



President's Piece

2015 has been a time of preparation in Malawi, with students from the ABC Hearing Clinic travelling to Manchester to undertake the Masters in Audiology course.

Training students outside their own country is not a norm for Ears Inc. but with no indigenous audiologists in Malawi and the process still underway for approval of an ABC/Ears Inc. audiology degree by the Medical Council and Higher Education Council in Malawi still some time away, we need to have the clinic headed by fully trained and accredited Malawian staff as the Bartletts prepare to leave later this year. Pete and Bec Bartlett have achieved something quite extraordinary during their 6 years in Malawi and we are immensely proud of them. They have been supported amazingly by Hear The World Foundation (US), Sound Seekers (UK), Dr Ingrid McBride and her Arizona State University students, and many others. Of these "others", Lois Grant from Australia has spent some months in Malawi and will now be moving there for at least one year and Helen Brough from UK who regularly spent several months a year will be sharing the load with Lois in the Clinic and student training. Pete and Bec will continue to monitor and assist from Australia.

In the meantime Donna Carkeet has been very busy on multiple trips to Fiji, one with Evelyn Vartuli a Speech Pathologist (see our last newsletter), and recently to Papua New Guinea to participate in a speech and hearing forum. Donna is expecting to return to Colombia later this year. Marg Anderson recently spent three weeks with the Bartletts in Malawi and I hope to return to Egypt and to get to the Congo where Prue Boyd is working tirelessly. There is also a project in the wings in North Maluku, Indonesia.

There is so much to do. We always need more volunteers, even people with no clinical skills can be useful.

God's grace and peace be with you.

David Pither, President, EARS Inc.



Volunteer opportunities

We need willing workers in the following locations.

Fiji

- Trainers in auditory brainstem response testing and teleaudiology
- Short term clinical work (audiologists and audiometrists)
- Trainers in a number of fields such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech and language pathologists, teachers of the deaf, special education teachers.

Malawi

- Short term clinical work and clinical supervision
- Teachers for audiology units in BSc in Audiology course and supervisors, particularly in 2017/18, for longer periods (3-6 months)
- Speech pathologists and teachers of the deaf are welcome too.

If you want to find out more, contact us—admin@earsinc.org.au.

Want to support the work of EARS?

So much of what we achieve is through generous donations of time, expertise and equipment from many organisations and individuals, but we always need more funds so we can do more.

- Trivia packs are available for anyone who wants to hold a trivia night to raise money for EARS Inc. Email admin@earsinc.org and we'll send it to you.
- Good at fundraising? Join our fundraising team.
- Donations are very welcome! Check our website for how you can give: www.earsinc.org. There is a tax deductible option through GiveNow.



...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. Our philosophy is to build local capacity and establish sustainable programs.

Malawi update

By Peter Bartlett

At the African Bible College Hearing Clinic and Training Centre (ABC HCTC) in Lilongwe, on outreach trips throughout Malawi, or in our house with the church growth group we host, often we see life-changing moments in the faces of those the Lord has connected us with. Bec and I feel privileged to have been God's hands and feet over the last six years in Malawi.

Students and Staffing

Three of our first batch of six ABC audiology students, Fletcher, Chikondi and Gospel, are at the University of Manchester in the UK, having started their Masters degree in Audiology in September 2015. They are progressing through the course but it is very difficult. While they are away from all that is familiar to them, God has faithfully provided the support they need through EARS Inc., Hear The World Foundation and Sound Seekers. They have left family, friends and the familiarity of Malawi to pursue God's calling for them, and they are embracing the opportunity, even in the snow! We expect Gospel and Fletcher to return to ABC HCTC in September, and for Chikondi to go to the Sound Seekers Audiology service in Blantyre (300km south of Lilongwe). Another graduate, Mwasoni, is practicing audiology in Zambia, while the other two, Alinane and Tiwa, are continuing to faithfully assist us clinically at ABC HCTC, and do an absolutely wonderful job.

Our second batch of five ABC students undergoing the audiology/arts degree program are also doing well, but as a result of our efforts to establish a Bachelor of Science in Audiology curriculum, their road to graduation will be longer.



Our wonderful friends from missions group AZTEM, Ian and Lois Grant visited us in January/February 2016. Lois is an audiologist and EARS Inc. member who specialises in early intervention, inclusive education and objective assessments, so was able to deliver a unit to the current student group on these topics. The great news for us as we transition home to Australia later this year, and for the ABC HCTC, is that Lois and Ian have applied to ABC and EARS Inc. to take over from us in October 2016.

