

**‘A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for a
time of adversity.’**

Proverbs 17:17

LYN'S COLUMN



We count our overseas partners as brothers and sisters in Christ – and we're proud to do so because they are extraordinary people. They do incredible work, often in the harshest of circumstances and with minimal material reward. They are determined, courageous and deeply committed. We're privileged to work with them, fight battles together and see young lives changed.

Our relationship with each one of our partner projects is a deep commitment: we want to honour and serve them and their communities, through thick and thin. And crucially we strive to work alongside our partners on an equal footing: learning as well as teaching, receiving as well as giving. They are professionals and experts in their context. Our work with them is not about giving hand-outs: it's about trying to understand the deep-rooted issues and complex situations they're grappling with, and standing with them in solidarity as they seek solutions.

We don't always get this right. But this is our goal. And even in our fallible, human efforts, our gracious God meets us and blesses us. The results are more than we could ever hope for or imagine: rock-solid relationships and countless lives transformed. I hope these fruits will be clear to you as you read on!

Lyn

Lyn Edwards, Operations Manager

WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

Being born with a cleft palate could so easily have meant disability and discrimination for life for Francesca – until Wukwashi stepped in.

Francesca's mum, Sibyl, cannot stop talking about the transformation in her daughter. It seems almost miraculous that her toddler might have a normal life now.

In Zambia, all too often a cleft palate condemns a child to not only serious speech impediment but also stigma. Francesca, now 18 months old, used to find it almost impossible to keep food and drink in her mouth. Neighbours would gossip: Sibyl would despair.

A few months ago, Wukwashi's local support group arranged for Francesca to have corrective surgery in Lusaka, even paying for her transport. Francesca now looks completely different and she's even starting to talk. Sibyl's talking a lot too, about what God's done for her child.

It's taken Wukwashi years to establish support groups and connections to ensure children with treatable conditions in deprived communities are not abandoned. Now the impact of this work is spreading fast. Wukwashi volunteers are using our

'Transform Disability' resource to train churches in the Copperbelt and beyond, with the result that more and more children are supported and cherished.

Pray that more and more churches will catch Wukwashi's vision to bring children with disabilities out of isolation.



Photo: Before and after! The change in Francesca is remarkable.

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Deep-rooted issues in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) may seem insurmountable – but our partner project LVLE is confronting them with tenacity and courage.



Photo: LVLE is training local communities in essential nutrition principles.

Faced with giants such as poverty and injustice, a small organisation has to be resourceful to be effective. Rev Jean-Paul's team in Goma have learnt that partnership is their best weapon. That's why they collaborate closely with others, including some seen as contributing to society's problems.

Now, LVLE has taken its successful model of 'Synergies' – collaborations between key local groups and organisations to tackle child witch accusations – and extended it into villages around the Masisi and Rutshuru areas. Remarkably, the Synergies are now helping 'prayer rooms', strongly linked to this abuse, to develop child protection policies. Typically, leaders of these 'prayer rooms' lack theological training – and accountability – so this represents big progress.

LVLE has taken a similarly resourceful and courageous approach to tackling local food shortages. At the time of writing, 27 million people in the DRC were 'acutely food insecure', the World Food Programme said. The LVLE team are now training 83 households in Turunga using our Transformation Resource, 'Let's Grow!', to set up their own gardens, as well as creating two example community gardens – partnering with the community to help them feed themselves.

Pray that God will continue to multiply LVLE's efforts and partnerships in miraculous ways.

LIVING IN THE MEANTIME

Learning to live with the unresolved is par for the course when you're working in deprived communities, as APRECOM knows all too well. But there's always cause for hope.

Edward's story is not fully written. The nine-year-old has severe epilepsy and is often very ill. The medication he needs is expensive and hard to come by in Rwanda – and too many people believe his fits mean he's cursed.

Despite the challenges, Odeth and her team are working hard to push Edward's story forward. They know he deserves better. They are busily building a society and an environment where children like Edward can expect different outcomes. They continue to train churches to reach out to children with disabilities: volunteers are now actively seeking out children who are so often hidden away. Ten more Edwards were identified, connected with their local churches and supported in the last quarter. And communities are realising they too can rewrite children's futures.

APRECOM has also been training churches to help improve communities' nutrition and food security, using our 'Let's Grow!' training materials. Already, two churches have committed to growing crops especially for twelve disabled children and their families, even selling surplus produce to give them cash too.

Ask God to intervene in the lives of children like Edward and strengthen their communities.



Photo: APRECOM is helping Edward and his mum to thrive.

AMBASSADORS

Our amazing Ambassadors are integral to our work, central to our team – and we need more of them! Could you consider joining them?

Across the UK, BCT ambassadors are raising the profile of our work and mobilising their churches to meet the needs of marginalised children. They are a voice for those who have no voice – and that voice needs amplifying.

If you share our vision of a world where all children are loved, safe, nurtured and free to reach their God-given potential, please consider becoming a BCT Ambassador! Do get in touch to find out how you could represent BCT in your church.



REACHING FURTHER

Amid increasing pressures on communities, our training resources enable us to multiply our impact and extend our reach.

A key part of our collaboration with partner projects is providing resources that will allow them to punch above their weight in tackling the root causes of complex social problems.

The list of those training materials is growing. Twelve modules of 'Transform Families' are now available through the BCT website, addressing subjects from normal child development to loving discipline. And 'Sickness, Health and Healing' and 'Mental Health Matters' have now been translated into Swahili, as well as English and French.

Please pray that our Transformation Resources will make a tangible difference to how communities care for their children.



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BCT is dedicated to mobilising Christians to respond to the needs of children at risk. Our vision is to see the Christian church leading the way in building a local and global society where every child is loved, safe, valued, nurtured and free to reach their God-given potential. Through teaching, training, advice, networking and financial support, BCT works with project partners to help restore the lives of marginalised and vulnerable children and to bring about changes in the attitudes, practices and situations that harm them. These marginalised children include those affected by abuse, exploitation, HIV, homelessness, disability and poverty.

Editors: Seren Boyd,
Simeon Whiting
Design: Vernon Kingsley

Registered Charity No. 1073817



How to contact us

Write to us: Bethany Children's Trust Office 214, Hill House, 210 Upper Richmond Road London SW15 6NP

Call us: +44 (0) 20 8977 7571

Email us: admin@bethanychildrenstrust.org.uk

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