



# BANANAS YIELD OPPORTUNITY

BY ANIETRA HAMPER, CHILDFUND CORRESPONDENT

**W**ho would ever think that something as simple as bananas could provide opportunities to break the cycle of poverty. In the village of Chongwe in Zambia, banana plantations have become a symbol of hope and a global example of how empowering youth can result in direct change for an entire generation.

Many of the children in Chongwe are among a booming population in the developing world known as the “youth bulge.” Outnumbering adults disproportionately,

**A banana plantation offers a source of employment for youth in this Zambian community. With it comes community development that will impact families there for years to come.**

these youth (ages 15 to 29) often have little hope of accessing gainful employment.

With support from ChildFund, the village of Chongwe is defying the odds. By bringing the community together and offering resources and education, the youth of Chongwe have transformed a growing problem into lasting change. ChildFund challenged local youth to envision a collaborative effort that would enlist their skills and create a long-term opportunity for employment.

They realized that their community offered a perfect environment for agriculture, and they suggested trying to establish a banana plantation. Soon, what was just an idea became a reality. A ChildFund grant paid for seeds and a state-of-the-art irrigation system powered by solar panels. A local chief donated land; the Ministry of

Agriculture taught the children how to grow bananas and care for their equipment; and a fertilizer company provided the training to farm the plantation.

The result is a flourishing farm of more than 1,500 banana trees and residual employment opportunities for the youth. More than 50 youth in Chongwe have become prospering entrepreneurs. They have learned to run a business and follow how bananas fit into the larger world economy, daily checking commodity prices.

The program is so successful in Chongwe that there are plans to expand and replicate the program elsewhere. Some of the boys and girls who care for the banana plantation are laying the foundation for another busi-

***Many of the children in Chongwe are among a booming population in the developing world known as the “youth bulge.”***

ness. They plan to stock lakes and generate a commercial fishing industry using the same economic and business principles.

What began as a challenge ended as an opportunity. The Chongwe youth are a testament to the kind of change that can happen when potential is discovered and resources allow it to flourish. **CW**







## ChildFund Experiences One Day Without Shoes

BY TASHA CHAMBERS, COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE

**C**hildFund employees came to work barefoot on April 10. It wasn't a new policy, but rather it was intended to raise awareness about the day-to-day lives of children who go without shoes



because their parents cannot afford to purchase them.

The day was inspired by an annual event started by TOMS Shoes. It wasn't easy, and it was not intended to be. To develop a better appreciation for those who don't own shoes in the countries where ChildFund works, staff exposed their feet to co-workers, walked barefoot on work floors dodging staples and trying not to stub toes. Ironically, the one day staff went barefoot, many were startled by a snake curled up at the main entrance.

While uncommon at the

Richmond, Va., headquarters, snake encounters are common for many children in ChildFund's program areas. Children who go barefoot are exposed to disease, soil-transmitted illnesses and insect or reptile bites.

Not having shoes also prevents many children from attending school because shoes are mandatory.

To create a more realistic experience, employees walked through boxes filled with lava rocks, pebbles and sand. Employees, including Anne Lynam Goddard, president and CEO, stepped right in. **cw**

**ChildFund International employees, including President and CEO Anne Lynam Goddard, take a day to bare their feet to understand the important role TOMS Shoes plays in donating shoes to children in our program.**



## MEETING PEOPLE FACE TO FACE

**M**eeting people in person is the best way to tell your story. That is why ChildFund initiated a program we call Face to Face.

Face to Face allows ChildFund representatives to go door to door, talk to people while they are shopping at the mall, or even meet them on the sidewalk of a major city. This provides an opportunity to talk one-on-one to people about ChildFund's work, and it allows time for questions and answers about what we want to accomplish on behalf of the children in our programs.

Sponsorship is a simple premise that opens many possibilities for the children whose lives are touched. "But we know that people have questions that can't be answered while watching a commercial," says Laura Thornton, director of marketing. "Face to Face gives us the opportunity to answer the questions."

So if someone from ChildFund wants to talk to you as you are rushing down the street, you will know they are trying to tell a story and find more people to help children in need. **cw**

### CURRENT FACE TO FACE ACTIVITIES

- Meeting people in the Mall of America
- Going door to door in New York, Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia
- Meeting people on the streets of Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Chicago, D.C. and various cities in Maryland and Virginia

# LIVE! EVENTS

## Volunteers Spread Story of Sponsorship at LIVE! Events

BY KATE NARE, CHILDFUND MARKETING SPECIALIST

ChildFund has been on a whirlwind nationwide tour with Thompson Square since February. During each concert, the husband-and-wife duo of Keifer and Shawna Thompson, who sponsor a young girl from Indonesia, take a moment to describe the difference each fan can make in a child's life through child sponsorship.

