

# Humanitarian Centre News

The Newsletter for Cambridge's Humanitarian Community - ISSUE 3 MAY 2009

## Key Events

### May 2009

1-3 May  
Cambridge International  
Development Summit

5 May  
Humanitarian Centre  
AGM and 7-way  
networking meeting

### June 2009

3 June  
Members Group  
Meeting

17 June  
Humanitarian Centre  
Garden Party

19 June  
Reading Afternoon:  
Refugees and Forced  
Migration

## 'Thinks local & acts global'

The Humanitarian Centre brings together Cambridge-based NGOs and individuals working and interested in international relief and development. It works to make these more than the sum of their individual parts.

## WHOSE WORLD IS IT ANYWAY?

### Third Humanitarian Centre Annual Lecture



Daily life in Dewan Camp, Pakistan, after the devastating earthquake in 2005. Carlo Heathcote/Oxfam

Every year on average 230 million people are affected by natural disaster. This figure is expected to rise to 325 million by 2015. In the third Humanitarian Centre Annual Lecture, Jane Cocking, Humanitarian Director of Oxfam, reflected on some of the philosophical and practical issues facing the humanitarian sector in addressing these challenges.

Jane started by examining the underlying logic of humanitarian action, in particular the issues of neutrality and impartiality in the delivery of aid: agencies operating in complex political environments could not assume that their work would be viewed as non-partisan by all sides in a conflict. This was demon-

strated the following day as Oxfam GB became one of several agencies to be expelled from Darfur by the Sudanese government.

Looking at the current system, Jane discussed the difficulties of engaging with governments who were neither willing nor able to provide aid to sections of their population. She highlighted the imbalance in influence between donors in the UK, and the beneficiaries of humanitarian work, who often had little influence over what was provided and how. The financial resources required to meet humanitarian need vary according to donor political priorities; many appeals, in particular in areas of lesser geopolitical importance

may only receive two thirds of the funding required.

Looking to the future, Jane highlighted the need for humanitarian action to stick to its principles of need-led rather than politically motivated action. She felt that there was a need for innovation within the sector to address ongoing issues through new ideas, and that the interest and engagement of people in the developed and developing worlds was a powerful force for change.

Many thanks to Lord Wilson of Dinton, Master of Emmanuel College, for generously hosting the evening and reception once again. A podcast of the lecture can be found at: <http://mediaplayer.group.cam.ac.uk/humcentre>

## LUMO Film Screening



*Bent-Jorgen Perlmutt, Director.*

*Three of the women whose stories feature in the film.*

The use of rape as a weapon of war against women in Eastern Congo has been an important issue for many years. The Heal Africa hospital in Goma is one of only two hospitals in the region able to provide physical, emotional and spiritual care for survivors of sexual violence.

The Humanitarian Centre hosted a screening of LUMO, a feature-length documentary shedding light on the experience of thousands of women through the story of one.

The audience gathered in King's College to watch this account of one woman's struggle to come to terms with her experience, and to develop coping mechanisms which have enabled her slowly to rebuild her life. The screening was followed by a question and answer session with Hon. Dr. Kasereka and Lyn Lusi, co-founders of HEAL Africa. The discussion highlighted that one of the biggest problems survivors face is a loss of respect and accep-

tance by their family and community. The holistic care provided by the hospital helps women to rebuild their dignity and if possible return them to their communities.

*For more information on HEAL Africa, visit:*

<http://healafrika.org/cms/>

*For more information on LUMO, visit:*

[www.gomafilmproject.org](http://www.gomafilmproject.org) The film is also available to borrow from the Humanitarian Centre Resource Centre.

## Itupale Online Journal

Cambridge to Africa is excited to announce the publication of its first issue of the Itupale Online Journal. Articles are on the theme of 'Understanding the African Experience'. The journal can be viewed online at:

[www.cambridgetoafrica.org](http://www.cambridgetoafrica.org)

## Re-thinking Peace-building

Academics and researchers from a wide range of disciplines and from throughout Africa and the UK came together in Cambridge for an exciting conference to discuss ways of rethinking peacebuilding in theory and practice across the continent.

