

Deaf Ministries International

Issue 47 | August 2023



Taking the Gospel to the Deaf

Fatherheart Conference in Egypt

In early July, a Fatherheart conference was held in Alexandria, Egypt. Given that Egypt is a Muslim country, this is extraordinary yet the fact that 65 Deaf came - including 2 from Jordan and 1 from Palestine - is amazing. The conference was led by Gunnar, Matthijs, Rani Supperamianiam (one of the pillars of Fatherheart Ministries) and Sahel (a Deaf Christian evangelist from Jordan).

The conference was transformative for many. Most had previously viewed God as strict and judgmental, but during the week they experienced God as a loving and caring Father, and the impact of this revelation was profound. The nature of the Trinity also became clearer to them. Attendees were encouraged to continually relate the teachings of the Bible to themselves and to share their own life experiences using the Bible as a guide. The testimonies shared at the end of the week were touching. Gunnar, the head speaker, left a meaningful impact

on many attendees with his engaging approach. Rani also made an affirmative impression (especially on the female participants) when speaking about life with her family and also as a mother. Matthijs quickly learned Arabic sign language, which the participants understood well, making him possibly the world's most multi-lingual signer!

For some Deaf attendees, this conference was a life-changing experience as it was the first time they had left their hometowns and met other Deaf people, all while enjoying the beauty of coastal Alexandria. At this moment, we have a great leader who can sign in Arabic Sign Language, Hany Melad. One of DMI's visions is to see Deaf individuals flourish and thrive in life on par with hearing people. DMI is working on long-term solutions to enable leadership opportunities for Deaf youth in the Mid-East.

It was a blessed week for many. They are already asking when the next gathering will be.



DMI CONFERENCE REPORT- KENYA, AUG 7-11

Two page centre spread

Give praise to the Lord, proclaim His name; make known among the nations what he has done. Psalm 105:1

www.deafmin.org



Burundi – IGA’s lifting the Deaf out of poverty

Our team in Burundi have shown great initiative by encouraging church members to start small start-up businesses. This is to give experience to those who have no track record of operating an income generating activity so that they can in time apply for a MREDF micro-loan to further develop their businesses.



Three Deaf people from Bubanza, two women and a man, have each been given a AUS\$130 advance to start their own small income-generating activity. The women sell charcoal, while the man sells shoes in the market. In the following days, if their activities are well-developed, they will be entitled to apply for a MREDF loan. This is a good initiative to alleviate repayment doubts.

On a separate note, our sewing workshops in Burundi have been going very well, supporting Deaf Burundian women – and the Deaf community. Earlier this year, the workshops combined to give a AUS\$300 donation from their profits to the Deaf community, and in the most recent quarter, they gave another \$150. This is big money in Burundi! Well done to the ladies for working so hard and for being so generous! The Bible translation project in Burundi continues to progress. With thanks to Wycliffe Associates and the Deaf Bible Society, 32 Bible stories have already been translated and more are on their way. This project will combine with our tablet and projector project which is taking the signed Bible to the Deaf all over East Africa.



Zambia – New church, new board, new hope

Church plants in Zambia continue. Last August we started a new church in Chipata, then in November we opened a new church in Katete. Our 8th Deaf church in Zambia opened recently in Kapiri in the Central Province and already has 37 members.

Mazlia and Janet are doing well. Mazlia was ill but has recovered and is learning well at home. His home tutor reports that his behaviour is good, his skills for daily living are improving and he is hungry to learn new things every day. Janet is doing well at school. She loves going and never misses a class. They are both truly happy and always appreciate DMI’s support for their education.

By the time this letter goes to print, Hastings will have just finished his secondary school exams. This has been a frustrating process for him. Neville saw real potential in Hastings and took him under his wing, providing an education for him. Two years ago, after never failing an exam in his life, Hastings failed his finals! (Overconfident?) Last year he was all set to go and had studied hard but a clerical error (misspelling of his name) ruled him ineligible to sit for the exams. This broke his heart. He has prepared well for this year’s exams and hopes to pass, then enter university in the coming school year. We’re grateful to have Geoffrey Mulenga join us as the new DAZ (Deaf Action Zambia) Board Chairman and Olivia Chongo

as our new treasurer in Zambia after the previous members moved out of the area. Both are devout Christians, are well qualified for their positions and while hearing, have a heart for the Deaf. Geoffrey is a lawyer who serves in the army. There are two Deaf prisoners in Zambia whom we believe were not given a fair trial because of their deafness. Through a Zambian lawyer, we have appealed to the President of Zambia for a presidential pardon and are praying for a positive response. Please join us in this.



DR Congo – Souls being saved

Papy, the DAC (Deaf Action Congo) National Director and John, the DAC Secretary conducted a successful mission to Bunia on the 28th April, 2023 to encourage the church after the death of Pastor Ochaite. During the Sunday preaching by John, 13 Deaf accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. After the service, Deaf couple Deba and Lotsove invited visitors and leaders of the church to an agape love meal at their home where people shared wonderful testimonies.



