



President's Piece



It amazes me that, despite a small number of volunteers and limited financial resources, thousands of lives have changed through the work of EARS Inc. Most of the people we have helped would not have had access to audiology and hearing aid services without us.

We're excited that our new partnership with Medical Ministry International means we will be establishing more than twenty-five new clinics, including training and equipping their staff.

2014 will be a year of seeking and drawing in more resources so we can achieve even more. If you have thought about getting involved in our clinical work, perhaps it is time for you to finally take the plunge and head overseas to volunteer your skills. There is much to do at home too, so if you're interested in helping us, we'd like to hear from you.

We hope you enjoy catching up on what we have been doing and hope to do in this combined Spring/Summer newsletter.

Grace and peace,

David Pither, President of EARS Inc.



...is an Australian, not-for-profit, Christian association dedicated to assisting children and adults affected by hearing impairment and deafness in developing countries.

EARS Inc. partners with local agencies to train and equip health workers and teachers to rehabilitate people with hearing loss and help them become self-sufficient and independent.

Donna's Update

By Donna Carkeet

Wrapping up in DR

Leaving dear friends and packing up the house we had lived in for over seven years was hard, but my Dominican adopted son Madison and I are now back in Australia. I am in the throes of planning new projects in Colombia, Haiti, Fiji, Ethiopia and Dominican Republic, which means a lot of proposal and budget writing. Madison is settling into Australian life and will be commencing TAFE in February.

We are looking forward to what God has in store for the next chapter of our lives. Please continue to pray for the graduates of the DR project as they continue to provide vital audiology services in their country.

Trip down the Amazon

Ever wondered how you would go backpacking through the Amazon? Imagine fitting audiology and medical gear into that pack, as well as an air mattress and sleep sheet along with personal items. I had to treat all my clothes with insect repellent (discovered it's better not to do this in a closed hotel room). I managed to squeeze in my testing gear (two tympanometers and an audiometer), two otoscopes to look in ears, plus 200 rubber tips, impression material and an otoacoustic emission screener. I used every last gram of my baggage allowance!

The trip was wonderful. A fast boat took us from Leticia to Santa Sofia, about 2.5 hours away, where we unpacked our gear and hiked to the satellite clinic. We were grateful for the help of many locals, as the high humidity and temperature made any exercise draining.

We set up tents and a temporary clinic and saw many patients over the next

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Madison & Donna back home in Oz



Donna could win a prize for her ability to cram so much gear into so little luggage!



Trekking between clinics



The MMI medical teams attended to hundreds of patients

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day and a half. We then packed up, hiked further up river to Zaragoza, and did it all again.

Earlier I had trained nine Youth With a Mission (YWAM) volunteers to screen hearing and I was delighted to discover that two of them attend every outreach project that MMI runs on the Amazon. The volunteers' skills and confidence developed rapidly as they worked alongside me during the first week, and when I became ill, they were able to carry on without me in the second week. All the doctors in the medical team told me how wonderful these volunteers were. They will carry on this work on all future MMI and YWAM medical projects in the region.

The audiology team was extremely busy over these two weeks, attending to 831 patients. Of these, 117 were treated for middle ear infections and 129 had wax blockages that required removal. We also found two children in need of urgent ENT specialist treatment and one

young child needed a bone conductor hearing aid.

Opportunities for 2014

In 2014, MMI will allow volunteers to travel to these regions and work with the medical teams and alongside hearing screeners. If you are a hearing health professional, why not consider putting your hand up for a trip? Email admin@earsinc.org if you would like more information.



This lad is not enjoying having his ears cleaned out!



Donna trained several volunteers to provide hearing care on MMI medical missions.



Patients of all ages came for help

Thank you!



Ears Inc. sends a huge thank you to **Jan Pollard at Hearing Life** for a van load of audiometers, test and other equipment donated by their Adelaide facility. David Pither and Madison Linares-Carkeet were like kids in a candy store sorting through it! Many countries will benefit from this gear, but Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Columbia will probably be first off the mark.