The five discussion panels throughout the day were based on changing concepts of peace, the political economy of conflict, peace negotiations, reintegration and justice and the security sector.

The conference also gave this year's Visiting Fellows at the Centre of African Studies a chance to present the papers they have been working on whilst in Cambridge on the theme of 'Peacebuilding and transitional governance in Africa'. It was also designed as an opportunity for four academics from Nottingham, Cambridge, Uganda and Botswana to present some of the materials they will be using during a collaborative peacebuilding project for sub-Saharan military officers in Uganda this summer.

Professor Christopher Clapham's concluding comments brought together some of the key themes of the day, notably the problems of hierarchical relations in peace building and post-conflict negotiations and what the role of the international community should be in African conflicts for the future.

## EWB Research Conference

The second annual Engineers Without Borders-UK research conference took place at the Royal Academy of Engineering in London.

The event was attended by over 100 delegates, including academics, students, development organisation representatives and professional engineers. The day began with a keynote speech by Dr. Mansoor

involved active participation from student moderators and the audience.

For many EWB-UK research students this was their first chance to publicly share their research. The forum allowed for discussion and debate which is vital to improving the quality of research produced. The day culminated with a speech by Paul Byars and Michael Woodrow,



*Presenters discuss their projects during the water panel discussion*

Ali of Practical Action. Dr Ali's talk centred on the theme of increasing attention to the social dimension of engineering practice. Throughout the day delegates were able to attend panels addressing water and sanitation, energy and habitat and social connections. Each panel included a range of presenters and

EWB-UK research students at the University of Edinburgh on the topic of 'a rights based approach to potable water'. All in all, the conference was considered a great success.

Conference proceedings are available in hardcopy at the EWB-UK office in the Humanitarian Centre and online at [www.ewb-uk.org](http://www.ewb-uk.org)

## Visions of a New World

To commemorate Cambridge University's 800th anniversary, Cambridge University International Development Society published a special edition of *Vision* magazine: "Cambridge University's Development Legacy".

It focussed on how the University has contributed – and continues to contribute – to development worldwide. Articles range from topics such as the history of studying development at Cambridge to a critique of the investment policies of Cambridge colleges.

The launch was an exciting event featuring an

interactive art exhibition: "Assessing Our Legacy". Our artistic team created thought-provoking multimedia pieces – one of the particularly memorable exhibits was by Heenali Patel, who superimposed images of slums and conflict on easily recognisable photographs of Cambridge. The exhibition was followed by a keynote address by Professor Keith Hart, former head of the Department of African Studies in Cambridge, entitled "International development: a historical perspective from Cambridge".

We hope that the special issue and its launch have stimulated some useful reflection on the role of Cambridge in international development, in this 800<sup>th</sup> year of its existence.



Superimposed images for the special edition of *Vision*

For more information, visit: [www.cuid.org](http://www.cuid.org)

A reference copy of the special edition *Vision* magazine is available to borrow from the Humanitarian Centre.

## Teaching Technology

In December 2008 Aptivate participated with girls' education charity Camfed International in a Leadership and Enterprise Training Programme for 150 school leavers held in Lubwe in rural Zambia, accredited by Cambridge Assessment and funded by the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women Initiative.

The 150 women were divided into project groups, each assigned with a mentor. All of the participants learned how to send emails and basic web skills. At least one from each group received additional train-



Women learning IT skills in Zambia

ing so that they could continue to support the others in their project groups. Before the main training began, we trained four young women from Camfed's alumni network Cama as training facilitators. Despite having little previous computer experience, these four would go on to manage a

new IT resource centre in the nearby town of Samfya after the training.

*...this was a reminder that IT can also build personal confidence and social standing*

An 18-terminal low-power computer network was purchased specifically for the training. The entire system, including two servers, a projector, printer and satellite modem, took less power to run than a domestic kettle and worked reliably throughout the training programme, coping with frequent power outages in a hot, humid and dusty

classroom environment.

