Autumn & Winter Newsletter 2019

Support the Impossible, I'm Possible!
Christmas Campaign 2019

How we’re breaking down the barriers to education
Welcome!

Welcome to the Autumn/Winter issue of the Cecily's Fund newsletter.

Working in Zambia for 20 years has allowed us to support children from early years to adulthood. We have alumni who have benefitted from our interventions at each stage of their lives. As they have grown up, Cecily's Fund has matured alongside them. This newsletter looks at the journey through our programmes. It starts by describing Margaret—one of our teachers at BISO and why early years education is so important. The stories of Mona, Penny, Sara and Vera who are transitioning to secondary school are perfect examples of how Cecily’s Fund’s support adapts to the needs of different ages. Finally, we celebrate our successful alumnus Fewdays Chibanga, who describes the impact of Cecily’s Fund support 23 years on.

We’re also looking to the future - page 2 describes ‘Impossible: I’m Possible!’ which is our Christmas Campaign. Some fundraising has already been done by our supporters, their exploits are described on page 7. Finally, page 8 describes the approaches we take to tackling the barriers to accessing education.

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IMPOSSIBLE: I’M POSSIBLE!

Launching Our Christmas Appeal for 2019

Imagine losing your ability to communicate. Completely shut off from the surrounding world. Alone, solitary with no ability to interact. Think about the impact on your life. The difficulty of completing basic tasks – to show you are hungry, to be aware of traffic, to speak to nurses in a hospital. Having no one to share your struggles, your successes, your hopes and fears with. Locked out of the world, with little or no support.

It sounds like the plot of a Kafka novel. Yet this is the plight of many deaf and hearing impaired children in Zambia. Hidden away by their families, many children never learn to sign, or are in households where no one else has the ability. They are trapped and isolated inside their minds.

"The problem is that deaf people have no detailed information on AIDS. We can go to the hospital but there is no sign language...The deaf do not know about adherence to medication and it can be a killer."

Franklyn C. Kitwe

This isolation is increased by the social stigma that accompanies all forms of disability. Deaf children are perceived as a financial burden, unable to contribute to the family income and superstitions regarding them as victims of witchcraft remain. As a result, they are denied access to the education, sexual health information and other services available to their peers. The perniciousness of this effect remains under researched, but work by Hanani-Hancock suggests HIV risk may be doubled in the deaf community, attributable to the lack of HIV education.

Children with hearing impairments have the same right to education, to a safe and successful future, to a network of support as any other. By supporting the Cecily’s Fund Christmas Appeal this year, you will help us to reach many children who remain invisible to authorities. Every little helps, and whatever you give will make a big difference to a disabled child’s life.

Our Christmas campaign 'Impossible. I'm Possible!' improves inclusivity and leaves no-one behind

Helping orphans and vulnerable adolescents with hearing impairments to access education and training
Tackling stigma and reducing discrimination within the community
Raising awareness of disability challenges and increasing equality of opportunity
Reducing poverty by developing savings groups that also teach people entrepreneurship and financial literacy
Margaret’s Story
A positive cycle of support

We have worked with BISO community school since 1998. One of their teachers is Cecily’s Fund beneficiary Margaret, who lost both her parents to AIDS. Thanks to Cecily’s Fund’s support, she has been able to complete her education and is now a much loved part of BISO.

One of Margaret’s pupils is Elise. Elise started attending BISO aged 6 years old. Margaret noticed that, though enthusiastic, Elise was often exhausted and falling asleep in class. Margaret discovered this was because Elise was spending the entire night looking after her aunt’s baby, and intervened to ensure Elise could stay with her grandmother.

Now well rested, happy and thriving, Elise is a passionate English student, who writes poems in her second language!

Her aim is to complete school and become a teacher — we hope she can emulate Margaret and achieve her goal!

“With the work that you’re doing, you are making big difference not only to the lives of the children but to the lives of the teachers as well. From the little I learn here I can help my youngest sister go to school and college.”

