“...for many it is a sign of hope.”

see p.2

How we do it... and how you can help

people powered development
2015: a seminal year

2015 was a seminal year for Progressio, marking 75 years since our foundation. During this anniversary year, Progressio is mounting an appeal to new and existing donors to make a special financial commitment to help us become less dependent on uncertain Government funding and to meet the very pressing needs of the people we work with. As Progressio President, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor has elicited support from a number of Vice-Presidents who are helping us reach new audiences and potential donors, including Catholic Dioceses, lawyers and women in business.

In the autumn, we held two special events to mark this milestone: one – an evening of speeches, singing and socialising in London’s Covent Garden, and the other – a service in the city’s historic Temple Church.

Although they took place in very different settings, both events celebrated Progressio’s rich legacy of working across faiths with some of the world’s poorest and more marginalised communities. We welcomed old and new supporters – from recently returned International Citizen Service volunteers to those who remembered Progressio’s days as the Catholic Institute for International Relations. At Temple Church, we were particularly lucky to hear a specially-written homily from our President Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor, which you can read opposite.

“We’d like to send a warm thank you to everyone who attended these events and to everyone who has helped make the last 75 years so memorable. Happy birthday Progressio!”

“IT’s the story of complete respect for every single human being; a commitment to working in solidarity with others rather than to narrow self-interest. And for so many it is a sign of hope.”

– Cardinal Cormac Murphy O’Connor

Vice-Presidents of 75th Appeal:

“There is no doubt that the work of Progressio has had a very great impact in many different ways. There are the farmers in Zimbabwe who have been helped to improve productivity, to farm sustainably and to gain the self-esteem and confidence to interact freely with policy-makers in their neighbourhood. Nor should I forget Progressio’s work with Islamic leaders in Yemen to develop greater HIV & AIDS awareness among the Islamic communities. Then there is the Dominican Republic where Progressio helped, with other people, to achieve a new national law to ensure every community can influence how government money is spent and this has led to the doubling of the national education budget. Notice that the work of Progressio is not so much to give things – food or resources as such – to people; its work is rather to change the social and political scene in these very poor countries.

I think the story of Progressio can in many ways help us. It’s the story of complete respect for every single human being; a commitment to working in solidarity with others rather than in narrow self-interest. And for so many it is a sign of hope. I hope that in small ways each of us can live to create some good for others.

You may think of Progressio as just a small agency in the light of perhaps bigger ones like the United Nations and others. But it is essential. No one agency can do everything but it can do something and, as the saying goes, it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.”
HIV and Disability: Breaking a Double Stigma

Farai Mukuta is a Progressio development worker based in Harare, Zimbabwe. He works on a Progressio project that aims to improve HIV and sexual and reproductive health information, care and support services for people with visual and hearing impairments. Working with local partner organisations the Disability and AIDS Trust (DHAT) and Deaf Zimbabwe Trust (DZT), the project will directly benefit 350 people in Harare.

“According to the World Health Organisation, there are 1.9 million people living with disabilities in Zimbabwe. Disability is as old as creation and is much older than the discovery of modern medicine. However, nothing significant has been done to ensure the meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in the national health system.

The combination of disability and HIV is very complex. The number of those with disabilities who are living with an HIV diagnosis is also unknown. This is an undocumented population; stigmatised by society because of their disability and stigmatised again because of their HIV status. Issues connected with disability are mostly excluded from HIV and sexual and reproductive health programmes.

The worst-affected disability categories are the visually impaired and the hearing impaired because of lack of information in accessible formats. The deaf need access to sign language, which the government and AIDS service organisations are not providing. The blind need information in braille, which is just not available.

Because of this, these people are
Main photo: Farai with service user, Yeukai Mazhawidza, demonstrating the need for disabled access. Yeukai’s leg was amputated and she now has an artificial leg. “She is gradually adjusting to the new experience. The idea is to have universal access to all that we do so that all disability categories enjoy all that able-bodied counterparts enjoy,” says Farai.

being left behind. Here is a population section which may not be part of the 15% reduction in Zimbabwe’s HIV infection rate because the group is undocumented and excluded from many interventions. These – especially the deaf – are our least understood population.

