



**REPORT TO SCHULPROJEKTE SAMBIA
ON THE USE OF THEIR COMMUNITY FUND
2024**



Introduction

In January 2024, Schulprojekte Sambia kindly donated USD 1,000 as a discretionary fund to assist impoverished, sick, aged or otherwise vulnerable people in the local community with medical or other urgent issues that they had no means to cover the cost of.

Breakdown of Expenditure

The fund was administered by me, and I was able to purchase items or assign cash as follows:

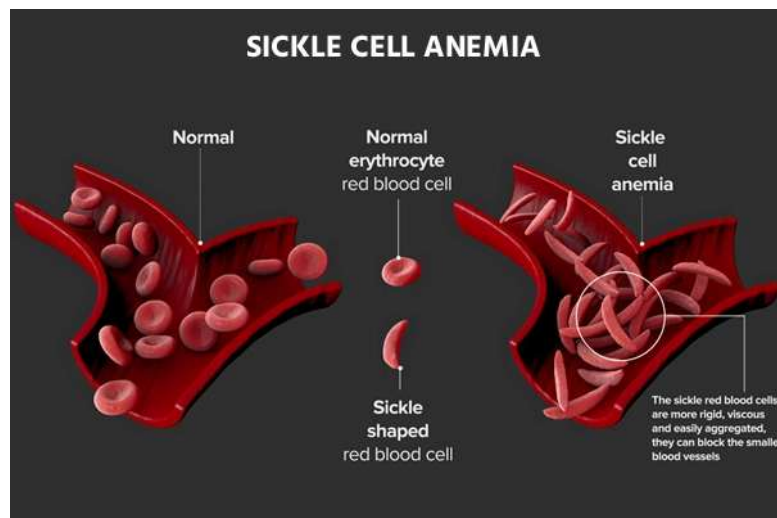
- 3 emergency food parcels for the elderly Elizabeth Zulu (the head of a very poor family I have been supporting for 22 years)
- Expenses for Elizabeth Zulu to attend Kamoto Hospital re eye problems
- Funeral contribution re the passing of the 3-year-old son of Moloson Banda
- Rechargeable torch for the night watchman at Mfuwe Primary School who had no torch and was seriously chased by an elephant one night
- Medical support for elderly Headman, Anderson Phiri for eye treatment (cataracts) and emergency dental treatment
- Transport money for the elderly Anderson Phiri to attend Kamoto Hospital to see his daughter who had an emergency caesarean operation when her twins were found to be in a breach position
- Wheelchair and spare tubes and tyres for a severely disabled girl in Grade 10 at Jumbe Day Secondary School
- Eye ointment for Pelela Kalima and Douglas Nkhoma (two of our ACL students) for eye ointment during a conjunctivitis outbreak
- Emergency dental treatment for Eunice Zulu (infected teeth removed)
- Wheelchair and crutches for Blessing Kunda, a Grade 6 girl from Uyoba Primary School who has sickle cell anaemia and mobility problems
- Monthly medicine and vitamins to assist Blessing Kunda with her sickle cell anaemia.
- Daily milk (250mls) for Blessing Kunda – administered by her Head teacher at Uyoba School so the family do not drink it!
- Expenses for Blessing Kunda to attend Kakumbi Clinic, Kamoto Hospital and Mambwe District Hospital for medical assessment of her sickle cell anaemia and mobility issues
- Contribution to the funeral of Blessing Kunda's mother
- Bandages and antibiotics for Charles Banda, a Grade 10 student at Mfuwe Day Secondary School who has sickle cell anaemia and is susceptible to serious ulcers on his legs.
- Medicine and vitamins for Charles Banda's sickle cell condition.
- Food contribution for the funeral of a Chipembe student at Yosefe Secondary School
- Fordson Ngulube expenses to attend a review re eye operation to remove cataracts at Chipata General Hospital
- Bicycle and spare tubes/tyres for Mumba Kunda, the older sister of Blessing Kunda who is now her guardian, so she could cycle to tend her maize field 15km away, rather than walk.
- Single mattress for Annie Chimba, a young woman with cerebral palsy who I have been supporting for over 15 years



Annie and her Mum with her new mattress

Case Story – Blessing Kunda

Blessing Kunda is a 16-year-old girl who is in Grade 6 at Uyoba Primary School. She has sickle cell anaemia, a condition that is fairly common in Africa. It is inherited and is caused by red blood corpuscles being c-shaped or sickle-shaped.



