



ACCOMPLISH
CHILDREN'S TRUST

Accomplish Children's Trust

S U M M E R N E W S L E T T E R

J U N E 2 0 2 0

Read the story
behind our new
logo (above) on
page 2



Learning sign language



Receiving a 'bucket of love'

Accomplish Children's
Trust CIO is a registered
charity in England &
Wales, charity number
1182573

Amazing response to our coronavirus appeal

Our emergency coronavirus appeal has raised over £17,000 and we are overwhelmed by the generosity of our supporters. Thank you so much! Given the incredible response to our appeal, we have been able to pay grants covering the wages and medical supplies to which we are committed for the next four months so that all our life-changing projects in Africa can continue. This includes paying teachers' and outreach workers' salaries, providing food for our special needs schools and medication for the epilepsy programmes.

Coronavirus has brought hardship to people all over the world and in many parts of rural Africa it has exacerbated pre-existing poverty. In Uganda and Malawi, rainfall was low last year, causing this year's

harvests to be poor. Lockdown has seen inflated food prices, alongside many families losing their source of income. Restrictions have also made it difficult for people to travel to markets to buy food, or to hospitals for medical treatments. Kyaninga Child Development Centre (KCDC) reports that 25% of the children with disabilities they treat at their rehabilitation centres suffer from malnutrition even in normal circumstances. The impact of lockdown on low income families in a country with no social security has the potential to be devastating.

KCDC and the Rwenzori Special Needs Foundation (RSNF) have been distributing food to families in remote villages during lockdown, as we report below. Using some of the



funds raised through our coronavirus appeal, Accomplish provided a grant for food for over 200 families.

Accomplish has been working with RSNF for several years to provide agricultural equipment to families, most of whom have been able to grow enough food to sustain themselves through lockdown. What's more, these families have donated food to 20 additional households.

Saving lives with buckets of love

Kyaninga Child Development Centre (KCDC) and the Rwenzori Special Needs Foundation (RSNF) have been distributing 'buckets of love' to families in remote villages near Fort Portal, Uganda. The buckets contain food, information about hygiene, and activities for children to do.

The KCDC team had reached 321 families by May 21 across seven districts, over five weeks. They are providing home-based therapy and education programmes, as well as nutrition.

The food seems to have come at just the right time. Several of the



families that RSNF visited had no food at all; they found the children eating grass. KCDC found four cases of severe acute malnutrition, but they were able to take these people to a nutrition ward at the regional referral hospital for further management and to receive therapeutic feeds. One little girl called Jackline



and her grandmother were starving, surviving on one meal a day. But in the last three weeks, Jackline has made good progress with KCDC's support and has gained 2.5kgs in weight. Thank you for supporting this vital work through our coronavirus appeal.



Accomplish's founder Rebecca Cornish was awarded an MBE in the Queen's 2020 New Year's Honours list (read about it on page 2)

Unveiling our new logo



Jeremiah, who is blind, is a student at RAP-CD's St Agnes secondary school. He achieved top marks in his 2019 year-end exams, coming second in the whole of Uganda!

Accomplish aims to lift people up, enable them to reach their full potential, and empower children with disabilities to achieve new things. We have tried to reflect this in our new logo, with the children reaching up and stretching themselves, the hand supporting them, and the upbeat, cheerful colours. We would love to hear what you think of the logo (which you may have already seen on Facebook, where it was first unveiled earlier this year.) Please share your feedback with us at accomplish@accomplishtrust.org.uk

Accomplish celebrated its tenth year in operation in 2019 and we took the opportunity to have a



period of reflection, renewal and regrowth. The new logo is part of this and we have also written a new mission statement. These developments follow on from our transition to a CIO last year (which is the charity equivalent of becoming a limited company rather than a sole trader) with a

new charity number: 1182573. We are also redesigning our website—please keep an eye on our [Facebook page](#) for news of the website's relaunch.

Our new mission statement reaches beyond the practicalities of providing education, medical care and income support, to reflect our wider aspirations:

Our mission is to transform the lives of children with disabilities in Africa, usually in poor remote regions. We believe every child should be loved, respected and encouraged to reach their full potential.

Thank you for your support over the past decade. Here's to the next 10 years!

Accomplish founder awarded MBE

We are thrilled to announce that Rebecca Cornish was awarded an MBE in the Queen's 2020 New Year's Honours list for services to children with disabilities in Africa. This award recognises more than a decade's hard work and dedication as Rebecca has spearheaded Accomplish's expansion.