Other mission trips also produced encouraging results. An evangelism campaign in Sake on the 16th April saw 3 new Deaf receive Christ and join the church. Two young ladies in Beni also came to Christ and were baptized on the 09th April by Pastor Alain. Our pastors have also started preaching in hearing churches, introducing the hearing to the Deaf world, often for the first time. Other aspects of the ministry have included visiting backsliders and encouraging them to come back to church, visiting the sick in their homes and praying for them, and visiting those who have recently lost relatives and comforting them through the Word of God. Collaborations from June with the Deaf Bible Society in Goma also look

promising, and we look forward to reporting on what that partnership will produce in future newsletters. In Beni, farmland production has been solid, producing the following quantities by lot for the lunch program:

- a)Nogera: 67kgs cocoanut, 84l of palm oil, 20kg of beans and 4kg bananas.
- b)Musenze: 90 kg beans, 1 sack sweet potatoes, 40l palm oil, and firewood
- c)Matembo (rented land): 12 sacks sweet potatoes, 8 sacks cassava leaves .
- d)School garden: cabbages, eggplants, leeks, amaranths and spinaches.

Portions of the vegetables produced in the garden were

eaten in school lunches and the rest was distributed to students to eat with their parents at home. Alain has requested a 3-wheel motorbike to help with farm production. The cost is AUS\$5,300. We have already raised \$2000 towards this.

Please help us raise the remaining amount. Go to <https://deafmin.org/donate/> to donate with reference to 'Benibike'. Thank you.



Africa Bible School

DMI's approach to global missions amongst the Deaf is truly revolutionary. Training the Deaf to take the gospel to the Deaf is a surprisingly unique and unsurprisingly effective approach to Deaf outreach. Our African Bible School, based in Uganda, has for over 20 years produced graduates who have gone on to plant churches in other countries and lead hundreds of Deaf to Christ. It's been amazing.

Yet a new season has come for our Bible School in Africa. We need to redevelop and expand the school yet it has become clear that it is much more cost effective to build our new Bible school in Rwanda. Rwanda is a more developed country economically, and our board and leadership there are exceptional, mature in vision and works, with our Director Patrick and Chairman Omar, both trained pastors and theologians. The school in Uganda will continue to train local pastors and evangelists and by 2025 will have transitioned into a fully self-sufficient operation.

The new facility in Rwanda will at any one time train dozens of Deaf youth and adults in Christian ministry. In the years

ahead, hundreds of Deaf pastors and evangelists will graduate, initially with certificates but in time with diplomas and even degrees, to plant churches and take the gospel of Jesus all over Africa. It's a truly exciting prospect.

We need funding for this. It will cost us US\$260,000 (AUS\$380,000) to build the school and a further US\$30,000 to furnish and set it up. For this, we are seeking grants but also asking our supporters for generous support to see this project realised. There will be options for supporters to donate 'rooms' and dormitories (with names attached, if desired), a lasting legacy for generations to come.

Plans for the school have been fully drafted. Please contact Andrew for details on the facility (andrew.miller@deafmin.org), or follow the details on the page after the conference report.

International Conference brings DMI family together



Conference group photo

The 8th DMI International Conference, held in Mombasa, Kenya from August 7-11, brought together 81 delegates from 16 countries, consisting of field workers, staff, supporters and ministry partners. In the comfort of the Mombasa Continental Resort, we were strengthened and encouraged through lectures, presentations, trainings and workshops.

In Yeong from Korea, our Asian representative on the International Board, was our keynote speaker. He gave an engaging set of lectures, taking

us through the course of the Bible, explaining how through Christ, a lost humanity was restored to God the Father and to each other in fellowship, that we all may be one in Christ. The five days we spent together in happy unity demonstrated the reality of this teaching. Each of our attending field directors encouraged us with presentations on the work in their fields. We were buoyed to hear first-hand accounts of the Deaf being saved and discipled, sustainability projects being developed and strategies for further outreach. Challenges remain, and these were shared, too. Each evening after dinner we heard testimonies from workers in the field. Matthijs provided an update and training on the group loan projects, Susi reviewed best financial practices and Andrew presented a global review and conducted a PR and fundraising workshop. We look forward to seeing the ideas that were discussed come to fruition.

Several other workshops were held, including a worship workshop, lead by Sylvia from Uganda, and an evangelism workshop jointly led by several of our field directors. The evangelism workshop concluded with members separated into groups to come up with new approaches to evangelism and discipleship. These approaches were then shared with the whole workshop. Outside the scheduled presentations, many meetings were held between field leaders, local boards and members of the international board. These were very important meetings. They brought clarity to issues and resolutions that would have been difficult to reach without meeting face to face. They also deepened our affection for one another.

