trade and investment should benefit all of Burma’s people without threatening the lives of ethnic nationals”



Above: This man from Shan State lost his hands when a landmine exploded in front of him

What does the lifting of EU trade sanctions mean for Burma’s Ethnic Nationals?

Over the past two years, the Government in Burma has been internationally applauded for undertaking a “process of reform” that has included the release of hundreds of political prisoners and the freeing of the opposition party leader, Aung San Suu Kyi.

In 2012, in response to these reforms, the EU temporarily suspended all sanctions on Burma, excluding the sale of arms. The EU Member States hoped that the suspension of sanctions would encourage further reform and they laid out benchmarks to measure Burma’s progress towards democracy:

“...the EU still expects the unconditional release of remaining political prisoners and the removal of all restrictions placed on those already released. It looks forward to the end of conflict and to substantially improved access for humanitarian assistance, in particular for those affected by conflict in Kachin State and along the Eastern border, as well as to addressing the status and improving the welfare of the Rohingyas.”

Then, in April this year, EU Member States announced that:

“In response to the changes that have taken place and in the expectation that they will continue, the Council has decided to lift all sanctions with the

exception of the embargo on arms which will remain in place.”

The removal of sanctions is intended to encourage trade and investment into Burma to promote economic development as well as furthering democratic reform. Yet, the benchmarks set in 2012 have not been met. While hundreds of political prisoners have been released, an estimated 200 remain in prison; conflict increased during 2012, particularly in Kachin State; the UN General Assembly has said that restrictions on humanitarian access violate international law; and conditions for Burma’s Rohingya minority have worsened.

Furthermore, the benchmarks represent only some of the humanitarian and human rights issues facing Burma’s peoples. Many of the ethnic national groups have precarious ceasefire agreements with the Government, but there have been no steps towards genuine peace processes.

The ethnic national groups occupy much of Burma’s resource rich land. They fear that foreign investment will be used to exploit them: through destruction of livelihoods, confiscation of land without compensation and forced labour.

Therefore, companies considering investment in Burma must do so responsibly. They must ensure that land is acquired with free, prior and informed consent, and without use of force. They will need to ensure workers’ labour rights and, in particular, ensure there is no forced labour for ethnic national communities.

The EU Members remain optimistic that European companies will be “promoting the practice of the highest standards of integrity and corporate social responsibility”, encouraging change by their example. Yet, ethnic national groups and many NGOs fear the EU is placing too much faith in the intentions of the Burmese Government and the ability of investors to ensure that local people are not adversely affected by ‘development’ projects.

Trade and investment should benefit all of Burma’s people without threatening the lives of the ethnic nationals, who make up 40% of the population. The ethnic nationals fear they have been abandoned.

Unhappy with the EU’s decision?

Please write to your MP or Member of European Parliament (MEP) asking that they use their position to press the British Government to support ethnic national peoples, ensuring human rights are respected and investment in Burma is carried out responsibly.

Templates are available on our website www.hart-uk.org/campaigns/write-to-your-mp-burmese-ethnic-nationals-3

Find the name of your MP and MEP, and contact them at www.writetothem.com

Dates for your diary...



L'Orchestre du Monde

at Cadogan Hall for HART

Thursday 24th October 2013, 19.30

Enjoy a wonderful evening of music in support of HART's vital work in South Sudan.

L'Orchestre du Monde - World Virtuosi, a magnificent group of international musicians of the highest calibre will perform a programme of Mozart and Beethoven. The concert is being hosted by the World Trust and proceeds will go towards HART's work in South Sudan.

Tickets can be booked via our website or at www.cadoganhall.com/event/lorchestre-du-monde-131024

Swim for change

At HART, we spend much of our time crossing various borders. This summer we decided to cross a border of a different kind...

In the first week of July, Lydia, our communications manager, and a team of six volunteers will attempt a relay swim across the English Channel to France.

Owing to the slow arrival of summer this year, the sea temperature is still only 11 degrees. The team expect the swim to take around 16 hours. They will be swimming without wetsuits.

Our swimmers have been training for the past 9 months, and for the last two months they've been swimming in cold water to get ready for the sea crossing. You can read their accounts of cold water training on the next page.

As HART swimmer and trustee Dr John Hardaker says:

"We think we can do it. We are training hard so we can go faster because the people we are serving in HART, in faraway places, very difficult places, are facing more difficult challenges every day. It is a privilege for us in HART to support them with aid and also to speak up for them on the world stage."

