

HEAR *the* WORLD *Foundation*
ACTIVITY REPORT 2011



Hear the world
FOUNDATION

5 YEARS OF THE *HEAR THE WORLD* FOUNDATION

Since 2006, the *Hear the World* Foundation has been constantly campaigning across the globe for better hearing. With the aid of our project partners from all over the world, we are significantly improving medical and audiological care for disadvantaged people with hearing loss in many countries, and thereby helping to enhance their quality of life.

New, professional and ambitious projects are launched every year, with each one giving us fresh inspiration. We have enjoyed very positive experiences, particularly with projects such as the Special Olympics (p. 34), where all the project participants are provided with long-term audiological support in their respective home countries.

It is equally important to us to support each of our project partners for as long as possible in order to ensure sustainable development. In the case of projects in Kenya (photo on the right), Cambodia, Canada and the Dominican Republic, our successful partnerships are now already into their second or third year. We have managed to build on the now well-established groundwork for these projects and to expand our strong medical care network.

Particularly in these fast-moving times, it is important to pay special attention to the sustainability of our work and to continually look for opportunities for improvement.





Yet what has become of the many children and adults who have received support from a project run by the *Hear the World* Foundation? How have their lives changed? This is an intriguing question, and one which often occupies our thoughts! That is why we would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of a multitude of people with hearing loss, to tell you about the fortunes of three individuals on page 46, and reveal the paths their lives have taken since their first encounter with our foundation.

Read our 2011 annual report and let us take you on a short journey through some of the most diverse countries on our planet, where you will see just how varied and multifaceted the issues of hearing and hearing loss really are.

Please help us to ensure that we can continue to provide good medical care to as many disadvantaged people with hearing loss as possible in the future. We are grateful for your contribution – every donation helps!

Thank you for your interest and support!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Zschokke', written in a cursive style.

Alexander Zschokke

President of the *Hear the World* Foundation

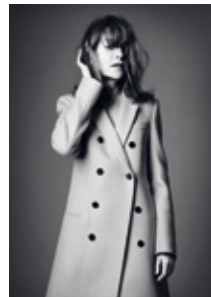
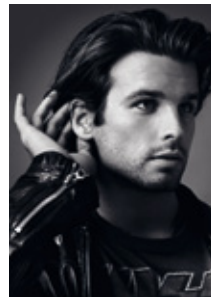
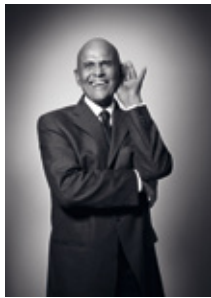
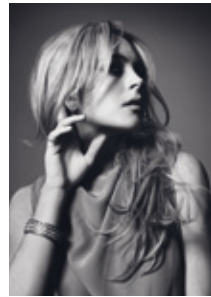
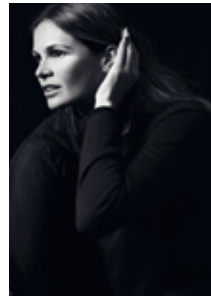
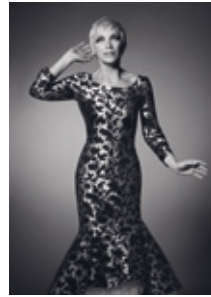
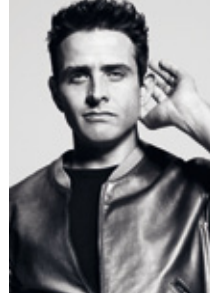
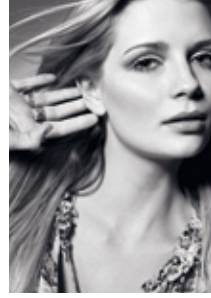
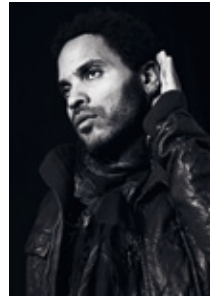
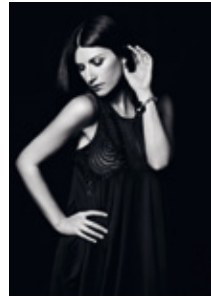
OUR PROJECTS AROUND THE WORLD