Working with DHAT and DZT, I am involved in projects aimed at providing information, care and support services for people with visual and hearing impairments through the distribution of accessible relevant materials. My main responsibilities are providing technical assistance to the local staff; strengthening their capacity to develop evidence-based policy, advocacy and lobbying programmes relating to HIV and AIDS.

I focus particularly on developing the skills and knowledge of staff on policy research, producing documents, knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation, communication and fundraising. We are working on engaging more at regional and national level and mobilising support for disability inclusion to be part of future sexual and reproductive health interventions.

I want to ask people – who is being left out of the attempt to “rethink” HIV? ...how can we meaningfully include those living with HIV or AIDS within the narrow coverage of HIV?”

– Farai Mukuta

More online
Read more stories from people living with HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe in our report Prayer alone is not enough, which you can find on our website at progressio.org.uk/sites/default/files/HIV-and-faith-report-2011.pdf
70% of Zimbabweans live in extreme poverty. Does this sound fair to you? No, we didn’t think so…

For many people in Zimbabwe, the future is uncertain. After years of economic instability, human rights challenges and the devastating impacts of HIV and AIDS, millions of Zimbabweans are confronted with severe food shortages.

During 50 years of working in Zimbabwe, Progressio has witnessed the effect of these circumstances. Inspired by the people we have worked alongside, we have developed a set of unique fundraising challenges: ZimFare and ZimFast.

Both challenges allow us to stand in solidarity with people in Zimbabwe and gain insight into the lack of choice that living in poverty brings, whilst stretching your cooking, hosting and quizzing skills!

Rebecca Masimbira lives in Wedza, rural Zimbabwe with her husband and five children. She says: ‘Famine is a problem here. The biggest issue is a lack of water. We depend on rainfall to grow our crops. If the rains don’t come we go hungry.’

In 76% of Zimbabwean households it is children and women like Rebecca who collect the water. They walk long distances which stops them from going to school or earning a living, and traps them in poverty.

Progressio sent development worker Philemon Handinahama, an advocacy specialist, to the Chinhoyi Diocese. Philemon helped our local partner, the Zimbabwe Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, to train Parish Groups across the diocese to advocate on local issues. These groups persuaded the authorities to repair 120 boreholes, giving c. 80,000 people access to clean water. This allowed children to go to school, women to earn a living and farmers to grow more crops.

Do something different this Lent
British novelist, Frank Cottrell-Boyce: “This Lent, I’m going to do the ZimFast challenge for Progressio. Everyone can see it’s such a worthwhile project and by fasting you’re putting yourself on the line and helping yourself to understand how tough it is for other people.”

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon, Liverpool: “I am endorsing this campaign because I care passionately about social justice and Progressio’s work. By taking these simple actions we can empathise closely with the people in Zimbabwe, so please support ZimFare and ZimFast this Lent.”

Bishop Declan Lang, Clifton Diocese: “I have hosted my own ZimFare meal as this is an important cause and I very much hope you will be willing to support it. Your support could make a significant difference, not just because of the funds raised, but because it will give hope to people who most need it.”
Progressio’s policy and programmatic work intersect in Somaliland – an East African state which, though remaining unrecognised, has recently made promising steps towards full democracy. In a region that is often in the news for unrest and instability, Progressio and other observers are hopeful about Somaliland’s future as a peaceful, democratic territory.

**Vetting voting**
Progressio has lent its expertise to monitoring three local and national elections in Somaliland. In January 2016, Governance Policy and Advocacy Officer Malou Schueller travelled to the country to observe the beginning stages of registration for the March 2017 elections. Women and men arrived at polling centres in large numbers to register for the presidential and parliamentary elections, a process that will take six months to cover all six regions. Significantly, Somaliland plans to be one of the first places to use iris-recognition software to register voters.

