



## School & Project News



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# New Classrooms for Myanmar



*New drainage*

Last year was especially challenging for the Neville Muir School for the Deaf in Kalay with the ongoing war, an escalating economic crisis and punishing restrictions from the junta government. Yet thanks to the support of Deaf Action sponsors, the school was able to thrive and celebrate Christmas with some special treats, enjoying some rare moments of peaceful life. Students were

able to do some sightseeing, swimming and partake in a soccer competition! It's wonderful that they could enjoy such activities amidst all the troubles.

We've been able to improve some of the facilities at the school. New drainage has been built around the school grounds to keep the school drier and cleaner. We're also in the process of building some new classrooms! The current classrooms must accommodate two grades in each room and this is challenging for the teachers. The new rooms will allow each grade to have its own room. The students and teachers are very grateful for the new facilities and thank Deaf Action and its supporters for their ongoing care for the school.

*Progress in pictures*





## DR CONGO

### Water and Walls

Thanks to generous supporters, the building of the water fountains at the Beni School for the Deaf was completed on 21st December. This means unlimited, clean water is now available for drinking and washing for 300 people in and around our school community. More than this, the 10 pipes going out into the surrounding villages and towns from the water tank in our school will provide clean water for 12,000 people! What a great result! No more walking 10 km with heavy water containers!



However, the escalating war has created a dramatic increase in homeless people and hostile activity. This is really precarious for our school. Without a security wall around the school, our students and staff face grave danger from strangers and rebels, who can easily enter the school at any time. Already some of the water fountains have been damaged. But the real risk is to the lives of our students and staff.

Fortunately, three very generous supporters have provided the USD 46,000 needed to build a full brick security wall. This is something that Alain, the school Principal, has been begging us to build for years. Construction of the wall will start very soon.

### The Consequences of War

Beni School Director Alain informs us of the sad news that two of our Deaf girls have become pregnant as a result of sexual assault outside the school grounds. The increase in hostilities and misplaced people from war is leading to more social breakdown and danger. The school is caring for the girls and will provide updates. As Alain poignantly states, "War has many negative consequences".

### Food Relief

The conflict in DR Congo has brought serious insecurity problems leading to food shortages. Over the last couple of months, we have distributed almost AUD 20,000 in desperately needed food relief – money raised through our MailChimp campaign. Our sincere thanks to all who gave to our food relief campaign. (Using DMI funds, we also spent AUD 3,692 to repair the roof of one of our churches which was bombed.)

Until the recent escalation of hostilities, the school farms were becoming more productive. Our farmland in Nogera produced 10 liters of palm oil and was beginning to harvest coconuts, and the Musenze farmland was full of herbs. Unfortunately, both these farmlands are now inaccessible. In the Beni school garden, however, a cabbage harvest is expected to be reaped any day now.



### Korea Team Mission

In February, a small but dedicated team from South Korea (mainly) and Norway hastily rescheduled a working trip to DR Congo. They had planned to paint the new secondary school building in Beni. Because of hostilities in DRC, they went to Rwanda instead where they worked on the construction of the new Bible School and served amongst the Deaf community. However, they still managed to send all the paint and equipment to the school where teachers and workers got busy painting the school in the beautiful green and gold colours of Deaf Action Congo. Great job!



### Wedding Bells

On the 8th December 2024, a wedding ceremony was held for the Deaf couple Obongoni and Giselle. Obongoni is a teacher at the Beni Deaf school. The wedding was blessed by Ps Papy from Goma together with Ps Alain from Beni and Katembo from Oicha. It's important and wonderful that the Deaf can have the joy and dignity of matrimony that they have long missed, and that many in the hearing community can witness this, too.





# GBV workshops bring understanding

Gender-based violence (GBV) workshops were held for Deaf women in DR Congo and Rwanda in November and December last year. In many East African countries, gender-based sexual violence is a devastating problem. The workshops aimed to educate girls and women in understanding, prevention and reporting of such abuse.



Two workshops were held in Beni, DRC, one for schoolgirls and a second for women in general.

In Rwanda, 60 women attended a training hosted by the Immanuel Bible Deaf Church (ICDR). Generating broad interest, the workshop was attended by Deaf mothers, Deaf young girls, unwed Deaf mothers, married Deaf women, Deaf church workers and others. Some who had experienced GBV shared their stories at the workshop. Participants expressed commitment to protecting others and sharing what they have learned with others.