- 1 CANADA Page 28**
Noise leads to damaged hearing – preventive training for Canadian elementary school pupils
A meeting place for communication and social exchange between Canadian children
- 2 JAMAICA Page 31**
Development of the first degree course in Audiology in the Caribbean
- 3 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC Page 36**
An Australian trains audiologists and establishes hearing screening programs for newborns
- 4 GREAT BRITAIN Page 25**
A place to go on the Isle of Wight for children with hearing loss
Modern technology and individual support in school as an effective preparation for life and work
- 5 GERMANY Page 24**
Recuperation and communication – a short vacation for children with hearing loss
- 6 GREECE Page 34**
Hearing aids for athletes at the Special Olympics summer games in Athens
- 7 MALAWI Page 12**
Pioneering work in one of the poorest countries in the world
- 8 KENYA Page 08**
Hear the World ambassador Patrick Nuo helps children with hearing loss
- 9 GEORGIA Page 22**
Hearing aids for schoolchildren and kindergarten children – development with rapid progress
- 10 ARMENIA Page 32**
A clinic partnership for pediatric health care for Armenian children
- 11 CAMBODIA Page 18**
Medical care and hearing aids for people on the bottom rungs of society
- 12 VIETNAM Page 14**
Better quality of life and education for children with hearing loss
How do I deal with a child with hearing loss? Advice for teachers and parents

HEAR THE WORLD FOUNDATION ACTIVITY REPORT 2011

- 06 *HEAR THE WORLD* FOUNDATION
Our aims, our principles, our supporters
- 08 KENYA
Children with energy and zest for life, in spite of all their troubles
- 12 MALAWI
Pioneering work in one of the poorest countries in the world
- 14 VIETNAM/SWITZERLAND
A country on the way up – but not for everyone!
- 16 VIETNAM
“I would like to give back what I received myself”
- 18 CAMBODIA
When life places too many obstacles in people's path...
- 22 GEORGIA
Cultural diversity and child poverty – a country of opposites
- 24 GERMANY
School is not just about learning – leisure time on the Isle of Wight
- 25 GREAT BRITAIN
Facing the future with self-confidence and optimism
- 26 GREAT BRITAIN
No special status – one child amongst peers
- 28 CANADA
Prevention is better than cure
- 30 CANADA
Loneliness in the second largest country in the world
- 31 JAMAICA
The first Caribbean Audiology Degree
- 32 ARMENIA/SWITZERLAND
Cooperation between two hospitals
- 34 GREECE
Special Olympics – colorful diversity from 170 countries
- 36 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
Audiologists wanted! – a career with a future on the island
- 38 HEARING LOSS AMONGST CHILDREN
IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
Interview with Professor De Wet Swanepoel: equal opportunities for all
- 42 52 CHILDREN
A little help, to great effect
- 43 *HEAR THE WORLD* FOUNDATION
Who we are – foundation board and advisory board
- 44 *HEAR THE WORLD* FOUNDATION
Annual Financial Statement
- 46 FROM AROUND THE WORLD
A look back at projects of the *Hear the World* Foundation



OUR AIMS, OUR PRINCIPLES, OUR SUPPORTERS

Within the framework of the *Hear the World* initiative, in 2006 the hearing aid manufacturer Phonak established the non-profit *Hear the World* Foundation. Both the initiative and the foundation share a common vision:

A world where

- hearing is valued and protected,
- people are aware of their hearing,
- wearing a hearing aid is no longer taboo, and
- people with hearing loss are not discriminated against, but have equal opportunities.

The Foundation's aim

Against this background, the aim of the *Hear the World* Foundation is to assist in specific ways where people with hearing loss can be helped, or where studies or campaigns can be carried out to improve their quality of life. The Foundation's help takes the form of financial support, the provision of hearing aids, or the deployment of one of its own teams.

Sustainability

The guiding principle when selecting and implementing projects is that of sustainability. The *Hear the World* Foundation thus primarily supports projects in which longterm positive effects can be guaranteed. What does this mean in practice? It means, for example, that where hearing aids are provided, care is taken to ensure that the recipients are also able to receive regular care from hearing professionals and/or doctors. This is not something that can be taken for granted, especially in developing countries, so in many places people have to be specially trained for this purpose. A consistent supply of batteries must also be assured. In the specific case of children, associated measures such as speech therapy are also essential. These are just a few examples of follow-up measures that have to be considered alongside the initial aid.

