

# PROGRESS!O 75

1940-2015

magazine 2015



“Hearing the testimonies  
of the people I work with  
is mind blowing”



Cardinal Hinsley and (Right) Barbara Ward, founding member of Progressio, an influential economist and life peer.

# 75 years young!

In 1940, young people in the UK started a campaign of “prayer, study and action to unite the citizens of this country in support of future peace”. After 75 years, that wartime movement has become today’s Progressio. This is how support from you and so many others through the years has changed the lives of millions of people around the world.

## Wartime vision: the 1940s

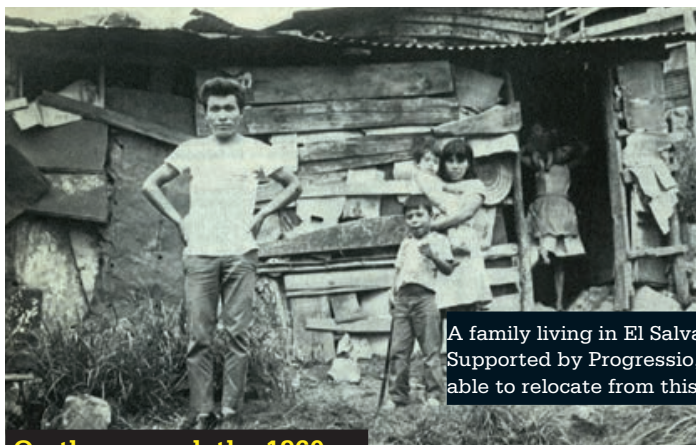
➤ Cardinal Hinsley’s best known wartime broadcast of 1939 reminded listeners of the need for Christian values of kinship and love in the face of Fascism in Europe. “The ‘sword of the spirit’ will alone convert unjust assailants and recreate peace and good will,” he said.

A group of young Catholics were inspired by this message, and were alarmed that Catholics were increasingly seen as fascist sympathisers. They wanted to stand up for progressive values and had a strong desire to defend “the rights of God, of man, of the family, of minorities, of dependent peoples”. **It was a prophetic vision years before human rights were widely adopted.**

Calling themselves The Sword of the Spirit, this dynamic group in the Church used pamphlets, public meetings, and BBC broadcasts to share their vision. **They pioneered ecumenical co-operation with other Christians** and argued that the human rights of the peoples had to be respected and a code of human rights was needed. The organisation campaigned hard for the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## An international outlook: the 1950s

➤ Building on a concern for the rights of people in Eastern Europe, the Sword adopted a more international focus in the 1950s. A significant amount of work in schools began and sixth formers were increasingly recruited to work overseas.



A family living in El Salvador in 1977. Supported by Progressio, this family was able to relocate from this area to safer housing.

### On the ground: the 1960s

✎ In 1962, the Sword adopted a special focus on work in developing countries and encouraged volunteers to take up posts overseas.

**The group worked behind the scenes to help establish *The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)***, as a fundraising and grant-giving arm of the Church in England and Wales. It also established Book Aid International, an offspring of a 'books for the missions' group.

