



March 2024

Christmas **IN A WAR ZONE** *Muir School for the Deaf - Myanmar*



Against all odds and working in one of the most hostile environments on earth, the Muir School for the Deaf is continuing to run as well as it possibly can. Staff and students were able to cheerfully celebrate an early Christmas with a delicious barbecue amidst the sounds and vibrations of heavy artillery in the streets outside. Kalay is still a battleground with road routes in and out of the city closed. Gunfire continues every night in the downtown area leading some concerned parents to take their children out of school for their safety. Yet many children remain at the school - along with the brave staff - as their parents consider the school to be safer than their home.



Classes continue. The biggest challenge for the operation of the school is electric power. The government can no longer supply sufficient power and the school has to rely on solar-powered light. The current solar panel is too small and cannot give as much consistent light as they need. They plan to buy one more solar panel with kind financial support from DMI Norway.



KENYA

Immanuel Integrated Christian School



Congratulations to the students and staff of the Immanuel Integrated Christian School in Kenya who have successfully transitioned up and on! The school celebrated the transition of their students from Junior Secondary to High School as well as from Primary to Junior Secondary and Kindergarten to Primary School. The Grade 8 students transitioned to High School whilst the Grade 6 students transitioned to Junior Secondary School. Both hearing and Deaf students also graduated from Kindergarten to Primary School. These are significant advancements in the lives of the students and all at the school - including parents - heartily celebrate these graduations.

Annual Parents Day was also celebrated. According to school culture, the parents get to interact with the teachers and students one-on-one to enhance good relationships with each other.



The Poultry Project is going well. They started with 200 chicks and the growth is amazing. The school farm continues to produce good corn and beans that will help to supplement their feeding program.

The school farm project ensures that the students learn how to plant, grow, and care for the plants which give them food at the end of every season. It creates responsibility, career development and social-economic uplift for the students. Students continue to grow their knowledge in Permaculture Farming and in a variety of plant/animal care.



IICS received new whiteboards from a generous supporter. The community at IICS continues to receive compliments for its successful integration program. The government continues to take a keen interest in its success in operations and management.

BURUNDI

Ephphatha School for the Deaf



14 DeafBlind students continue their studies at school. A SIL team from America and Colombia conducted two training workshops. SIL is a global, faith-based nonprofit

organisation that works with local communities to develop language solutions that expand possibilities for a better life of individuals. 14 DeafBlind students participated in one workshop along with 14 Deaf student guides, 9 school staff and

5 parents. After the workshop was completed, SIL organised quality eye exams for the 14 DeafBlind students. Deaf Action Burundi plans to hold Burundi Sign Language classes in several places for family members of DeafBlind students.



UGANDA

Ugandan National Association for the Deaf Vocational College



Samuel with a table and chair that he built

Brian, Jordan, Kenneth and Samuel have completed their final DIT assessments in carpentry. They will be waiting for their results in March when we will know of their graduation plans as well. They will be receiving tools from DMI after their results come through so they can start their own carpentry businesses.

We have two students who will be commencing their studies this year at UNAD. Solome will continue her second year course in sweater making. Mary will be taking a course in tailoring.



Allan graduated from the IDEAS Workshop in November last year. His performance was impressive. He was given a tool kit to help set up his own business. He is back living at home in Buikwe and he has teamed up with a few friends to try to start their own workplace business. They are still facing a challenge with a lack of funds to purchase timber, nails and varnishes. We will be using the funds from the Christmas Gift Catalogue to help with his startup capital and look forward to him achieving his dream.

RWANDA

Tresor Nsengimana



Tresor continues to do well in his preschool classes. In the first term, he had a 76.6% score in his studies and he is in the 4th position in his class. He is excelling well in Maths and Kinyarwanda (National Rwanda Language). He is now able to focus on the teacher in class and tries to communicate using sign language which was challenging for him before. His parents are grateful for Tresor's sponsors.

Thank you for your support!

MEANINGFUL GIFTS, TRANSFORMING LIVES



We'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all who purchased a gift through our meaningful Christmas catalogue at the end of 2023. Over \$13,000 was raised which will go directly towards practical items for our Deaf communities. These items have such a life changing impact on those who receive them. Already we have been able to purchase a three wheeled motorcycle and a laptop for DR Congo, and provide start up tools for five Ugandan carpentry students including Allan Lule. What a huge blessing! Thank you!

PHILIPPINES

Bacolod Boarding House

Online learning will finish on May 31st 2024 when the 2023-2024 school year ends. This is very exciting as online learning has sometimes been difficult for the students. The students will return to school in person for the new academic year on 29th July 2024.



Bicol Deaf Action

(Formerly Fishermen of Christ Learning Center)



Fifteen men and women from the Berwick Church of Christ completed a 2 week mission trip to BDA in January. Led by Chris Hennequin, the team worked to replace the roof of the Grade 7 classroom - the sole remaining building in the school with a thatch roof - with galvanised iron. They also provided the school with 20 laptops, iPads and a projector. They replaced 100 chairs (that really needed replacing!) with new ones and bought 100 new chickens for the farm with enough



Gerald

Realyn and Gerald are studying hard with their online modules using laptops. Gerald will be graduating this year and has expressed interest in attending the Deaf Evangelistic Alliance Foundation Bible College in Laguna to become a teacher. His passion is to teach Deaf children. If you would like to help him with further

studies, it is PHP57600 (AUS\$1600) per year.

