

# MOVING IMAGE

Purple Field Productions Supporters Newsletter

## Making films in the time of coronavirus



Recording in Sierra Leone

The coronavirus crisis has challenged us in many ways over recent months. At first it seemed like a major setback—PFP cannot at present work directly on any of its usual projects in Africa, with shutdowns and social distancing operating in all the countries we work in.

But it has also handed us an unexpected opportunity.

Coronavirus is affecting countries in Africa just as in Europe. But with health systems among the most fragile in the world, there is serious concern about how quickly the disease could spread.

*"This has shown PFP can respond very quickly to changing circumstances—it's innovative, it breaks the mould, and it shows we can diversify."*

~ Kevin Waldie, PFP chair

Two countries PFP works in are particularly vulnerable: Sierra Leone has just one ventilator between eight million people, and Malawi has about 25 intensive care beds, for a population of 17 million.

The best hope for avoiding the worst is to minimise the number of people who have to go to hospital—and for that information is needed. The more people who know how to avoid catching coronavirus, the less pressure there is on local health services.

So PFP was glad to step up and help. We developed proposals for two music videos: one in Sierra Leone, and one in Malawi, both spreading the word about measures ordinary people can take to avoid coronavirus.

We had to act fast, though, as lockdown was imminent and there was just a small window of opportunity for musicians and film makers to get together and record.

The first problem was funding. At lunchtime on 25 March, PFP launched an emergency appeal in the UK for the £1000 cost of making the film.



Singers recording in Malawi

### 'Staggering' response

The appeal drew a truly staggering response. By the time we went to bed on that same day you had already donated £700 — enough to make and distribute the first film. The total raised is now over £2000 and still rising.

This meant our film makers could swing into action. Working almost entirely via WhatsApp, UK-based trustees Kevin Waldie and former music video producer Rick Elgood supported long-term partners the Future View Film Group in Sierra Leone in recording and filming "Le wi protect wi sef" (Let's Protect Ourselves).

"It was very quick and it wasn't planned," says Kevin. "It's innovative, it breaks the mould and shows we can diversify."

In Malawi, film makers who had already worked with PFP dubbing 'The Unknown' into the local language, Chichewa (see p3), came together as the Kasungu Film Collective. Their music video, 'Tingathe' (Yes We Can) handled the same message but differently, tailored for a Malawian audience.

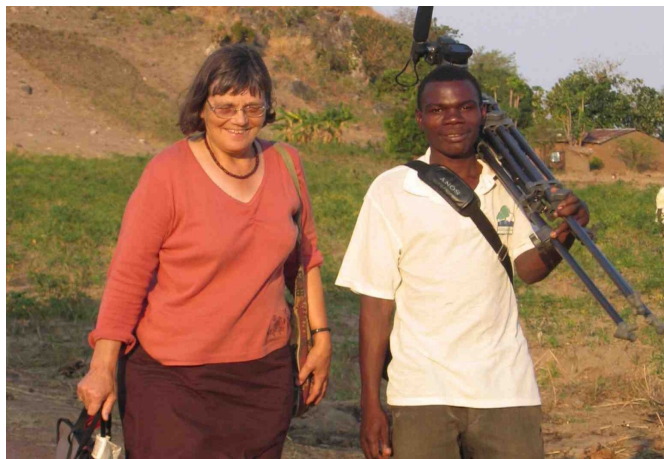
Both films were produced and ready to release within just three weeks. They're now in circulation on mobile phones, via Video Shacks, on FM radio stations and now on local TV, too.

**None of this could have happened without your support. Thank you! You are amazing.**



Watch both videos online (with subtitles) on the Purple Field Productions Youtube Channel: [youtube.com/purplefieldonline](https://youtube.com/purplefieldonline)

## Elspeth steps down



The tireless founder and chair of Purple Field Productions, Elspeth Waldie, retired from her executive roles at the beginning of May after 16 years at the helm.

Elspeth became involved in film making almost by accident, after the founder of a rehabilitation centre in Bangladesh challenged her to write a script for a film with a disabled person as the hero.

That film was such a success that at local request, Elspeth went on to write a second film, *Radio Bhai*, and this time since no more money was available, recruited a volunteer crew and produced it herself. Purple Field Productions was born.

**"One of the things people in rural Africa need most of all is information. They have great determination, but without access to information it is very difficult to overcome adverse circumstances."**

**~ Elspeth Waldie, PFP founder**

PFP now works across four countries training film makers and raising awareness of issues from cerebral palsy to safe motherhood and the Ebola crisis.