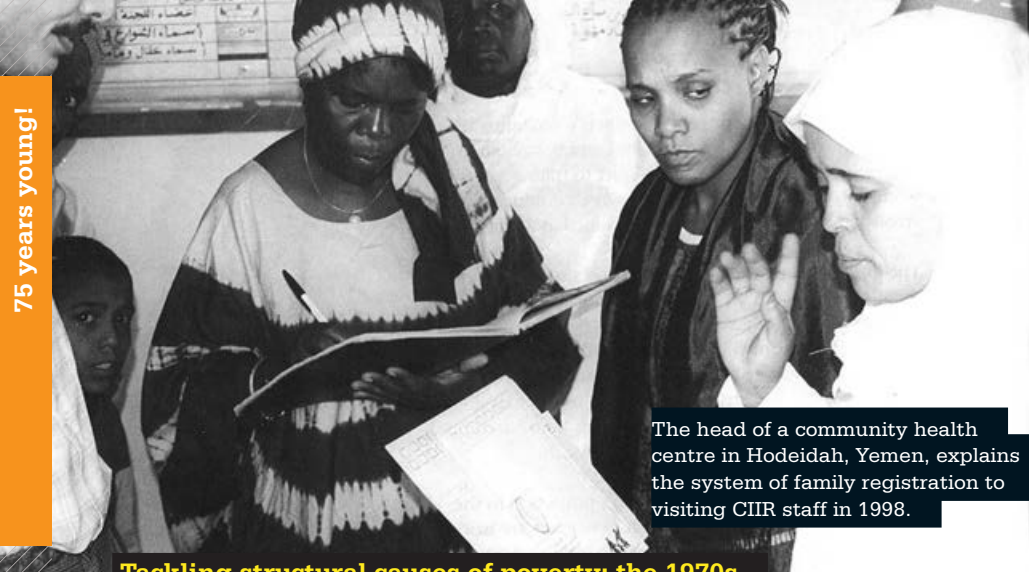
Relationships with missionary bishops across eastern, central and southern Africa resulted in an overwhelming call for the placement of volunteers in newly independent countries. Many young people spent time overseas, mainly working in education and healthcare.

With so much focus on international engagement, the Sword changed its name to the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) in 1965. It had two main areas of work: an education and advocacy programme focusing mainly on liberation and human rights struggles in southern Africa and Central America, and an overseas programme of technical assistance.

The education programme produced highly respected up-to-date reports of the situations in many countries, regularly briefing writers and news reporters.

Heated race relations in the 1960s meant the media frequently turned to CIIR for comment on behalf of the Catholic Church. It soon became clear that a dedicated function was needed, and the Catholic Council on Race Relations was established. It was the forerunner to today's Catholic Agency for Racial Justice.

**The deaths of large numbers of infants in Yemen due to dirty water in baby formula started a sustained piece of work on the ground.** CIIR worked to improve knowledge in local communities and to raise awareness of the role of UK companies overseas, an issue that still causes concern today.



The head of a community health centre in Hodeidah, Yemen, explains the system of family registration to visiting CIIR staff in 1998.

### Tackling structural causes of poverty: the 1970s

➤ Global poverty, a longstanding concern for CIIR, led to the development of more formal research on different aspects of poverty. It became clear that poverty often does not simply happen, but that it is a result of decisions that are taken by everyone. **The need to address structural causes of poverty became an overriding concern for CIIR.**

The policy recommendations and statements which were issued by CIIR were often politically sensitive. These included significant work on trade agreements, colonial aggression, drugs, the impact of the European Economic Community, and issues of global finance. CIIR became well respected for its progressive stance when speaking out against injustice. **It was the first organisation to place local full-time country representatives to lead projects, as opposed to UK ex-patriates, and pioneered placing experts living in nearby countries when needed.**

### Long walks to freedom: the 1980s and 90s

➤ A deep-rooted engagement in freedom movements through the Church and significant knowledge of the reality for ordinary people led to CIIR developing expertise in a number of countries including Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Timor Leste. The organisation produced publications, lobbied intensively with policy makers, and conducted many publicity campaigns supporting liberation movements.

Being long-standing allies in the fight for self-determination, CIIR was well-placed to send development workers to help build nations out of the ruins of civil war. The CIIR technical assistance programme was also invited to Nicaragua, El Salvador, Zimbabwe and Namibia as an agency of trust.





A woman campaigning in Somaliland ahead of the elections in November 2012. In 2012, 140 women stood for election compared with five in the previous elections.

### Today's Progressio: the 2000s

➤ In the 2000s, CIIR became Progressio. The international development and policy programmes were joined together to help tackle unjust power structures locally, nationally and internationally.

Development workers shared skills in-country and the issues for international advocacy work came directly from partners on the ground, while Progressio's experts strengthened their work. This tradition of true partnership is a source of considerable strength for Progressio.

