



March 2022

A Secondary School for Beni in DR Congo!

More students have enrolled at Beni school in the DR CONGO recently, and many older students have now completed the primary school grades. They now need secondary education! Congratulations to the students, Principal Alain and all the teachers, for all they have achieved. Our students who complete secondary school will have better opportunities to gain employment!

A ceremony to commence the building of the secondary school was conducted on February the 22nd. The Mayor of Beni, the local Chief of Police, and Papy, our National Director of Deaf Action Congo attended; as well as other local leaders. All the students lined up to watch the blessing of the first stone at the official



Foundation stone ceremony

first stone at the official



celebrations. The secondary school will have 11 rooms to allow for enough classes in the future! The school garden is growing well and recently produced an excellent crop of big cabbages. The new solid concrete store-room at the school keeps their garden produce safe. Some of the students have also started their own home gardens. The farmland has beans and cacao nuts ready for harvest and provides employment for deaf adults. Education and farming are making a big difference to the lives of deaf people in the Beni area; and now the students can complete secondary education!

Thank you sponsors and supporters for your generous financial support of this school but we need more sponsors. If you would like to sponsor your own student at Beni School for the Deaf please contact us.



Papy, Alain, Chief of Police and the Mayor

www.deafmin.org/deaf-action

DR Congocontinued

Security is an ongoing problem in Beni.

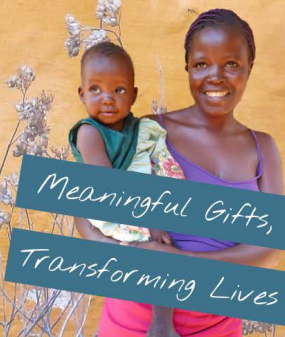
There is police protection in Beni town and the army patrols the farming areas, but the general security outside Beni is not good especially at night time. Many families have moved to live in Beni town but they need to go to their farms to work each day. Rebels raid the farms around Beni and people have been killed and crops stolen over the past decades; and sadly this continues. But we are very thankful that our students are safe walking to school.



Secure Storage

Thank you!

Thank you to all those who gave so generously through our Christmas Campaign. We received a total of **AUD12,527** in gifts and these will be distributed throughout our schools and employment projects. One of the Christmas Catalogue items (under 'Tools') that has been recently purchased for F.C.L.C at Ligao in the Philippines is a brand-new grass cutter! They were also sent another Christmas Catalogue item under the 'Most needed gift' fund to buy a new camera for their school to use to take photos of the students and around the school campus. **They are extremely grateful for your support!**



DMI & DA Christmas Lunch Gathering

DMI and DA staff and volunteers had a lovely end of year Christmas gathering at Steve and Di's McAllister's house. We all had a great time catching up as most people hadn't seen each other since the Melbourne lockdowns. It was wonderful to celebrate Christmas together, even amidst a stubborn global pandemic.



Uganda



Four students – Winnie, Peter, Sylvia and Shabira - have graduated from the Malaika Comprehensive Vocational School and completed their internships. Congratulations to these students on completing their graduation which finally took place on 6th December 2021 due to

Covid-19 and lockdowns! DMI covered the cost of the graduations, including gown hire and photos, transporting their parents/guardians to the graduation venue and providing a special meal for them to celebrate together. Sylvia and Peter

received a Diploma in Institutional and Hotel Catering with internships completed at Endiro and The Kitchen respectively. Winnie and Shabira completed a Diploma in Beauty and Hair dressing and completed internships together at Sparkles Beauty salon.

Sylvia tops her class!

We are thrilled to advise that Sylvia has not only completed her Diploma but has finished top of her class! Her top marks resulted in a certificate of outstanding performance. The presentation was aired on the Uganda National Television station, UBC!