Suad Abdi, Progressio’s Country Director for Somaliland, hopes this will make the voting process fairer, establishing the number of eligible voters per district in a country where many citizens still do not yet have identity cards.

“Somaliland cannot afford to repeat the mistakes made in the 2012 elections, when the lack of a voters’ register and inefficient safeguards resulted in multiple voting as groups in different regions tried to increase their constituency numbers to achieve greater representation,” said Suad. Putting
Women in Somaliland

“Without being involved in political decision making, Somaliland’s women have little chance of their specific needs being addressed by policy makers,” says Malou. “We hope that our research will give us a better understanding of the socio-cultural context of Somaliland, and will help us to explore ways of how those working for gender justice may be able to influence decision-makers, and encourage a change towards a more equitable, peaceful and inclusive society.”

Amplifying voices
An important part of Progressio’s work is helping to ensure that everyone has a say in political decision-making. The programmes team is working closely with a dozen civil society organisations (CSOs) to improve their knowledge, technical skills and confidence. We hope that they can use their influence to strengthen the position of women in society, in particular by pushing for the adoption of a new Rape Act.

Meanwhile, the policy team in collaboration with University College London, are in the midst of a major research project on gender roles within the country’s political system. The project also works closely with local activists to look at the position of women in Somaliland’s society and ask what might be done to increase their influence and participation. Women are very poorly represented in Somaliland politics at the moment – accounting for only 1 out of 184 of the country’s MPs.

Progressio, the Development Planning Unit of UCL and Somaliland Focus (UK) do not take a position on the international recognition of Somaliland, as we regard this issue as beyond our mandate. At the same time, we welcome the increased stability, security and accountability to citizens, which has in part been supported by the development of democratic institutions in Somaliland. Democracy is about more than just elections – but elections are still vital.
Progressio (formerly Sword of the Spirit and CIIR) has been campaigning on many fronts for 75 years. Here is a glimpse of some of the major milestones in the life of this vital organisation...

**1940**

**Sword of the Spirit takes up the fight**
Sword of the Spirit is founded by Cardinal Hinsley, Archbishop of Westminster. Publishes pamphlets decrying Facism, serving as a voice of British Catholics against Totalitarianism.

**1960**

**Advocacy work begins in Zimbabwe**
CIIR lobbies to draw attention to the plight of people suffering torture and eviction due to resettlement in Zimbabwe.

**1985**

**CIIR calls for change in Timor-Leste**
CIIR fights to end the Indonesian occupation, lobbying and mobilising religious institutions and the UK government, raising awareness through quarterly newsletter *Timor Link*.

**1998**

**CIIR enters Haiti**
CIIR begins work in Haiti, where inhabitants face issues such as environmental degradation. For Haitians living in the neighbouring Dominican Republic, problems are particularly acute. Many workers are denied basic rights and facilities.

**2005**

**Starts monitoring elections in Somaliland**
Progressio commences work with local partners to support and strengthen a burgeoning civil society within a very fragile state. At the invitation of the country’s electoral commission, we go on to monitor three elections and publish reports on our findings.
1973

Work begins to support women in Yemen
CIIR establishes training for midwives and rural health workers, as well as literacy programmes for women, in a country where a third of women are illiterate.

1974

First development worker sent to Nicaragua
CIIR becomes first international development charity to appoint regional development workers, through tumultuous times – the revolution, natural disasters and the Contra War.

1980

Pushing for justice in South Africa
CIIR becomes one of the most persistent voices calling for an end to apartheid, drawing attention to the unique injustices. Supporters write postcards to lobby MPs and MEPs.

2008

Hitting home with big campaigns
“Say No to Terminator Seeds” campaign highlights practice of genetically modifying plants to produce sterile seeds. Supporters send 2000 postcards to MPs to raise awareness. In May 2008, UN agree to keep the ban on the seeds.