In addition to the Grants, our UK friend and EARS Inc. member Helen Brough has also agreed to come for one year beginning in September 2016. Helen has spent two 3-month periods in Malawi (2014 and 2015), and knows God is calling her to this longer term of voluntary service. During her 2015 trip, Helen lectured the ABC students in Vestibular Assessment and Rehabilitation. Helen especially loves outreach!

For us, 2016 is about the end game. Our eldest daughter Jessica has been in Australia since January and settled back in to life well with the help of our loving family and friends. Bec will return with youngest daughter Elouise in late September, while Brianna and Peter will stay on until mid November, to ensure our new audiology staff transition well. Family-wise, this is not ideal, but we are compelled to make sure that the ministry in Malawi is sustainable.

A New Curriculum

I am trying to put together the final submission of the audiology curriculum to have the ABC degree course approved by the Medical Council of Malawi. I received a recent boost when EARS Inc. Board Secretary Marg Anderson visited for three weeks in April/May to help with this and other things. We are committed to having the curriculum finalised before leaving.

Cochlear Implants

During Lois Grant's visit, we reviewed the progress of the first two cochlear implantees. Lois lead our ABC audiology students to develop the first speech discrimination test materials in Chichewa, Malawi's main native language, and used the material with these two children. Two more children with acquired profound hearing loss were implanted in February and had their device switch-on in April. They are also progressing well with fortnightly follow up visits.

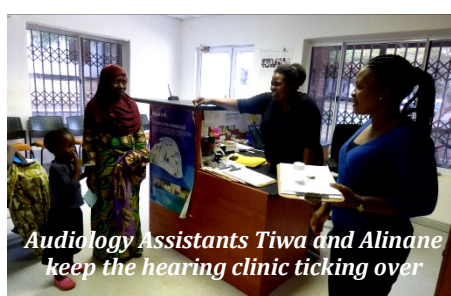
Outreach

Although we currently only have a small clinical team, we have continued to provide outreach services to schools for the deaf at Embangweni and Bandawe, and worked with Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) networks established by Christian Blind Mission and World Vision. We are preparing for our June outreach trips with Arizona State University's Hearing For Humanity team, and anticipate seeing a couple of thousand people in the four weeks they will be here.

As we prepare to return home, we are so thankful for all God has done through so many people. The ministry has gone far beyond what we could ever have hoped for. All the glory goes to God. What has been achieved would have been completely impossible without His direction, strength and grace.



Bec and Pete with (L to R) Gospel Mangwiro, Chikondi Chabaluka and Fletcher Chisalipo



Audiology Assistants Tiwa and Alinane keep the hearing clinic ticking over



Marg Anderson with students at Bandawe school

Our new Malawi 'missionaries'

Lois Grant



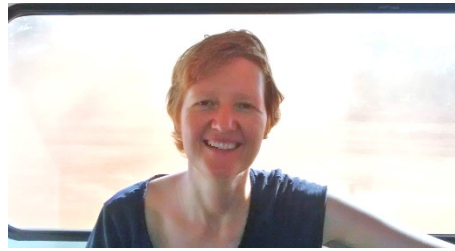
I am an Audiologist and part-time lecturer at the University of Melbourne Graduate School of Education. I have worked in audiology, early intervention and more recently, teaching audiology to training teachers of the deaf.

After two short trips of about six weeks to Malawi in 2012 and 2015 to help out our friends, Pete and Bec Bartlett, my husband Ian and I will be heading back for a year from late October 2016.

Sometime last year, Rebecca wrote to ask us to consider and pray about going to Malawi for a year ... and the rest is history. We go to support the Malawian students as they move towards running the hearing clinic themselves in the future. There may be opportunity to develop an early intervention service for children identified early with hearing loss and to support the recent inclusive education strategy developed by the Malawi Government. Ian will also assist in clinic management and in teaching within an international development subject to students at the African Bible College where the clinic is located. He may also teach some subjects within a new Veterinary school nearby.

We are looking forward to working with the Malawians who are full of faith, joy and enthusiasm and believe this is where God wants us for the year. We are also excited and a little nervous about the challenges we may face and leave five small grandchildren behind in Australia. We see the amazing work of Pete and Bec in building the hearing clinic and training local staff with wonderful sponsorship and support from within and outside of Malawi. Our hope is that the work will continue to flourish and grow and offer hope to the many Malawians with hearing and communication difficulties.

Helen Brough



I work part-time as a Clinical Scientist in Audiology with Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. I am involved in specialist clinics working with people with learning disabilities, and with patients with vestibular schwannomas.

I am also a member of L'Arche London, an intentional Christian community where people with and without learning disabilities live together. I have been a member of the community for 16 years, and work there part-time as the faith and community development assistant.

I spent 3 months working at the clinic in 2014 and a further 3 months in 2015, and now I will be going to Malawi in September with the aim of being there for 12 months.