And it was the warmth of the fellowship that was perhaps the high point of



Gunnar & Andrew

the whole conference. Renewing old friendships, starting new friendships, connecting mission to mission and strengthening partnerships made for rich fellowship. There were many who knew (of) each other but had never before met. Even Gunnar and Andrew, despite working closely together for years, met face-to-face for the first time at the conference! The joy of these (re)unions cannot be overstated.

We are an extremely diverse organisation. We are also a beautifully unified one. Our common faith and unique purpose to reach the Deaf with the gospel of Jesus brings the di-

versity of geography, language, colour, culture, education and socio-economic standing into a precious unity in Christ. We are one, just as the Father is in Jesus and Jesus is in the Father.

We welcomed to our gathering some promising new (and not so new) mission partners. Members of Wycliffe Associates who have been training many of our members in the SUN program were able to join us, as was a pastor for the Deaf from the Ivory Coast who is interested in partnering with us, and a businessman from South Africa who is potentially working with us to use technology to help our evangelists reach the pre-illiterate and semi-illiterate Deaf.

Many travelled for days to reach the conference. Special kudos to our brothers and sisters from Burundi who travelled for 4 days to join us! May God bless them richly for their devotion to our family! Special thanks to Josephat Mulongo, Director for Deaf Action Kenya, and the whole organising committee who did a fabulous job planning and putting the event together.

On the final evening, a farewell party left members rejoicing for all that we had happened over the period of the conference. We are looking forward to our next conference which will be held in 2026 in...the...



Opening Ceremony



Worship Seminar lead by Sylvia (Uganda)



In Yeong - Keynote Speaker

PHILIPPINES



Andrew & Josephat



Ugandan Delegates with Kathi Kitao



Sarah (DR Congo)



Gunnar, Susi, Wesley (Kenya), Andrew & Matthijs



Josephat leading the conference



Steve McAllister (International Chairman), Anne Horton (Auslan Interpreter), Andrew Miller



AFRICAN BIBLE SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

To donate towards this project:

Credit card payments directly through our office or bank transfer donations are preferred for donations above \$500. Follow donation details on the back of the newsletter for bank transfers and use *bibleschool* as the reference



Donations under \$500 can be donated through www.deafmin.org/donate



Myanmar - Light in the darkness



In the first week of May, our church in Yangon held a 3-day Bible seminar attended by 16 people. One man, Win Min Thaug, gave his life to Christ and Pa-lian baptised him in a little blow-up pool at the church. Many others declared their faith in Christ and wanted to be baptised but they feared the response of their

families. Pastor Naing Naing Kyaw delayed the baptisms of two other women, wanting them to first grow in their understanding of the Bible.

After months of fierce battles, we have finally received news of the church in Pyindaw Oo in the far north of the country. Most of the villagers have fled, some into India and some into Kalay. Despite gunshot and fire damage to many buildings in the area, our church building has remained untouched! Praise God for His protection. We hope to restart services soon.



Left: making table and chairs
Below: new toilets



There have been some good developments at our Muir School for the Deaf in Kalay. The staff have been preparing curricular and facilities for the start of the new academic year. Many tables and chairs were too dilapidated to use so our staff made 9 new sets of tables and chairs! A new toilet block was also built

for the boys. This year we have 28 children attending the school, 18 boys and 10 girls. We also installed some solar panels because the school was limited to just 4 or 5 hours of power. The piggery project at the school is going well. The school has 4 pigs now.

Church still standing

Philippines - Negros summer camp reaches 105 Deaf!



The 10th Negros Summer Deaf Camp in Pulupandan, Negros Occidental was enjoyed by 105 people! Pastor Rodel from Manila, despite being DeafBlind, was able to teach adult Deaf people at a level they could understand. He continues to faithfully serve the Deaf for the Lord wherever he goes. His wife helps and guides him when they visit the homes of the Deaf to teach about God's Word.

On July 13, 2023, we had a water baptism for Ryan Meñoza before his graduation the following day. Then on July 14, 2023, an additional 13 Deaf were baptized! A powerful super typhoon

with huge waves couldn't keep the 13 from being baptised! They experienced the joy of the Lord God and are so pleased to now be serving God. Pastor Albert says, "Praise the Lord for His great blessings to us. Thank you so much to DMI for supporting the Summer Camp in Pulupandan."



Pastor Rodel teaching

News from Supporting Countries

Andrew and Matthijs visit the UK

Matthijs and I visited the UK in late June/early July to increase prayer, financial and service partnerships for DMI. It had been some years since anyone from DMI had visited the UK (the old banknotes I took, left over from Neville's last trip, were no longer legal tender!) so it was great to finally meet face to face the names that we had been seeing on DMI's literature for so long.