2012

ICS launches
Progressio is selected to join the UK government’s International Citizen Service (ICS) programme, involving young adult African, Central American and UK volunteers working side by side with communities e.g. to help build eco-latrines and help fight gender-based violence.

2016

ZimFare/ZimFast
Progressio launches new fundraising challenges in solidarity with Zimbabweans and other marginalised people – see pages 6-7. Please join ZimFare/ZimFast or see the back page to donate now.
At the Department for International Development (DFID) Youth Summit held on 12 September, Progressio volunteer Amro Hussain co-hosted the entire event. Progressio’s Empower and Action 2015 youth panel members Jess Lee and Alex Duffy worked tirelessly to shape the event and create a space where young people could voice their commitment to the achievement of the SDGs and push decision-makers for strong UK leadership on an international stage.

On 17 June, 10,000 people descended on the streets around Westminster to lobby their MP on climate change. Progressio was well represented at the Interfaith Art Installation and stood alongside religious leaders calling for a strong deal on climate change at the Paris conference.

At the Department for International Development (DFID) Youth Summit held on 12 September, Progressio volunteer Amro Hussain co-hosted the entire event. Progressio’s Empower and Action 2015 youth panel members Jess Lee and Alex Duffy worked tirelessly to shape the event and create a space where young people could voice their commitment to the achievement of the SDGs and push decision-makers for strong UK leadership on an international stage.

On the eve of the announcement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Progressio supporters were among the 2,000 people who stood on Millennium Bridge shining torches to ‘Light the Way’ to a better future. The activity in London was mirrored in similar rallies taking place all over the world.

We were thrilled with the success of our petition to David Cameron which showed solidarity with Pope Francis’ message to world leaders at the UNGA summit in September. Over 600 people echoed the Pope’s desire for a more equal world and asked the Government to implement the new SDGs in full. We received a response from Baroness Verma who said their implementation is a top priority for the UK.
This year we continue to focus our campaigning efforts on challenging and changing institutions for a fairer world for women. We will continue to ensure that at every moment our representatives know what we expect from them and have the resources available to achieve this.

We are coordinating this work with the Progressio Empower network who are an active network of volunteers aged 18-30 committed to social justice and international development. They are helping us celebrate key international days. We’ve been incredibly impressed with the calibre of their work so far.

If you’d like to get involved with the planning that goes in to making these days a huge success and raising awareness of these issues in your community please email campaigns@progressio.org.uk

Days for the Diary
5 Jun    World Environment Day
12 Aug   International Youth Day
15 Oct   International Day of Rural Women
25 Nov   International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls
1 Dec    World AIDS Day
8 Mar    International Women’s Day

This year we were heavily involved in marking the 16 days of activism to end violence against women and girls, with a campaign stunt across London, drawing attention to the issue with eye-catching images in London’s most iconic locations. Our campaign was featured across the media, including in The Guardian.

Carmen Medina – Progressio’s country representative in El Salvador, which has one of the highest rates of gender-motivated murder in the world, writes: “In the 30 years we have been working with Progressio we have achieved many improvements in law and policy, but gender-based violence is still a huge problem in our daily lives. Women and girls suffering discrimination and gender violence both within the family and in the streets. The campaign helps raise awareness of gender-based violence… no human being on this planet deserves to receive any form of violence.”
Progressio is one of a handful of charities delivering the government’s International Citizen Service (ICS) programme, an initiative that gives young people aged 18-25 the chance to volunteer overseas, working alongside their counterparts in the host country.

It has been a truly incredible year for Progressio ICS. We have recruited, trained and sent 336 volunteers from the UK to work hand in hand with 355 volunteers from El Salvador, Honduras, Malawi, Nicaragua and Zimbabwe (we call them national volunteers).

Our UK and national volunteers formed teams to work together for cycles of 12 weeks. They tackled issues affecting some of the poorest communities in the world. The nature of projects depended on the needs of the people they were volunteering for. For example, volunteers in Central America worked on mitigating the effects of climate change and ending gender-based violence, whereas the projects in Africa had a greater focus on HIV prevention and Sexual and Reproductive Health education.