The team are raising support for HART's partners providing education for children affected by conflict in Sudan, South Sudan and fighting child malnutrition in Timor-Leste (see pages 10 and 11).

Visit our website www.swimforchange.com, to meet the team, find out how they are training to swim the English Channel and why they are doing it.



We hope to inspire you to join our *Swim for Change* Campaign

You can **Swim for Change** by taking on your own personal challenge or by organising a sponsored team event with your friends, school or church in your local pool.



All swimmers will receive a HART swimming cap. There will be prizes for teams who swim the most laps, as well as those who raise the most funds by their participation in the sponsored swim. And a star prize for any teams that can cover the distance of the English Channel!

You can sponsor our channel swimmers through www.justgiving.com/BraveHARTChannelSwim

Find out more at www.swimforchange.com or contact megan.rowland@hart-uk.org



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Swim for Change

Continued from page 9

Our first Sea Swim

By BraveHART swimmer **Alan**

"It was an epic battle of four terrified, quaking-in-our boots swimmers against the might of the ocean (the Thames estuary).

We went straight in and wrestled with the cold, wind and extremely choppy conditions and we won. We managed 40 mins which was great. We even got £20 sponsorship money from a nice lady who felt sorry for us.

The after-care today was great as we were all shivering wrecks afterwards, sitting in our deck chairs smothered in blankets, sipping soup, looking like we were on a cold seaside holiday. We were looked after by Lynn and Audrey who brought us back to life!"

Our qualifying swim

By BraveHART swimmer **Jamie**

"It's cold, cloudy and windy. Three words I would usually never want to associate with a day by the seaside, or indeed with a two hour qualification swim in the sea itself! According to the resident lifeguards, the water temperature was a toasty ten to twelve centigrade with an estimated wave height of around three feet, although in future retellings the waves double in size. These conditions were easily the most difficult that I had previously endured.

As we finally worked up the courage and approached the grim shoreline, the waves appeared even more frequent and fearsome. A dip of a toe in the frothy sea was followed by a quick gasped inhalation as the waves rose up to engulf us into its salty embrace.

After this day, no one could label the group as having anything other than steely eyed determination. This comment was particularly appropriate for a certain John Hardaker whose new goggles broke ten minutes into the swim! One hour and fifty minutes of hard swimming later, the group waded exhausted out of the sea and into some well-earned warm clothes."

Visit www.swimforchange.com to find out more



Above Left: Our communications manager Lydia takes the plunge

Above Right: Bas has just been told that he won't be able to wear a wetsuit

HART's *Swim for Change* campaign is supporting education projects for children affected by conflict in Sudan and South Sudan

Education in Sudan and South Sudan

By David Thomas

Succinct words of wisdom are something always to cherish. Four years ago a medical director working in South Sudan stated, "If you gave me a hundred million pounds and asked me to improve the health of this country, then, speaking as a medical man, I would spend it all on girls' education." Educate the girls and you open the surest path to new knowledge for families and the entire community; and the most effective way to eliminate bad practice.

HART is concerned for all education, primary and secondary, but we especially reach out to girls. There is an enormous need to improve the ratio of girls staying for secondary education and to put an end to the frightening report that a girl in South Sudan is more likely to die in child-birth than she is to complete primary education.

We are assisting both in South Sudan and Sudan. In the war-torn border areas of Sudan we seek to assist both in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile State. The famine, malnutrition and general disruption of community life by war effectively put a stop to schooling. Pupils and teachers are too weakened by malnutrition, too busy seeking the little available wild food, to engage. All aid that genuinely assists the local community to survive and function can also assist education. A revival in education is one of the indicators HART always looks for in assessing the impact of its aid.

In South Sudan, we most notably assist at the Marol Academy in the war devastated and poor region of Bahr-el-Ghazal: the "Girls' School which boys may attend". Less than 10% of the population have finished primary education, for girls this figure is even lower. The percentage of girls in the school rapidly declines with increase of age. Country-wide it is reported that there are fewer than 1,000 girls in the top year of secondary education. The repercussions of this shortage of educated females for medical and teacher training, and for government administration, are immense. Still, to increase the number who complete primary education is a great achievement. HART continues to work with Naomi Pendle, and increasingly with Bishop Moses of Wau (also in Bahr-el-Ghazal), to tackle the problem of female retention at secondary level. Through Marol we have a partnership with the superb Nairobi-based organization of FOCUS who supply well-educated volunteer teachers each year, including some females. Their work deserves every bit of support, through both finance and prayer.

