



**First  
Newsletter  
of 2020!**

**'Clear  
the Way!'  
Read what  
trailblazers  
Evans and  
Isaac have to  
say**

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

A warm welcome to the first Cecily's Fund Newsletter of 2020!

'Clear the Way!' is the theme of this issue, showing that the path to gaining an education is rarely a clear one. Zambia's current economic crisis has highlighted just how low the quality of life the vulnerable are living. For most, one meal a day is the norm and with no electricity or clean running water to power the running of households, children are often expected to help the adults they live with to provide a source of income. Quite often this leads to dropping out of school all together. Page 8 describes how we act to remove the different obstacles faced by the children under our care.

Of course, to clear a path, you often need a trail blazer. Pages 3 and 4 celebrate two of our inspirational alumni, Evans and Isaac, their challenges, ambitions, and vision. Evans is a Copperbelt University Graduate and the President of the Alumni Committee. Isaac is a medical student at the University of Zambia who now supports himself financially from the sales of his artwork. You will also get insight on how our alumni network allows Cecily's Fund to extend beyond school life through a talented group of volunteers who want to give back to their communities by working as Peer Educators, Sunshine Leaders, Mentors, and Para-teachers.

Changes in the Zambian economy have led to a pressing need for greater representation and to 'Clear the Way!' for a younger generation. We explain recent events in Zambia on page 5.

Some of the work Cecily's Fund does is itself trailblazing. Keep your eyes peeled for the launch of our Lessons Learned Guide to Peer Education which explains our methodology and how we hope other NGO's or government organisations can adapt and emulate it.

We're so grateful for the generosity shown in supporting our Christmas campaign. The impact of raising in excess of £18,000 is on page 7, as well as an update on the exciting fundraising work underway!

## In this issue...



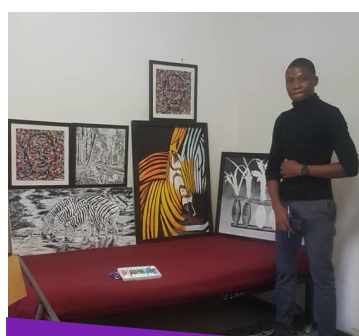
**Page 3**  
**An interview with Evans:**  
**What the Cecily's Fund**  
**Alumni Network is**



**Page 4**  
**In Memory of Beauty**



**Page 5**  
**A need to clear the way:**  
**The Zambian government**



**Page 6**  
**Balancing Medicine & Art**



## Social

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



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

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**Page 7**  
**Fundraising update: Our**  
**supporters' activities**



# Connecting Paths and Trailblazing

## An interview with Evans Chinika and what the Cecily's Fund Alumni Network is

Evans Chinika, 28, graduated from the Copperbelt University last year with a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Wildlife Management and Conservation. He is the president of Twibukishe Cecily Alumni Association, the official name for the Cecily's Fund Alumni Network. Here, he reflects on his journey from struggling orphan to independent graduate

**How have you 'cleared the way' in your family?**

'After the death of my parents, life became so hard that our grandmother took us to the village. The school was over 15 kilometres away, which I used to walk to and from, without shoes. I was helping my aged grandmother to do farming for our survival and at the same time going to school, which led to my absenteeism.

When I eventually started school again, I had a ripped uniform and shoes which I borrowed from the neighbour's son. Under the care of Cecily's Fund in the third term, I received new shoes, uniform and all school requirements – it felt like heaven on earth.'



*"I am hopeful for all the opportunities ahead and this is very exciting!" - Evans, President*

**What makes the work of the alumni network so special? What about in relation to Cecily's Fund?**

'I really enjoy interacting with the vulnerable orphans and it excites me because it gives me the opportunity to have personal interactions with them; hear about the challenges they are facing, and see how I can advise them. I use the motivational sessions in the schools to remind the children of the importance of education, and also provide some sort of emotional and mental support for those who approach me with the difficult scenarios they are facing.

They don't have anyone else to go to and really rely on the CF alumni committee to provide good counsel; all our sessions bring in plenty of positive feedback as the children find the stories of the alumni inspirational in overcoming their present difficulties.

The future is bright! We have a lot of alumni whose lives are now flourishing and they are now following different professions. Some are police officers, others are teachers, we even have a few in University right now studying medicine.'

**Where have there been good external links and partners?**

'Afya Mzuri & CHEP have been consistent and loyal partners of the alumni association and have provided invaluable support.

I'm excited to say that this is just the beginning of great things. The alumni are striving to operate independently and come out from under the wing of Afya Mzuri & CHEP.

We hope to engage with more organisations in order to gain more sponsorship, since at present the committee members operate voluntarily and contribute whatever bit of their own money they can, to generate sufficient funds for expenses such as transport to and from their school visits, presentations, and meetings.'

**What obstacles have you encountered as a team? What have you overcome?**

'Our first major challenge is that we don't have a good location where we can carry out our planned fundraising activities.

We had prepared to wash cars to raise money but our applications to the Zambian Registrar of Societies were denied as we are not a registered society.

