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## Editor's note

The Inauguration Ceremony of the Chief Executive of the CEDAR Fund was held at Diamond Hill Baptist Church on 3 December last year, and we would like to thank our guests and friends for coming to 'See and Change'. In this issue of SHARE, 'Focus' brings the interview of our new Chief Executive, Dr. Winnie Fung, to let readers know about her insights and changes on the road to poverty alleviation. With the title of 'Come and See: Bring Transformation', 'Back to the Bible' guides readers to take a closer look at the Lord's work to achieve the transformation of life, and 'Taking Action' brings us trippers' sharing from those who have visited the minority churches in northern Thailand. As the Lunar New Year approaches, the CEDAR Fund supports education projects in impoverished countries through the 'Red Packet Campaign', hoping for a change in disadvantaged children's lives by getting a quality education.

## FOCUS

### 'Seeing is Changing' Interview with the CEDAR Fund's new Chief Executive, Dr. Winnie Fung

*Written by Gloria Cheung (Senior Communications Officer)*

CEDAR Fund's new Chief Executive, Dr. Fung Wan Yi (Winnie), comes across as a polite and smiling lady, and, to our surprise, she knows how to drive a motorcycle and shoot, which were learned for visiting and working in poverty-stricken areas. Was she a bold and daring person? Winnie immediately denied, 'Of course not! It was just because motorcycles are often used in impoverished areas, and firearms are seen from time to time in war-torn areas, so it is always good to know about them.'

Winnie's dedication to those experiencing poverty began by seeing the 'unseen', causing her to quit her role as a scholar and serve in a poverty alleviation organisation. How far is the distance between seeing and changing? Although the answer is different for everyone, for Winnie, her every sight significantly changes her life's direction.

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## The Three Sights of Those in Poverty

Winnie has loved studying, especially mathematics, since young. Having excelled in high school, she was admitted to Harvard University in the United States, majoring in applied mathematics. After graduating, she pursued a PhD in economics at Harvard Business School because she wanted to teach at universities. She then taught economics at Wheaton College, a prestigious Christian institution in the United States, and even obtained a tenure.

However, the Lord changed her future life path through her three sights of those experiencing poverty - giving up the 'iron rice bowl' (lifetime employment) of academia and joining CEDAR, a donation-based organisation located at an industrial building in Kwun Tong, to participate in the CEDAR's service and walk with the impoverished who are in dire straits.



Winnie (second from left) visited Ethiopia with CEDAR Fund's staff.

Her first sight came in her first year of PhD study. She went to Manila, the Philippines, with a student mission organisation to visit the slums and fell ill in the third week due to poor sanitation. 'I asked the Lord, "I don't know what I'm doing, and the books I read and the knowledge I learn have nothing to do with where I am now." At that moment, the Lord showed me that no matter how good my grades were and how many degrees I had, it meant nothing to the young Filipino couple and their hungry baby beside me. But at the same time, the Lord showed me that studying economics is very meaningful, enabling me to help people from a socioeconomic perspective. So when I returned to the United States., I changed my major from corporate finance to economic development, focusing on hunger and poverty.' That was the first turning point.

The second sight came from her short-term mission in an Islamic country in North Africa. She followed the country's custom, wearing a headscarf and a robe like other women. One day after she returned to the United States, she saw many people covering their faces and wearing headscarves on the street. She realised that not only in the Islamic country but also in the community where she lived in the States, there were many such 'neighbours' with their faces covered, but she had never seen them. 'At that moment, the Lord let me see my "unseen"! They were by my side every day, but I didn't see them.'

The third sight was seeing her common humanity with people experiencing poverty during that trip to North Africa. She once went to a public bath with a few girls wearing burqas. Because of the language, religion and cultural differences, she estimated that there must have been many communication barriers. Unexpectedly, when they went to the bath and took off their burqas, she realised the girls had much in common. Under the burqas, they loved beauty and cared about their figures. 'The Lord showed me that we are not any different and have the same desire for love, security,

and respect. Since then, whenever I come into contact with people in poverty, I feel very close to them, and even every time a plane lands in an impoverished country, I feel like I am at home.'