Symptoms are multiple, but include fatigue, lowered resistance to disease, frequent infections, swelling in hands and feet, and severe pain attacks that can last several days. Sickle cell anaemia causes tissue damage because the tissues don't get enough oxygen. Tissue damage hurts, so the patient may have pain in their arms, legs, chest and back. It may start as an ache that gets worse or come on suddenly, causing excruciating pain. It is not curable, but symptoms can be treated or lessened.

I first met Blessing when she came to the Chipembele Centre for the day in May 2024 with the Conservation Club of Uyoba Primary School. She was clearly weak and then and had to be lifted in and out of the truck. She was walking with the type of crutches that go under your arm pits

(banned in most developed countries because of the pain and damage they can cause to the tissue under the arms). When I spoke to her, she told me that she had sickle cell and as a result her spleen had been removed several years earlier. She was clearly limping and said that one leg was shorter than the other. She told me her father (a wildlife scout) had passed away the year before and she was being kept by her mother (who was not working) together with her two older sisters and a younger brother.

Blessing participated fully in the day's activities and was in the winning team. Thanks to the SPS community fund I was able to promise to buy her a pair of better crutches and a wheelchair so she could more easily get from class to class when at school. She got back on the truck as a very happy girl.



Very sadly, when she arrived home later that afternoon, she found her mother had suddenly passed away (she collapsed outside), leaving her as a double orphan. Her older sister, Mumba, who is in her early 20s, suddenly became the guardian to her 3 younger siblings. She began fishing as a means to support the family, but it became very clear very quickly that they needed more support, and that Blessing was in particular need of extra nutrition.

I immediately liaised with the Head Teacher at Uyoba School and arranged for the Valley Doctors (Keith and Ginnie Birrell, a husband-and-wife team from the UK) to examine her. Dr Ginnie Birrell is a retired paediatrician and assessed that in addition to Blessing's nutritional and medical needs for the sickle cell disease, she had badly crumbling hip joints (caused by the condition) which had led to the variation in height of her legs. She was referred to two different hospitals and the expenses were kindly covered by the SPS fund. The diagnosis about her hips was confirmed and the orthopaedic doctor recommended hip replacements. Unfortunately, these cannot be done until she is at least 18 years old, and all growth has stopped. Fortunately, she only lives about 50m from the school so does not have far to walk to reach there.

Since then, I have purchased a whole range of medication and vitamin supplements for her as prescribed at the hospital. Mumba ensures Blessing takes them every day and informs me in plenty of time before they run out. I also buy a case of long-life milk (250ml sachets) which I leave with the Head Teacher. She makes sure Blessing drinks one every day to help with her diet.

I then discovered Blessing's other sister was pregnant and she gave birth to a healthy baby boy in October. There is no father on the scene, so the baby is yet another added financial strain for Mumba. I also found out that Mumba was walking 15km every day to the family maize field – and 15km back again. This was the field she used to help her mother with, but now she had to do it

alone. This was not a sustainable situation – imagine how tired she would be after a morning tending the field and then cycling home! I therefore bought her a bicycle using SPS funds, which not only helps her transport situation immensely but also means she has more time and energy to care for Blessing when she reaches home.

Blessing's health has improved significantly – her face looks radiant and although she still has her excruciating pain attacks, they are less frequent and she is able to control them with strong painkillers. I am pleased to report that despite her absences from school she performed well enough in Grade 6 to progress to Grade 7 in January 2025.

I visit her regularly and will continue to monitor her health and progress. She has wonderful support from the Head Teacher and another the woman teacher at the school (seen right, in the photo below).



Blessing on her first ever visit to the Chipembele Centre, seeing the Luangwa River for the first time



Blessing's two older sisters outside the family home.



Mumba with her new bicycle



Blessing with her new wheelchair



Blessing looking radiant, Christmas 2024

Conclusion

The SPS Community Fund helped improve the lives of many people and their families in 2024. On behalf of Chipembele I extend my heartfelt thanks to have had this fund available for discretionary

use whenever urgent needs were brought to my attention. Your kind donation truly made a difference to some of the poorest and most vulnerable members of our community.

Anna Tolan

Founding Director