

Deaf Ministries International

Issue 51 | May 2024
GERMANY EDITION

*Taking the Gospel
to the Deaf*

Yangon Church Silver Jubilee! - MYANMAR -



Myanmar Director Pa-lian leads the Jubilee

On 25 February our Yangon church in Myanmar celebrated 25 years of worship against a backdrop of gunfire and bombings. Our church members are undaunted. They continue to gather and celebrate at record numbers. Every Sunday 70-80 people come along to experience light amidst the darkness. The Word of God is preached, outreach missions continue and baptisms and Bible studies follow. For the Jubilee celebrations, Gunnar and Andrew sent encouraging video messages which were well received. The church rejoiced and feasted.

Church members have been generous in a harsh economic environment. Together they raised almost USD1500 to repair the roof of the church. There is a true spirit of life at the church. Amidst the common dangers of civil unrest, Pastor Naing Naing Kyow asks for prayer, not for peace or prosperity (though we should pray for these) but that the Burmese they are preaching to "can accept Jesus Christ as their savior and Lord bravely". The situation in the north of Myanmar where the Muir School for the Deaf operates is far more dire. Earlier this year in one of

the villages of Kalay where some of our students' families live, fighter jets bombed a church killing 20 people. You won't read about this in the mainstream media. None of the Deaf or their families were injured but it's a hostile environment for children to live in.

Despite this, the school continues to run well with about 29 students in attendance. Christmas was celebrated with a barbecue meal and with Christmas gifts received from DMI. One of the biggest challenges inside the school has been the sporadic supply of electricity. Thanks to DMI supporters, a second solar panel has been installed at the school and now power is sufficient to keep things running. The students have just gone on summer holidays.

The church in Pindaw Oo is probably in the most violent region of the country. The church remains closed and we haven't had road access to the area for almost two years. We can only pray that the Deaf community are safe and well. Join us in this.



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

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CHINA

God's Butterflies

The Deaf in China continue to meet together for worship, study and fellowship yet it's challenging to get detailed information and what we receive can only be reported without place or personal names. Christmas was spent very enjoyably with hearing believers in 'Y'. An entomologist was invited to share how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly and the Deaf expressed their hope of transforming to become 'God's butterfly'. Deaf members were able to perform a drama in church on Christmas Eve.



Pastor L in 'D' is slowly recovering from his stroke. It has been a tough journey. Ms A and others went to visit and encouraged him

to hold fast to his faith in Christ. Ms A joined a Zoom meeting with sign language translation teams in the hope that China can reopen their translation program soon. Separately, a 'sign language corner' was started for hearing people to learn sign and the team are hoping that more and more hearing will join.



PHILIPPINES

Bacolod and Davao

PICD, Inc. (Philippines Immanuel Churches of the Deaf) has over 20 congregations which do a great job in preaching the Word of God to the Deaf in Bacolod, Bicol, Davao and their surrounding areas. Pastors visit many homes of those who are Deaf or hard of hearing and encourage them to come to church where they can be taught about God's salvation and enjoy the fellowship of other Christians. PICD churches also offer the opportunity for the Deaf to participate in Sunday services via Zoom. At the moment around 600 Deaf people attend Sunday services across the PICD branch churches and this number is growing all the time.



One Sunday morning last November, the churches in Bacolod celebrated Rev. Albert Mercado's 60th Birthday. Albert knew nothing about it until many guests started turning up at church for the party, sneakily organised by his wife Kim and some other Deaf church members. Albert's mother Nanay and other family members made a surprise appearance, too. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed it. It was a special day.



Gerald graduates



Congratulations to Gerald Febreo who will graduate from high school in early June. Once a street kid, Gerald has grown up to be a fine young man under the loving care of Albert and Kim in the boarding house in Bacolod. (See Gerald's heart wrenching story here: <https://deafministriesinternational.com/17-gerald/>)

Gerald's desire is to follow in the footsteps of Ryan, one year his senior, and study at the Deaf Evangelistic Alliance Foundation in Laguna. He wants to be a pastor to the Deaf. This is not a whimsical idea. Four years ago when he was interviewed for our blog we wrote, "Though still in year 8, he has a clear goal for his life... He wants to be a preacher/evangelist to the Deaf. This is not a pat answer. Gerald's sincerity and desire to take the gospel to the Deaf is clear and passionate."

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It's wonderful to see how resolute his determination is to serve in Christian ministry. Thanks to a kind donor from Germany, Gerald's goal will be realised this July when the new college year starts. We look forward to seeing Gerald - and Ryan - leading a whole new generation of Deaf Filipinos to faith and full life.