These experiences led Winnie to decide in 2018 to leave everything she had established in the United States and return to Hong Kong because she believes that the centre of Christian faith has shifted from Western countries to Asia, Africa, and Latin America, a region collectively known as the 'majority world', where she longs to experience and participate in the work of the Lord. 'According to statistics, there are 2.5 billion Christians in the world. For every 100 Christians, about 67 live in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and 79 in countries with moderate or high levels of corruption, where the Spirit of the Lord is working.'

## CEDAR Fund's International Role and Prophetic Nature

After returning to Hong Kong, she was invited to join the Board of Directors of CEDAR, where she got up close and personal with the CEDAR's work. Despite its small size, Winnie found that the CEDAR played a crucial role in the international arena of Christian poverty alleviation.

'CEDAR Fund is a founding member of the Integral Alliance (IA), a global coalition of Christian relief and development organisations. IA has 20 members, and like CEDAR, all carry out poverty alleviation and development and relief work based on the integral mission and holistic Gospel. CEDAR is the only non-white representative from the Asian, African and Latin American regions.' She pointed out that through this network, CEDAR's work can be extended to 85 countries, reaching partners in more than 500 impoverished countries and thus being able to quickly participate in earthquake relief efforts such as Syria and Afghanistan.



A group photo of Winnie (first from right) and some Integral Alliance members after the conference.

Winnie said that if she used one word to describe CEDAR, it would be prophetic. 'CEDAR Fund's development over the past 32 years has been "avant-garde", being a thought leader in the church's witness, its integral mission, and God's involvement in the "majority world" and "global south".' (Note: 'developing countries' and 'the third world' are replaced by the 'global south'.)

## Three Trends in Poverty Alleviation and Development

As the new Chief Executive, Winnie shares a few trends she sees in poverty alleviation and how they will impact CEDAR Fund's work in the future.



### Come and See: Bring Transformation

Written by Fountain Chik (Theology Development Officer)

'Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?" "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.' (John 1:38-40)

Have you ever wondered what it would be like if Jesus Himself were to pose the question, 'What do you want?' If it were me, I would probably feel flattered and fumble for an immediate answer - I want a transformation in my life. Yet, I often find myself shrouded in the mist and do not know the next step to take from the beginning. I suppose the two followers who Jesus asked the same question might have felt the same way.

John 1 describes the first day of Jesus's public ministry. When He asked, 'What do you want?' The word 'want' in the original Hebrew means 'to seek', representing a profound enquiry meaning within Jewish culture. The two followers answered: 'Rabbi, where are you staying?' Jesus responded: 'Come, and you will see.' The Bible does not explicitly state what Jesus intended for them to see. Yet, they met by the Jordan River, far from Jesus's homeland. For this reason, scholars speculate that Jesus stayed in temporary lodging. In any case, this invitation to 'come and see' marked the starting point of transformation.

What is worth noting is that the Gospel of John records four instances of 'come and see' (John 1:39; 1:46; 4:29; 11:34), each leading to the same outcome, although they involve different individuals and circumstances: people came to Jesus, stayed with Him, observed His actions and professed their belief in Him. The repetition of these key phrases is a writing style of John, the author, in a way that characters and even the readers of the Bible were being invited with the same call: 'come and see'.

Let's return to the two individuals invited by Jesus to 'come and see'. It is only known that one of them was Andrew (John 1:40), who stayed with Jesus that day. Andrew is mentioned again in the Gospel of John. He witnessed how Jesus compassionately fed a hungry crowd of five thousand (John 6:8-13). He is last mentioned when he conveyed a message from some Greeks who desired to see Jesus (John 12:20-22). This is how I interpret it: Andrew repeatedly stayed by Jesus' side, observing His actions. Over time, he underwent a transformation. According to accounts in church history, Andrew ventured far and wide, even to present-day Turkey and Ukraine, for missionary work. It is said that Andrew was martyred by being crucified on an X-shaped cross.