Accomplish's story begins in 2005 when Rebecca moved to Kasese in western Uganda to spend three years working as a physiotherapist in Kagando Hospital for Africa Inland Mission. One area that touched Rebecca deeply during her time in Kagando was the need for community healthcare for those who were not able, or could not afford, to make their way to a hospital. This was a particularly acute need for children and families with any form of disability. Disability carries a social stigma in many parts of Africa, and families are ashamed to admit to having chil-

dren living under this 'curse'. As a result, their medical, education and social needs go unattended, and those suffering are often left languishing in the dark recesses of the family hut. Rebecca met with fledgling parent support networks in the Kasese region who were impassioned to see social change and wider acceptance of their children. Their vision was far reaching but they were held back by the total lack of resources and any community or national support. Rebecca worked with these groups on community outreaches and saw the need for medical intervention and education first-hand. Upon her return to the UK, she founded Accomplish Children's Trust in November 2008.

In the past 12 years, Accomplish has helped to establish schools, vocational training centres, community outreaches, medical care and income generation initiatives. One of the largest projects is RAP-CD's special needs primary school, which has almost 200 pupils and has received awards.



The Accomplish epilepsy outreach programme now provides medication for over 700 previously untreated children. Epilepsy treatment guidelines produced by Accomplish have now been adopted by Uganda's health authority for national dissemination. Families and communities have benefited from goat, pig, and farming projects.

"Rebecca is an inspiration in her dedication to making a positive impact in the areas of social stigma, medical intervention and education for these young children in rural Africa. That so many have been touched via the charity and its fundraising, is in itself a tribute to her drive and selfless giving," said Dr. Tom Jackson, Chair of Accomplish.



Cerebral palsy in Africa: the facts



Accomplish works with young people who have a wide range of disabilities, including cerebral palsy: a condition caused by a brain injury sustained before, during or shortly after birth. Children affected have difficulties controlling the movements of their arms, legs or both. Around a third of children with cerebral palsy also have learning difficulties.

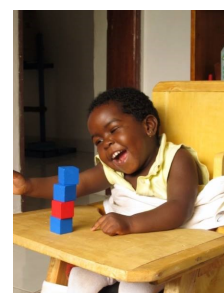
In rural Uganda and Malawi, there is so little knowledge about cerebral palsy that parents are often told that

their child is cursed or contagious. Other families avoid them for fear of catching this affliction. Some parents hide their children away. Families rarely have enough money to take their child to a doctor, and those that do come back disappointed that there is no cure for the condition, and in fact, there is a lifetime of often unaffordable therapies ahead. As a consequence, many children do not receive treatment. Their limbs begin to contract as their muscles do not receive the stimulation they need to maintain balance. The contractures get so bad that the limbs begin to 'fold up' to the point that children cannot stand or put on a t-shirt. Eventually, children spend so long lying down that they cannot cough up the normal secretions in their chest, so infections set in, which can damage the lungs.

But this does not have to be the case. Accomplish supports a physiotherapist and occupational therapist at Kyaninga Child Development Centre (KCDC) in Fort Portal, Uganda. They work with children with cerebral palsy and their families, and teach them exercises. KCDC also provides devices that help children adapt to their disability. Furthermore, KCDC educates local communities that cerebral palsy is not contagious and that children can go to school. KCDC also organises events regularly to bring parents and children

with disabilities together. The equipment at KCDC's centres facilitates more specialised care if needed. These vital services give care and confidence to children and their families.

Accomplish also partners with the Heart of Mercy Project in the Zomba region of Malawi. Heart of Mercy works with local children who have cerebral palsy and other severe disabilities. It supports children and their families through outreach visits and practical help, such as teaching them exercises to improve mobility.



Will... you think about Accomplish?

In these difficult and thought provoking times, many people are considering doing things which have been at the back of their minds until now. One of these issues is making a will. If you are considering writing or rewriting your will, may we humbly ask if you might consider including Accomplish in your giving? In the future you would be making a huge difference to many children with disabilities who have very few resources at their disposal.

Flonika learns to walk

Flonika, who is 8 years old, has cerebral palsy. She lives in Wilson village in Malawi. Flonika has difficulty moving, so she needs help with everything, including feeding. Since her mother's home was destroyed in a cyclone in January 2019, she has lived in her grandmother's mud house. The grandmother (who looks after Flonika while her mother works in the fields) is very proactive in obtaining medical care for Flonika when she is sick, which she often is, contracting malaria three or

four times a year. The Heart of Mercy team, which Accomplish supports, visits Flonika every month. When Gladys from the Heart of Mercy first met Flonika, she couldn't walk. Gladys taught her some basic exercises and encouraged her grandmother to keep her moving. As a result, Flonika has now taken her first steps and is starting to walk! Flonika has also been given a goat (through a project in her village supported by Accomplish) so her family will earn an income by



Flonika and her grandmother

selling its kids. Owning a goat also increases Flonika's status in her village.