### Progressio's extended family

Progressio, CIIR and the Sword of the Spirit have helped to set up a number of important organisations including:

- Pax Christi England and Wales
- CAFOD
- Book Aid International
- The Africa Centre
- Christians Abroad
- Catholic Agency for Racial Justice
- National Justice and Peace Network
- Latin America Bureau

## Celebrating in Style

Join us to celebrate 75 years of progress! Here's what we're planning in 2015 and how you can get involved.

### April – Live Below the Line



Can you live on less than £1 a day for five days? Progressio supporters of all ages have raised thousands of pounds with this act of solidarity.

Will you join them this year? Head to [www.progressio.org.uk/lbtl](http://www.progressio.org.uk/lbtl) for more information.

### Summer – Big 75th Anniversary Power Challenge


We're keeping the plans for the Big 75 Anniversary Power Challenge under wraps for now. Stay tuned!

### September – The Anniversary Party

The highlight of the anniversary year! You're invited to our anniversary party. Join current and former staff, ICS returned volunteers and partner organisations to recall the extraordinary work that generations of supporters have helped make happen.

### 75th Anniversary Christmas appeal

Towards the end of 2015, we'll be shining a light on a story that shows some of the long term change Progressio has brought into lives around the world.



Safia Mohammed Ahmed Al-Oseili on the road that she took a leading role in getting paved and that opened up local markets and facilities to the people of her village.

## Unbreakable women changing lives in Yemen

**While the road that Safia Mohammed Ahmed Al-Oseili is standing on may not look like much, to her and her community it's a lot more than a simple stretch of tarmac.**

In Yemen, women like Safia face challenges and restrictions that significantly affect their lives. Yemen sits at the bottom of the Global Gender Gap Index and the difference in rights is particularly an issue in rural areas like Safia's home district of Al-Zariba, where poor infrastructure means communities are often cut off from education and other basic services such as electricity and safe drinking water.

A woman usually carries an enormous responsibility for the wellbeing of her family, yet has a very low status in society and few opportunities to influence decision-making at a community or regional level.

Safia, a head teacher and mother of three, took a leading role in convincing the government to invest in her rural area

and getting the road leading to her village paved.

**She also played a crucial role in bringing electricity to the region and, with support and training from Progressio, improved the health of local families through a water filtration programme.**

Then, in response to the marginalisation of women in local areas, Safia set up the Al-Zariba Female Social Association.

"I train women on the basic concepts of gender and I support them in their personal development," says Safia. "We encourage them and build up their skills in various fields, including childcare and how to care for people with specific needs. On special occasions, like Eid, we organise clothes packages for distribution."

"We're really proud that we were able to bring electricity to the region. It's made a big difference to the rural villages and means that people have been able to install fridges, washing machines and televisions."

"Working with Progressio on the water filtration project was a high point for us. After people received the water filters, their health improved. Filters were distributed to 2,400 men and 2,400 women along with a basket containing detergent, shampoo, scissors and household utensils."

Hamida'a Ahmed Ftenee, 50, explained the difference the filter project is making for her: **"If I do not drink from the filter, I will get sick. In the past, my son was always sick, and there were a lot of children who died because of the water, but no more. Now, I only drink water from the filter."**

Saeeda'a Ahmed Yousef Adni, 60, said: "The water is cold and we don't get sick after drinking it. My kidneys used to suffer, but the filter helps me to stay healthy."

Progressio development workers also supported the Al-Zariba Female Social Association's education programme

**"Working with Progressio on the water filtration project was a high point for us... Filters were distributed to 2,400 men and 2,400 women."**

– Sofia Mohammed Ahmed Al-Oseili

and helped people to understand what organisations like Safia's have the potential to achieve.

Safia is an extraordinary woman carving out a role for others like her as Yemen's civil society grows in strength. She's also a mother of three using her education to empower her children. That's what makes her unbreakable.

"I hope that the next generation will be better off than us in all aspects of life. In their education, culture, health and in their planning for community development and their aspirations to build a beautiful Yemen," says Safia.