'What do you want?' While I would not strive for the ability to express my core needs precisely, but I yearn to respond to John's invitation, 'come and see', and look at the actions of the Lord today over and over again: how He feeds the hungry through the Church, how He cares about the circumstances of other nations. Through such observation, the transformation takes place.

Firstly, she believes that the centre of faith of the universal church has shifted to Asia, Africa and Latin America. Hence, she hopes CEDAR can be a 'matchmaker' to connect Hong Kong believers with the needs of churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America and effectively walk with local people in poverty. Secondly, Hong Kong's role in the international arena has changed with the rise of China. Hong Kong was a window for dialogue between China and Western countries, and it will be advantageous as a bridge between ASEAN countries and the West. As a result, CEDAR will allocate 60% of its resources to Southeast and South Asian countries, 15% to Africa, 10% to the Middle East, and the remaining 15% locally. Thirdly, poverty alleviation and disaster relief were two different concepts. However, with the intensification of natural disasters and the escalation of political conflicts, poverty alleviation and development, humanitarian assistance, and peace-building will no longer be separated but must be carried out simultaneously.

Many people are concerned about whether Winnie will adapt from a university campus to a poverty alleviation organisation. However, she asked everyone to rest assured because her teaching has been related to poverty alleviation and development and the integral mission. 'Although my role has changed, the core values remain the same.'

Pray that with Winnie's knowledge and experience in poverty alleviation and development, the Lord will lead the staff of CEDAR, hand in hand with supporters, to continue to shoulder the mission of poverty alleviation in the changing and complex era.



Winnie (third from left) is a passionate traveller to impoverished countries and is pictured in Nepal.

Dr. Winnie Fung is a development economist with a PhD in Business Economics from Harvard University and an MA in Biblical Studies from Wheaton College. Before joining CEDAR Fund, she taught at two Christian higher education institutions (Wheaton College in the United States and Lumina College in Hong Kong) for over 12 years. Winnie loves teaching and sharing information about the holistic Gospel and transformational development. She is passionate about working with and learning from people experiencing poverty in developing countries.

Please visit our website by scanning the QR code below to view the highlights of 'Seeing is Changing', the Inauguration Ceremony of the Chief Executive of CEDAR Fund. (Chinese only)



[link.cedarfund.org/inaug-highlight](http://link.cedarfund.org/inaug-highlight)

## Sharing on the Exposure Trip of Ethnic Minorities Church Life Experience in Northern Thailand

Written by Gloria Cheung (Senior Communications Officer)

Contact with life has the most transformative power to change hearts. Last October, two colleagues from CEDAR joined eight pastors and members from Light Church on a journey to Northern Thailand. They embarked on an eight-day, seven-night 'Exposure Trip of Ethnic Minorities Church Life Experience in Northern Thailand' and visited four partners from churches representing different minority ethnic groups. These partners, each in their unique way, demonstrate the love of Christ by being the salt and light in their communities.

The first destination of the journey was a visit to CEDAR's partner Immanuel Foundation (IMF). IMF is dedicated to combatting human trafficking, providing essentials such as shelter, food and legal support for rescued children. Many trippers found the most profound moment of the trip was the conversation with C (pseudonym), the founder of IMF. As a second-generation pastor and a member of the Kachin ethnic group, C responded to God's calling by fully committing himself to combat human trafficking. When the trippers asked C if he was concerned about potential retaliation from human traffickers against his family because of his work, C responded firmly yet calmly, 'I'm doing the right thing. God is with me, and He will protect me. There's nothing to fear!' The trippers were struck by the unexpected peace that encompassed C, attributing it to the Lord's gift for those who walk in His righteousness.