"The most satisfying thing has been giving people the information they need to make their own decisions and steer their own development," says Elspeth.

She says working with young film makers and watching them realise the potential of film has also been a "tremendous joy and satisfaction". But, she says, none of it would have been possible without PFP's supporters.

"It has been so very much a team effort," she says. "PFP has some really wonderful people on board—and therein lies its greatest strength."

Elspeth now hand over the reins to Dr Kevin Waldie, trustee for Distribution and Impact. Kevin has lived and worked in several African countries — his daughter was born in Kenya. Until recently he taught International Development at Reading University, and has a masters degree in documentary film making.

Despite the common surname, the two had never met before Kevin's involvement with PFP—but have consequently discovered they are distantly related!

## The next three months...

Just before Elspeth retired, Trustees agreed an Emergency Plan to cover May to July, taking PFP through the next three months of coronavirus uncertainty.

There is much that can be done, even from a distance and under lockdown. The plan is to continue work in Sierra Leone and Malawi producing videos on coronavirus as well as working on post-production of Future View Film Group's "Safe Motherhood" film (see p3).

In Malawi, the focus is on consolidating and developing the newly-formed Kasungu Film Collective in Malawi (see p1), setting up a new training programme and encouraging more female film makers to come forward, possibly with a competition offering prizes.

It's all part of a wider plan to establish new film groups across Africa and make good use of social media and short clips as well as longer-form films.

"We're getting a bit more sophisticated about finding different audiences," says new chair Kevin Waldie. "There will always be a role for longer films but there's also room for shorter, smaller videos too."

### Meet the Team!

#### Rick Elgood, Trustee



Rick comes to PFP by way of a distinguished career in film making. He started his film making journey at Ridley Scott Associates in London, then went on to spend the 1980s editing and then directing TV commercials and music videos.

A work trip to Jamaica for Island Records was meant to last two weeks—but turned into 20 years making films about social

matters, HIV/AIDS and music-related documentaries, eventually directing dramatic feature 'One Love', starring Hollywood star Idris Elba. He is mostly UK based now but continues to travel back and forth.

He saw the advert for the PFP trusteeship last year. "It was exactly what I wanted to do, helping, giving back some of what I'd learned," he says.

He's jumped in with both feet and is just back from his first PFP trip to Sierra Leone, where he helped the Future View Film Group with their latest production, working title "Safe Motherhood" (see p3). "I hope over the coming years we can expand what we can do and have a far wider reach," he says.



## Shooting in Sierra Leone: “A wonderful experience”



Just before the coronavirus crisis hit, trustee Rick Elgood set off for Sierra Leone. It was his first PFP trip, working with Future View Film Group on their new film, working title “Safe Motherhood”.

It proved to be a rewarding but challenging trip from the start: “I was meant to arrive two days before shooting started, but the plane broke down twice,

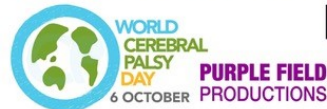
then I missed the connection from Casablanca,” remembers Rick. “So I missed the first morning.”

It didn’t stop there. “Every day there were challenges,” says Rick. “It was extremely interesting working alongside the locals—we would take food with us to villages and they would cook it in huge pots with masses of rice, which all ate by hand off large trays.”

The team shot the film in 17 days, finishing three days early. “There was a lot of training and learning to do on set,” says Rick. “I was learning about them too, and they all seemed very happy. It was lovely.”

Work has now begun on editing and refining the film under Rick’s guidance, with a view to releasing it some time over the next two months.

## Lisilojulikana continues to change the lives of Kenyan families



**LISILOJULIKANA**  
the unknown  
[www.purplefieldproductions.org](http://www.purplefieldproductions.org)

Screenings in Kenya of PFP’s award-winning film ‘Lisilojulikana’ continue to have a deep impact on families and their children.

PFP’s facilitator and health worker Salome Jordano has been following up with visits to 16 families of children with cerebral palsy.

They included Mama Salome, who told of the abuse her daughter had suffered at the hands of her biological father because of her cerebral palsy.

After visiting, Salome Jordano admitted the girl to her school in Naivasha, and now both she and her mother are safe.

Another visit was to David Njuguna, left caring for two disabled children after his wife ran away, seeing their cerebral palsy as a sign of misfortune.