Gerald in Albert and Kim's boarding house

RWANDA - Big Developments New African Bible School

DMI's African Bible school for the Deaf is at the heart of our ministry: training the Deaf to take the gospel to the Deaf. Development of the new school is now beginning in Rwanda. Land was purchased in February and building begins this month! It's an exciting time for our Rwandan team, for the Deaf of Africa and for DMI globally. We anticipate construction will finish in July 2025 and the school will commence operations in September 2025. The school will have the capacity to train and accommodate 200 students in facilities which will include twelve classrooms, a library,

a prayer hall, a dining hall, offices, two guest houses and dormitories for men and women. The school will initially train Deaf evangelists and pastors to certificate level but will in time advance to provide diplomas and even degrees.

Please contact Andrew for details on the facility or if you would like to honour a family member or friend by naming a room after them.
andrew.miller@deafmin.org

New IGA

Next month, Patrick, our director in Rwanda will sign a lease on a premises to start a new Income Generating Activity (IGA) for the Deaf community in Kigali, Rwanda. The IGA is a cafe. It will train local Deaf people in hospitality, employ Deaf staff and is aiming to make a monthly profit of AUD750 which will be put back into the

business or into the Deaf community in a way to be decided by the DAR (Deaf Action Rwanda) Board. The cafe will also be a place where the Deaf can gather, share a drink and enjoy friendship.

Bambanze's Mill



In March 2023 we learned of the plight of one of our evangelists, Herriman Bambanze, a DeafBlind man in Rwanda who had faced terrible discrimination and abuse from members of society as well as from his own family. Now married and with children of his own, he was finding it very difficult to support his own family. No-one would employ him! He asked for a handout. We did better than that. We built him a mill. It has taken a while to raise the funds but it

was finished this February and now the mill is fully operational, provides a service for the local people and an income for Bambanze. More than an income though, it provides him with independence and dignity. We're so happy to see this improvement in his life and thank all those who gave to this project.



Blog Book Now Available!

Three years in the making!
50 extraordinary interviews!
170 pages of gorgeous full colour portraits
and testimonies!

This beautiful coffee table book is a collection of 50 testimonies from the fields in which DMI operates. These are amazing testimonies. Yet in DMI, they are common. They tell of lives that have been radically transformed, sometimes miraculously, from darkness and despair to light and hope. They testify to the dedication and endurance of DMI's workers, and they testify to a God who hears, cares and rescues the Deaf.



To Purchase:
Search for 'Signs and Wonders by Deaf Ministries International' at the Bookstore tab on the top menu of Lulu:
<https://www.lulu.com/>

Fulgence's Church (*Rwanda continued*)

On the cover of our December newsletter last year, we reported on the new church started by Fulgence Uwimana after he returned from the international conference fully inspired and red hot to go. In the first month, 10 Deaf gathered. Meeting in a rented classroom, the church has already grown to 24! We're excited to see how God will use Fulgence's gifting to grow this church. Fulgence has also been working hard on an agricultural business project, funded through the MREDF loan program. After harvesting the rice he planted, he stores it in a warehouse. When he sells all his rice, he expects to earn between AUD600 and AUD1,000 for four months' work.



Patrick speaks at Masaka Creamery



Alphonsine Uwimana, one of our pastors in Kigali, works part time at the Masaka Creamery in the city. 80% of the staff at the creamery are Deaf. Alphonsine is employed as Head of Spirituality & Inclusion and leads a fellowship gathering twice a week. Thirteen staff regularly join in.

In February, Alphonsine invited DAR Director Patrick to visit the creamery and speak the Word of God into the Deaf workers' lives. Patrick is never one to turn down an invitation so was pleased to share the Word of God with the Deaf workers. He spoke from the book of Proverbs, encouraging the workers to have a love for their work and a respect for each other in the workplace.

D.R. Congo War Crisis Deepens

The war in DR Congo is spreading and making life more dangerous and more expensive for our schools and churches. The Deaf of Sake and Masisi faced a food crisis in February because of the conflict. We sent emergency funds to address this. Maize, beans and oil were distributed to 22 Deaf living in displacement camps. Those living in Goma are struggling with high food prices and insecurity. All roads from the villages around Goma are closed.



The situation is also worsening in Beni where we have our primary and secondary schools. The farms we have been tending near the school have been affected. Rebels have moved in and killed civilians in the area. Many locals have since fled. The government has established military camps near the farms which have been both a help and a hinderance. It has brought some safety to the area but it also means we have been denied access to our farms. This means our lunch program - which has been doing so well since 2021 in providing lunches for the students - has been suspended. Food stocks will run out around the time this newsletter goes to print and we will need to send emergency food relief.



In our Minova school, nine desks and three sewing machines were stolen. We are sending funds to replace them using the money raised from our Christmas fund. Thank you to all those who gave to the fund, enabling us to replace these.

The hardships of the Deaf in DR Congo are on another level. Please pray for DR Congo and for the North-Kivu Province in particular.



UGANDA

New IGA Starts!