Samira Saeed Yahya Daodd (left), one of the beneficiaries of the WASH filter project, that improved the health of thousands of men and women, talking to Safia Al-Oseili.

A photograph showing two women in the foreground, smiling and engaged in conversation with a man whose back is to the camera. The woman on the left has reddish hair and is wearing a dark purple top. The woman on the right has short black hair, wears glasses and a black shawl, and is holding a book. They are in an outdoor setting, possibly a prison courtyard, with a vehicle wheel visible in the background.

## Compassion and education changing lives in prison

Overcoming stigma and discrimination is often one of the toughest challenges facing Progressio's development workers as they support people to prevail over poverty.

Teclah Ponde worked with the Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders and has helped to support some of the country's most marginalised people. We asked her to share what she has learned.

➤ **Teclah, your work supporting people living with HIV and AIDS to access treatment and overcome stigma has been inspirational. What motivates you?**

I had a friend who died of an AIDS-related illness. She was very dear to me and, at the time, I did not know much about HIV. When I eventually learnt about it, **I felt that, by raising awareness, many people would not have to lose their loved ones and the quality of life for people living with HIV could be enhanced.**

I have learnt that discrimination and stigma come from a lack of knowledge and inadequate information. I have spent a lot of time educating people in the community where I live: in churches, in prisons and even in my car as I drive around. I have offered one-to-one counselling sessions to people living with HIV, supporting them to accept their status and to find joy and relief in sharing their status within safe environments, such as support groups.





Main photo: Progressio Development Worker Teclah Ponde (left) speaks with truck drivers in Zimbabwe, where Progressio has helped provide health assistance and counselling to truck drivers living with HIV;

Teclah Ponde (seated on the chair) with colleagues.

**“Discrimination and stigma come from a lack of knowledge and inadequate information.”**

**– Teclah Ponde**

### 🔑 You work with a lot of prison inmates living with HIV. Why is working with this group so important to you?

Inmates are a vulnerable population who many people find it hard to work with. Very few people take the time to see them as individual people with fears, apprehensions and insecurities who are battling with acceptance and rejection issues and lacking in hope.

In Zimbabwe's prisons, there are women, children, young people, old people, disabled people and foreigners who cannot speak our language. There are teachers, accountants, people who can read and people who cannot. You name it; they are all there, the innocent as well as the guilty and those who are sick or chronically ill.

The prison environment is not a natural one and so many first time offenders find it hard to cope. When you reach out to someone about personal issues on an individual level, you can unlock their potential. **My work ceases to be simply an HIV and AIDS programme, it becomes a survival strategy, a way out and a new lifestyle.**

My work is about supporting people to realign their personal goals for the

future. Hearing the testimonies of the people I work with and facilitating their reintegration back into their families and communities is mind-blowing. **When you witness this transformation process, you kneel down in the evening and thank God that you have been an instrument for bringing joy and hope back into people's lives.**


I consider it a privilege to be able to access prisons. I see it as an opportunity God has given me to reach out and provide avenues for new beginnings and another chance to live a different lifestyle. I do not have all the answers, but, for some people, the information I have provided has helped them to look inside themselves and think about how they can turn over a new leaf and live as honourable and responsible citizens.

### 🔑 What do you think it takes to overcome discrimination and stigma?

It takes a caring heart, perseverance and a lot of education and effort to overcome stigma. Let us educate our communities, work together and coordinate efforts. Let's look for help where we cannot do it on our own. Nothing is impossible to a person who has the will to overcome.

# Celebrating the best of Progressio's work in Timor Leste

© Marcus Perkins/Progressio



Sister Guilhermina cared for 1,400 children who were displaced following past violence in Timor-Leste.

**In 2014, Progressio announced the end of its programme in Timor Leste. Chief Executive Mark Lister reflects on what the organisation has achieved working in solidarity with Timorese civil society in recent decades.**

For more than 30 years, Progressio has been immensely proud to stand alongside people like Sister Guilhermina who has campaigned tirelessly for justice and for the rights of the marginalised people of Timor-Leste. Together, we've supported the Timorese in their calls for independence, in speaking out against human rights violations and in working for peace, reconciliation and justice.