Dreams & Visions



Sylvia
Start a coffee café



Peter
Start a restaurant



Winnie
Start a beauty parlour/salon



Shabira
Start a beauty parlour/salon



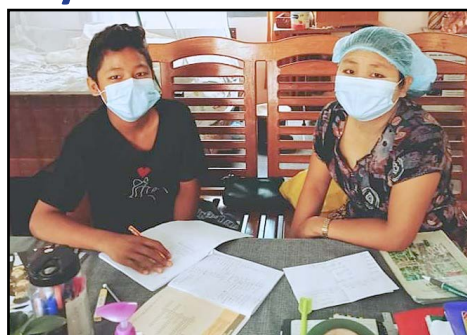
Simon is studying at RUTI Rehabilitation Centre in leather work and shoe making. When qualified, he will become a cobbler and make a living out of it. He is looking forward to graduating and joining the workforce.

Jordan, Allan and **Rachel** are

happily studying at Ugandan National Association for the Deaf Vocational Centre. They are learning so much for their vocational courses. Other students are still attending Mulago School for the Deaf and are thinking about the vocational course they might like to do.

We would like to say a special thanks to an Australian donor who's donation is being used to support 9 students in Kenya. The items they purchased were school shoes, school bags and umbrellas. The gifts are greatly appreciated by the students.

Myanmar - Neville Muir School for the Deaf



The Neville Muir School for the Deaf is still closed as fighting continues in the nearby streets of the school between the soldiers who are controlling the country and the people on the streets. It is highly

dangerous! The military is stopping people from moving out of the area they live in because they think the people will go to the demonstrations in the bigger towns and cities. The military patrol the country roads and force people to stay in their own villages or they will be arrested. The parents are afraid to travel to bring their children to school. The

parents who are farmers are still able to run their farms and grow food to look after themselves. We expect it will slowly improve but it is very sad that the children are missing out on their education. Only twelve students are being home-tutored by the teachers who travel to their homes to teach the students in small groups. We continue to send aid to our church members and staff in Yangon and at the school in Kalay. Pa-Lian has also recently bought a van as an aid to help the deaf community with transport and as a financial safeguard at a time when the Myanmar currency and interest rates are volatile.



Disaster in Malawi

In late January, we received news that Cyclone Ana had caused massive damage and disruption to Malawi, including the buildings, homes, fields and livestock of our staff and Deaf community. A state of emergency was declared by the government. Elton's assessment was as follows:

- * 200 Deaf families homeless, needing food, blankets and plastics to make temporary shelters
- * The roof, toilet, security fence and dormitory have been destroyed at our vocational centre in Migowi
- * Church buildings in Chikwawa and Zomba have been destroyed
- * All of the crops planted in 2 of the 3 of our self-sustainability fund fields have been lost, along with equipment.

The good news is, no lives have been lost and we are very thankful for that!

We have sent three transfers so far to help.

*AUD500 - Immediate response for food and water

*AUD8000 - for extra food relief and temporary shelter for 200 families

*AUD19,000 - for Phase 1 of rebuilding which is to rebuild the Vocational Training Centre.



Continued...



These funds have been received from donors in response to our initial mail-out Disaster Relief campaign.

Thank you very much to those who have already so generously given.

Phase 2 of rebuilding is for the security fence (AUD9,500).

Phase 3 is to rebuild the dormitory (AUD19,000).

Phase 4 is to replace equipment (AUD5,000).

To support our Deaf family in Malawi, we have opened a Malawi Disaster Relief Campaign to raise AUD28,500 for Phases 2 and 3 of rebuilding. Please see the campaign below to help. The needs for Phase 4 will largely be met through our Christmas Campaign. Thank you to all who gave there, too!



Please help us meet the immediate and longer term needs of our Deaf community in Malawi following Cyclone Ana.

AUSTRALIAN SUPPORTERS:

Please donate through **Deaf Action** via our website or using the bank details on the back of the newsletter
<https://deafmin.org/donate/>

ALL OTHER COUNTRIES:

Please donate through **DMI** via our website or using the bank details on the back of the newsletter
<https://deafmin.org/donate/>

Follow the links for Malawi Disaster Relief

Thank you for your generous help at this time.

Uganda

Boom time for Uganda School

Neville Muir Comprehensive School for the Deaf

With the pandemic easing, it's wonderful to see so many students returning to the Neville Muir Comprehensive School in Lira, Uganda under Dennis' directorship. Registered students are now up to 350! Over 80 of these are Deaf, with 270 having other disabilities or special needs. We have never had so many students come for vocational training before! It's great to be able to make such a difference in the lives of these young people.