We are grateful to other donors of equipment this year, and to **Paul Flynn from Pro-Cal** who freely gives his time and skills in calibrating and repairing the equipment and offering valuable advice.

pudding drive a success

Many thanks to everyone in NSW who bought a 'Pudding Lady' pudding last Christmas. We sold over 100 and raised more than \$1,400.

EARS Inc. making a difference: Yewo's story

Yewo became sick when he was a month old with what the doctors thought was meningitis. Yewo was slow to sit and walk, and by the age of two, he was not talking and didn't seem to hear. Living in Karonga in the far north of Malawi, Yewo's parents found out about the ABC Hearing Clinic and Training Centre (HCTC) from a speech therapist in Lilongwe.

Yewo was first seen at HCTC on 13th January 2014 and his hearing was tested using Visual Reinforcement Audiometry (VRA) technique where a young child is rewarded by a puppet when they turn to a sound. Yewo was delighted to be in the booth with its many toys, and he turned consistently to louder sounds. The results confirmed he had a hearing loss and he needed hearing aids for both ears. Ear impressions were taken and his custom-made earmoulds were produced on-site.

Within a few days, two hearing aids were fitted and an aided assessment demonstrated the difference amplification made to him.

At Yewo's follow up appointment a week later, his parents were delighted he finally had hearing aids. He still has a long road ahead of him, but his parents now have hope that he will learn to talk and understand speech, and has a chance now of one day attending school and learning with other children.



Audiology student Chikondi (holding Yewo) with Yewo's grateful parents.

Malawi Update

By Peter Bartlett



The HARK vehicle and audiotrailer hooked up and ready to take hearing services out to communities



The audiotrailer has two sound booths

Big new toys for outreach

Training of the six ABC audiology students and the Thursday outreach program continues, but now outreach has become high-tech and fun! In October 2013, a specially equipped bright yellow HARK Land Rover Defender from Sound Seekers in the UK arrived, along with a customised Audiotrailer from POHSA in Johannesburg, containing two sound booths, funded by HTW Foundation.

This unique combination enables us to take high quality services to communities all over the country. With the new Amplivox battery-powered audiometers purchased from Australian distributor Sonic, again with HTW funding, people can be tested to 120dB. The need for hearing help is great. In our first outreach trip in November, ten people were diagnosed with hearing loss and may require hearing aid fitting.

Welcome student support

In July, we were delighted that Australian mining company Paladin Energy advised they would contribute toward the tuition of the ABC audiology students. When they finish in 2014, the six graduates will provide audiology services to the Karonga School for the Deaf in Malawi's far north, which Paladin also supports.

However, despite this generous support there are still some students who struggle to cover their tuition, and we need further donations or sponsors to assist all of them to complete their studies.

New Aussie Audiologist dives in the deep end

Within six months of graduating with her Masters in Audiology in December 2012, Rosanna Morrison was on a plane and heading to Lilongwe from Brisbane. Under the supervision of Rebecca Bartlett, this courageous audiologist made an invaluable contribution to the clinical and training effort at ABC HCTC over her six months there.

As well as unusual casework, Rosanna enjoyed the cultural diversity of Malawi, the serene beauty of Lake Malawi, the breath-taking power of Victoria Falls and the exhilaration of meeting lions, leopards, elephant, hippos and other wild animals on safari in neighbouring Zambia.



Rosanna (second from left) with Bec and students Tiwa, Alinane and Chikondi

If this sounds appealing, we need experienced, enthusiastic and culturally sensitive audiologists to provide training and/or hearing services. There are opportunities all year round so please email Peter and Rebecca Bartlett at pandrbartlett@yahoo.com or hearingabcclinic@gmail.com if you are interested or want more information.

Can you help us help people hear?

The work of EARS Inc. aims to provide ongoing training and support to local workers or health clinics, hospitals, deaf schools and mission groups in developing countries, to empower them with the necessary skills and equipment to rehabilitate people with hearing loss.

- **Become a member** of EARS. See our website for membership forms.
- **Donate money.** We urgently need money to buy equipment and support our workers and audiology students overseas. Tax-deductible donations can be made through the GiveNow link on the Donate page on our website. Maybe consider a bequest to EARS.
- **Donate equipment.** We need audiological equipment and hearing aids (second hand is fine) to equip our clinics and graduates.
- **Join our fundraising committee.**
- **Volunteer.** If you are a hearing professional who would like to provide training and/or hearing services overseas, contact us. Technicians are also needed to check and calibrate equipment.