ChildFund relies on the help of current sponsors to volunteer at events in our LIVE! concert series and share their experiences of sponsoring a child with concertgoers. Volunteers are stationed at a ChildFund booth, ready to have conversations with fans about how sponsorship can change the life of a child. The table is lined with information packets about children ready to be sponsored that evening.

One of our recent outstanding volunteers is Alan Mireles, who volunteered at a Thompson Square concert in San Diego. Talking



**These volunteers helped answer questions about ChildFund at a concert.**

with concertgoers before the show and during intermission, Mireles shared photos and letters from his sponsored child, Carla, a little girl from Brazil whom he has sponsored since 2009.

"My experience at the concert was amazing," Mireles says. "It was very self-rewarding to volunteer for such a great cause. With meeting new people, listening to great music — and let's not forget saving lives as well — it was an overall awesome experience that I was proud to be a part of!"

Thanks to the support of Mireles and all of our concert volunteers, ChildFund has signed up hundreds of new sponsors who are committed to changing the lives of children worldwide who are living in poverty.

*If you would like to volunteer with ChildFund, visit our website or scan the below QR code to review volunteer guidelines and a list of upcoming concerts in your area, or simply call 800-458-0555 for more information and to sign up. **cw***



- \* Thompson Square – through October
- Fab Four – through the summer
- PFR – August
- \* Girls of Grace – through February
- \* Neal McCoy – through November
- \* *events where we need volunteers*



**Watch This  
New Series**

**ChildFund**  
International

**Visit ChildFund's work in Kenya  
through a new Web reality series:  
Missions In Action**

Host Alex Boylan travels the globe in search of great stories about people helping people. The webisodes offer an inside view of how ChildFund supporters are making a real difference in Kenya.

Follow the link to watch; and then share with your friends on social media.

**[ChildFund.org/articles/MIA](http://ChildFund.org/articles/MIA)**



## WORLD NEWS

### DOMINICA

The Caribbean National Office was honored with a national award by the Ministry of Education for its outstanding service to Early Childhood Development in Dominica. We are working with the Dominican government to mainstream our Early Childhood Development program. ChildFund focuses much of its work on children from birth to age 5 so they can get a healthy start in life.



### DOMINICA AND ST. VINCENT

ChildFund is actively participating in a United Nations study on Violence Against Children in the Caribbean. For more than 10 years, ChildFund has been contributing to national policy in Dominica and The Caribbean as a member of the National ECD Council and the Child Rights Committee. Our efforts continue to influence the National School Crisis Management Policy and the National Child Friendly Schools Approach in both Dominica and St. Vincent.

### THE GAMBIA

The drought in western Africa has caused massive food shortages in many countries, including The Gambia, where ChildFund serves more than 20,000 children in the large West Coast region. In a country where most people depend on seasonal agriculture and subsistence farming for their survival, widespread crop failure means that most of the rural population is experiencing hunger. ChildFund is responding with support for 8,000 children across 32 communities where we work. Our efforts are focused on

malnutrition, child protection and the psychosocial needs of children caught up in the food crisis, especially of the most vulnerable — children under 5. Meanwhile, we are keeping a close eye on neighboring Senegal, as well.

### INDIA

Nearly 90 percent of 4,450 pregnant women in ChildFund India's program areas delivered their children in health facilities. This is a





significant achievement given that institutional delivery in many areas throughout the country is below 50 percent. In a related effort, ChildFund India served more than 56,000 under-5 children and 86,855 community members through its early childhood interventions.

## MOZAMBIQUE

Finding viable livelihood activities for older youth is important in creating lasting, sustainable change. In Mozambique, beekeeping training was organized for young people with the support of ChildFund and the Ministry of Agriculture. Beekeeping offers a new skill and a means to earn a living.

## PAKISTAN

ChildFund Afghanistan works to support refugees returning from Pakistan. This program — Resettlement Support for Afghan Returnee Families (RESTART) — includes education for parents of children ages 0–3 and the construction of five daycare centers for 200 children ages 3–5. In addition, solar power water systems and winterization support programs (distribution of winter supplies such as blankets) are underway in the area.



## PHILIPPINES

ChildFund Philippines responded to the devastating flooding and landslides that swept through the south in mid-December. Cagayan De Oro, where 1,200 children are enrolled, was greatly impacted. Tens of thousands were displaced, and ChildFund responded immediately with the distribution of food and non-food items. Eight Child-Centered Spaces (temporary places where children go for adult supervision) were opened in evacuation centers.

## TIMOR-LESTE

ChildFund, working in Timor-Leste, a small country near Indonesia, made big strides in food security. Over a period of several months, staff there oversaw the distribution of 135 goats that were shared among nine

farmer groups. It was followed by training on goat raising, health care and feeding practices. Each farmer group shares the responsibilities of caring for the goats so that a number of families



benefit from a source of food and a method of generating income by selling any goat milk not needed for the families' consumption. **CW**






ChildFund wants children to participate in their future. One way is by encouraging them to ask questions in school.

**ChildFund**<sup>®</sup>  
International

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