After the training, some of the equipment was transported to the Samfya Resource Centre. Those project groups located near to Samfya are now using the Resource Centre to communicate with their mentors by sending emails. This event was a reminder that IT is not only a technological tool, but can also build personal confidence and social standing. Aptivate returned to Lubwe in April with Camfed to provide further training.

For more information, visit:  
<http://www.aptivate.org>  
<http://www.camfed.org>



## Building School Partnerships

78% of Congolese children are unable to attend school, even for a short period of time. Over the past three years Menelik Education has supported seven schools in Kinshasa providing much needed equipment for classrooms and paying school fees for children who would otherwise have no means of accessing education at all.

For six months the charity has received help in achieving these goals through a partnership with Impington Village College. In February a small group of teachers and staff from the college accompanied Theodore Menelik on a visit to Kinshasa to meet local teachers and students and find ways to develop their partnership. Over the course of a week, the group was involved in a range of activities from building a perimeter wall for a primary school to painting and crafts with young children to setting up links between sixth-form students in Kinshasa and those in Impington to develop language skills.

Teachers from Impington and Kinshasa came together to discuss ways in which they could support each other in the future. There is a clear need for equipment and resources in the Congo which students and staff in Cambridge can help to fund-raise for, and there are

plans for a group of teachers from Kinshasa to visit Impington and learn about teacher training in the UK.

Shortly after the visit, Menelik Education shipped a container of equipment to the Congo to support a central resource centre in Kinshasa. The aim is to allow local students and staff to gain access to the Internet and run training courses, a playgroup, and in time a microfinance scheme, helping schools to achieve more through working together.

For more information, visit:  
[www.menelikeducation.org](http://www.menelikeducation.org)

### Lyrics for Ladies

The Cambridge Oxfam group held a fundraising gig to celebrate International Women's Day. Our performers included Cambridge-based jazz singer Beth Walthew; Lincolnshire singer-songwriter Irene Rae, who impressed everybody with her vocal range and emotional input; and well-known local singer and teacher Rowena Whitehead, who performed a variety of songs from all four corners of the globe, including particularly memorable "chorus" songs from Africa, which got the audience singing along! All in all, a good evening raising over £200 for Oxfam. Many thanks to CB2 and all involved!

## thehumanitariancentre

Cambridge initiatives for international relief and development

'Thinks local & acts global'

### Networking Cambridge's humanitarian community ...

The Humanitarian Centre has just launched two new networks; one for research students working on humanitarian themes, and the second for local consultants working in the Humanitarian sector.

Both networks received a positive response from invitees, and there will be further meetings for both later in the year. If you would like further information on either of these networks or indeed the 7way network for Cambridge NGOs, please contact [ian.steed@humanitariancentre.org](mailto:ian.steed@humanitariancentre.org)

### Contact The Humanitarian Centre:

Ian Steed, c/o Fenner's, Gresham Road, Cambridge, CB1 2ES (01223 760885)

[ian.steed@humanitariancentre.org](mailto:ian.steed@humanitariancentre.org)

To submit articles for the newsletter, email [newsletter@humanitariancentre.org](mailto:newsletter@humanitariancentre.org)

The Humanitarian Centre is a Company Limited by Guarantee  
in England and Wales;  
Company number 6080896; Registered Charity number 1121067.

## Water for the World

As part of the Cambridge Science Festival, Engineers Without Borders Cambridge and Architecture Sans Frontières ran an event to build a structure entirely from recycled materials. We built a shelter with boxes for walls, old wooden pallets for flooring and plastic packaging for a roof.

The workshop, *Water for the World*, was then run from the shelter in the afternoon. The challenge was to construct a water filter with limited resources and we had some very enthusiastic and resourceful participants.



*Testing the shelter structure.*

At the end of the day we dismantled our structure and returned it to nearby recycling bins. We had a lot of fun building it, and hopefully those who came to visit our quirky project enjoyed themselves too.

For more information, visit:  
<http://www.ewb-uk.org>  
<http://www.asf-uk.org>