Our team at Deaf Action Uganda (DAU) have been working hard to streamline their operations, to empower their evangelists and to move toward self-sustainability. A key step in self-sustainability was taken this month when they began their Poultry Rearing and Crop Farming IGA (Income Generating Activity). This enterprise, overseen by Projects Officer Robinah, began with clearing and ploughing the land to get it ready for the planting season. So far, beans and maize have been planted, with work carried out by the students of the Bible school. This is an excellent use of the students' extra time and prepares them for a life of 'tentmaking' in the ministry.



The Chicken house was renovated to provide shelter for the chicks and strong metallic doors were added to safeguard against theft. A solar panel has been installed to provide enough light for the chicks as well as for security. A big water tank was also set up to harvest rainwater and a bicycle was bought as transport for the two caretakers who were hired to supervise and take care of the project. The DAU team and Bible school students make regular visits. The goals of this project are to grow food for the Bible school students to eat, to teach farming and entrepreneurship skills to staff



and students, to create a sustainable livelihood base for DAU and to generate income from the sale of the produce.

Developing long term sustainable IGAs is challenging in any environment. In many developing countries, theft, insecurity, limited resources, rampant inflation and harsh climates exacerbate the challenges. We're hoping that this Poultry Rearing and Crop Farming IGA will be a huge success for our team in Uganda and look forward to seeing their goals being achieved.



EGYPT

Breaking new ground

Our ministry partner Sahel from Jordan visited Egypt earlier this year to train Deaf teachers and interpreters and establish links with the churches. He notes the economic hardships that many Deaf face in Egypt. He also reports some wonderful developments, including the excitement of the Deaf adults and children receiving gospel teaching. Here's one example:



Then at 6:30 they had a Sunday school and I went with them to see the children and the leaders there with Sawsan and Daoud and they were fantastic, and I've asked a 11 years old child where is Jesus now he answered even without thinking "in my heart".

As a result of this outreach, it's encouraging to see our workers welcomed into the evangelical, Catholic and Coptic churches to teach the gospel to Deaf children. As many as 23 Deaf children are gathering at a time to learn Bible stories and hear about God's love for them. We were delighted to receive a video of Sosana teach-



ing one of the young boys in the class. To us, it might seem to be nothing exceptional, but to see a Deaf female teaching the gospel in a strictly Muslim country is extraordinary. We give thanks for this progress.



News from Supporting Countries

JAPAN

Arigato, Japan!

Through February and March, Andrew visited our team and supporters in Japan where some exciting developments are taking place. At the team meeting, Kami Alexander was unanimously

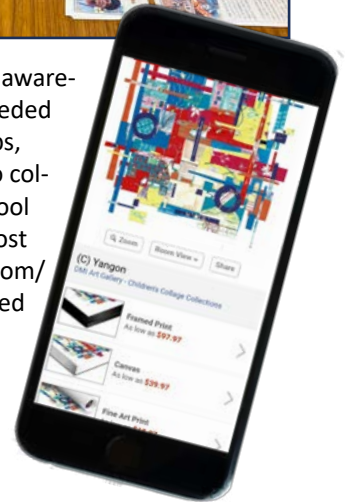


Kami Alexander

voted in as Japan Coordinator, replacing interim Coordinator Karen Ellrick who resumes her preferred role as Sponsorship Coordinator and tech titan. Volunteer Tony Barrera has patiently accessed some large Japanese church groups. Jack and Keiko Marshall, who recently retired from DMI after 40 years' service, have come back into play - you can't keep them down - as our Okinawa ambassadors!



Visits to numerous churches raised awareness of DMI's work, and a much-needed AUD15,000 for student sponsorships, general funds and projects was also collected. Sales of collages of DMI school students' artwork alone raised almost AUD600. (See <https://www.artpal.com/dmi>) Andrew is thankful to have teed up five new speaking engagements for his October/November visit.



International Board Meeting

Raising Deaf Leaders

Members of the International Board met online on March 14 to present reports, approve new developments, resolve issues in some fields and clarify policies pertaining to DMI's mission. One of those policies involves prioritising secondary and, where we can, tertiary education for some of our Deaf students.

It's a dilemma: do we educate more students through to a lower level of education or fewer students to a higher level of education? Do we give more students a basic education - providing literacy, numeracy and communication skills to students who will typically progress to menial work, or do we educate a slightly smaller number of students to a higher education - typically progressing to more meaningful work, a greater contribution to Deaf and hearing societies and, most of all, raise a new generation of Deaf leaders?



It was a difficult decision but the Board unanimously chose the latter. We want to educate as many as we can, of course, but we also want to prioritise the raising of Deaf leaders - those who will go on to educate many more Deaf, and represent the Deaf as leaders in business, spiritual and political arenas. This is very much in line with Neville's vision as well.