David had been blaming himself, but after talking to Salome came to understand that disability is not a curse. “He was more at ease, and vowed to continue to look after his children with more care and love,” writes Salome.

Salome’s work prompted the local authorities to tell her about more families affected by cerebral palsy in the area, some with children hidden at home. Salome is now trying to locate them so that they can be helped too.

## Malawi film screenings ‘lifechanging’



Chiwemwe Phiri

After successful pilot screenings, the dubbed version of PFP’s cerebral palsy film The Unknown (Lisilojulikana), under its Chichewa title ‘Chosadziwika’, is now making its way around villages across Malawi. To date it has reached nearly 11,500 people.

The impact on children and young people with cerebral palsy in these communities has again been extraordinary.

**Chiwemwe Phiri** passed her first school exams at the age of 26 after her mother saw the film and asked for help: a wheelchair gave Chiwemwe the freedom to attend school.

**Aida Banda**, 18, now has new mobility aids and her medical needs are being assessed at Kasungu hospital, prompted by a screening of the film in her village.

**Tionge Gama** had been locked up at home for most of her two years until her parents saw the film; she is now out and about and has been referred for assessment.

## Breaking new ground in Tanzania

PFP is continuing to hold trial screenings of Lisilojulikana across Tanzania and it has become very clear how much the message behind the film is needed.

Between December and February the team managed a tour of eight screenings, as well as helping partners such as Neema House in Geita and the Inuka Rehabilitation Centre in Wanging’Ombe to run their own screenings as part of their outreach.

To date, over 3000 people have seen the film. Over half were at a single screening, run by our incredibly supportive partners in Tanzania, ADD International. We continue to help the film reach new audiences across Tanzania.

# Support in the UK

## News from PFP fundraising events

### Giving in the time of coronavirus

You will remember that, just five years ago, PFP was heavily involved in supporting our young filmmakers in Sierra Leone who were caught in the midst of the Ebola epidemic. Valiantly, they continued working and produced films that demonstrated how to avoid contracting the disease. Two of their film crew died. Later, they also made a film that addressed the stigma that arose after the crisis. Their film got international recognition.

We are now in the midst of our own crisis. We have important projects in Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya and Sierra Leone that urgently need our continuing support. With fundraising events cancelled, we have to look to alternative methods. We will be writing proposals to funding organisations, of course, but our chances of getting their support are slim.

So how can you help? Here are a few suggestions:

**Buy a face mask** - Sewing machines have been whirring overtime as a group of Ilminster volunteers get to work producing face masks—over 500 so far. These are now available to the public from the Silver Street Dairy and the Green House in Ilminster in return for a donation—50% of which goes to PFP's Covid 19 work in Africa.



Give as you Live®

#### Give as You Live

This is a way of donating funds to PFP that doesn't cost you a penny! It works like this: you register online ([giveasyoulive.com](http://giveasyoulive.com)) and when you purchase goods or services online, the supplier donates a percentage (typically 2% - 5%) to the charity of your choice.

#### amazon smile Amazon Smile

This works in a similar way for goods purchased on Amazon.

**Sponsorship** – How about getting friends, relatives, and colleagues to sponsor you. You could knit the longest scarf in the world, grow the biggest sunflower ever, or build the Shard out of matchsticks! Get creative, you know you can be!



**Grow** – Grow extra vegetable/flower plants this year to sell outside your front door in aid of PFP.

### Meet the Supporters!

#### Jelena Stanojlovic



Jelena, or Jeli to her friends, is one half of the stalwart team who organises PFP's legendary Quiz Nights at Horton Village Hall.

Jeli is a retired teacher, formerly at Holyrood Academy, Chard, and with friend and former colleague

Micki Darbourne she raises about £800 each year.

She got involved with PFP after volunteering in Malawi. On returning home she knew she wanted to do more, and another ex colleague, Rob Rainbow, asked her to set the questions for the PFP quiz.

"The first time we had so many people we didn't have enough room for everyone," she says. "It's good fun, and the charity itself is fantastic—so it's a pleasure to do it."

Jeli is spending lockdown researching the next set of fiendishly difficult questions, with next year's quiz likely to be themed: "It makes it more interesting," says Jeli.

Look out for details of the next Quiz early in 2021 (coronavirus restrictions permitting)!

~ Rob Rainbow, PFP Trustee responsible for fundraising