



1 Chronicles 29:14: *“But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.*”

While we rejoice in the privilege we have had to equip local churches in southern Africa to care for orphaned and vulnerable children, we regret to announce the conclusion of operations for Forgotten Voices International, effective August 31, 2024. Maintaining our staffing and operating in 3 countries has become economically unsustainable. For various reasons, we unanimously sense God leading us to this painful decision.

Making this decision now allows us to fulfill our commitment to support our church partners in empowering children and families, taking care of children through the end of December, and providing staff care amidst this unexpected change. We still need your help (*see end*).

When we first started visiting Zimbabwe in 2004 before Forgotten Voices came to be, we continually saw local churches coming alongside local families, who were caring for a child biologically not their own but loving them as family. This continues. The entire premise of Forgotten Voices has always been that these local churches know more than us and it has been our great joy to invest in their hopes and dreams for the families and children in their communities. That desire continues.

Yet, these past few years have been filled with gut-wrenching challenges: cancer took loved ones on our team, another died in childbirth, several staff and board members struggled with cancer for themselves or their families, and other personal matters that have also brought us to our knees. Through it all, God was faithful and continues to be.

Coupled with these challenges faced by our team, another significant challenge making our current trajectory unsustainable is decreasing funding levels in the nonprofit landscape. Over the last few years, we’ve seen a steady decline in support across all giving levels, which has been experienced by other organizations similar to ours. In March of this year, Shelton and our USA team shifted to focus almost exclusively on fundraising to address some unexpected loss of support, but this decline in funding continued despite the team’s faithful efforts.

Amidst these obstacles and challenges, we rejoice at the ways God has been at work around us. When we first began, a pastor in Zimbabwe remarked, “In 20 years of working with orphans and vulnerable children, Forgotten Voices was the 1st outside organization to ask me what I thought should be done.” When we started, our approach was very rare. We are thankful it is not rare anymore, as dozens of groups in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi are listening to local churches. Forgotten Voices helped change the conversation and equipped many ministries.

While Forgotten Voices will conclude its operations to fund and supervise the work in southern Africa directly, we are pleased to share that the vital work we have supported will continue through newly established, independent organizations. These new entities, led by local Boards of Directors who have been at the heart of our efforts, will carry forward the mission of supporting orphaned and vulnerable children independently.

This year alone, Forgotten Voices has helped train leaders in our model from 85 different countries. We’ve also contributed to the World Health Organization’s INSPIRE program, which is focused on





ending violence against children around the world, as one of the few faith groups to give shape to the effort.

In March, one global leader from Southeast Asia told us that “no ministry has impacted my thinking about advancing the Gospel more than Forgotten Voices.” We give glory to God for that and for all things.

Since we started, God has allowed us to invest in over 300 local churches and, through our custom plans, serve over 20,000 orphaned or vulnerable children, including over 9,000 beneficiaries this past year. The indirect impact of your investment cannot be calculated. Your support and faithfulness made that possible. We are grateful to you for allowing God to use you.

As a board and staff team, we have faithfully sought God’s provision again and worked hard to consider all the options. After months of prayer, we believe this is the wisest path to honor the children and staff we serve. Continuing further as status quo may result in us simply running out of funds and not being able to honor our current commitments to either.

We would like to thank Shelton Taguma and the entire staff for their tireless efforts toward our mission.

Decisions like this raise many questions. We are working on many of them, while others we will, too, wonder about, perhaps forever. This isn’t how we wanted to end our work, but we do believe it’s the most faithful and wise decision for this moment with the information we have today.

How can you help? There are two ways in the immediate:

1. **GIVE:** Thank you for giving towards our wind-down fund. Your gifts have helped us fulfill the commitments to children and families in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi, fulfill our commitments to churches through December 31, and provide staff care amidst this unexpected change. All gifts will be gratefully received between now and September 20, 2024 by check to our office or through the Kindful online giving platform. If you have an auto-recurring gift set up through the Kindful online giving platform, we will deactivate the recurrence as of August 31, but invite you to consider consolidating your 2024 remaining planned giving into a single one-time donation. Any contributions received above our goal will be distributed by the FVI board to support the efforts of local FVI boards to continue the work in Africa.
2. **PRAY:** We covet your prayers for the children and families we serve, the local churches we partner with, our staff in the USA and in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi, including our local advisory boards who have all served faithfully amidst great challenges, and our Board in the United States.

There will be new updates in the coming weeks, with many people to thank those who have helped us through the years. Thank you for considering this and joining us in fulfilling our mission to the end. To God be the glory, great things He has done.

Forgotten Voices International Board of Directors: Michael Dolislager, Kathy Goss, Ryan Keith, Jeffrey Moshier, Beverly Nyberg, Stephen Proctor, Chair, and Amanda Thompson.