For the trippers, being able to personally interact with the children being helped is the most effective way for them to truly understand the needs of impoverished communities.

The second stop of the journey involved visiting a group of Karen people who have lived on the highlands for generations, relying on farming as their livelihood. Thanks to the work of missionaries, the Karen have come to know Jesus for several generations and have been taught biblical principles in land management and caring for the poor. For instance, they practice shifting cultivation, ensuring timely harvests while at the same time allowing the land to rest for six years. Also, each year, they offer a portion of their crop yield to the church, enabling the church to support the impoverished in the village. However, the Karen people are currently facing the potential forced displacement due to the government's intention to designate the area as a national park. After spending two days and one night with the Karen community, the trippers discovered that the Karen, while steadfastly guarding their land, adopt a 'persistence rather than confrontation' approach in



Trippers accompanied by the Karen villagers to go to the fields, experiencing the daily life of the tribe.

safeguarding their homeland. They firmly believe that all outcomes are blessings filtered through the Lord's selection. Some of the trippers expressed admiration for the Karen people's absolute obedience to the Lord's sovereignty, considering it the most compelling testimony to believers walking alongside the Lord.

After several days of interaction, it was not merely a cultural experience but also a journey of mutual understanding and blessings between believers from Hong Kong and Northern Thailand. Through this exposure trip, the trippers gained a deeper appreciation for the circumstances faced by underprivileged communities and a better understanding of the work and needs of the churches in Northern Thailand.

If you are interested in organising an exposure trip in the name of your church to visit countries where CEDAR has projects or to visit local partners and beneficiary communities, please feel free to contact us.

## 2023/2024 Operating Statements

In the period of Jul 2023 - Nov 2023

<b>Income</b>	<b>HK\$</b>	<b>5,352,100</b>
Donations		4,572,543
Grants		-
Appeal for Relief		603,479
Other Income		176,078

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>HK\$</b>	<b>8,009,091</b>
Development Projects - Asia		3,527,192
- Middle East		731,173
- China & HK		786,790
- Africa		628,427
Disaster Relief & Rehabilitation Projects		258,820
Partnership Development		1,421,478
Administration		655,211

**Account profit and loss / (Deficit) HK\$ (2,656,991)**

Note: CEDAR's fiscal year is from July 1st to June 30th of the following year. The total budgeted expenditure for the fiscal year 2023 to 2024 is HK\$25,058,000. Please pray for and support CEDAR and its partners in their ministry.

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# CEDAR Fund Red Packet Campaign

## ENSURING QUALITY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN POOR COUNTRIES



We cordially invite everyone to participate in the Red Packet Campaign, helping CEDAR serve impoverished children in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa, enabling them to access quality education and transforming lives.

### Donate red packet money

Donate money from one or more of the red packets they receive and attach a 'Lucky Sticker' to the packets to send blessings to the impoverished community.

### Give Red Packets

Fill out the response form inside the 'CEDAR's Red Packets' and make a one-time or regular donation. You may also consider passing on the red packets to family and friends, encouraging them to participate in the donation.

### Spread the Love

Request 'CEDAR's Red Packets' and 'Lucky Stickers' to distribute to your organisation.

### Invite Sharing

Invite us to give a talk and share stories of impoverished children to raise awareness about their needs with more people.

Participate/ Enquire:

☎ 2381 9627 📞 6383 6861

@ event@cedarfund.org

CEDAR Fund is an independent Christian relief and development organisation serving those in poverty in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, with a vision to build a just and compassionate world. CEDAR was able to walk alongside approximately 1,632,600 beneficiaries and restore their dignity and value through 87 relief and development projects, including 18 new development projects, through partnerships with 47 Christian organisations and churches in 17 countries and regions around the world.



Join Now, Give Blessings.

[link.cedarfund.org/rpc2024-en](http://link.cedarfund.org/rpc2024-en)



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