Timor-Leste is now a more peaceful country and its people are determined to move on from their turbulent past, but there are many obstacles to overcome. As a result of decades of conflict and poverty, the population is young and more than 50% of people are illiterate.

Timor-Leste is now classed as a lower-middle income country, but very little of the revenue from its offshore oil and gas reserves have been invested in development at the community level. Most people rely on subsistence farming and many families still suffer from high rates of malnutrition.

Progressio established its programme at the invitation of the Timorese in 2000, barely a year after the Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste had ended. Since then, more than 40 highly skilled development workers have supported local partner organisations to transform many thousands of lives.

**By strengthening emerging civil society organisations working on reconciliation, women's rights, HIV treatment and prevention, and environmental sustainability, strong foundations have been laid that will last for many years.**

We set up a pioneering 'bio-briquettes' project that provides a sustainable fuel source and reduces the environmental damage associated with heavy reliance on firewood for cooking and heating.

The rights of women have been central to our work. **With local partners, we promoted the development and implementation of legislation to protect women from gender based violence,** and to give them equal access to economic markets, land and property rights.

The low prevalence of HIV in Timor-Leste is another legacy of our work. We supported the National AIDS Commission to establish the first ever national AIDS strategy for prevention and care. We also boosted the ability of HIV support groups to raise awareness and advocate for the rights of people living with HIV.

Noa Gaspar, Director of the National AIDS Commission, told me: "Progressio's development worker taught us a lot

from his experiences in other countries. He worked with our teams to identify gaps and helped show us how to tackle these issues strategically. **Progressio has helped the National AIDS commission to grow in strength."**

The closure of our programme does not mark the end of Timor-Leste's transition to a nation free from poverty. The organisations we have worked with will carry on transforming lives and the next chapter will tell the story of resilient people resolved to take this nation forward.

We thank the people of Timor-Leste, their civil society and government for their generosity and dynamism. Everyone at Progressio wishes them well as they face the future together.

I'd like to thank Progressio's supporters too. Their solidarity has made an enormous difference and continues to bring much needed hope and support in other fragile nations where Progressio is working.



Bringing in the day's catch on the beach at Dili, Timor-Leste.



# 2015: A momentous year

**Action 2015  
Launch,  
15 January**

**Commission  
on the Status  
of Women 59,  
9-20 March**

**UK General  
Election,  
7 May**

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## Stay in touch...

2015 is set to be a big year for development. There will be many opportunities to influence decision makers.

We have the chance to push them to work towards the best possible goals, commitments and legislation that could, in time, change the lives of millions of marginalised people.

Progressio will be calling for fair and ambitious targets on gender justice and climate change. We'll keep you up to date.

- You're invited to get involved
- Keep an eye on #Action2015
- Take action today through our website
- People power makes change happen!

**Mass action  
at Parliament,  
17 June**

**United Nations  
General Assembly  
Meeting,  
15-28 September**

**Paris Climate  
Conference,  
30 November –  
11 December**

**16**

# Let's celebrate our successes



Empower network members at the 2014 Autumn conference

## PROGRESSIO empower

### Empower autumn weekend

We hosted another fantastic Empower Conference in September. Young activists joined together and discussed strategies, campaigns and events to help Progressio plan out its next year of campaigning.

### 0.7: Our efforts are set to pay off

Since September we have been rallying supporters to secure the progress of the International Development Bill that would put into law the commitment to spend 0.7% of national income on development. We were thrilled when it passed its Third Reading on 5 December. Hundreds of Progressio supporters told their MPs to 'turn up and save lives'.

It was a real example of people power in action as you directly influenced the result of a crucial Bill.

## Things you can do

### Join Empower

The Empower network is a passionate team of young adults committed to standing alongside poor and marginalised people around the world.