Celebrity ambassadors who attract attention

Plácido Domingo, Sting, Take That, Bobby McFerrin, Lenny Kravitz, Annie Lennox, Ben Kingsley, Jude Law, Tilda Swinton, Julianne Moore and Patrick Nuo are just a few of the over 50 celebrities who support *Hear the World* on a voluntary basis as ambassadors. All of them have had their pictures taken by rock legend and photographer Bryan Adams in the pose synonymous with conscious hearing – with a hand behind the ear. This unrivaled support helps draw attention to the issue of hearing and raise awareness among the general public.

You too can help us to help people!

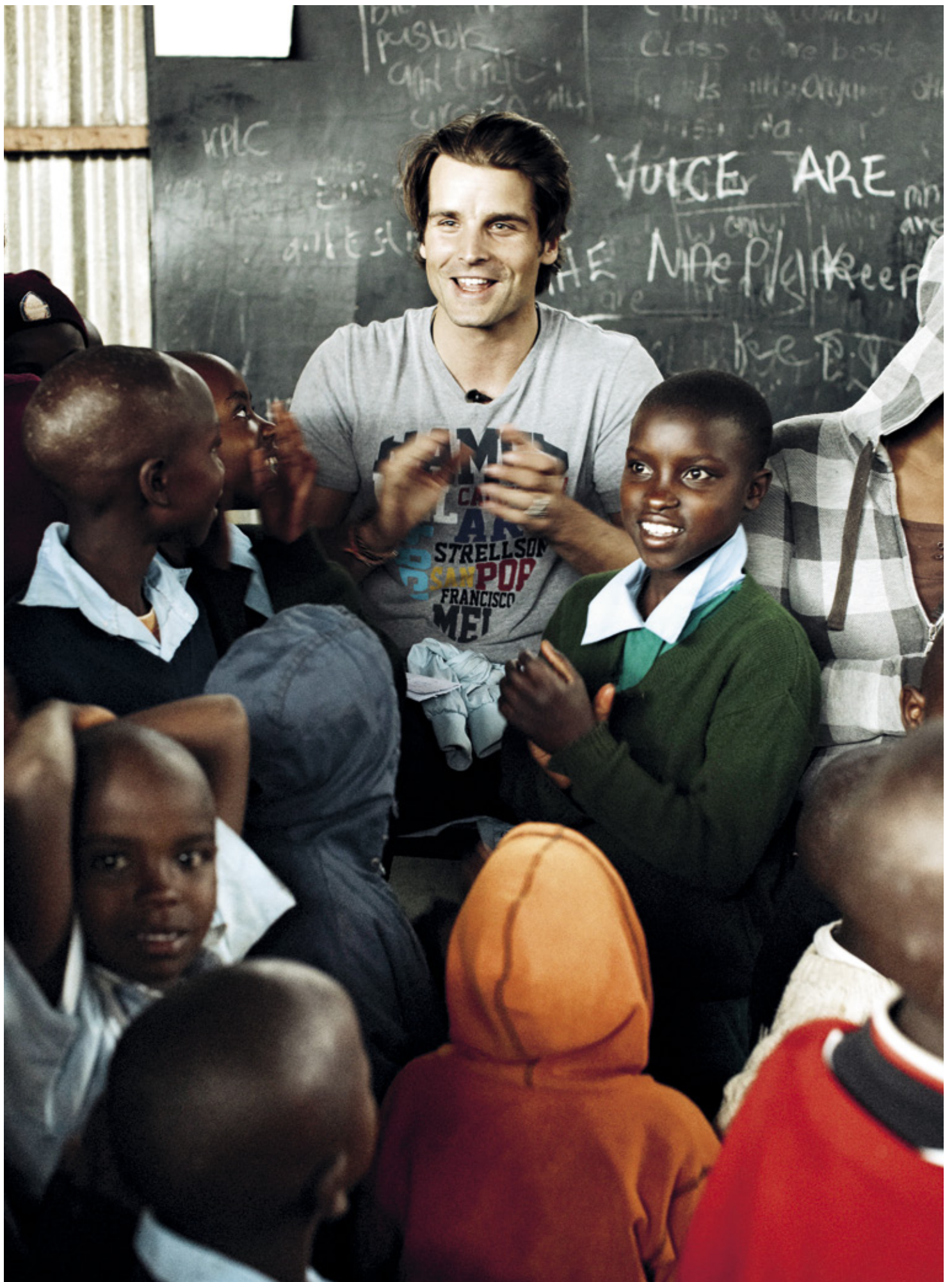
The staff at the *Hear the World* Foundation finds on an everyday basis that they can support only a fraction of the people who actually need help. You, dear reader, can help people to hear again. You can make it possible for children with hearing loss to have a school education. Please help us to help them!