The recently completed dormitories are full and the courses are expanding. In addition to the Brick Laying and Concrete Practice, Carpentry and Joinery, Tailoring and Hairdressing, the school will soon be introducing Knitting, Computer studies, Mechanics and Driving, and others.



Yet the blessing of so many students also brings trials. We don't have enough classrooms for the students! With the rainy season starting in March and the government putting pressure on us to build proper facilities, we can no longer keep holding classes under trees. The quote to build four classrooms is AUS64,000.

Thank you so much to those who have already so generously given.

Philippines

Davao School Closing

It is with sadness that we announce that our school in Davao will be closing on 31 March, 2022. The Davao school has for many years been a flagship school for DMI with, at its peak, over 100 Deaf students studying and living at the school. We are grateful that so many Deaf have graduated from the school, been a part of the Deaf church associated with the



Joshua and Jocelyn Asuela

school, and gone on to live meaningful lives because of the education received at the school. Joshua and Jocelyn Asuela have been like parents to many of the Deaf children studying at the school, and have done a superb job educating, guiding and caring for them all.

We thank God for their diligence, skill and big hearts in running the school. The school began in 1991 under the name Deaf Ministries Institute and hosted the first DMI Conference in 1999. Joshua was the one who suggested to Neville that the name of our growing organisation (at that time under World Opportunities International) should be Deaf Ministries International. And that is what we became!

Over the last few years, because of another school for the Deaf opening in the area, changing logistics and, more recently, the pandemic, the number of students has drastically decreased, meaning it was no longer viable to continue running the school. The few remaining students have been guided to other schools, and sponsors have been notified and redirected to support DMI students at other schools. We're grateful for their ongoing support.

Gabriel our deaf and blind student at Davao continues to be



Davao students 2008

cared for by Glen who is devoted to him. Glenn was a deaf graduate of the DMI College and has cared for Gabriel for many years. We are now considering how Gabriel's needs can be best catered for in the future.

Deaf Ministries Institute is now in the process of selling the school building. The Davao Immanuel Church For The Deaf will continue at a new location yet to be decided.

This has been a challenging time for DMI and for the Asuela family, but we are confident that things will work out.



Davao school building

F.C.L.C at Ligao - Philippines

The Omicron variant started in the Ligao area in December 2021 and anyone who was unvaccinated was not allowed to go out during this time! So the Work Modules system continued again after the Christmas holidays and students are not yet permitted to board at school. But schools like F.C.L.C. where the teachers are fully vaccinated are allowed limited face to face classes, so they can now meet occasionally.

However most of the time the students work at home and parents deliver the completed work to the school and collect new Work Modules. When parents need to ask questions about the worksheets they communicate with the teachers through text. Six older students who live a long distance from the school are limited to working online, but their learning has been able to continue. The teachers and students are overjoyed to start occasional activities together at school with less covid restrictions from now on.

Happy Hearts Day

Valentine's Day is celebrated in the Philippines. But at schools



it is called 'Happy Hearts Day' and the students celebrate it with their teachers. The lower grade students in the photo have been vaccinated and were allowed to come to school to celebrate 'Happy Hearts Day' with their teacher. Activities like this are important for the students who still do most of their school work at home. We have students at this school that still do not have a sponsor. If you would like to sponsor one please contact us.

Christmas Bonus and Teachers' Lunch

It is a government regulation in the Philippines that all public and private companies pay an end of year bonus of one month's salary to their staff! With so many needs in a school for the deaf it is difficult for the school to keep money aside for this purpose; but the school is very grateful for the financial support for them to do this. The teachers also had a special Christmas party and wore their new uniforms that were purchased using the surplus left from the Typhoon Aid sent in 2021, with many thanks to Chelsea and Berwick Church of Christ in Australia. The teachers even played novelty games.



Have you ever tried to build a tower using those soft marshmallows and chopsticks?

Left: New uniforms
Bottom Left: Marshmallow game



The classrooms at Ligao were built many years ago and the roofs were natural palm leaves, but regular typhoons mean constant repairs are needed. At last they have all been roofed with permanent iron, and deaf workers have been employed to do this.

