



**Cecily's
Fund**

**Autumn &
Winter
Newsletter 2019**

**How we're
breaking
down the
barriers to
education**

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



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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Social

Keep up with our news on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube at /cecilysfund and on Instagram at cecilys.fund



About and Contact

Cecily's Fund is registered charity **1071660**. Our work makes education possible for orphans and vulnerable children in Zambia.

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Fundraising update: Our
supporters activities

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 Hanass-Hancock suggests HIV risk may be doubled in the deaf community, attributable to the lack of HIV education¹.

Children with hearing impairments have the same right to education, to a safe and successful future, to a network of support as any other. That is why our partners ensure that they are given the same help they need to thrive as all the vulnerable children we support. 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 vulnerable child's life.

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



Helping orphans and vulnerable adolescents including those 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

To donate, go to www.justgiving.com/campaign/CFChristmasAppeal2019

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 be 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 earn here I can help my youngest sister go to school and college."

Margaret



Margaret (left) and Elise (below)

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.



We help with the payment of fees for those who need it most



With strong businesses, parents can afford their children's school fees



Peer Educators act as key role models



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.