



Cecily's Fund Impact Report September 2024



PHE session on human rights at Kachema Musuma Community School

Impact Report **Our Peer Education Programme**

Spreading vital health information and HIV awareness in schools

Many programmes at Cecily's Fund take a holistic approach to combating poverty in Zambia, but without a doubt one of the most important ones is our Peer Health Educator (PHE) programme. Zambia remains a fairly young country where almost half of the population is 25 years or under, and one of the biggest reasons for this is the continued prevalence of HIV, and its devastating effect on young people and the population at large.

The purpose of our PHE programme is to train young Zambian school-leavers to teach other young people and share knowledge about the health risks there are around areas such as HIV and drug abuse, as well as how to avoid them and stay

safe. The programme also covers other health matters that affect young people in Zambia such as teenage pregnancy, whilst also teaching important life skills that build confidence and help them make informed decisions about their own health and well-being.

All three of our Zambian partners have reported great results in how our trained peer educators have helped to change the attitudes of many school pupils; leading them to better recognise what health risks are present and make better life choices. We hope you will find our most recent impact report to be an insightful guide into how your support through this programme is making a positive difference.

Programme objectives:

Since our programme started in 2001, we're proud to say that we've helped over 50,000 children benefit from our PHE programme, whilst we continue to train new PHEs every year. The goals of the PHE programme include:

- Promoting positive behavioural change among young Zambians, helping them to make better and healthier life choices
- Creating informed young people who understand issues relating to HIV prevention, reproductive health and have good psycho-social skills
- Developing confident and inspirational youth leaders who can act as role models for other young people.

Progress to date:

Our PHE programme continues to go from strength to strength, thanks to being propelled forward by the enthusiasm of our talented PHEs and the local schools we work with. We've received some excellent feedback from our Zambian partners which show that the pupils fully enjoy participating in the sessions and are applying what they've learnt to make better decisions in their own lives.

As one of the schools we've worked with, Luansobe Secondary School has reported that the number of girls dropping out due to teenage pregnancy has halved in the last year alone, whilst the number of incidents involving drug abuse among the students has also reduced. This has undoubtedly been helped by our PHE sessions, which shows that through your support, our work is having a positive effect on the lives of the young Zambians we aim to help.



Students and PHEs following a focus group session at the Highland School

Outcomes:

Increased awareness and better life skills

Our PHEs have worked incredibly hard to deliver a variety of sessions and focus groups with the aim of providing high-quality lessons that promote good life skills and health awareness. The PHEs we trained in Chazanga and John Laing were able to reach up to 1,023 pupils between the ages of 10 to 19 in this year alone, where the students learnt about issues relating to the transmission of HIV and other STIs, as well as learning about the dangers of drug abuse and the dynamics of boy and girl relationships as they enter adolescence.

Discussions during sessions showed that there was greater awareness and understanding among the pupils of HIV and sexual reproductive rights. This was reflected in the random knowledge assessments that the PHEs conducted, when many of the students demonstrated their improved understanding of these issues. Teaching fundamental life skills, such as critical thinking, being self-aware and how to support each other have also formed part of a separate series of life skills focus groups, which our PHEs have also been instrumental in delivering. Our aim is not only to spread important health awareness, but to give young people the social skills they need to develop into confident and successful adults.

Effective monitoring and training of PHEs

Ensuring that the students receive high quality teaching with access to the correct health information is essential, which is why all of our PHEs undergo rigorous training and monitoring in the schools they work in. We've received several reports from our Zambian partner CHEP which show that our PHEs have done an outstanding job in keeping the students engaged in all of the schools they've been

placed in. The Kachema Musama Community School in Chingola is one such example, where the guidance teachers observed that the PHEs planned their lessons well and always helped each other during lessons, showing the spirit of team work that the PHEs embody.

The PHEs work closely with the school teachers to ensure that the sessions have a clear lesson plan and that the students have the chance to participate and ask follow-up questions. We also ensure that the PHEs are familiar with our policies on safeguarding and personal self-conduct, ensuring that our lessons are conducted safely for the PHEs and the students. Several sessions have also focused on topics such as climate change and the role young people can play to help prevent the growing impact of global warming in their country. Overall, we're pleased to say that our peer educators have done a fantastic job in delivering our PHE programme. We have no doubt that they will continue to be outstanding representatives for Cecily's Fund.



A monitoring visit of a PHE delivering a session on climate change

Positive behavioural change

We believe it's important to not only deliver high quality PHE sessions, but that the students take this newfound knowledge and apply it to their own lives. Drug abuse and teenage pregnancies can be very common among young people in rural areas, where recreational activities can be non-existent and little health information is available. That's why we were delighted to receive a report from one of our partners, the Care Provider's Foundation, who highlighted the positive changes that had been seen in pupils attending the Luansobe Secondary School, which is one of the rural schools we support.

The school guidance teacher they spoke with highlighted how they had seen fewer girls dropping out of school due to teenage pregnancy, with 12 girls falling pregnant this year compared to 25 in 2023. They credited this improvement entirely to Cecily's Fund's PHE programme. Many of the students have also changed their attitudes to taking drugs, an activity which many have now stopped due to learning about its harmful effects through the PHE sessions. The learners also found the information about how to stay safe from HIV and Aids to be really useful, especially as in rural areas the topic can be treated as a taboo subject which is not often openly discussed.

Due to a lack of local recreational activities the PHEs also secured an agreement with the rural schools to start introducing extra-curricular activities such as football, to help the children to stay occupied after school and avoid getting tempted into negative social behaviours such as taking drugs. The rural schools we work with have all expressed enormous gratitude for the help that Cecily's Fund has given. As one teacher said 'A healthy child is a healthy nation!' It's a statement we couldn't agree more with!



A group photo of some of our PHEs following a mentoring session

A huge thank you from Cecily's Fund!

Our heartfelt thanks goes to you for the incredible generosity and assistance you've given us. The work we do would not be possible without your continued support, and thanks to your belief and trust in our work we can ensure that more young Zambians are able to access informative and sometimes life-changing information that can help them to stay healthy and grow up to become positive young role models in their communities.

With your support, our work is making a lasting difference in rural communities,

especially where access to young peer educators can make all the difference between young people indulging in negative vices and staying healthy. I hope you have enjoyed reading about the progress made with one of our programmes and I look forward to sharing more updates with you about our work in the months to come.

Matthew Kraus

Digital Supporter Engagement Officer