The farm at Ligao helps support the school. Rice

was harvested and other income was raised through selling rice, coconuts, dressed chickens, fattened pigs and fruit. The newly planted crops include pineapples, bananas, cassavas, taros and gingers, and they are growing very well.



Bacolod - Philippines



Another tropical cyclone has ripped through Bacolod. A state of emergency was declared and over 5,600 people were evacuated from their homes. Three of our students' houses were badly affected. Their families have no money and no food, so they were unable to provide for their children's education. But with the help of Deaf Action's sponsors, they

were able to continue studying away from home, and we are very grateful for that.



Bacolod students are continuing their training online although some modules are very difficult for them. Learning is in the form of individualised instruction that allows students to use self-learning

modules in print or digital formats. Students can use whichever learning resources are most appropriate and helpful for them, like Learner's Materials, textbooks, activity sheets, study guides and other study materials.



Kenya

Covid Free Year

2021 was a strained academic year but there were no cases of covid among the students or teachers for the whole year! The government insisted on compulsory vaccinations and the school introduced regular, compulsory hand washing and practised social distancing at all times. These practices are being continued at the school. Unexpected visits from parents were not allowed, except for the usual set holidays and mid-term breaks when parents come to take their children home.

I.C.S.D. is an Integrated School

Integration is now a Kenyan Government policy that is being implemented with the aim of 'ensuring all students are given a fair and equal opportunity in an inclusive school learning environment; without segregating students based on any form of disability'. Educational research has shown that students in integrated schools are more likely to continue their education to a higher level, than students from a special school. The aim of our school is to provide 'quality holistic



Celebrating International Deaf Day by planting trees

education for hearing impaired learners.' The school has been aware that some students complete Year 8 in junior high school, but then do not complete any higher or vocational education.

The integrated hearing students that are enrolled are day students only and parents must commit to paying their school fees. They are not sponsored and attend their own classes in another building, but all children eat lunch and play together. The integrated students have signing classes in the afternoon, and the teachers of integrated students must also learn signing. This Government Pilot Study will fully integrate the students at Grade 3 level. All students will learn in the same classroom and signing will be included in all teaching in

Zambia

Hastings

Hastings recently sat for his final government exams. He has a dream to study medicine overseas. He is enthusiastic about becoming a doctor and helping the Deaf and hearing communities of Zambia and beyond. Unfortunately, he failed his exams – the first time in his entire schooling that he has not passed an exam! - and will have to re-sit them. He is disappointed as he has high expectations to do well. We are hoping he will be able to re-sit his exams and meet the qualifications needed to enter medical school.

Mazila

Mazila support needs keep changing. He comes from a very, very poor family, with no supportive network in his home village for children with disabilities. Mazila was studying at

the higher classes.

The school celebrated International Deaf Day and were joined by the Kenya Scouts Association who donated trees for them to plant along with a performance from their Scout band.

The students who are now attending **Kuja High School**, are thankful to have the opportunity to continue their education at senior high school; and the **Sikri Vocational College** students are very motivated to learn a vocation that will help them support themselves in the future. They still need sponsorship and send a special thank you to their sponsors.



Kenya Scouts Association joined the celebrations

the Maamba Special School for two years, then moved to the Mulumba Catholic School with Hastings for two years. The Mulumba Catholic School felt that Mazila's special needs/skills might be better learnt elsewhere as their school was unable to provide them. Lewis, Deaf Action Zambia's Director, is trying to move him back to the Maamba Special School but the Maamba Special School didn't want to take him back! Both schools think Mazila needs home schooling - for a tutor to teach him life skills but the village is in a remote area with few government facilities. There is no phone usage in the village. It is hard to find a suitable teacher/tutor for him but Lewis is working hard to take care of Mazila and find a suitable school or home where he will be well educated, cared for and given hope.



