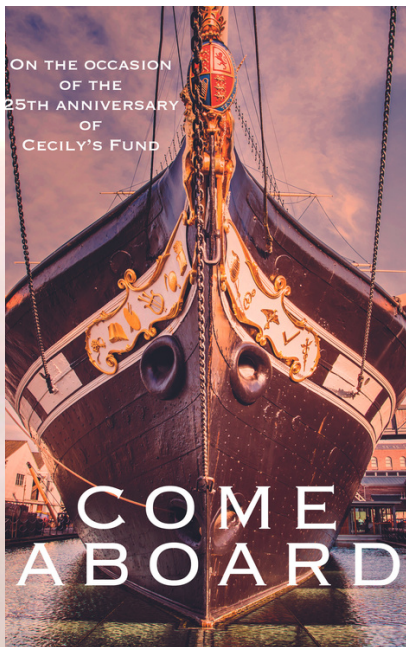




**Spring
Newsletter
2023**



**We Celebrate
25 Years of
Transforming
Lives**

Welcome



WELCOME

This year is a milestone for Cecily's Fund. We celebrate 25 years in Zambia. This newsletter looks at the journey so far and highlights what's been achieved with your support.

Our Co-Founder Basil Eastwood introduces this issue on page 3 and on pages 4 & 5 we take a whistle-stop tour of the projects we've delivered and the lives that changed as a result of your support. We speak to Beatrice Chola, (page 6) Founder of BISO, which has been central to Cecily's Fund's work from the early days. And on page 7 you can find out how to get involved with our 25th celebrations this year.

Since the last newsletter we have had a fantastic Christmas Appeal with the Big Give, raising £19,000 and benefitted from a Radio 4 Charity Appeal that's raised £13,000. Both are welcome additions to our fundraising at this challenging time when the cost of living tightens and natural disasters demand our attention and support.

It is not an overestimation to say that we couldn't do what we do without you. Cecily's Fund was built from the ground up by our supporters, many from those first days are still with us, a testament to the charity's drive and determination to find a way to raise hope for thousands with a bleak future.

As we look forward, we hope you will continue to support our journey. We want to raise awareness and funds to help lift thousands more out of life-limiting poverty and into sustainable futures and we believe we can with your continued support.

Thank you!

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Social

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About and Contact

Cecily's Fund is registered charity No: **1071660**.

We make education possible for orphaned and vulnerable children in Zambia.

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Roads Are Made for Journeys



As Cecily's Fund celebrates 25 years, Co-Founder Basil Eastwood reflects on how it began.



Our adored daughter Cecily died in a car crash in Zambia in June 1997 [above left]. Alison and I founded Cecily's Fund in her memory in September 1998.

Today we are a small, well-regarded international development charity able to win funding from the most demanding international donors.

Our family tragedy still motivates us and many of our donors, but increasingly we are motivated by what we achieve. We are making a real difference to the lives of thousands of young people, we show that **Education gives Hope.**

We were not driven by a burning sense of Christian mission. Nor, to be honest did we really know what we were letting ourselves in for. We certainly did not have a strategy at the outset.

The first key decision was not taken by us at all. CINDI, the local Zambian NGO where Cecily had been working, decided to use the money donated at her funeral to place orphans in their care into school for a year. The second decision was ours — to continue that work in Cecily's memory. Those two decisions in 1997 and 1998 have guided Cecily's Fund ever since.

Then it was a few hundred children in primary school now it is several thousand – both primary and secondary.

Then our focus was narrow, just getting these children into school. Now it is holistic, enabling better health and social outcomes as well as educational attainment.

We are strengthening communities to help them to be self-reliant and able to support the children in their care.

Our unique approach is defined by how we've always worked— in partnership. From the start we realised that interventions must be sustained and to do that effectively, local partnerships built over time work best. Cecily's Fund made that commitment and this makes us stand out.

As one of our Zambian partners said; "Cecily's Fund is different. You don't start talking about your exit strategy from the day you arrive."

We have been at it now for 25 years. HIV is no longer an automatic death sentence and it no longer attracts international compassion, but it still leaves massive social problems.

When we started, over 20% of Zambia's adults were HIV positive. 12% still are.

24% of Zambian children aged 15 to 17 have lost one or both parents, and 60% of Zambians still live in extreme poverty. Orphans are the poorest of the poor.

Hope for a better future through education is at the heart of what we do. Our challenge continues for decades to come and we are determined to be in this for the long haul.

Basil Eastwood

Co-Founder, Cecily's Fund

Help us change more lives: cecilysfund.org/donate

Transforming Lives...



As we celebrate 25 years, we take a whistle-stop tour of the points that changed over 50,000 lives!

25 years ago an unexpected journey began that forged new futures for a generation of children.