The *Hear the World* Foundation's well-defined purpose and transparent procedures ensure that all help given by donors will benefit those who need it.

Even the smallest donation is welcome and will make a difference. The *Hear the World* Foundation gratefully thanks all of its benefactors.

Bank details for donations:

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CHILDREN WITH ENERGY AND ZEST FOR LIFE, IN SPITE OF ALL THEIR TROUBLES

Every day in developing countries, 2000 children are born with impaired hearing. They do not have the opportunity of having this detected in time, nor any prospects of qualified medical treatment. Without hearing assistance, these children remain isolated all their lives.

Back in 2008, the *Hear the World* Foundation, in close cooperation with Cargo Human Care, set up a hearing center in Kenya's capital, Nairobi. There, the German ENT specialist Dr. Michaela Fuchs offers consultations and conducts hearing tests, free of charge. The *Hear the World* Foundation donates hearing aids, which, for example, are fitted for children from the Mathare Valley, Nairobi's second biggest slum. In May 2011, Patrick Nuo, as new *Hear the World* ambassador, visited Nairobi. The Swiss Singer/Songwriter wanted to find out for himself about the project of which he is a patron.

"For me, the journey to Nairobi has made one of my greatest dreams come true", says a pleased Patrick Nuo. Together with Dr. Fuchs, he carried out checks and hearing tests in the medical center: "Patrick assisted me with complete commitment and without any anxieties about physical contact." Patrick explained that he had long been interested in the subject of charity but had not yet found a topic with which he felt a personal connection. Then he appeared at a project run by *Hear the World*, in which bands play live and unplugged in a sound-proofed glass box, from which not a sound reaches the spectators outside it. "For me, hearing is really the heart of creativity and enjoyment. I just cannot imagine a life without being able to hear." Specifically as a musician, Nuo therefore feels a responsibility to help the children in Kenya.

Hearing loss in children in developing countries is often called a silent epidemic. The term 'epidemic' describes the extent and widespread distribution of the problem and hearing loss is thought of as silent because it remains unnoticed for a long time, and is often not detected at simple routine check-ups. Also, as a rule, hearing impairment does not pose a threat to the lives of the people affected, so in countries whose inhabitants have to struggle with problems of simple existence such as

"For me, hearing is like my second heart, and I can only recommend that everyone treats it with care."

Patrick Nuo, Singer/Songwriter

hunger, treatment for hearing problems is not given a very high priority. Hearing impairment is also invisible, and those affected often have their intelligence doubted by those around them if they cannot express themselves verbally. But over the long term, hearing loss has huge consequences. As can be seen in Kenya too, the children frequently do not learn to speak or read and write, and thus pass their lives in loneliness and isolation. One good reason, therefore, for Patrick Nuo to fly to Nairobi for the *Hear the World* Foundation!

In order to ensure lasting care for Kenyan children, the *Hear the World* Foundation has further extended its commitment in Kenya's capital year on year. In addition to supporting the medical center, providing hearing aids and paying an audiologist on the ground, it also supports the Jabali Kindergarten and the Joymereen School for the Deaf in Nairobi. In both these institutions, individual attention is given to children with impaired hearing; the teachers patiently practice the correct pronunciation of words with them, using picture books. "I admire how strong these children are: despite extreme poverty and impaired hearing, they radiate so much energy and zest for life", enthuses Patrick Nuo about the pupils.

Patrick Nuo, ambassador for Hear the World

Hear the World: “Patrick, in May 2011 you visited a project of the *Hear the World* Foundation in Nairobi. What did you take away from this visit?”

Patrick Nuo: “Not being able to hear properly in a poor country like Kenya is a catastrophe for the children. They do not get any schooling, do not learn to speak, and are socially excluded – so they have no chance of a normal life.”

Hear the World: “Amongst other places, you visited the Joymerreen School for the Deaf. What are your impressions of it?”

Patrick Nuo: “It really is a great school. The children are really well looked after there, the teachers are very professional, and the atmosphere is great. What it lacks is professional help for their hearing aids. I am very happy that with *Hear the World*, we can offer help so that the children get support there.”