By joining Empower, you become part of a vibrant community working together to raise the profile of international development and achieve change through campaigning and fundraising.

### Become an Advocate

Our Advocates are a core group of supporters who represent the work of Progressio within their community or church.

By becoming an Advocate for Progressio, you can take a leading role in our major campaign actions and spread our messages throughout your networks, acting as a catalyst for change.



Rhiannon Clapham and her abuela, Marta, in El Salvador.

## Learning from inspirational women in El Salvador

Rhiannon Clapham travelled to El Salvador in July 2014 for her International Citizen Service with Progressio. Here, she shares the story of the inspirational lady who hosted her.

The rural community of Santa Marta in El Salvador was almost destroyed by civil war. The lady who hosted us – our abuela – had suffered more than most. At 67, she had lived through 12 years of war, become a refugee, and lost her husband, parents, brothers and two of her children. She now raises her grandson singlehandedly after his father migrated to the United States 15 years ago.

She'd tell me stories about El Salvador and its history of *lucha* – fighting for a just society. She taught me about the importance of preserving the historical memory and the spirit of *lucha* in the young people of El Salvador – so that they carried on working and putting their energy into making a difference.

My abuela inspired many of the activities we did during our placement. We created a monument to a famous massacre that took place in Santa Marta during the civil war, where 300 civilians escaping to Honduras were murdered by the armed forces. We also interviewed people in the community about their experiences in the civil war and recorded these to pass the historical memory of the community on.

Saying goodbye to my abuela was one of the hardest things I've ever done. She said: "It is always like this when my children leave me, but I have to remember that you're not mine – that I've just borrowed you; and that you have to go back home. You'll always be remembered and you'll always have a home here."

**After my experience in El Salvador, Progressio's strapline, "People Powered Development", makes so much more sense. I'd definitely recommend ICS to other people. You learn a lot about yourself and about how to understand different cultures and people. Working and living with a small group in such an intense environment teaches you a lot of skills that are necessary when you go home.**

**Take the challenge! Find out how you can volunteer with Progressio at [www.progressio.org.uk/ICS](http://www.progressio.org.uk/ICS)**

**"My abuela taught me about the importance of preserving the historical memory and the spirit of *lucha* in the young people of El Salvador – so that they carried on working and putting their energy into making a difference."**

– Rhiannon Clapham

# Speaking out on women's rights

Throughout 2014, members of Progressio's Policy team were involved in discussions on gender justice and faith. Here are some of the highlights.

## 58 Commission on the Status of Women

The whole team was very active at the Commission on the Status of Women 58 (CSW58) in New York. The team shared Progressio's CSW58 briefing paper with the UK's International Development Secretary, Justine Greening, and organised a successful side event, *'What's faith got to do with it?'*

At the side event Maureen Meatcher, from the National Board of Catholic Women in the UK, reminded everyone that, after the world wars, Europe was in a similar situation to those countries that we call 'fragile states' nowadays. She shared stories of how the Church empowered women by teaching them how to read and write and said she hoped other countries will also start to recognise the importance of empowering women.

➤ **Find out more about the event here: [www.progressio.org.uk/blog/progressio-blog/whats-faith-got-do-it](http://www.progressio.org.uk/blog/progressio-blog/whats-faith-got-do-it)**

## End of Sexual Violence in Conflict summit

The team hosted another side event at the End of Sexual Violence in Conflict summit called *'Learning to speak taboo'* which was well attended by key development professionals.

➤ **For more on Progressio's Policy team, head to [www.progressio.org.uk/policy](http://www.progressio.org.uk/policy)**



Lizzette Robleto-Gonzalez (right) speaking at the End of Sexual Violence in Conflict summit



## **Thank you to all our fantastic fundraisers!**

**Fundraising for Progressio gives you a chance to challenge poverty. You can raise vital funds for our work and raise the voices of the world's poorest and most marginalised people at the same time.**

There are many ways to get involved and support our work, and we'd love for you to join us!