This is a quote from a Malawian, Peterse Nooldhin, with whom ICS worked: “I am so grateful for what Progressio has done for me and my family. Your volunteers encouraged me to get tested for HIV. I now know my HIV status and how to protect myself from HIV. I was so happy after I got tested that I ran home and told my sister. I convinced her to get tested too. Now both of us know the hospitals where we can get HIV testing and counselling and will get tested every three months”.

Do you know any young people 18-25 who could benefit from ICS? Ask them to apply at www.progressio.org.uk/ics
ICS Highlights in 2015:

- 43,650 community members reached
- 5 countries: Malawi, Zimbabwe, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua
- 336 UK volunteers
- 355 African and Central American volunteers
- 2,078 people tested for HIV
- 82 farmers trained in irrigation farming
- 51 eco-latrines built for families
- 23 alcohol and drug-prevention fairs held
- 2 children living and working on the streets reunited with their families
- 1 library set up for an indigenous community
- 1 running track built for patients of a rehabilitation centre
- 377 training sessions held in schools
- 3 schools provided with 6 modern toilets
- 2 fish ponds constructed
- 1 car park redesigned and constructed
Once a volunteer has completed their Progressio project, their ICS journey is not complete. An important part of the government-funded programme is fulfilling an ‘Action at Home’ – taking part in at least one project to benefit the local community or bring about positive social change. Progressio volunteers have completed some amazing actions since ICS began – here are two examples from different sides of the world:

**Sandeleh Pfukwa was a national team leader in Zimbabwe**

**There is no better feeling than the feeling of belonging**, knowing that somewhere someone loves you and calls you family. But people don’t need blood ties to be called a family – the most important thing is love, and the realisation that another person will always be there and stand by one’s side through it all. This is the hope the children in alternative care institutions carry with them each day.

After volunteering with Progressio near my near home town of Marondera, Zimbabwe, I completed my Action at Home at Mushawevana Children’s Home. The home houses 79 children aged between 2 and 19, who have been placed in care for reasons varying from orphanhood and neglect, to physical or sexual abuse.

My responsibilities included running counselling sessions and assisting with homework. I also ran sessions on children’s rights and sexual and reproductive health with older students. The staff members at the institution worked tirelessly to ensure that some, and if possible, all the children may be adopted and live in formal foster homes.

Being part of this was a great opportunity for me. I was happy to be a part of the Mushawevana family, to be making a difference in children’s lives.

My time at Mushawevana taught me that there is no end to the things that individuals, groups or the community can do to make a difference in the lives of the less privileged. People are right when they say the size of the gift does not matter – the heart gives the gift. It’s also the small things that matter the most in life – great things are built from small things.
Jonathan Ammoun, 22, from Reading, volunteered in Nicaragua

As winter drew in and the temperature started dropping below freezing this year, I started thinking about others who are not as lucky as me; those who do not have a family to spend Christmas with or a roof above their heads. This is even more pronounced today following the massive influx of refugees from war-torn countries. This is when I made the decision to spend Christmas volunteering at a soup kitchen. The kitchen, in Uppsala, Sweden, gives homeless people, refugees, struggling families and those without families a place to celebrate Christmas and enjoy a traditional dinner.

On Christmas Eve alone it was estimated that approximately 1500 people would be coming and that over 3500 portions would be served. Although a lot of people were on hand to help out, the sheer amount of food to be prepared meant that the workload was quite strenuous. However, by working as a team and allocating the work among us we managed to keep everything running smoothly. It was a really enjoyable work environment and we received constant positive remarks from the guests.

Working at the soup kitchen made me realise that people can make a big difference to others – even if only for a short period of time – with relative ease of effort. Completing my Action at Home has definitely renewed my ambition to continue to volunteer alongside university, work, or whatever I do in the future.

“By working as a team and allocating the work among us we managed to keep everything running smoothly. It was a really enjoyable work environment and we received constant positive remarks from the guests.”