Hear the World: “You also visited a slum area: that must have made a big impression.”

Patrick Nuo: “We drove to the Mathare Valley, the second biggest slum in the city. Here too, patients – especially children – are supported by *Hear the World*. Being there on the ground feels quite different to seeing it on the TV. It really is a big lesson in humility.”

Hear the World: “Which experience made the greatest impression on you?”

Patrick Nuo: “The children at the Mothers Mercy orphanage taught me a song in their own language. That was a very special moment for me, and I was incredibly pleased to be able to sing along with them.”

Often it is the little things that make life much easier!

Just how useful help can be is demonstrated by the example of the Joymerreen school for children with hearing loss. In discussions with the school principal, Patrick and the *Hear the World* team found that when the children dance and play, the floor of the classroom squeaks in a way that is very unpleasant for hearing instrument users. Despite wearing their hearing instruments, the pupils are then barely able to understand the teacher. The consequence: the *Hear the World* Foundation is undertaking to provide funding for the floor to be renovated, and for the rooms to be equipped with soundproofing material. Sometimes it is the little things that can achieve a great effect. In addition to these costs and the audiological equipment, above all further training for the teachers and also the parents of the affected children is funded. Dr. Michaela Fuchs was delighted about the visit from Switzerland: “It contributes towards making the public aware of our work, and hopefully we can then win additional financial support.”

Did you know?

- On average, each Kenyan woman gives birth to 5 children; infant mortality stands at 77 per 1000 births.
- In all, there are more than 40 different ethnic groups living in Kenya, speaking more than 50 different languages.
- On average, a teacher teaches more than 100 pupils. Moreover, the number of teachers is declining steadily, and good quality education is difficult to access – unless the parents have enough money for one of the private schools.
- On average, there are just 14 hospital beds and one doctor to every 10,000 inhabitants.
- Less than 25 percent of the population has health insurance.



PIONEERING WORK IN ONE OF THE POOREST COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD



“In Malawi it used to take up to six months before a child received his ear molds.”

Peter Bartlett

In August 2010 the Australian Bartlett family moved, with their three children, to Malawi in southern Africa. Peter and Rebecca Bartlett, both audiologists, have set aside two to four years in order to establish the country’s first audiological establishment, in the capital, Lilongwe.

In the African Bible College, a small but reputable clinic, the Bartletts who work for the Australian organization EARS have found premises in which they can offer their services in audiological care. Within the space of a year, genuine pioneering work has been carried out here: the Bartletts have not only built up the first permanent institution for patients with hearing loss, in which hearing tests are carried out and accurate diagnoses are given every day – there is also a small laboratory in which the ear molds for hearing aids can be made on site. “In Malawi, it used to take up to six months before a child, for example, received his ear molds, by which time of course they no longer fitted properly”, says Bartlett of the initial situation. “Now we are in a position to produce them within two hours!” But the couple also travels all over the country in order to visit all five of Malawi’s schools for children with hearing loss, to examine children there and to teach teachers about audiometry and the fitting of hearing aids. “The teachers respond to this training with great enthusiasm.

Until now, they have lacked the experience and self-confidence to check their pupils’ hearing themselves”, explains Bartlett. It is tiring work, but both of them see it as a great source of personal enrichment: “We are incredibly impressed by what we can do in this country for people with hearing loss: there is huge potential here!”

Compared with children in countries of the so-called First World, girls and boys in Malawi still struggle with quite different difficulties. Due to their limited hearing, they are accused of lacking intelligence, being mentally retarded, being disobedient or, in the worst cases, cursed – and the parents turn away from them. But in many cases, hearing loss is even reversible: often all that is needed is for the right medication to be taken in order to have a positive influence on the consequences of malaria treatments, meningitis or chronic inflammation of the middle ear, for example. The *Hear the World* Foundation has now awarded the Richard Seewald Award to the organization EARS, which is also working successfully for the second year together with audiologist Donna Carkeet in the Dominican Republic (see the project report on p. 36). With the financial support from *Hear the World*, it is finally possible to acquire the country’s first and only sound-proofed cabin for more accurate hearing tests, and with new equipment, children under the age of four can also then be tested accurately.