Margaret

Why is Early Years Education so important?

Young children exhibit an incredible level of neuroplasticity. Their brains are rewiring, growing, and developing. This means early interventions are vital to build the foundations for future academic success. Malnourishment at this young age can prevent the brain accessing the nutrients it needs to develop which inhibits growth. The effect of poor early years education leaves a dramatic legacy in adulthood. It manifests as lower earning power, poorer academic results and a decrease in higher education participation. Cecily’s Fund works with various primary schools, and children as young as 3 to set the foundation for a lifetime of learning.
Four lives changing at Mwambashi Primary

Mona, Penny, Sara and Vera have brighter futures ahead with our support

At Mwambashi Primary School in Kitwe, Cecily’s Fund supports a number of children with their school fees. Without this essential assistance, Mona, Penny, Sara and Vera would not be attending school.

We caught up with them to find out more about their backgrounds and what the support of Cecily’s Fund and the chance to complete school means to them.

While the girls are all aged 15 or 16, and are in grade 9 at the school, they have more than this in common. All of them have lost their father, in one case as recently as late 2017. The girls live with their mothers, with the exception of Vera who lives with her aunt.

Typically the girls eat just one meal per day; Sara says that her one meal is carefully timed so the family can make the most of it. Mona sums up her background by saying, “after my father’s passing, life has become extremely challenging for us.”

This description would fit all of the girls’ lives, but another thing that unites them is the support they receive. In each case they would not be able to attend school without Cecily’s Fund support.

“It has changed my life”, Penny says. “Prior to the support I rarely attended classes.” Moreover, the girls have found that the reduced burden of school fees has improved the prospects for their families as a whole. In Sara’s case, it means that her mother can use the money for her other children’s fees, and for buying essentials like food.
Looking back: how Fewdays got his start

A look at the life of Fewdays Chibanga is a way of seeing how the support of Cecily’s Fund during a person’s early years transforms their later life.

Today, Fewdays is a pastor and a successful businessman who owns his own company providing telecoms and related services. His wife, Melody, works as a nurse at Kitwe Teaching Hospital and the couple have a young family.

Fewdays credits Cecily’s Fund with helping him achieve the life he now has. After the loss of his father in 1996 when he was 14, Fewdays was initially unable to continue with his schooling. Then a very new organisation, Cecily’s Fund, was working with CINDI (Children in Distress), and was able to help pay Fewdays’ school fees. Fewdays’ mother had also volunteered with CINDI.

Cecily’s Fund, “helped me to finish my education and gave me a chance to learn how to live without having AIDS, through various workshops and seminars”, Fewdays says. “Today, I can go anywhere and survive because of the foundation of education.”

Looking back on that time, Fewdays remembers it as being “not easy and very challenging”, and strongly believes that the support of Cecily’s Fund and CINDI laid the foundation of his later success.

The church at which Fewdays is a pastor is one that he set up himself, after formerly working as a youth pastor. His own company is doing well, and he is looking into expanding into the timber business. In all things, Fewdays desires to “be a blessing to anyone” and to support others around him, just as he was supported by Cecily’s Fund and CINDI so many years ago.

Support for our ‘Impossible: I’m Possible!’ campaign will allow for more success stories like Fewdays. Just as our supporters twenty years ago enabled Fewdays to reach where he is today, the impact of the £30,000 we aim to raise would continue far into the future. Your support leaves a legacy of empowered, self-reliant, educated young people who, like Fewdays, can go on to share their success with others.
Fundraising update:

Four ways Cecily’s Fund and our supporters have been making our work possible

Over 30 Cecily’s Fund supporters joined Basil and Alison Eastwood earlier this summer for a special fundraising walk in central London. Starting from Trafalgar Square and taking in sights including Tower Bridge and Buckingham Palace, the walkers endured a short hailstorm but mostly enjoyed good weather.

