



**Spring
Newsletter
2021**

**Looking back
on
International
Women's
Day:
Choose To
Challenge**

Programmes:

**Cecily's Fund
Capacity
Building New
Approach
with Schools**



Welcome!

A huge welcome to our Cecily's Fund 2021 Spring Newsletter!

Warm greetings to all the new names we are so happy to see joining our ever-growing family of esteemed supporters. We are also grateful to our local familiar supporters who are still donating generously, writing thoughtful letters, and who continue to support our work in any way you can.

In a recent conversation between our Communications & Supporter Relations Officer and an alumnus in Zambia the following was said, *"Please do make it known to the rest of the CF team and the much-loved donors that their deeds are not in vain. What they do is indeed a call for a noble cause and they touch people's lives in many and different ways. Even though they may not actually see the fruits of their labour directly, or even straight away, the fruits are harvested and they are good and pure. Cecily's Fund ensures that everyone is included and not one is left behind and for that we are grateful."*

In this newsletter we are looking back at International Women's Day and celebrating some of the wonderful women we have had the privilege to know and 'watch' grow, since their early childhood years, under our care.

The Cecily's Fund Staff and Trustees were devastated to learn about the UK government aid cuts that were recently made. We explore the impacts of the decision on Cecily's Fund on page 4 and an introduction to our new capacity building programme on page 5, focusing on 8 schools in Zambia.

In our alumni feature on page 6, we caught up with highly self-motivated Noriah Chibwe, who shares how much of a positive impact her life skills learned from Cecily's Fund PHE programmes are still making today, 6 years after graduating high school.

We're so grateful for the immeasurable generosity shown in supporting our programmes. Page 7 is full of updates on the exciting fundraising work underway — including the International School of Lausanne's Sports Fundraiser. Follow along on our website and social media.

We hope you enjoy reading!

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Community and Fundraising



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. Over the years, our work has helped over 20,000 children and we've spent over £6 million on projects in the country, building brighter futures in Zambia and helping to break the cycle of poverty.

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 orphaned and vulnerable children in Zambia.

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Looking back on International Women's Day: Cecily's Fund Women Choose to Challenge

Hand up high to show you're in!

International Women's Day is a global day, first observed in 1911, celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender equality. Notable activity is observed worldwide as different groups come together to celebrate women's achievements.

2021 International Women's Day

The campaign theme for International Women's Day 2021 was 'Choose To Challenge'. A challenged world is an alert world. And from challenge comes change. So let's all #ChooseToChallenge.
[source: www.internationalwomensday.com]

Women's Day in Zambia

Every year, there is a grand parade in Lusaka, Zambia's capital, for Women's Day. The march is often very vibrant, colourful and the entire atmosphere is buzzing with excitement. Often, female gymnasts showcase exciting performances as they march—or summersault—down the streets.

Several organisations show solidarity for the goals of women's rights by getting involved with traditional dance performances, marching bands and many other celebratory activities.

This year, however, things were different due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Thankfully, this did not stop individuals or organisations from celebrating virtually via social media platforms; amplifying the unison expressed in the journey to a more gender equal Zambia.

What our women are saying

"#choosetochallenge. Our conversations as females should not be about competing with the male folk, rather to always add value in every way possible in places we are found, be it in a market place, home or office."

Namonje Mukomanji

"I care about children and women's rights and I believe that education is what could save African women and the future of their sons. I am challenging the limited opportunities for education for some girls and women."

Viola Mwaba

"I choose to challenge the lack of support from our government for vulnerable families and marginalised people in Zambia. I would like to commend Cecily's Fund for the good work they are doing through Bwafwano Integrated Services Organisation that has helped me and other vulnerable children in Education support. It makes a big difference. It is my appeal to all the partners to continue working with Cecily's Fund or to emulate what Cecily started."

Justine Ndawa

"I would like to tell children being helped, not just by Cecily's Fund but other organisations as well, that they have to consider themselves fortunate and aim at using the opportunities that come their way to their advantage because they never know what tomorrow may bring. I will #choosetochallenge the mindset of my fellow youth who are unsure about their future. Do not worry about what you don't have, rather make the most of today."

Michelo Michelo



#ChooseToChallenge



How Government International Aid Cuts have Affected Cecily's Fund



The announcement by the UK Government to cut its international aid budget is something that many people may believe relates to emergency aid and humanitarian relief. However, the impact is much closer to home as Cecily's Fund was informed that the 3-year grant secured from UKAID for our pioneering '*Empowering Deaf Youth through Peer Health Education*' disability programme has been withdrawn just at the point of implementation. This means that nearly 5000 disadvantaged children many of whom have a disability, will not be able to benefit from gaining essential life skills and information on how to stay safe from HIV and Covid19. It also means that discrimination and stigma will continue and they may have little or no opportunity to progress in life.

need and most vulnerable to Covid19. Whilst we made programme adaptations to be able to continue with our work, we also spent a great deal of time planning the implementation of the UKAID funded programme that was to train deaf and hard of hearing youth to be Peer Educators using sign language. We are now experiencing the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic in different ways, and funding cuts is just one example of the many hurdles we will need to face as life begins to return to a form of normality. Fortunately, Cecily's Fund is resilient and has overcome setbacks in the past, and we will do our level best to reinstate this programme when we are able.