Accomplish Children's Trust CIO

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OUR PARTNERS

Rwenzori Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities (RAP-CD) has established a special needs primary school and a secondary school. It also runs an extensive outreach programme visiting 350 families four times a year.

Rwenzori Special Needs Foundation (RSNF) supports children with disabilities and their families through vocational training and income-generating projects.

Kyanninga Child Development Centre (KCDC) runs two rehabilitation centres through which they provide physiotherapy, occupational and speech therapy to children with disabilities. They have recently started running epilepsy clinics.

Heart of Mercy Project in the Zomba region of Malawi supports local children with disabilities and their families through outreach visits and practical help.

Proreso School for the Deaf in Bunia, Democratic Republic of Congo, has 253 students, many of who are orphans. Each deaf child comes accompanied by a sibling. Accomplish contributes towards the school's food costs.

Exploring opportunities in Ethiopia

Chris Acton, a trustee of Accomplish, and his wife Hilary recently visited Ethiopia to explore possibilities for Accomplish to work there. Chris and Hilary were hosted by Moira McLure, a missionary who works with BEZA, a development charity in Gaiyint (which is supported by the protestant church in Addis Ababa and some UK churches). BEZA runs a number of projects in Gaiyint town. Its development arm has a range of outreach workers and project managers, all of whom appear to be highly effective.

One project is a successful kindergarten in Gaiyint for children aged four to seven. There are four classes, each with a trained Montessori teacher and an assistant. Children learn both English and Amharic. There are 110 children registered, half of whom pay a fee, and the remainder get free places. Other development projects include tutorial sessions for older children three times a week. These sessions are for the poorest children in the town, to supplement their school learning. BEZA also operates an impressive empowerment programme for women.

Chris and Hilary visited two local families whose children have disabilities. Nine-year-old Andabet (pictured above, right with his mother, Kirkham) has multiple disabilities: poor sight, learning and speech difficulties, and behavioural prob-

lems. These conditions probably resulted from a bleed on the brain when he was 18 months old. As a result, he cannot be left alone and cannot attend school.

The family (with two older children) is extremely poor, and the father left several years ago. Kirkham has a one-room government house and earns a small amount of money from making and serving local beer. She has to carry the water for this across a busy highway, whilst carrying her son on her back. BEZA include Kirkham in outreach activity and supply Andabet with clothes. They also paid for him to attend hospital in Addis for an assessment (the only centre in Ethiopia for disability assessment), and for six-month follow-up sessions. Medication has stabilised his behaviour and he can walk unsteadily. What the family really needs is a helper to look after Andabet to free his mother up to work and to carry water safely.

Chris and Hilary also met Mastaba, whose third child, Bizuayu, appears to have cerebral palsy (although she has not had a formal diagnosis). Bizuayu is four years old and is very well looked after by her moth-



er and older sister. There is also a new baby who appears to be blind. Mastaba has attended women in empowerment programmes at BEZA and received about £30 to buy chickens. The family receives no other help or healthcare for Bizuayu (above).



Accomplish is now considering whether to start working in Ethiopia and how to provide support to these two families.

Bringing warmth



It is strange to us to think of African children being cold. However, the wind can howl and temperatures can plummet, especially in high altitude regions. Rural African life is lived outdoors so everyone is exposed to the elements. Children with disabilities often spend their time sitting in the open air so they get very cold. Many of you have risen to this challenge and been busy knitting. Our trustees now have lots of beautiful, warm, woolly garments to take with them on their next visit. A couple of church knitting groups in York have clicked together and made lots of gorgeous, cosy items. Thanks to all of you from the many children to whom you have brought much needed warmth.

Ethiopia is a large, land-locked country in north-east Africa, with a population of around 110 million. It has a distinguished history, with one of the oldest alphabets in the world, some of the oldest skeletal evidence for modern humans, and ordered systems of governance for two millennia (including the retention of sovereignty from long-term colonisation). It has the largest number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Africa.

Ethiopia has experienced conflict and famine, but now has the largest economy by GDP in East Africa, and Addis hosts a number of global and pan-African organisations. It remains an extremely poor country, however, with its large size, rural population, weak infrastructure and some corruption. Health and education services tend to be poor, particularly outside the major cities. The literacy rate is around 45% but with wide disparities between rural and urban settings. Progress in health services is being made. People are migrating to the cities (where there are more health facilities and trained health workers, sanitation is better, and there are high-quality maternity services). The prevalence of HIV AIDS and communicable diseases has fallen, although both are significant. Malnutrition and FGM also remain problematic. Services for disability are extremely limited.