In all, the walk raised a fantastic £1,340! Of this, over £300 was raised by Isobelle Jacques, who set up her own fundraising page and enjoyed the “good company and plenty of chat along the way”.

Visitors to Burford had the chance to see the remarkable paintings of Raymond Martinez. The internationally renowned artist generously donated all of the proceeds from sales of his work to Cecily’s Fund. The exhibition of seascapes and landscapes at Warwick Hall formed a part of Oxfordshire Artweeks, in which Cecily’s Fund took part for the first time.

Congratulations to Rhydian Sandbrook who ran the Newport Marathon on behalf of Cecily’s Fund and Prostate Cymru. David, Rhydian’s father-in-law, was a long-time supporter of Cecily’s Fund who passed away in 2018. Including Gift Aid, Rhydian has raised over £960 to be split between the two charities.

Thank you to all the runners who completed the Asics London 10K. Once again, Southborough High School were part of the team, raising almost £2,000. Our athletes have raised over £2500 so far!

We’re calling on all our supporters—can you raise funds for our Christmas Campaign? Our life-changing work is made possible by our valued fundraisers and anything from a coffee morning to a marathon can help make a big difference. For lots of ideas and a fundraising pack full of tips, visit cecilysfund.org/fundraise or email acooper@cecilysfund.org
Opening the Way:
How Cecily’s Fund breaks down the barriers to education

While education is a human right, the chance to attend and complete school is too often denied to children in Zambia. Cecily’s Fund works to ensure that as many children as possible do get the schooling they deserve—a challenge we approach from a number of key angles.

The cost of school fees is a major barrier which keeps children from progressing in their education. Over 60% of Zambians live in extreme poverty, and many families are unable to afford the fees charged for secondary school.

With our partners, Cecily’s Fund identifies the children in most need and helps to meet not only the cost of fees themselves, but also of uniforms, books and shoes.

Because one of our goals is to help communities become self-sufficient, we put in place interventions to assist them with generating their own income to help pay school fees. These include supporting community savings groups, and the provision of training in essential business and financial literacy skills.

The risks of dropping out of school are most severe for girls. It is all too common for early pregnancy or marriage to bring an early end to a girl’s education. Cecily’s Fund helps to counter this by making sure families are aware of the long-term value of education, to encourage them not to seek early marriage for girls.

Peer Health Education plays a vital role in helping girls develop the knowledge and psychosocial skills to stay on and complete education. The sessions empower girls to delay pregnancy and marriage until adulthood, and Peer Educators themselves are key role models who show children how education is the route to a better life.

About Cecily |

Cecily’s Fund is named in memory of Cecily Eastwood, who died in Zambia during her gap year in 1997. The charity was set up by her parents, Alison and Basil.

While in Zambia, Cecily worked with orphans and vulnerable children. For over 20 years, we’ve done the same - our work has helped over 20,000 children and we’ve spent over £6 million on projects in the country. Over time, we’ve expanded beyond paying school fees and our work now offers a comprehensive approach to building brighter futures in Zambia and helping to break the cycle of poverty.
Getting ready for 2020 and helping our Zambian young people!

We are looking forward to many friends and supporters joining us in any form of fundraising activity in 2020. We have twenty in these pages! Would you like to offer to have a small coffee morning, a children’s cake sale or something bigger? Everything helps our young Zambians to improve their life chances. Maybe your children’s or grandchildren’s school would like to give a donation at a Christmas concert? All ideas welcome!

Do reply to Anne our senior fundraiser (acooper@cecilysfund.org) and copy in Georgina (georgina@cecilysfund.org) and me, Alison (stableyardalison@gmail.com) if you have a bright idea.

SEPTEMBER 14 2019 - Anne Cooper
Anne Cooper, CF Senior Fundraiser, Rotarian, passionate about education for the vulnerable children in Zambia, will be getting extremely muddy during a 5k run in South Park, Oxford.

OCTOBER 6 2019 - Frank Prochaska
Historian of modern British history, Fellow of Royal Historical Society, will give a lecture on The Feminisation of the Monarchy. (Charlbury, Oxfordshire).