Contact us:

- admin@earsinc.org
- www.earsinc.org
- 03 9654 5511, David Pither (BH)



PSST! You can keep in touch with latest happenings by becoming our 'friend' on our Facebook page.

New centre finally opens in Malawi

By Peter Bartlett

With the arrival of a newborn, so much fuss and preparation is focused on the actual birth. First time parents often don't realise the real work begins after the baby arrives.

So it is with the ABC Hearing Clinic and Training Centre on the campus of African Bible College in Lilongwe, Malawi, where we have seen a significant increase in patient numbers following publicity about the opening of our brand new facility.

Official Opening

The ABC Hearing Clinic and Training Centre (HCTC), a ministry of EARS Incorporated Australia, was officially opened by Malawi's Minister of Health, Mrs Catherine Gotani Hara, on 4th October 2013. The Minister's speech was full of understanding and appreciation as she acknowledged the importance of the Ministry of Health working collaboratively to make the most of this facility, the first of its kind for the country.

In what was at times a very moving ceremony, Peter Bartlett thanked the many contributors, including major facility donor AusAID, major equipment donor Hear The World (HTW) Foundation, and many churches and individuals in Australia and the U.S.

A young lady spoke of how she has benefited from the audiology services and hearing aids provided at ABC. She received a standing ovation following her speech on her life's struggles and the difference this facility will make by detecting hearing loss in children at a younger age than she was (along with her twin sister) when her deafness was diagnosed.

A moving drama by a local disability-awareness NGO helped the audience understand the importance of engaging communities in supporting people who have a hearing impairment.



Peter & Rebecca with their beautiful daughters Brianna, Jessica and Elouise



Pete & Bec with the audiology students



Malawi's Minister for Health unveils the plaque



The Centre has two sound booths

It was an enormous amount of work to get the facility ready for the opening, with Peter and Bec, Peter's parents and even ABC colleagues working alongside the tradesmen. However, the final product is exceptional, and will serve Malawi as a Centre of Excellence for many years to come.

The Bartletts hope and pray that other audologists will follow in their footsteps and consider going to Malawi to continue the high quality audiology services and training delivered by the HCTC for the people of this country.

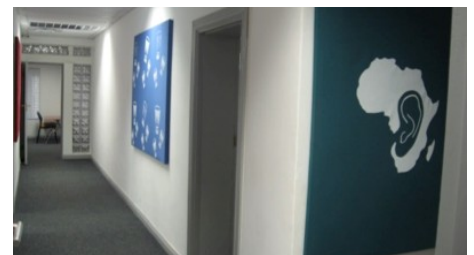
A first for Malawi

By Helen and Don Bartlett (Peter's proud parents)

The opening of the ABC Hearing Clinic and Training Centre in Malawi was an amazing experience. The list of dignitaries was impressive: Malawi's Minister of Health Mrs Catherine Gotani Hara, the Australian Deputy High Commissioner Mr Joel McGregor, Audiology Professor and Hear the World Foundation advisor Mr John Bamford, Principal Secretary at the Ministry of Health Dr Charles Mwansamo, and Chancellor of the African Bible Colleges Dr Paul Chinchon.

The HCTC is the first hearing clinic in a country of 15 million people, and Peter and Rebecca Bartlett are Malawi's first registered audologists.

All who spoke mentioned the considerable impact this mission has had in just three years and the high quality of the new clinic and its equipment. Australia's High Commissioner Matthew E.K. Neuhaus said, "We view this assistance as being very much in line with Australia's broad and on-going support for the development priorities of the people of Malawi. In that sense Peter and Rebecca are the best of Australia. Their efforts personify the people-to-people links that are the very basis of the relationship which Australia enjoys with Malawi, the warm heart of Africa and we couldn't be more proud of them."



The lovely banners decorating the Centre walls were produced by Australian designer Krystle Hunter



The smart entrance to the HCTC