A great deal of background work takes place from the initial programme design through to thorough due diligence in the UK and Zambia, and then implementation. The inception period before activities begin on the ground is a crucial and necessary step to ensure that the programme outcomes and anticipated impact is not only effective, and results in the positive changes we seek in people's lives, but also that the intervention is value for money, and is sustained. During the first national lockdown in 2020 Cecily's Fund managed to navigate its way through the precarious uncertainty of the Coronavirus Pandemic. We continued to work hard to support those in greatest



Did you know?

According to UNESCO, if all women had a primary school education, there would be 15% fewer child deaths, and if all women had a secondary education, child deaths would be cut in half, **saving 3 million lives.**

Programmes

Capacity Building: New Approach with Schools



Cecily's Fund is working with 8 specially selected schools to help them become flagship schools of best practise in the care and support of orphans and vulnerable children.

In brief, School Capacity Assessments have been carried out remotely by our Director, Chery Hooper, and Programmes Manager, Steven Barlow. The assessments focused on 4 key areas of governance, support and care of orphans and vulnerable children; parent engagement and links with local government. This 3- year programme will enable us to work closely with schools to build capacity and improve the learning outcomes of the most disadvantaged children.

Work has already started and education resource packs have been developed and budgeted for, ready to be introduced into the schools.

In addition to this, 16 Peer Health Educators (PHE) will be trained to deliver Peer Education sessions to children in those schools so that they learn essential life skills that help build confidence, resilience, and self-belief as well as learning about how to stay safe and healthy.

One Community School Head Teacher said, *"The first thing I would like to achieve during the partnership with Cecily Fund is to restore the lost hope in the minds of my pupils who seem not to see future in education. This is the case now because some of them have lost their parents while others have parents who are too poor to provide for their education. One way to achieve this is by offering them guidance and counselling. Moreover partnering with organisations that can offer to them material and financial support can help them see that despite the hardships that they are passing through they are also relevant to society just like anybody else who has all the necessities available."*

In this remark, it is evident just how urgent our support is needed and the extent to which we are committed to providing. Our strapline *"educating young Zambians for a brighter future"* demonstrates that our impact extends beyond traditional classroom learning, to a deeper, meaningful level that helps ensure that the wellbeing of the beneficiaries we support realise and utilise their wealth of innate capabilities. With the loyal aid of our valued supporters, we are able to be there for them for the long run.

"There have been some major achievements that the school has scored in the last two years and the institution looks forward to moving on this developmental path especially in the areas of improving teaching and learning.

This is very remarkable to our pupils who have been engulfed in high levels of poverty— especially the orphans. Therefore as head teacher of the school my desire is to welcome partners who may have the heart for our little ones coming on board to assist us rekindle their hopes so that as they develop into responsible citizens, they become living examples to others."

- Fabiano Kabwe, in response to a call for application to be a partner school with Cecily's Fund



Mathematics lesson taking place at Mimbula Fitula Community School

Where Are They Now?

Catching up with
Noriah Chibwe



In 2005, a nine year old Noriah joined Bwafwano Integrated Services Organisation (BISO) in grade two. Fully supported by Cecily's Fund, she successfully completed her high-school education on time, in 2015. We are so pleased that she was happy to answer a few questions and give us a life update, with an insight to what she has been up to since becoming an alumnus.

Where are you now and what have you been up to these last couple of years?

Well, currently I'm in school pursuing a bachelors degree in Science with Education at The University of Zambia majoring in Biology and Chemistry. I'm happy to share with you that I'm now in my last year of study.

It saddens me knowing that I have to be learning from home until September 2021 (via e-learning platforms such as zoom, google meet, and Moodle etc.), because of the challenges that come with online learning. This is because the university is opening in phases due to Covid-19, following the guidelines given by the Ministry of Health in order to ensure that there are fewer students on campus at the same time.

"I was depressed, thinking I was left out of something that I thought was better for me, but when I went back to BISO, which is more like my home.... Mr Kataso gave me plenty of advice."

What made you decide to pursue what you have been studying, and how is it going?

Initially, I wanted to do Medicine or Economics, venturing into the corporate world of business but unfortunately life took a toll on me. The mentioned fields were my first and second option, in that order, when I was applying for Uni—but the application process required three options for the application form to be valid. So I thought to myself why not Science with Education as my third option? Since high school, I have told myself that if ever I find myself in the teaching field, let it be Biology or Chemistry. Even so, I was still optimistic that I will be picked for either the first or second option and never for the third option. As if life was laughing at me or throwing

jokes in my face I was picked for my third option. Heart-broken and disappointed, I almost didn't want to go for the studies; but just like the saying goes '*time heals and things change*', it was time that I changed my mindset and face the situation with a more focused and sober mind, unlike the previous mind which was still in the clouds, dreaming. In the long run, it turns out this field is very interesting considering what we look at during experiments ranging from bacteria to DNA, viruses, blood, plants, animals etc. As it stands, I'm not disappointed with the turn out of events but I'm rather more optimistic with this field because it has more to offer including the education sector. As it is, education is a right and not a privilege.