## RWANDA

### Tresor Nsengiyumva

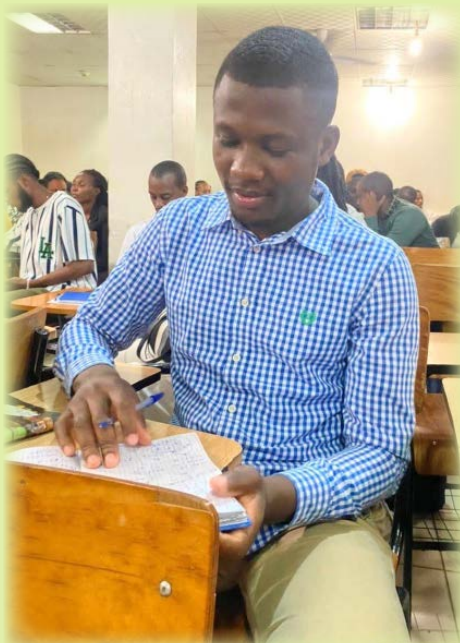
Tresor Nsengiyumva is continuing to do well in Grade 1 at Umutara Deaf School. In January 2025, he started his second term of Grade 1. He is now able to write his name, address and his age! His favourite subject is Mathematics and he likes playing football.

In his first term, he got a score of 45.4% and was ranked 8th in his class. Well done Tresor! Patrick Tuyishimire (Deaf Action Ministry Rwanda Director) visited Tresor during the school holidays and reported that Tresor is communicating well using Rwandan Sign Language more effectively than before. Previously, he used gestures for communication.



### Fulgence Uwimana

Fulgence Uwimana is in his first year of Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration and Local Governance at the University of Kigali. The course is 4 years long. DMI is also supporting him. He is a busy young man, serving as a DAMR board member, overseeing the DAMR self-sustainability farming project, and leading a new church. We are looking forward to seeing him excel in his studies.



### Update on Past Student – Alphonsine Uwimana

Alphonsine Uwimana graduated from the University of Tourism, Technology and Business Studies with a bachelor's degree in business management on 22nd November 2024. She wishes to express her heartfelt gratitude to her past sponsors and supporters for their incredibly generous support of her education, from secondary school to university by covering fees, providing school materials and paying for a sign language interpreter for her classes. Congratulations for persevering and best wishes on your future endeavours, Alphonsine!!! She is now working as a Human Resources Officer at Masaka Creamery Ltd factory where 60% of employees are Deaf.





## PHILIPPINES

### Bacolod Boarding House



The students are no longer wearing masks and are back in class full time. The students from San Carlos are settling well at the Boarding House. Some have very limited sign language skills and are slowly learning from others who reside with them.

Last year in October 2024, nine students from the Boarding House went to the Masskara Festival in Bacolod City and en-

joyed strolling, shopping and buying snacks. They had fun! Ryan and Gerald are in their second and first year (respectively) at the Deaf Evangelistic Alliance Foundation (DEAF) Inc. On 21st December 2024, Albert & Kim visited them and shared some food and gave personal items for their Christmas gifts.



*Albert & Kim with Gerald & Ryan*

## Bicol Deaf Action

Our Bicol Deaf Action school in Ligao, Philippines has enjoyed three visits from overseas teams in the last few months. Norma Armstrong, former finance manager at the school visited with friends from New Zealand. They brought lots of items for the students like drawing books, toys, and coloring materials.

Rohan and Juanita Kimpton and team from Melbourne did fantastic work repairing the girls' dorm gutter, installing CCTV at the farm and servicing the jeepney and the rice mill.



*Before*

*After*



*Canteen renovations*



And the team from Berwick Church of Christ in Melbourne were not to be outdone. They renovated the canteen, and fitted out the classrooms with new tables, chairs, whiteboards and roofing. They provided ten new laptops for the school, painted the dorms and installed fans amongst other repairs at the school and farm. They also provided the teachers with a much-needed retreat and a McDonalds day for the students!

Thus refreshed, the staff got to work on self-sustainability projects raising chickens and pigs on the farm, milling rice, drying rice, grating coconuts, maintaining the self-service car wash, producing and selling BDA's special brand of dishwashing liquid, and selling snacks and lunches at the canteen. The recent rice harvest was bountiful despite the rain – 46 bags of fresh rice!