The Richard Seewald Award is named after Professor Richard Seewald, renowned for his decades of tireless commitment in the field of pediatric audiology. He carried out comprehensive pioneering work in the development of the internationally recognized fitting method for hearing aids for children, the Desired Sensation Level (DSL). He is also a co-founder of the National Centre for Audiology in London, Ontario, Canada, and a member of the advisory board of the *Hear the World* Foundation.

The Richard Seewald Award carries a prize of 20,000 US dollars. The annual award is presented to an established institution, dedicated to the detection and treatment of hearing impairment in children and babies, in order to promote measures for improvement there, for example in the areas of diagnosis and the fitting of hearing aids.

The recipients of the award must fulfill the following criteria:

- Extremely professional and committed management of the institution
- Offering their services to all children, regardless of their economic background
- Offering students the opportunity to acquire practical experience

Did you know?

- With an average of 4.3 children per woman, Malawi is one of the countries of Africa with a traditionally high birth rate (the highest rate in the world is held by Niger, with 7.68 children per woman), and less than 40 percent of women have access to suitable contraception.
- Malawi has an illiteracy rate of around 50 percent, and the majority of the population lives on less than one US dollar a day.
- Just under 12 percent of its inhabitants is infected with HIV. Since these are usually young people of working age, the infection rate also has consequences for the country's economy.
- In terms of statistics, there is one doctor for every 51,000 inhabitants in Malawi.

Teachers receive training in audiology

Hara Macleod, head of a school for children with hearing loss in the Malawian town of Embangweni, thanks Peter Bartlett in a letter for the audiology training they received:

“Greetings from Embangweni. Apologies for not replying until now, but our network had no reception for days, and it has only just started working well again.

Peter, I would like to express my great thanks for the most important training that we have ever had in our school. It was simply perfect, because every year at registration we have to check the hearing of our new pupils, but also their language skills and their education.

When your wife Rebecca was with us in July, she was a great help to us in this. She prescribed medication to a large number of patients with earache or hearing problems, and told them that they should wait six weeks to see if any improvement occurs. These patients have now returned and for most of them, things have improved.

Best wishes, Hara Macleod”

A COUNTRY ON THE WAY UP – BUT NOT FOR EVERYONE!

Thirty years after the Vietnam War, the consequences can still be felt. In many families, a disproportionately large number of children are born with disabilities. 5.3 million Vietnamese people live with a disability, and in a quarter of these cases the war is the reason for it.

With the rise of the Vietnamese economy, for the first time the government began to create a statutory basis for integration, albeit with a very limited budget. The Ha Giang Welfare Centre for Handicapped Children, the country's only institution specializing in the needs of children with disabilities, is financed in part by the *Hear the World* Foundation, in order to provide support for children with hearing loss too. Children can stay in the home belonging to the Ha Giang Centre for a maximum of two years. During this time they receive a medical diagnosis, are provided with a hearing aid, and in addition

In the last 10 years, development of the Vietnamese economy has been among the fastest in the world.



to the normal school lessons they are given individual support lessons and speech therapy. The aim is to strengthen the children's self-confidence during this time, to enable them to then attend mainstream school and to keep pace with classmates.

To care for a total of around 300 children, the project run by the Swiss charitable institution Caritas Schweiz, trains employees and teachers at the Ha Giang Centre and educates them in audiology, speech therapy and the function and maintenance of hearing aids. In order to spread knowledge and results more widely, 'core teachers' are established, who can then in turn run training courses themselves and pass on their knowledge. An additional central element in supporting the children is their parents, for it is only in this way that the girls and boys can continue to develop well in the future too, after their stay at the Ha Giang Centre has come to an end. Most of the families from which the children come are burdened by serious financial problems. They often lack the education that is needed to support their youngsters in this difficult situation, and to continue to improve the skills they have learned once they are back home. Many of them have to overcome their doubt that with adequate support, their children will develop positively despite all their handicaps, and learn to cope with their lives independently later on – there are hardly any examples, so they simply cannot imagine it!

In training courses, the teachers try to convince parents of the necessity of hearing aids, to explain how to use them, and to provide help for speech exercises that they should practice at home with the children. For better understanding, easily comprehensible manuals are provided, and tips are given on which methods lead to the desired success. Around 200 parents benefit directly from this service.

The aim is to use regular meetings to improve the management of the project and to monitor progress continuously.