What started as a commitment to get as many children into school as possible, grew into a circle of care that now nurtures resilience and hope, helping to fight poverty for whole communities.

When Cecily's Fund first formed, Zambia was crippled by HIV/AIDS with 1 in 20 children under 15 orphaned, exacerbating the crippling poverty families faced and leaving thousands of children out of school. In the context of the AIDS crisis, lack of education is not only disempowering – it is lethal.

Cecily's Fund grew from a concept that education could be a route out of poverty. The first five years focused on helping orphans and vulnerable children go to school. We established partnerships with local NGO's and met Beatrice Chola, who founded BISO. We funded BISO's one room Community school and Early Years programme (we still do), and supported school leavers into teacher training. This laid the foundations for new futures and many of those helped 25 years ago are now teachers, doctors, nurses and business owners.

"It was seeing my father die that made me determined to make something of my life. I want to influence and change people's lives." Cynthia became a teacher.

The Power of Youth

As the charity grew in confidence and funding, helping children beyond school was the next step. In the following 10 years 22,500 children accessed education through new programmes that went beyond school. Tackling the root causes of poverty meant helping children to have hope, and get the life skills to overcome daily challenges, build resilience and self-belief.

As Naomi from Kitwe explained;

"The main issue was seeing no hope in my life. Through Cecily's Fund I got to Grade 12 and I'm thinking of college. It changed my life."

Through partnerships first with BISO and HODI, then CHEP, and Afya Mzuri, we expanded our influence. Working with local partners remains central to our ethos, sharing knowledge and resources means we can find and act on solutions together faster. With partners we developed what became our flagship Peer Health Education programme delivering life-changing support to children who had few role models.

Later, entrepreneurship training was introduced to older youth who had left school and remained unemployed. In the first five years PHE reached 20,000 young people, tackling sexual health and HIV/AIDS ignorance with knowledge and support.

A 3-year grant from Comic Relief funded our 'Connecting Communities' work that put education and life skills for out of work youngsters at the heart of 8 Copperbelt townships, and trained Peer Educators as mentors through 'Sunshine Clubs'. These vocational training clubs offered vital emotional support, friendship, and recreation, something that many orphaned youth struggled to find. Sunshine Clubs gave children the springboard they needed to explore new options, as PHE trainee Chileshe says;

"I decided to study nursing so that I could use the skills from Peer Educator and Sunshine Leader training and combine them with nursing to help more girls."

As our impact grew we advocated for young people on a national scale, lobbying the Zambian government to improve education rights for children on the margins of society.

And Changing Futures With You!



Circle of Care

Fifteen years later 35,000 children had been supported into school, and we took the learning from our experience to adopt a youth-led approach to development. Cecily's Fund's alumni were growing, and increasingly wanted to work with us. Keen to share what we'd learnt with other NGO's we produced our first publication, 'From Paying School Fees to Active Citizenship and Community Mobilisation using a Youth-led Approach'.

The more we did the more we saw that reducing poverty and inequality meant creating opportunities for vulnerable youth, especially girls and their mothers. Introducing GROW savings and loan groups (above left & right) helped women become financially independent and support their children to go to school and succeed. GROW is now one of our most successful programmes, building sustainable futures and challenging attitudes to women that perpetuate vulnerability and hold them back.

Working holistically with communities has allowed us to reach 2,500 parents and carers. The trust we've fostered is enabling us to raise sensitive subjects around gender violence and disability, and to better understand the challenges our communities face and want to talk about.

RESPECT was our first programme that aimed to reduce inequality and the stigma of disability. RESPECT brought together carers of deaf and hearing children in a unique programme that changed attitudes and behaviour towards people with disabilities. Mothers learnt how to form GROW savings groups, and start social businesses making low-cost reusable period pads as a way to increase family income, whilst also ensuring that teenage girls could remain in school during their period rather than staying at home.

"My daughter will have a better life than we had. She will become financially independent and have a better stand in society." Hope. (45) a small-scale farmer in Chingola, mother of 4 and GROW member.



The Future

25 years of working in urban areas and on the outskirts of cities, with a commitment to holistic support saw Cecily's Fund take on new work in rural Luansobe in 2022. While it is new territory, the challenges are familiar, and our 25 years' experience will help shape support for these rural hard-to-reach communities where little outside help exists.

The challenges we faced 25 years ago remain. HIV prevalence is still high. Violence against women remains common, 18% of children are orphans, and it is still a country of youth with over half the population under 25.

Today our encompassing approach wraps around the key moments and people in a child's life helping them navigate to adulthood with confidence and hope. Their stories of success drive our commitment to stay in Zambia, which is as strong now as it was on our first visit.

Education is knowledge and freedom, and it is still one of the best routes out of poverty and into a better future.