I am in awe of what the Bartletts and their staff have achieved in such a short time and want to offer what support I can to the clinic for the next step of their journey. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there, particularly teaching a module on the balance system and helping develop a dizzy clinic. I hope to develop the balance service further during my time there.

My aim is to offer clinical support during the transition period as the Malawian audiologists prepare to take the clinical lead. I'm looking forward to building on the relationships I have with the staff and students, and to work with them to serve God through serving others.

I think these coming months will be an exciting but fragile time for the clinic, as the work continues without the day-to-day presence of the Bartletts. It's daunting, but I'm looking forward to the challenge. I have a lot to learn, and am prepared for the fact I'm going to make a lot of mistakes. I hope and pray that God will guide us gently and clearly as we try to follow him and see what happens next.

Learning in Laos

By Lisa Hue

In early December 2014 my colleague from Always Hearing, Mary-Ann Law, and I flew to Laos as volunteer audiologists with a volunteer crew from Melbourne and Western Australia as part of Global Hands Charity* to support the students at the Special Education School of Luang Prabang.

The audiology programme at the school started in 2013 when Melbourne's Balance and Hearing Centre (BHC) sent staff to test the students and those suitable for amplification were fitted. Our visit was to follow up the aided students which included a hearing retest, service and reprogramming their hearing aids, and providing training and information as needed. We also tested the new children at the school.

David Pither, president of EARS Inc., was a significant contributor to the program, providing equipment such as the audiometer and HiPro and sharing his knowledge and experience in working in developing countries. We are grateful for his time and input.

The 2014 team included optometrists, hair dressers who helped set up a hair dressing salon for the girls, and 10 high school students who had swapped their 'schoolies' week to spend a week with the children doing various activities.

It was wonderful to see the aided students hearing well with their hearing aids and to learn several students had left the centre and found employment.

This trip has been both rewarding and interesting. We have learnt a lot and we will use what we have learned to provide a better service to these students when we next visit Laos.

** Global Hands is a not for profit organization which supports educational programmes and resources.*



Donna's Update

Papua New Guinea

EARS Inc. was invited to PNG's first Ear Hearing and Speech Forum in Port Moresby in April. A group of people working in hearing health and speech pathology - mainly local professionals and workers including an ENT specialist – spent three days talking about progress made so far in the country, discussing ways to develop services further. It was an amazing experience for me to attend this important forum on behalf of EARS and to share some of our experiences and ideas. I can see areas where we could assist PNG in the future development of services. There are so many opportunities and many enthusiastic local professionals keen to improve the level and quality of hearing and speech services. We will continue communicating with PNG and waiting on what God might have planned for us there.

Fiji

Finally, I was able to visit our ongoing project in Fiji in May. There have been some great developments in the project since my last visit a year ago.

An organization called the Carabez Alliance has worked in Fiji for a number of years but is now ending their project. They established a clinic in Suva over ten years ago with funding from Hear the World, and since then they have provided many services, fitted hearing aids to many children, and trained the ENT specialist. They have donated the majority of their wonderful equipment to the Hilton Organization who EARS is working with in Fiji. This equipment includes visual reinforcement audiometry (VRA) gear which we were able to begin to use last month, enabling us to test younger children. This is an important development for the clinic and allows many children with multiple disabilities to be assessed using a behavioural technique.

The Carabez Alliance has also donated ear mould making equipment, which means we can set up a laboratory for local ear mould manufacturing in the near future.

More training of local staff is needed in auditory brainstem response testing and we are looking for volunteers for this and also for audiologists who may be interested to visit or to assist with ongoing training and development via teleaudiology.

Another need is for special education training for the teachers at this school, many of whom are not trained for early childhood but are assigned by the Ministry of Education to the early intervention centre, although they only have upper primary school teacher training.

A multidisciplinary approach is needed to assist in this project. We are looking for professionals who may be interested to volunteer some time to training in Fiji, such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech and language pathologists, teachers of the deaf, special education teachers and others. Spread the word!



Help us help people hear

EARS Inc. aims to provide ongoing training and support to local workers in 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.** Tax-deductible donations can be made through the GiveNow link on the Donate page on our website. Maybe consider a bequest to EARS.
- **Donate audiological equipment and hearing aids** (second hand is fine).
- **Join our fundraising team.**
- **Volunteer.** We need hearing professionals to provide training and hearing services overseas. Technicians are also needed to check and calibrate equipment.
- **Join our prayer support team.** Contact our coordinator Jim Thompson jimmthompson80@gmail.com.

admin@earsinc.org, www.earsinc.org
+61 (0) 3 9654 5511—David Pither, President
Suite 302, 220 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000, Aust



Keep in touch with latest happenings by becoming a 'friend' on the EARS Facebook page.