DEAF ACTION

School & Project News



November 2026

D.R. CONGO

Ebola threatens the safety of students at Beni school

The Beni School for the Deaf is facing a particularly challenging period as the town continues to battle a devastating Ebola outbreak. Since May, approximately 3,500 people have reportedly died. The outbreak has also affected families connected to nearby schools. Recently, the parent of a student at a neighbouring school for hearing children died from Ebola, and the child is now in isolation at Beni General Hospital receiving treatment for the virus.

In response to the growing threat, we provided the Beni school with funds to purchase Ebola prevention supplies, including water tanks, thermal scanners, soap and disinfectants. These essential items will help the school take precautions to protect its students and staff.

Alongside the health crisis, the school has also experienced a distressing security incident. At around 2 a.m. on August 10, a group of eight intruders—four armed and four unarmed—climbed over the school fence and broke into the office. With no night watchman on duty, a Deaf student living at the school spotted the intruders and raised the alarm. Tragically, they caught and severely beat him, although he thankfully survived. The intruders stole various items, including equipment, money, a computer and a printer. We were able to provide funds for the school to replace the computer and printer.

Despite these difficulties, school life continues, with opportunities for learning, connection and celebration.

On September 15, an NGO organised a seminar for the school's Deaf female students, providing valuable education on menstrual hygiene and Ebola prevention. A week later, on September 23, the school community gathered to celebrate the International Day of Sign Languages with a conference highlighting the importance of sign language and Deaf culture.

There has also been cause for joy among the students and teachers through the support of Deaf Child Hope. Funding from the organisation enabled the school to purchase school supplies and bags, which were warmly



Teachers and students with new bags thanks to Deaf Child Hope







Meanwhile, the school garden is showing promising signs of growth. Corn and cassava have been planted, and both crops are thriving. With hopes of a good harvest ahead, the garden offers a welcome source of encouragement amid the many challenges facing the school community.



PHILIPPINES

Celebrations at Bicol Deaf Action

Bicol Deaf Action has had several reasons to celebrate over the past few months. The school marked its 43rd Founding Anniversary with a simple celebration and also recognised World Teachers' Day by treating its dedicated teaching staff to a well-deserved lunch. Students also had the opportunity to showcase their creativity at a Children's Art Festival organised by the Department of Social Welfare and Development.



The school community was delighted to welcome Grace Houghton, a student from Colorado, USA, who spent two months completing a summer internship at Bicol Deaf Action. During her time there, Grace shared her knowledge and skills with students in the classroom and built meaningful relationships with them.

Thanks to the generous support of the Garden Church in the USA, the gutters on the boys' dormitory and Grade 7 classrooms have been repaired. The school also extends its gratitude to a Garden Church supporter who donated additional art supplies, giving students more opportunities to explore their creativity.



Gutters fixed

Agricultural activities are progressing well, too. The school harvested coconuts during the past quarter, and the rice fields have been replanted for the next growing cycle, with a harvest expected in October. he farmhouse is not yet fully completed, it is already suitable for occupancy—a welcome step forward for the school.



Rice planting

The school canteen continues to provide both a valuable service and employment opportunities for four wonderful women: three Deaf women and one hearing woman with cerebral palsy. Having a hearing staff member on the team is particularly helpful, as she can assist customers with communication, helping make the canteen welcoming and accessible to everyone.

Bacolod Boarding House

Life at the Bacolod boarding house continues to be filled with activity, friendship, opportunities for growth – and fun! On July 10, all public and private school classes were suspended due to strong winds and heavy rain, with concerns about flooding in low-lying areas. Although students were advised to stay home, they made the most of their unexpected day off by enjoying time together exploring Bacolod City!

In August, the students joined in celebrating Buwan ng Wika (National Language Month), an annual occasion that promotes Filipino languages and cultural heritage. Proudly wearing traditional Filipino attire, our Deaf students embraced the opportunity to celebrate the richness and beauty of their culture.



Evenings at the boarding house provide an important time for spiritual growth and fellowship. House parent Albert leads the students in devotions and Bible studies using the Daily Devotion Bible from Deaf Missions USA. These shared moments help strengthen their faith and provide a valuable foundation for their



lives.

Financial challenges remain, however. With jeepney fares having risen to ₱16 each way, transport costs have become a greater burden. To help the students, Albert drives them to school in the mornings, while they walk home at the end of the day. This also answers the often-asked question, "How many people can you fit in a Corolla station wagon?"



Updates on Gerald Febreo and Ryan Menoza



Gerald Febreo

Gerald Febreo is in his third year of college at the Deaf Evangelistic Alliance Foundation, Inc. (DEAF, Inc.). During the recent Nutrition Month celebrations, he took part in modelling events alongside his classmates. He is also preparing to gain practical teaching experience through upcoming classroom demonstrations as he works towards his future career.