PHE deliver workshops to young people

Beatrice Chola, Founder of BISO Shares Her Story

“Patients were arriving in wheelbarrows, and on the backs of relatives, there were so many, we didn’t know what to do, they couldn’t afford treatment. There was no support.”

In 1995 as the HIV/AIDS crisis took hold of Zambia, Beatrice Chola was a nurse in Lusaka, horrified at what was happening, she had to do something, “I did the only thing I could, I took early retirement. I had to find out where the problem was, it was dire.”

HIV/AIDS had hit poor communities hard, and the stigma associated with it saw people hiding relatives indoors or using healers, the cost of treatment was out of reach. Beatrice explains, “I thought, communities are not taking care of these people, so I must do something - I started by organising the community leaders.”

Beatrice got results, recruiting 50 women to make family visits, she began to see attitudes change, first with nourishing food, and as her help was accepted, the barriers came down and treatment started to be received. Beatrice called this incredible outreach programme Bwafwano, which means helping one another, and we know it today as BISO.

Bwafwano was caring for 100,000 people in Lusaka. Beatrice raised funds to build a community clinic and a local police force to protect it.

As Beatrice and her team went into homes, they saw the impact of HIV/AIDS on the children, who stayed away from school to care for terminally ill parents, they weren’t getting an education or getting enough food, and the risk of them growing into street children with poverty on a repeat cycle was very real.

To combat this, Beatrice began holding school lessons under a tree, but her long-term plan was to build a community school, a place where traumatised children could go to rest, learn, and eat.



Beatrice’s phenomenal organising skills saw funding secured and two classrooms were built in 2003, this was when Cecily’s Fund first met her.

Our Co-Founder, Basil Eastwood visited Beatrice and with Cecily’s Fund’s support a further 60 women were recruited to work alongside parents to provide home help so that their children would be free to go to school, “We would do the children’s home chores instead”.

Alongside a feeding programme that tackled malnourishment, BISO’s intervention helped deter hundreds from becoming street kids. Cecily’s Fund paid for more teachers and food, additional classrooms and a library, and the Early Childhood program was born.

Today BISO remains embedded in the community and helps children go onto university with government bursaries, through an MOU Cecily’s Fund helped to forge. For those wanting something else, workshops and skills are available at BISO.

Thanks to Beatrice, thousands of children got a second chance, and with Cecily’s Fund’s long-term commitment more can realise brighter futures too.

Fundraising News



Dates For Your Diary!

Please join us for one or both events to celebrate our 25th Anniversary on 16 September 2023

Cecily's Day Celebration Event from 1:30pm

An afternoon of remembrance and celebration at St Paul's Church, St Paul's Road, Clifton, Bristol with buns and tea, hosted by Co-Founders Basil and Alison Eastwood. Hear our latest news and meet other supporters and the team!

Celebration Black Tie Gala Dinner aboard SS Great Britain, 6:30pm – 11pm

A unique black tie fundraising reception and dinner in the stunning first-class dining saloon aboard Brunel's fully restored SS Great Britain, the world's first ocean liner birthed in its original Bristol dock. Admired by Queen Victoria, explore the ship's unique maritime history in sumptuous surroundings.

Tickets are £125 per person. For details about attending either of these events please contact basil.eastwood@gmail.com



Vintage Morris Minor, Zambia

Peter Hills is raising funds for Cecily's Fund travelling across Zambia in his fully self-restored 1929 Morris Minor. He found the car as a wreck while working in Zambia, fell in love, and spent decades restoring it. He returns to Zambia this April to drive to the sites of its previous owners.

This is an epic and incredible journey across bumpy roads and great swathes of countryside in a car that is as tough as it is elegant. You can follow his travels and support the charity here: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/peter-w-hills



to Africa 1929 Morris Minor DS9936



BBC Radio 4 Appeal

Did you hear our BBC Radio 4 Charity Appeal? Told by our own Lwiza Mulenga the Appeal shared Noria's story of triumph over challenge. Sadly Noria is not alone and many children face similar struggles in Zambia. Our 25th anniversary is a reminder of how far we have come but of how much more there is to do to break the cycle of poverty to help children realise better futures. The Appeal raised £13,000.

Thank you!

Want To Fundraise for us ?- Get In Touch!

acooper@cecilysfund.org

25 Years of Hope

Your gift makes a difference!

£5 supports school lunches

£50 helps to keep a child in school for a year.

A regular donation helps us to plan and gift aid lets us claim an extra 25p on every £1 you give. Your personal data is only used to process your donation and keep you updated with our work.

Please return this form to:

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

Thank You For Your Support!

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

£

Gift Aid: 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.**

Registered Charity No: 1071660

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

One off

Date of first payment

Bank name

Bank address

Name of account holder

Account number

Sort code

Signature

Date