



## A BRIEF UPDATE FROM EARS INC.

*During this global COVID-19 pandemic, we have all experienced many changes in our lives. We hope that you are finding new ways to stay in touch and are not feeling disconnected. For each of us, this is a challenging situation to our regular lives, and no less so for EARS Inc. volunteers and our overseas project teams.*

### FIJI

The staff at our partner Frank Hilton Organisation (FHO) have had to reorganize quickly. The schools have closed, leaving children with hearing aids at home with their devices, for the first time for many. The FHO audiology team have been visiting families in person, online and by telephone to help them manage their children's devices, and also explain how to protect their families from COVID-19 through social distancing and handwashing. FHO staff have been working from home, and have even survived a hurricane recently.

Each team member is using this time to connect more with clients' families throughout the country, develop more online resources and department protocols, and maintaining battery supplies, earmould and repair services to their clients as best they can.

There will be some salary reductions due to the impact of the pandemic on donations and grants they rely on, and the team is actively exploring new ways to raise funding in the country.

## PAPUA NEW GUINEA

EARS Inc. volunteer Mahes Satchi was in Papua New Guinea when Australia announced it was closing its borders, so she had to leave early and return to her home in Tasmania. Audiometry student Desmond was at least able to receive some supervision in the brief time Mahes was there. The two students in PNG and one in Fiji have been able to extend their study period with TAFE NSW due to COVID-19 restrictions delaying supervisors travelling to provide the support they need.

We are working on plans for resuming work on clinics and training in PNG when lockdowns lift. They are currently still on lockdown with unreliable internet, but Donna Carkeet has managed to provide distant training, support and encouragement when technology allows.



**EARS Inc. is an Australian, not-for-profit association dedicated to reducing the incidence and impact of hearing impairment through training and equipping local individuals and agencies in developing countries.**

**We serve and empower people, irrespective of nationality, race, gender or religion, while showing the love of Jesus through our words and actions.**

**Our vision is for deaf and hearing impaired people in developing countries to have access to the hearing services they need to help them to reach their potential.**



*Fiji audiometry students have been visiting the families of special needs children to ensure they understand how to manage their child's hearing aids and how to avoid contracting COVID-19.*

## MALAWI, AFRICA

Malawi's borders have shut down due to the coronavirus. Rebecca's planned trip in March/April had to be cancelled, and audiologist Dr Jenna Montgomery and her new husband Blake have reluctantly left Malawi temporarily to return home to USA. Jenna continues to teach the students online from America, and Blake will be teaching the upcoming Physics, Algebra and Statistics courses. Jenna plans to use this time to strengthen and build the audiology degree program and establish partnerships with US universities that are interested in research collaborations. Blake and Jenna hope they will be able to return at the end of July to recommence face-to-face teaching and outreach services. The impact of coronavirus is just beginning to be felt in Malawi. As of May 18, Malawi has 70 official cases of COVID-19. The ABC clinic remains open but few people are attending appointments, which means less income. We are grateful Hear The World funding has been approved to be used for subsidising the wages of the ABC clinic staff.

As a result of government restrictions on gatherings, we have suspended outreach visiting sites. We have also needed to suspend any services outside the ABC



*Above: ABC audiology students on a hearing loss awareness campaign speaking to parents, teachers and students at a local school.*

*Below: Visits to outlying areas of Malawi are on hold until restrictions lift.*



hearing clinic itself. This includes school screenings, community education, industrial screenings etc. This has freed up staff to do things they often do not have time to do, such as providing care calls to people fitted with hearing aids in the last ten years to see how we can help them with batteries, hearing aid repairs and future appointments. It also allows us to look at factors affecting hearing aid use. We are also hoping to conduct retrospective research at this time.

We are thrilled that an application for a \$75,000 grant from the J & K Wonderland Foundation was approved. This will fund the purchase of a vehicle to transport students to outreaches as well as expenses associated with a week-long outreach trip to Rumphu and Mzuzu every month (when they recommence).

We are uncertain about what the future looks like in Malawi and we are in need of extra support at this time to continue operating. Tax deductible donations in Australia can be made at [GiveNow - EARS Inc General Appeal](#) or in the USA by selecting ABC Hearing Clinic at <http://africanbiblecolleges.com/donate>.

## LONG DISTANCE SUPPORT

Until travel restrictions are lifted, Donna remains at home in Sydney. She is using this time to catch up on reports and paperwork, but spends many hours online and in Zoom meetings with audiometry students and our project partners in Fiji, PNG and Dominican Republic.



## PLEASE PRAY FOR EARS

After delivering ear and hearing healthcare services, training, outreach and resources in a variety of countries for more than 20 years, EARS Incorporated is at a cross-roads. There are major changes required at Board level and we need the Lord's guidance to determine our future vision, direction, structure and personnel. We need to be clear about how our Heavenly Father wants us to proceed to an exciting and life-changing future, and who He wants in key positions to lead us forward. If you believe in the power of prayer, please join with us to ensure we hear clearly from Him, so that we make wise decisions, act courageously, and bring glory to Jesus.

## Help us help people hear

- **Become a member of EARS.**
- **Donate money.**
- **Donate audiological equipment and hearing aids.**
- **Volunteer.** We need hearing professionals and technicians.
- **Join our prayer support team.** Contact our coordinator Jan Bebbington: [janbebbington@bigpond.com](mailto:janbebbington@bigpond.com).

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