JANUARY 2020 - Julieanne Jefferies
A foot health practitioner, works in Oxfordshire and is offering a consultancy.
Alison Eastwood
Mother of Cecily and co-founder of Cecily’s Fund, is organising a large concert in Summertown, Oxford.

Isobelle Jaques
Isobelle Jaques, former civil servant involved in international relations and human rights, is researching sponsorship for the concert and is Alison’s hugely appreciated right-hand whizz.

Sarah Scheele
Sarah Scheele, retired teacher and organising genius, is overseeing the catering arrangements for the concert.

Nick Green
Nick Green, former manager of a game lodge in Botswana, married to Zambian CF volunteer Princess, has organised prestigious raffle prizes for the concert.

Hugh Gledhill
Hugh Gledhill, Basil’s first cousin, retired businessman and wine connoisseur, is donating the wine for the concert.

Anne and Peter Clifton
Anne and Peter Clifton, retired teacher and retired businessman, long-term supporters, will volunteer to give much appreciated help in any way needed, at the concert.

Helen Dancer
Teacher of mathematics, long-term supporter and fundraiser, will organise Eventbrite and the sale of tickets.
THE BIGGEST EFFORT TO DATE FOR CECILY’S FUND 2020 FUNDRAISING

On Wednesday 5 February 2020 Alison Eastwood, mother of Cecily and co-founder of Cecily’s Fund, is organising a terrific concert. As part of their contribution to our 2020 fundraising efforts there are many supporters and friends of Cecily’s Fund who are coming along to help in the many different ways required by an evening like this.

Seven Oxfordshire schools will be contributing to an evening of music and dance on the theme of Loving and Caring at St Michael and All Angels' Church Summertown, Oxford. The proceeds are for the education of vulnerable children in both Zambia and Lebanon.

Abingdon School, Cherwell School, The Dragon School, Headington Girls’, New College School, Summer Fields and and St Edward’s School are each offering seven minutes of music or dance. It will be fantastic!

Each participating school has complete autonomy on what it presents on the night although the programme will be coordinated by the organisers. This will ensure a varied and exciting programme. If you, our audience, go away at the end of the evening totally inspired by what you have heard having raised funds for our two vital causes, we can ask no more.

SPRING 2020 - David Pollock

David Pollock, former senior civil servant, chief executive of newspaper publishing group, artist, and Green Guide will offer a detailed tour of Oxford.

6 MARCH - Hugh Williams

Retired lecturer of mathematics at Nottingham University will lecture on Lincoln Cathedral.

2 MAY - Basil Eastwood

Cecily's Fund co-founder will lead our second annual London Walk. Details to follow.
17 APRIL - Angela Huxter
Angela Huxter, retired caterer, wonderful cook, and long-time supporter, is offering another coffee morning for her friends and neighbours in Wantage, Oxfordshire.

MAY/ MID JULY - Mary Fletcher
Mary Fletcher, supporter who visited Zambia, her birth place, in Basil’s organised tour 2017, is again offering a plant sale and coffee morning in Newark, Nottinghamshire.

26 APRIL - Jenny Heaps and Carol Mitchell
Jenny Blue Guide, accompanied by long-term supporter Carol, will guide a group round Roman Colchester, Essex.

SUMMER - Sharon Bachmann
Sharon Bachman, caterer, member of the Thun Anglican congregation, is planning an event (yet to be divulged!) in Thun, Switzerland.

SUMMER - Mike Morrison
Cecily’s theatre studies teacher, artist and photographer, is creating a pop-up studio, "Portraits for Charity".

END AUGUST - Alastair Langlands
Former English teacher of the Eastwood girls, will donate any profits from his play performed by ex-Bedalians (Petersfield, Hampshire).

2020 YEAR ROUND - Jenny Massiah
Printmaker and artist with new interest in stained glass, will offer a donation from sales of her work (Wells, Somerset).