GIVE THE GIFT OF Sponsorship

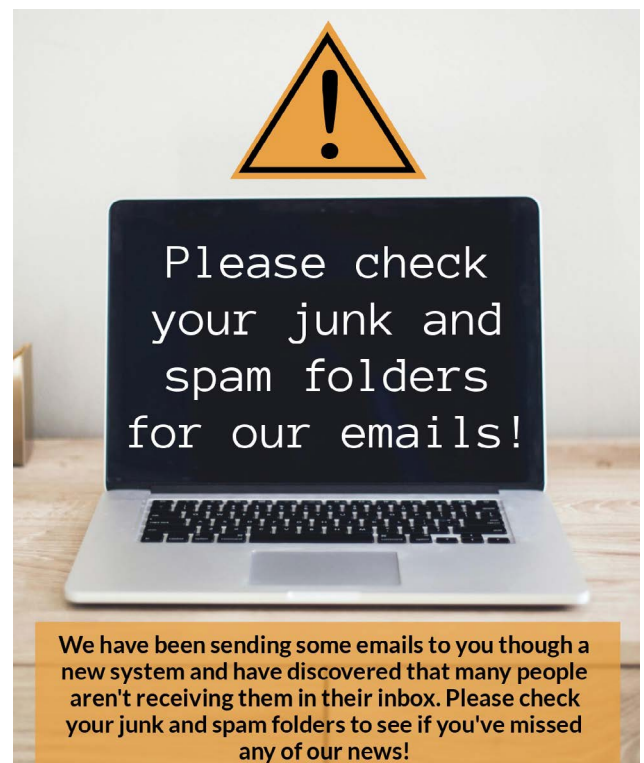
\$40 AUD PER MONTH

Why not give the gift of sponsorship to a child?

The Deaf Action sponsorship program assists deaf children to attend schools in remote towns in Asia and Africa. \$40 a month helps to cover costs of education, skills and moral training to equip them to lead productive and fruitful lives. Programs range from kindergarten right through to college level. The schools also work with young adults who have missed out on schooling due to poverty or lack of opportunity. You can help by sponsoring a child in either Myanmar, the Philippines, Kenya or Uganda.

For more information please contact:

Deaf Action
info@deafaction.org.au
Ph: 03 5940 5431
www.deafmin.org



Please check your junk and spam folders for our emails!

We have been sending some emails to you though a new system and have discovered that many people aren't receiving them in their inbox. Please check your junk and spam folders to see if you've missed any of our news!



Great Success!!

On March 3, World Hearing Day, we held our Gala Fundraising Dinner in Sydney. It was a sumptuous affair, held at the View hotel in North Sydney, and was attended by 65 guests who ate well, played games, bid in silent auctions, and responded generously to Deaf Action's work.

Nick Farr-Jones, the former Australian Wallaby Captain was our guest speaker.

He spoke about his rugby playing days, his Christian faith and the need for us to be passionate about the things in life that really matter. Supporting those who are vulnerable must be one of those things.



Andrew also spoke on the work of Deaf Action, the students and staff in the field who we support, and appealed for guests to support our self-sustainability projects in particular. The successes of our projects in DR Congo and Malawi are a model for those we are now planning. DMI Australia board member David van Namen and Finance Coordinator Susi Tjhai came up from Melbourne for the event, David to emcee, and Susi to run around with the Eftpos machine. They both did a great job. Also,



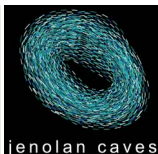
Andrew Miller with his Mum (right) and Carmel (left) lucky door prize winner.



Nick Farr-Jones & David van Namen

a huge thank you to Anne Horton who did an amazing job as our Auslan Interpreter for the night. The evening raised over \$8,000 and a whole lot of awareness of the work that Deaf Action is doing. Over \$5000 of that was raised from the silent auction. We'd like to say an extra big thank you to Nick Farr-Jones and all the businesses that supported the event by donating items and goods to be auctioned off on the night! A fun evening was had by all. Next stop, Melbourne!

Thank you to the businesses that supported the fundraiser:



www.deafmin.org/deaf-action/

Tax-deductible

Donations:

Please make cheques payable to:

Deaf Action

Details for EFT:

BSB: 633-000

Account: 145834263

Credit Card facility available at office

Paypal facility (secure) on website

www.deafmin.org/donate

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