While Matthijs stayed with Bob and Gabi McFarland (both Deaf), I stayed with Paul and Alison Hayes (also both Deaf) providing me almost limitless opportunities to mangle British Sign Language. As Bob and Gabi move toward retirement, Alison will be taking on a greater role as DMI UK's primary representative. We are blessed for this. Alison is an enthusiastic and capable representative, experienced in working with the Deaf, and a good communicator with the hearing.

In the first five days, Matthijs and I spoke to 50 people, mainly Deaf, in 5 church or small group settings, including the Deaf Christian Fellowship led by Bob and Gabi, Alison's Hand



Andrew, Bob & Gabi McFarland, Alison Hayes & Matthijs

in Hand church, and Bob and Gabi's church in Leicester. Many signed up as prayer/finance/service partners. Some

of these engagements involved me driving Matthijs all over the midlands and badly mis-navigating some roundabouts but that's another story. Matthijs departed on Sunday evening to lead the Fatherheart conference in the Middle East, leaving me to speak, sign and deal with the roundabouts on my own.

Over the next few days, I spoke to 30 more Deaf people in 4 church or small group settings around the London area, including John Delve's lovely congregation, building some wonderful relationships and more prayer/finance/service partnerships.

My last few days were spent in Belfast, Northern Ireland. With interpreters who did a stellar job of handling an Australian accent, I spoke to 70 people, again mainly Deaf, from 3 congregations combining in two services. These included the Belfast congregation of the Deaf Christian Fellowship which has been so supportive of DMI for many years, as well as the Kinghan Church and the Sign Language Church. I couldn't overstate the kindness and warmth that these people showed on a sign-mangling stranger. More partnerships were established. I was also encouraged to meet a number of Deaf with strong connections to Deaf missions all around the world.



Andrew with John Delve

We can have every reason to believe that DMI in the UK will go from strength to strength, contributing in robust ways to DMI's mission goals.

On my return leg, I stopped in at Los Angeles for 6 days. Though thoroughly zombied from the time changes, it was a joy to meet with mission representatives from the Shepherd Church, the Garden Church (including our US PR and Admin Coordinators) and the CBF churches. Each of these churches has been generously supporting DMI in various ways. (For those interested, I would be happy to share the full trip report. Please contact me if you would like a copy.)

Andrew Miller - International Operations Coordinator

Dry July

It might sound strange to use the phrase "dry July" in the context of DMI, but from July to October, history shows, in terms of funds coming in, these are our dry months. Funds that have been reserved from more fruitful months begin to dwindle and the pressure begins to build for us to maintain full budget support for all our fields.

Many of you would have received an email from Andrew last month, appealing for support so that we would be able to cover the budget for July. We are so thankful to all those who responded and generously gave, enabling us to send 100% of the allocated budget to the fields (right on the deadline!). We serve a God who promises to provide all our needs and a God who keeps his promises.

Our general fund, though not glamorous, is the heartbeat of our finances. It provides the salaries of the teachers and pastors at our schools and churches, rents, equipment, maintenance and project development. It also supports the administration and salaries of our workers in supporting countries.

Your support is essential. We'd like to thank all of those who have given so generously towards DMI's work. If you don't already do so, we ask you to consider donating regularly to our general fund so that we can continue to bring the Gospel, education and small business opportunities to the Deaf.

Donations can be made through our website : <https://deafmin.org/donate/> or details for bank transfers can be found on the back of this newsletter. Please use the reference "GF".

Susi Tjhai, Finance Coordinator



Bequests

Bequests are a wonderful and meaningful way to leave a lasting legacy for Christ in the world. After firstly considering your family in your will, you may wish to consider leaving a bequest to DMI. In order to do this you should contact your legal advisor who will help you add your bequest. A bequest flyer is included in this newsletter.

Praise and Prayer

Prayer is such an important part of this ministry, and we'd like to ask you to partner with us in praying for the work that DMI is involved in. We may not be able to do much by our strength, but with God, nothing is impossible!!

Weekly prayer points can be found on our website or sign up to be a prayer partner and receive them directly to your email.

<https://deafmin.org/prayer/>



Andrew Miller
International Operations
Coordinator



Matthijs Terpstra
International
Development Coordinator



Susi Tjhai
Finance Coordinator



Amy Jack
Communications
Coordinator



Kay van Namen
Sponsorship &
Administration
Coordinator



Neville & Lill Muir
DMI Founders



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Deaf Ministries International

P.O.Box 395

Beaconsfield, Victoria 3807
Australia

Ph: 03 5940 5431

SMS/WhatsApp

0487 209 881

e-mail: info@deafmin.org



www.deafmin.org/deaf-action

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Deaf Action

P.O.Box 395

Beaconsfield, Victoria 3807
Australia

Ph: 03 5940 5431

e-mail: info@deafaction.org.au