In addition to this, we require a bank account designated to our work. Without one, people have been hesitant in donating to our cause and we have realised that the right documentation will help us gain trust from the public and clear our way of many obstacles.

# Trailblazing: Isaac and his story balancing medicine and art

Isaac Zulu, 24, is a former supported child and the first from a family of six to reach university. He is a talented artist and winner of the **Junior Achievement Africa it's TYME Award** and is now studying medicine at the university of Zambia. He independently supports himself through the income generated from the sales of his artwork. His natural passion for both art and medicine make managing both aspects exciting. Isaac learned to set up his thriving art business after attending a Cecily's Fund 'Fresh Start' Entrepreneurship training after he left school as he couldn't afford the fees to enable him to go to University.

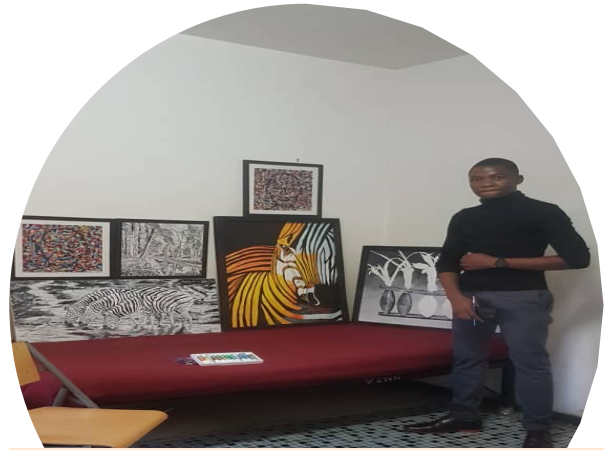
*"Over the years I have learnt that success is a gradual process which requires patience and persistence. I am now in my fourth year of study, and I promised myself that before I go in fifth year, I will have done something huge with my talent."*

'The number one obstacle I have encountered is finding a good market for my products. I managed to secure a stand at one of the shopping malls but I feel I am greatly exploited in terms of pricing my products. To overcome this, I am currently looking for a market outside Zambia because I think it's time for me to expand my business - it's one of my 2020 resolutions and I believe that I will achieve it.'

'I have a great passion for both since I was young, both professions complement each other, my art business has really helped me financially.'

Cecily's Fund Alumni have been working together to find ways to empower all the alumni and not just those on the management committee. Most of the current members are high school leavers and are unemployed. The Executive Committee members have found that if the alumni network can help empower their members through motivational talks, help with job opportunities, emotional support and life-skills training, they will be more willing and able to contribute to the programme and give back to their communities.

'We want to touch lives and help all previously supported and those who are currently supported by Cecily's Fund, to rise up and implement their business ideas. The alumni body should grow to be so impactful that even children in schools not supported by CF will be inspired to come on board and work with us. This will create independence within the community and our work as the Alumni Committee will truly be fruitful.'



Isaac with some of his artwork

## BISO is also taking the lead with enforcing HIV Education in the workplace

Our partner Bwafwano Integrated Services Organization (BISO) has been instrumental in taking HIV awareness into the workplace through a workshop with SINO Hydro Corporation in HIV/AIDS Peer Educator training in Lusaka.

SINO Hydro, the world's biggest hydropower engineering and construction company, hosted the workshop focusing on HIV education at work.



The Alumni Executive Committee members pose for a photo after the AGM in 2019

# A need to clear the way

## What the Zambian government is doing about education now and how individuals are affected by the changes

In the light of Zambia's changing economy, the youth bulge, and the need for new ways to adapt, we take a look at how the Zambian Government is reacting to education reform, especially for the most vulnerable children.

Last year, the Zambian Government announced a reduction in all fees paid in public and grant aided schools.

The new school fees per term for all grade 8-12 students in rural areas is ZMK150 (£7.87) while the school fees in urban areas is now ZMK200 (£10.49). Other means of payment in the form of produce from subsistence farmers i.e. maize, beans, rice, goats etc are to be accepted by the schools where families cannot pay the sum in cash. Boarding schools nationwide, now have a maximum fee limit of ZMK1,000, helping ease the financial burden for families who have struggled to cope.

General Education Minister David Mabumba advised, "With this guidance no additional charges should be demanded from learners either in cash (administration fee, affiliation fee, registration fee, practical fees, computer fees, learning material fees etc.) or in kind (cement, realm of paper, cobra, paint, slasher, hoe, mattress etc)."

Despite these beneficial changes, there have been constant reports across Zambia stating that most schools have not adhered to these changes, and continue to demand the same amount of financial payments toward the various costs associated with going to school.

In addition to the economical challenges, Zambia is experiencing environmental hardships of severe floods from rain following a drought, and little to no electricity available to power the nation.

These difficulties have a ripple effect on the wellbeing of the population and more specifically, vulnerable children. With floods blocking roads, and no electricity for light to study, or power to cook, it makes an already tough living situation even harder to cope with.

For the children supported by Cecily's Fund, this means there is still an urgent need for support for their care to ensure that various external factors do not result in absenteeism or affect performance results that could have otherwise been avoided.