– Jonathan Ammoun

Find out more at www.progressio.org.uk/ics
Our amazing fundraisers

Fundraisers helped celebrate our 75th year in a variety of ways, from fancy dress races and pub quizzes to fasting through Live Below the Line and climbing mountains worldwide! These determined efforts and the generosity of their sponsors helped Progressio support over a million people last year.

For three weeks in April 2015 Suzie Young walked 500km along the Camino de Santiago, an ancient Christian pilgrimage route in northern Spain, raising an incredible £600.

Suzie was inspired to support Progressio because of our approach of empowering people to transform their own lives. She said, ‘the prospect of walking alone for 500km in a country where I can’t speak the language seemed crazy, but the people Progressio support overcome much bigger challenges every day’. For Suzie walking the Camino was a spiritually enriching journey full of self-reflection, beautiful countryside and challenges; not least walking in the rain carrying all her kit!

Suzie’s £600 could train 120 villagers in Zimbabwe in lobbying and advocacy skills empowering them to influence decision-makers and transform their own lives. Thank you Suzie!

Thank you to everyone who fundraised for us in 2015!
**Skydiving**
Team Progressio will be taking to the skies above Cambridgeshire on Saturday 5 November 2016 to take the leap for people powered development. In tandem with an experienced skydiving instructor, the team will free-fall from a height of 10,000 feet whilst enjoying beautiful views of the scenery below. If you can’t make it to Cambridgeshire, you can jump anytime at over 15 jump sites around the UK.

‘Nothing is impossible to those with the will to overcome.’
– Teclah Ponde, Development Worker.

**Feeling adventurous?**
Experience a life-changing adventure, fundraise for Progressio and help people living in some of the world’s poorest communities.

**ZimFare/ZimFast**
If you’re not sure what to give up for Lent this year, why not stand in solidarity with people living in poverty by taking part in ZimFare and ZimFast? The challenges are simple: either fast for six days on a simple Zimbabwean diet, or host a sponsored Zimbabwean-themed meal for family and friends. The campaign launched on Ash Wednesday and runs until Pentecost on 15 May. See pages 6 & 7 for more information.

**Royal Parks Half Marathon**
If heights aren’t really your thing, you can fight poverty with every step of the Royal Parks Half on Sunday 9 October. Run past some of London’s most iconic landmarks and through the beautiful surroundings of Hyde Park, St James’ Park and Kensington Gardens. It’s a very popular event that sells out every year, so make sure you join the team early!

To sign up for any of these challenges email supporters@progressio.org.uk or visit progressio.org.uk/fundraise for more information.
Yes I want to help people living in poverty to transform their own lives

£10 could pay for a community vegetable garden in Malawi
£25 could provide a care package of medication and food for a person living with HIV in Somaliland
£75 could educate someone on their rights and teach them how to hold their local government to account in Zimbabwe

Name (required):

Address (required):

Postcode (required):

Email address (optional):

Please send me updates about Progressio’s work: [ ] by email [ ] by post

I would like to give regularly:

Amount £:

[ ] Monthly [ ] Quarterly [ ] Annually

Starting on: [ ] [ ] [ ]

Account holder name:

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I would like to make a single gift:

£10 [ ] £25 [ ] £75 [ ] Visa [ ] Delta [ ] Mastercard [ ] CAF

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Make your gift worth even more – make every £1 worth £1.25 at no extra cost.

[ ] I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I want Progressio to Gift Aid this donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years.

[ ] [ ]

[ ] I would like to give regularly: [ ] Monthly [ ] Quarterly [ ] Annually

Starting on: [ ] [ ] [ ]

Account holder name:

Bank name:

Account no.:

Sort code:

Signed: [ ] [ ] Date: [ ] [ ] / [ ] [ ] / [ ] [ ]

Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by direct debit: Please pay Progressio Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction, subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Progressio and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society. Originator’s Identification number 982514

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