Please note it is not tax-deductible and the amount will be donated to DMI, not DA.

Ryan Menoza is continuing his studies at the Deaf Evangelistic Alliance Foundation, Inc. He is now a second year college student.



Ryan

feed for them all. They have also spent time building relationships with the staff and students - precious friendships that will last a lifetime. A big thank you to the mission team members and all those at Berwick Church of Christ who have been supporting them and Bicol Deaf Action! More mission trips are in the making. Contact Kay at kay.vannamen@deafmin.org if you're interested in joining one.



DA General Fund Campaign

It's amazing how many new developments we're able to complete each year thanks to the generous giving of our wonderful supporters. Last year we were able to buy land and develop new school gardens in Kenya; buy secondary school supplies, teaching materials and school furniture in DR Congo; purchase motorbikes, support an increase in Ligao teachers' salaries, and much more.

Building or providing them is one thing. Maintaining them is another. With each new facility or piece of equipment, we have more staff to employ, more maintenance, and more general running costs. This is why giving to the General Fund is so important. The General Fund keeps the whole organisation going. No, it doesn't have that sense of 'I did that!' one might feel with a new facility but it does ensure that we can fulfil our primary mission goals: to break the cycle of poverty and discrimination and make a positive contribution to the wider community in both education and employment.

Every month for the last five years, we have been able to send 100% of our budgets to the field. It hasn't always been that way and it is rarely easy. The struggle to send monthly budgets to our fields continues.

Would you please consider committing to sending monthly donations to our General Fund? This would be very helpful in supporting the hundreds of Deaf students, teachers and support staff in our fields.

Donation details can be found on the back of the newsletter.





We urgently need sponsors to support these students!



Princess Jeliene Broqueza
(Girl) Grade 7
Ligao, Philippines



Aung Zaw Htay (Boy)
Grade 4
Myanmar



Masika Kalwana
(Girl) Grade 1
Beni, D.R.Congo



Bravyn Junior (Boy)
Grade 1
Kenya

To sponsor any of these students, please go to our website: <https://deafmin.org/child-sponsorship/> or email: info@deafaction.org.au

DR CONGO Beni School



DMI UK supporters raised funds to give the Beni students gifts for Christmas. These included biscuits, sweets, juice boxes and balloons. The students were also given new school uniforms and school bags which they were very thankful for and excited to receive.



Beni School would like to say a big thank you to supporters for gifting them a new 3 wheeled motorbike. It will greatly assist the school in transporting the harvest from across three fields. It was on our 2024 project wish list and we are grateful to achieve this wish!



Staff suspended agricultural activities in the school garden from November because of the dry season. The harsh conditions of the dry season have a dire effect on garden production and finding water is difficult due to distance. The best solution would be a drilling fountain at the school, but the drilling fountain is costly, at around AUD10,000 ~ AUD15,000.

Food has been provided three times weekly. In October, students were eating sweet potatoes and beans from their harvest. In November, it was rice and beans.



A new toilet block of five toilets was erected for the secondary school. Before these were built there was a severe shortage of toilets so having these installed brought great relief! Construction of the five toilets (one for the teachers, two for the girl students and two for the boy students) involved eleven workers, six of whom were Deaf. The team at Deaf Action Congo wish to express their thanks to DMI for having responded to this major request.

LIGAO TEACHERS' EDUCATION FUND CAMPAIGN

Teachers at FCLC are receiving much less pay than the local government school rates. FCLC is lucky to have these teachers who are willing to stay on to teach Deaf students when they could be receiving more money from other schools. These teachers really have a great heart to serve. We are looking to change this, by better supporting our teachers through a salary increase. Would you be able to help with this, by giving \$40 per month to support the Ligao teachers?

Contact: **Kay van Namen (Sponsorship Coordinator)**
kay.vannamen@deafmin.org

2024 Wish List

Here is a list of all the things Deaf Action and DMI would love to achieve in 2024. We are excited to report that, thanks to our generous supporters, we have already achieved some of the goals on the list! Thank you!



How are you receiving your newsletter?

We spend approximately \$6,650AUD a year on hard copy newsletters. This is a good use of funds if readers don't have email addresses or find the hard copy easier to read. We love being able to bring you the news from the fields as regularly as possible. But for those who do have email, we can save some of that money and send more of it to the Deaf in need.

Can you make the change from hard copy newsletters to email versions?



If you can, send us an email to info@deafaction.org.au with your preferred mail address, requesting to make the change to e-newsletters. Thank you for your ongoing support of Deaf Action.

Keep up to date with all the latest news from **Deaf Ministries International** by receiving our other newsletter.

If you would like to receive this in addition to the Deaf Action newsletter, please contact us at info@deafmin.org



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www.deafmin.org/deaf-action/

DA DONATIONS:

School, Employment and
Aid Projects

(tax deductible in Australia)



Please make cheques payable to:
Deaf Action



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Account: 145834263



Credit Card facility available
through PayPal (secure) on our
website.



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Neville Muir (OAM)
& Lill Muir
DMI & DA Founders

Thank you for continuing to support our school students,
teachers and self-sustainability projects.
Warm regards, Kay (Sponsorship Coordinator)