### Trending:

Parliament has approved the motion that government should provide adequate sanitation and sanitary towels to girls in government secondary schools. This follows a motion moved by Chembe Member of Parliament Sebastian Kopulande who says there is need for policy implementation to ensure girl child education is supported.

Unfortunately, not *all* girls will benefit from this development as remote and rural schools are often excluded and this is why our new project RESPECT tackles this issue. With parents making and selling reusable, environmentally friendly, sanitary towels, they are economically empowered and able to be more self-reliant.



# In Memory of Beauty

## One of our partners in Zambia remembers a pupil who sadly passed away last August

Beauty Mwansa, born 19th May 2004 and died 19th August 2019 was put to rest in Chingola on 15th August 2019. Beauty died of Asthma, a respiratory disease that she had suffered from since infancy, according to her mother. She was raised by her single mother as her parents divorced when she was still a baby.

Beauty was one of the 900 girls enrolled for education support under the Cecily's Fund DREAMS project in Chingola in 2017. She was a rather shy, but ambitious and intelligent girl, whose dream was to become a midwife because she loved babies and so would have loved to help mothers deliver safely.

She was one of the girls who received a 100% sponsorship. Her mother also received training in entrepreneurship and a grant of K2, 900 (about \$250) designed to help sustain and compliment her daughter's education support. The grant helped the single mother who had been working as a maid, alongside running a small business to improve her income.

Beauty's death has touched and shocked a lot of people who were close to her as she was one of the academically-most-promising pupils at her school and also on the CF DREAMS project in Chingola. She was one of the girls under DREAMS project who made it to grade 10 in 2019, with impressive marks.

The young dreamer has left a broken-hearted community and a mother who had hope in her to change the story of their family through her education. Her resilient pursuit for education has however no doubt left a trail of inspiration to other girls in her community & family as well as the project.



## DREAMS

DREAMS is an ambitious initiative to reduce new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) between the ages of 10 and 24 years. The goal of DREAMS is to help girls develop into Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe women. Since 2015 over 100,000 adolescent young girls and women have been enrolled on the program in Lusaka, Ndola and Chingola districts.

# Fundraising update: 20 Fundraisers for 2020

We have kicked off our 20 fundraising activities and events for this new decade, and are looking forward to many friends and supporters joining us in any form of fundraising activity throughout the year 2020.

Would you like to offer to have a small coffee morning, a children's cake sale or something bigger? Everything helps our young Zambians improve their life chances. Maybe your children's or grandchildren's school would like to give a donation from a sponsored walk? All ideas welcome!

Contact Anne, our Senior Fundraiser  
([acooper@cecilysfund.org](mailto:acooper@cecilysfund.org))



## Upcoming Events and Activities

We are overwhelmed by the continuous support that you, our supporters, continue to show. An excess of £18,000 has been raised through our 2019 Christmas Appeal. Every single donation contributes to the overall wellbeing of the children we support, changing their lives for the better.

The money you have generously given assists us in providing for the children we support in four major ways:

1. Enabling orphans and vulnerable children to go to school
2. Helping children succeed in school
3. Preparing for life beyond school
4. Strengthening Community support for children's education

Don't miss out on all the fun!

There are several varied plant sales and coffee mornings throughout the year being hosted by individual supporters.

Follow us on social media for all updates, as well as to share and tag us in all your photos of either our events or the ones you will be hosting.

Listed below are a small selection of the public events taking place during the first half of the year. Everyone is welcome and we really do hope to see you there.

Dates for your diary:

<b>8<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>English Medieval Decorated Window Tracery Lecture</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> May</b>	<b>Annual London Walk</b>
<b>26<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Guided tour of Roman Colchester, Essex</b>



For lots of fun ideas and a fundraising pack full of tips, visit [cecilysfund.org/fundraise](https://cecilysfund.org/fundraise)



# Breaking Barriers:

There is a difference between being in school, and receiving an education. Obviously, the former is a necessary part to attaining the latter. But on its own, simply attending school is not enough if you are an orphan or a vulnerable child.

You can be in school, but so hungry you can't concentrate. Or so distracted by your lack of menstrual health products that you barely pay attention to what the teacher is saying. Or so disillusioned by the lack of role models, that you don't see the point in continuing. Maybe you feel embarrassed or ashamed by your lack of uniform or how you dress. Maybe there simply aren't enough textbooks to go around. Mental health and stress can be affected by feelings of frustration, worry, embarrassment, and more that the educational opportunities are lost. Thus, one can be physically in the building, but not gaining the benefits.

This is why Cecily's Fund does more than simply pay school fees. We look to alleviate these challenges through a holistic approach, so that children access an **education** —not just schooling. Our interventions are centred around:



Uniforms are often mandatory for school, and are a costly barrier



Books and equipment have to be paid for out of pocket. Providing these stops this being an obstacle



Sexual reproductive health and learning how to stay healthy is often a major driver for girls dropping out of school due to preg-



Saving groups improve financial stability and literacy in communities., reducing the need dependency and external support

providing:



Networks of alumni and inspirational Peer Educators who give children life-skills, build self-esteem and create positive role



Nutritious meals that enable children to concentrate in school, focusing on their education.



## 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.