HART continues to seek funding for a new project at Marol to increase female-retention by including training in maternal and child care for girls at secondary level, thus providing extra value in female education that can be recognized by the community.



A class of primary students at Marol Accademy, South Sudan

The battle against child malnutrition continues in Timor Leste

by David Thomas and Megan Rowland



Our swimmers will fight against the waves in aid of communities fighting malnutrition in Timor Leste.

“They leave the centre, not only with a healthy child, but with the skills to keep their child healthy. These skills can then be passed on to others in their communities.”

Timor Leste appears as a tropical paradise, the turquoise blue sea gives way to tropical rainforest, eucalyptus trees and long grasses. But the history of this beautiful place is far from idyllic. Shortly after gaining independence from Portugal in 1975, Timor Leste was invaded by Indonesia. After over a quarter of a century of occupation and conflict, and three years of UN-administered transition, independence was finally gained in 2002.

Despite gaining freedom, Timor Leste's past has left it with a legacy of poverty, unemployment and political instability, exacerbated by a stark lack of infrastructure. Food shortages are made worse by cultural taboos which prevent local people from growing and eating some foods which are available. Over half of Timor Leste's children suffer from malnutrition. This can have serious long term health implications, particularly below the age of three, where malnutrition can inhibit brain development.

HART partner, HIAM Health is fighting malnutrition in Timor Leste. Malnourished children are treated in HIAM Health's centre and during their stay parents are educated in nutrition, as well as how to grow and prepare food. They leave the centre, not only with a healthy child, but with the skills to keep their child healthy. This knowledge can then be passed on to others in their communities.

In the last newsletter (Spring 2013) we described HIAM Health's newest project: the "Family Gardens". The HIAM team provide tools and seeds for the family, and teach them how design and build their garden, and how to maintain it. The family's success makes them ambassadors in their community. This has been extended through 'community garden projects'. The villages themselves ask for help in their development. Already more than ten community gardens have been established, in addition to the twenty two family gardens.

As previously mentioned, this malnutrition programme functions in a difficult environment of embedded food taboos, as well as a deeply entrenched mind-set of fatalism which renders any behavioural change a problem, particularly in hygiene and anything affecting health. It will be the sustained work of many years to change this. The individuals, families and communities who are open to change must follow a courageous and independent path.

On Atauro Island

Twenty five kilometres off the north coast of Timor-Leste lies Atauro Island. Here problems of malnutrition are compounded by a shortage of water. HIAM Health, are the only NGO to reach the remote population on Atauro Island.

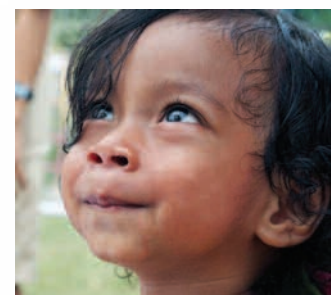
Every four weeks, the HIAM staff travel across the deep channel to take life-saving food supplements to the island. Their monthly journey on small boats laden with food covers a similar distance to the English Channel.

Only 25% of the villagers on the island can be accessed by road. The others must be reached by circumnavigating the entire island in a small boat, a demanding and risky job that takes eight days.

Each month, HIAM Health are providing food supplements to 2700 infants, malnourished children under five and pregnant or breastfeeding mothers. For the 9514 villagers on this little island, it is a lifeline.

Our Swim For Change campaign is supporting HIAM Health's work on Atauro Island.

You can support HIAM Health by getting involved with this campaign. See page 10 or visit www.swimforchange.com for more information.



Above: Malnourished children getting treatment at HIAM Health

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Isle of Man Overseas Aid Commission for committing to provide considerable funding for HIAM Health over the next three years.

Through HART, they are supporting HIAM Health with approximately £75,000 p.a., which is 36% of the running cost of the centre and its magnificent and innovative work. The centre still seeks further funding in order to utilise its facilities to the maximum.

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 unreachable, 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!**

Name.....

Address.....

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

E-mail address.....

Phone.....

giftaid it

I am a UK taxpayer, please claim the tax on this donation through the government scheme of Gift Aid.

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year 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. 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**