Please visit [www.progressio.org.uk/](http://www.progressio.org.uk/) to fundraise for the latest opportunities.

### **Live Below the Line is back!**

Taking place again this April, your aim is to survive below the poverty line for five days. It's a meaningful way to raise awareness that extreme poverty is about more than hunger. It's also about a lack of choice and opportunity.

If you want to raise money by living off £1 a day for all food and drink for five days, let us know at [www.progressio.org.uk/lbtl](http://www.progressio.org.uk/lbtl).

### **A dinner party with a difference**

Last year, Max Donnell-Ford, 19, hosted a 'Come Dine Below the Line' fundraising feast, as part of his Live Below the Line week. Inspired by his time volunteering in Nicaragua with Progressio ICS, Max cooked a meal for 18 people for less than £1 a head.



**Aidan Bruynseels after running 50 km to fundraise for Progressio.**

### **Running the extra mile**

Aidan Bruynseels showed his commitment to Progressio by taking part in the Royal Parks Foundation Ultra Marathon, running an impressive 50 km to fundraise for the poor and marginalised people we support!

If you're looking for a fun way to fundraise in 2015, we have places in the Superhero Run. It's a brilliant fun run taking place on Sunday 17 May in Regent's Park, London. With 5km and 10km routes to choose from, and the options to run, jog or walk it, no previous experience is required.

Plus, every participant gets a FREE superhero costume!

# Challenge yourself

Fundraising offers the chance to experience life-changing adventures, see incredible sights and meet amazing people. Experienced fundraiser Monju Meah returned to Peru, where he had previously spent time as a Progressio ICS volunteer, to trek Machu Picchu whilst raising more than £3,000.

Read about his trip on  
[www.progressio.org.uk/monju](http://www.progressio.org.uk/monju)

**'If you have a daunting challenge ahead, harness your will and energy, trust in people and remember those who you are doing it for. You will get there in the end.'**

– Monju Meah

From Ben Nevis to the Great Wall of China, Progressio offers a variety of events to participate in and raise valuable donations. You can even throw yourself out of a plane if it takes your fancy!

## Spend and fundraise for us!

Now there's a way to make every pound you spend in 2015 count! When you sign up to Give as You Live, a percentage of your online purchases get donated to Progressio, at no extra cost to you! Signing up is free and very easy. You can get more details on our website.

## Got a spare minute or two?

Then why not speak to a local school or church group about Progressio's work? We can provide you with text for a two minute talk, as well as posters and donation forms.

## There's more...

Further ways to fundraise can be found on our website, and we're always keen to hear your ideas. No matter how you choose to fundraise, Progressio will be there to support you all the way – from the first step to the final mile!

Make sure you check out [www.progressio.org.uk/fundraise](http://www.progressio.org.uk/fundraise) for all the information and email [supporters@progressio.org.uk](mailto:supporters@progressio.org.uk) if there is anything we can do to help.





## Become a Living Legend



**Writing a Will is one of the most important things you will ever do. After you've taken care of your loved ones, you too can become a living legend by including a charity you care about.**

In September, we celebrated legendary charity supporters such as wing walker Tom, iron woman Eddie and high diver David. If you haven't seen their videos yet, watch it now on our website: **[www.progressio.org.uk/content/everyone-can-be-living-legend](http://www.progressio.org.uk/content/everyone-can-be-living-legend)**

But remember, you don't have to take on high diving or wing walking to be a Living Legend!

Gifts in Wills are equally legendary acts in the way they support our work.

Over the last three years, legacies have allowed us to train and support more than 3,000 people. That's thousands of people who we have helped empower to overcome the barriers that keep them in poverty.

In the years to come, with the help of these legendary gifts, we want to send even more development workers to share their skills with more local organisations and communities. That means more people with the least power and least wealth will be able to take a leading role in achieving lasting change for themselves.

To receive your free legacy guide to making or updating a Will, please call us on 020 7326 4046 or email us at **[legacy@progressio.org.uk](mailto:legacy@progressio.org.uk)**