Raising Deaf leaders is a great goal. It will also require strong support from our donors. We would love to see more of our primary school graduates advance to secondary school. Likewise, students like Alphonsine in Rwanda, and Gerald in the Philippines - among many others - are showing promise at the tertiary level. Judith is another promising student in Tanzania, brimming with leadership potential who is hoping to attend college. (See the campaigns section in this newsletter). They all need financial assistance. Please prayerfully consider how you might contribute to this mission goal.



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Computer Campaign

AUD10,000 FOR 6 LAPTOPS

Many of our evangelists and field Directors are working on old second-hand laptops. They are painfully slow, limited in what they can do, or no longer working at all. Laptops allow our workers to access almost unlimited resources to share the gospel and to educate the Deaf.



https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=CG9898ZK5FGQY

Bank transfer reference: Computers Campaign

HOME LOAN Campaign

Campaign

One of our greatest challenges now is the drastic inflation rates across our fields. Perhaps the hardest hit area is housing. Rents have gone through the roof. We'd like to address this starting with our field directors. They work so hard and are rewarded with so little. We would like to start a housing loan fund for them so they can buy their own home to escape the rent trap. We are looking to raise USD50,000 to run this loan fund. Contact Andrew for donation details. andrew.miller@deafmin.org



USD 50,000

Ligao Teachers' Salary Support

On our visit to Bicol Deaf Action in the Philippines, it became clear that our teachers there were badly underpaid and needed extra salary support. The fund to support our teachers at BDA was started last November. Please consider contributing to this fund.



Bank transfer reference: Teachers Salary



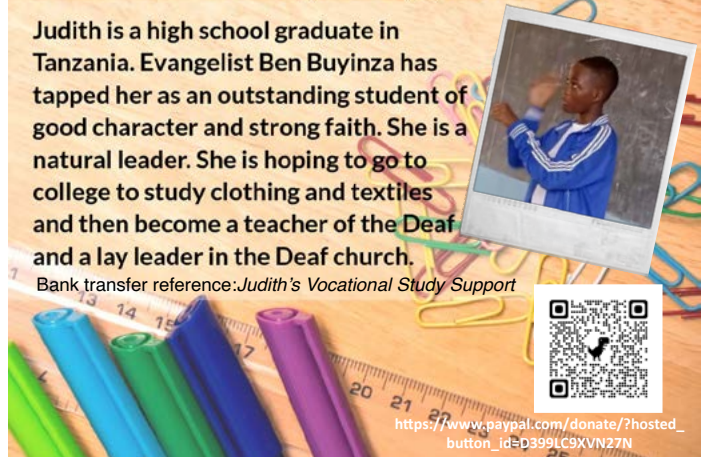
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Judith Vocational Study Support

AUD 500

Judith is a high school graduate in Tanzania. Evangelist Ben Buyinza has tapped her as an outstanding student of good character and strong faith. She is a natural leader. She is hoping to go to college to study clothing and textiles and then become a teacher of the Deaf and a lay leader in the Deaf church.

Bank transfer reference: Judith's Vocational Study Support



https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=D399LC9XVN27N

Prayer Partners

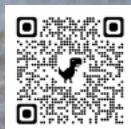
Here at DMI, we want to always firstly give all praise and honour to God who is over and above all things and pray that all we do in this ministry brings glory to His name. In Philippians 4, God asks us to bring all our requests to Him and to thank Him for all he's done. Prayer is such an important part of this ministry, and we'd like to ask you to partner with us in praying for the work that DMI is involved in. Each week we are going to share a few prayer points and we ask that you join with us in bringing them before God in prayer. We may not be able to do much by our strength, but with God, nothing is impossible!!

Would like to become a prayer partner?

To receive weekly prayer points sign up at www.deafmin.org/prayer



Philippians 4:6
Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.



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

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@deafmin.org with your preferred mail address, requesting to make the change to e-newsletters. Thank you for your ongoing support of DMI.

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

If you would like to receive this in addition to the Deaf Action newsletter, please contact us at info@deafaction.org.au or sign up on our website: https://deafmin.org/newsletters_deaf/



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!!

New IGAs

Give thanks for the new IGAs (Income Generating Activities) that have started in the Philippines, Rwanda and Uganda. Pray that they will be successful.

Peace

Pray for peace in our fields struggling with war or persecution - Myanmar, DR Congo, Egypt, China. Pray that the gospel would reach the Deaf unhindered.

Myanmar

Give thanks for the recent celebration of the 25th anniversary of the church in Yangon. We pray for the church to continue to be a beacon of Jesus' love and light in the community.

African Bible School

We pray for God's blessing to oversee all aspects of the new African Bible School project. We give thanks for the funds that have been raised to start this large project. We pray that the school will give many Deaf an opportunity to grow in knowledge and wisdom of the Gospel so many more Deaf will be reached in Jesus' Name.

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/>



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