## UGANDA

### A new business for Solome



Solome is one of our vocational school students who graduated last year in knitting. Christie is one of our Australian supporters who has long had a heart for Solome's progress. Christie has very kindly donated the \$200

needed for Solome to purchase her own knitting machine. That alone is a godsend but the story gets better. Christie's 16-year-old daughter Josie used all her savings and added the \$300 needed for Solome to open her own store! Solome is thrilled! With this, she has been able to start her own business, loan-free, and become financially independent. We are so touched by young Josie's kind heart and life-changing generosity. Thank you, Christie and Josie!



## SELF-SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS

### Sustainable Agriculture Training Workshop



*Training session*

Some workers in DMI fields attended a Sustainable Agriculture Training at the ECHO community in Arusha, Tanzania on 4th to 9th November 2024. The 21 DMI participants included Deaf Action Congo (9), Deaf Action Ministries Rwanda (6) and Deaf Action Tanzania (7). Wycliffe Associates (WA) provided financial support for DAMR including a Rwandan Sign Language interpreter. During the training, participants acquired skills in Sustainable



*Hands on learning*

Agriculture, Biogas production, and home animal husbandry. Participants also learned effective methods for creating kitchen gardens suitable for home use, producing farm manure, and strategies for selecting quality seeds for planting. Upon their return to their respective countries/regions, participants will train others in agricultural and livestock practices to raise funds for self-sustainability. Building knowledge and using that knowledge to help train others is a great asset in small businesses.



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support these students!**



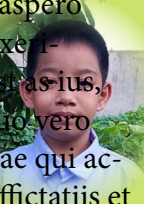
Khairah Gonzales  
(Girl) Grade 9  
PHILIPPINES (Ligao)



Ramon Ramos  
(Boy) Grade 3  
KENYA



Sirikivuya Dono Kamukoko  
(Girl) Grade 2  
DR CONGO (Kinshasa)



John Semper  
(Boy) Grade 2  
PHILIPPINES (Bacolod)

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



# TANZANIA

## Rice farming in Mbeya



Deaf Action Tanzania (DAT) hired 11 acres of farmland for Tsh 5 million to develop a new agricultural project. Funds were raised from selling 45 bags of rice in September 2024.

DAT purchased 44 bags of seeds and fertilizers for Tsh 3 million for the new farming season. Because of financial difficulties, the planting started late. 40 more bags of rice were sold to keep things going but the team refrained from selling any more because the price of rice remains unstable.

The next stage of development in the project involves the preparation of the rice fields including preparing the soil, watering the fields if the rain comes late, and spraying herbicides. Planting is planned for early next month. The forecast for rain this season is not good, so DAT are looking to purchase a water hauling

machine to irrigate the fields.



# EGYPT

## Update on bedsheet set production

In Egypt, a factory has consistently produced 5-piece bedsheet sets. The products are high quality and are all made by Deaf workers. The production line has been running efficiently, with regular output based on demand. The total cost of producing one bedsheet including fabric, sewing, electricity, rent and other necessary materials is 128 EGP. Each bedsheet is sold for 140 EGP which allows for a small profit margin. Each Deaf worker is paid a monthly salary of 1,500 EGP. This is based on production levels, with some fluctuation depending on the market demand. The cost of running the factory includes a monthly rent of 1,000 EGP for the workspace, in addition to the cost of raw materials and utility bills.

The factory continues to face increasing costs, especially in electricity, materials, and rent which have put pressure on the overall profitability. Despite these challenges, the factory has remained operational, and efforts are being made to maintain production while ensuring workers' needs are met. The revenue from sales is being reinvested into maintaining production and covering ongoing operational costs. This reinvestment is essential for the sustainability of the factory and the workers' continued employment.



Andrew Miller  
International Director



Matthijs Terpstra  
International  
Development Coordinator



Susi Tjhai  
Finance Coordinator



Amy Jack  
Communications  
Coordinator



Kay van Namen  
Sponsorship &  
Administration  
Coordinator

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



[www.deafmin.org](http://www.deafmin.org)



[www.deafministriesinternational.com](http://www.deafministriesinternational.com)

## DMI DONATIONS:

Christian Ministry + School,  
Employment and Aid Projects



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funds are intended for.  
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Neville Muir (OAM)  
& Lill Muir  
DMI & DA Founders