Ryan helping a student

Ryan Menoza, now in his fourth year at DEAF, Inc., is undertaking his pre-teacher training. This gives him valuable opportunities to learn how to support primary and elementary school children while continuing to develop his teaching abilities and academic knowledge.

Both Gerald and Ryan were delighted to join the team for Foundation Day, where they enjoyed the celebrations, gained valuable experience and created lasting memories together. Their progress reflects the importance of providing Deaf students with opportunities to grow in confidence, develop practical skills and prepare

BURUNDI

A Vision Taking Shape

Our team in Burundi continues to show remarkable initiative, turning the success of small sustainability projects into opportunities for ministry, education and employment.

In January 2024, Deaf Action Burundi (DAB) received a US$10,000 loan from DMI to purchase two bajaj (three-wheeled vehicles) to generate income. The idea came from two DAB members who had used similar loans to buy vehicles and earn enough to build their own homes. DAB is now using the same model to help fund a much bigger dream: a new DAB Community Centre.

The centre will bring together several important services, including:

- An administration office for DAB's growing ministry
- A church and gathering place for worship and community
- Training facilities to develop job skills and improve communication between Deaf and hearing people
- Housing for missionaries and pastoral workers
- A café to support staff and trainers while generating income

Between April 2024 and September 2025, DAB carefully managed the income from its bajaj vehicles, making a profit of almost US$9,000. In October 2025, this income helped make the first major step possible: purchasing a 40m x 100m block of land just 10 minutes from Bujumbura International Airport.

The land markers are now in place, and the official land certificate is being processed. The land and legal fees totalled US$9,495. DAB borrowed US$1,400 from the DMI-funded farm project to complete the purchase, then repaid the full amount within three months using bajaj income. Deaf Action and DMI fundraising events in Australia have also begun to support the next stage. Necessarily, it must start with the fence (which is not terribly exciting) before we can begin building any of the training centre itself (which is much more exciting).

DAB hopes to expand the property to 60m or even 80m wide by purchasing neighbouring land. Once the site is secured, the first buildings will be the administration office, church and missionary house. The remaining land will be used to grow mangoes, providing fresh juice for Deaf children in schools.

We're incredibly proud of our team in Burundi. Through careful planning, hard work and a commitment to sustainable income, they are building more than a centre. They are creating a place where Deaf people can find community, develop skills and discover new opportunities for generations to come.

Donations toward the fence and the vocational training centre are much needed and are tax deductible. See back page for donation details.



Land purchased for community centre



Proposed buildings



MYANMAR

Staff and students at Muir School for the Deaf press on

Muir School for the Deaf continues to provide education for 35 children in Kalay, with student numbers unchanged from the previous quarter. While the school is going well, the economic situation in Myanmar remains difficult. Inflation continues to push up the price of food and other essentials, making it increasingly challenging to manage the school's expenses. The team had hoped circumstances would improve this year, but they are only getting worse.



Despite these pressures, there has been some good news, particularly in teacher training. Every three months, staff attend sessions at the Disabilities Development Initiative Centre in Kalay, where they learn about supporting people with disabilities and understanding child psychology.

Teachers also attend training organised by the government's Township Education Office. These courses run for two weeks to a month and take place twice a year. The training has been very useful, giving teachers new knowledge and practical skills to bring back to the classroom.

The school has also joined other disability groups to celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. These gatherings give the children an opportunity to meet others in the community and take part in a wider celebration.



Meanwhile, the school's small piggery project continues, with two pigs currently being raised. The project provides welcome support for the school at a time when costs are rising and every bit of extra income helps.

There is also a little happiness growing in the school garden. Seasonal plants produce fruit that the children really enjoy. It's a simple pleasure, but an important one for the students.

Muir School continues to work steadily through a challenging period, supported by its teachers, practical projects and the community around it. The staff and students remain profoundly grateful for the generosity of Deaf Action supporters.



Andrew Miller
International Director



Matthijs Terpstra
International Development Coordinator



Susi Tjhai
Finance Coordinator



Amy Jack
Communications Coordinator



Kay van Namen
Sponsorship & Administration Coordinator

As this is our last Deaf Action newsletter for 2026, the International and National Boards, staff, representatives, and volunteers of DMI and DA wish all our supporters a wonderful Christmas and a safe, peaceful, and blessed 2027.

Thank you for your faithful prayers, generous financial contributions, and practical support throughout the year. Your partnership makes a lasting difference, and we look forward to serving alongside you again in the new year.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



DEAF ACTION

www.deafmin.org/deaf-action/

DA DONATIONS:

School, Employment and Aid Projects
(tax deductible in Australia)

Please make cheques payable to:
Deaf Action

Details for bank Transfer:
BSB: 633-000
Account: 145834263

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

Deaf Action
P.O.Box 395, Beaconsfield, Victoria, Australia, 3807

03 5940 5431

(SMS/WhatsApp)
0487 209 881

info@deafaction.org.au



Sponsorship Coordinator:
Kay van Namen
kay.vannamen@deafmin.org



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