Are there any skills or life lessons that you picked up during your time with CF at BISO that you are still implementing today?

Most certainly I learnt something. Lessons like how to stay focused and working hard on what you as an individual. Just like what happened at the time of my acceptance into Uni. I was depressed, thinking I was left out of something that I thought was better for me, but when I went back to BISO (which is more like my home) and I told Mr Kataso how I felt about it, I was surprised that he considered it as a big achievement. He was very happy for me and gave me plenty of advice. I just had to carry on and do my part knowing that once again I had the support of my 'family' [CF/BISO], and so, my heart was now at ease.

This year's theme for International Women's Day has been #choosetochallenge. What are some issues that you are choosing to challenge this year?

School wise, I choose to challenge myself to complete my studies this year regardless of the disparities that come with e-learning. I will challenge myself to take on any extra activity that is productive and beneficial to me and the people around me. This could be in form of a small business or forming a group work with friends. Unfortunately I can't say much about this as it is still under construction. So, for now we keep the faith and our fingers crossed!

Fundraising

A heart-felt thanks to you, our valued supporters

We are always so grateful for the unwavering support that we continue to receive from our valued supporters. Despite the global crisis that has impacted everyone's lives, we are still the humble recipients of your caring thoughts and support.

During the first quarter of 2021 alone, you have not only made generous donations in support of our vision, but you have also been taking part in some very impressive virtual, solo challenges.

All donations that have been so kindly made, come at a time where it has possibly more than ever, been life-changing support which is assisting in helping provide the much needed care for the orphans and vulnerable children that we are honoured to care for 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

A huge congratulations and thank you to superstar, Elizabeth Eastwood Dewing, who has triumphantly finished her half marathon in fundraising aid of Cecily's Fund. After making a start during the first lockdown last May, a leg injury meant a pause in progress. Unsurprisingly, now she has done it!

Diary excerpt: **"Day 31- Oct 18 9:30pm Air 49° (9°C) Water 61° (16°C) Felt great to ice my bones after hiking Rubicon Peak with**



Nick's swimming conditions.

(Photo courtesy of SF Gate photographer, Ryan Salm)

Elliot on my back. Having serious doubts about being able to see this through."

Now past the halfway date and near halfway to his fundraising goal the Lake Tahoe 365—cold water challenge is Nicolas Mitchell's admirable way of raising both awareness and essential funds for Cecily's Fund.

International School of Lausanne Sports Fundraiser

The International School of Lausanne, where Cecily Eastwood attended, has organised an incredible virtual sports challenge beginning in May. They aim to have as many members of the school community involved including students, teachers, parents and alumni, all trying to exercise 13000km to Tokyo and the Olympics. Lausanne, in Switzerland, where the school is based is the home of the International Olympic Committee.



Would you like to offer to have a virtual coffee morning, a solo adventure challenge, or something bigger (government rules applied)? Everything helps our young Zambians improve their life chances. Maybe your children's or grand-children's school would like to give a donation from a sponsored walk? All ideas are welcome and encouraged—We're still looking for runners for the London 10K on July 25th 2021!

Contact Anne, our senior fundraiser
(acooper@cecilysfund.org)

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

For lots of fun ideas and a fundraising pack full of tips, visit cecilysfund.org/fundraise

Your chance to help out

Donate today and help us change lives in Zambia

Whatever amount you can give, whether regular or as a one-time donation, can help Cecily's Fund build brighter futures for Zambia's orphaned and vulnerable children. Just £5 supports out feeding programme, while £50 can help us keep a child in school for a year.

Yes, I want to give Cecily's Fund a one-off donation of...

£

Please tick to agree with the following statement: I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations, it is my responsibility to pay any difference. This includes any donations I make in the future or have made in the past four years.

Please tick to confirm the above:

☐

Title

First name or initial(s)

Surname

Full home address

Postcode

Email

Date

Signature

This form **must** be signed in order to be valid

Please return this form to:

Cecily's Fund
Top Floor, 6 Church Green
Witney
Oxon
OX28 4AW

Single and regular donations can also be made online at www.cecilysfund.org. Thank you for your support!

Bank Standing Order Mandate

(Please also fill in the left-hand side)

This is an instruction to your bank. Please fill in the form, return it to us, and we will process it for you.

Please pay Cecily's Fund

CAF Gold, Sort Code 40-52-42 A/C No. 00089893

The sum of:

£

Each month

☐

Each quarter

☐

until further notice

Each year

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Date of first payment

Bank name

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Name of account holder

Account number

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