PERSONAL REPORT

On the way towards independence

Nguyen Thi Huong has been affected by hearing loss since birth. She comes from a poor peasant family in the mountains of Vietnam. Before Huong came to the Ha Giang Centre in 2008 at the age of 8, she could neither hear nor read and write. But there, the bright young Vietnamese girl received a hearing aid and intensive individual tuition. In spite of her parents' best endeavors, Huong repeatedly regressed in the school vacations. It was not until a conversation between the teacher and her parents that things were turned around. Now Huong uses her hearing aids regularly at home, she can carry on simple conversations and attends the local mainstream school in the same class as her younger brother.

Did you know?

- With 88.1 million inhabitants over 331,000 km², in terms of size and population density Vietnam corresponds roughly to Germany.

“I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE BACK WHAT I RECEIVED MYSELF”

Three years ago, Paige Stringer, a refreshingly cheerful career woman from Seattle, travelled through South-East Asia. In the two weeks she spent in South Vietnam, she saw with her own eyes what incredible difficulties children with hearing loss have to contend with.

Having been born with hearing loss herself, this young woman knows what she is talking about. “I was given a hearing aid at the age of 11 months, received early support, and was thus able to attend a normal kindergarten, and later on a mainstream school.” Paige subsequently went on to study, and has made a career as Marketing Director in various large companies. “Through this, you can see what can be achieved with corresponding support. I would like to make a contribution towards more people, and above all children having this opportunity to exploit their full personal potential.” No sooner said than done! Shortly after her trip, the American established the “Global Foundation for Children with Hearing Loss”, and in the summer of 2010 she established the “Vietnam Deaf Education Program”, which has been supported by the *Hear the World* Foundation since the spring of 2011.

The Vietnamese Ministry of Education envisages integrating children with hearing loss into mainstream schools wherever possible. The problem here is that in the whole country, there are hardly any teachers who know how to teach children who are hard of hearing in a mainstream class. This is where Paige Stringer comes in. She brings experts from the United States – a team of audiologists, doctors, speech therapists and teachers and organizes four-week “Teacher Training Programs” at the Thuan An Center. In three groups, 90 teachers from 35 schools in Vietnam are given further training. At the beginning, everyone was surprised by the great success of these workshops. “To start with, the Vietnamese participants were shy and reticent, but a few days later they were waiting at the door half an hour before class started, working with great motivation, and avidly used every minute to find out about early support, speech therapy and medical know-how.”

The foundations of language development are laid in a child's brain in the first six years of life.

In the “Parent Programs” and the “Family Consultations” – in parallel with the further training provided for teachers – there is also a team on hand to educate the parents of children with hearing loss about how they can best help their child. “Over 90 percent of these children have hearing parents”, explains Paige. “They try their best, but often they do not know how they can help.” By boat, bus or motorcycle, these parents come from remote regions and have one question above all others: “My child now has a hearing aid just like you, so why isn’t he talking yet?” The parents are often not aware that language acquisition is a process that moves on only in stages. The American team of experts gives these parents concrete tips on how they can practice words with their children, who are so very close to their hearts, using simple pronunciation exercises and sounds.

In addition, she travels, wherever necessary, to equip children with hearing aids. With the help of the *Hear the World* Foundation, in February 2012, the “Mobile Mission Series” will take place once again. Here, the teams of experts from abroad go directly into the preschools in which children with hearing loss are taught, and thus they can offer coaching for the teachers directly in the classroom. In addition, teaching materials are distributed, suggestions are made for new teaching methods, and any problems that arise can be sorted out on the ground.

Over 200 teachers and parents were trained and supported in the foundation’s first year alone. Over 1000 Vietnamese children with hearing loss already benefit from this.

Did you know?

- More than 30 years after the end of the war, the country is still struggling with the consequences. Hundreds of thousands of people are suffering with deformities, genetic damage or cancer, caused by the massive use of environmental toxins such as Agent Orange.
- Only two thirds of all Vietnamese children attend primary school. In the rural regions parents are often unable to pay school fees and to pay for books. Schooling is not compulsory.
- Over 180,000 children in Vietnam are affected by hearing loss.
- There are around 15 hospital beds for every 10,000 inhabitants in Vietnam.



Five-year-old Le Doan Nguyen Khang finally receives the long-awaited hearing aid.

Overnight, a whole new life

One afternoon, four-year-old Le Doan Nguyen Khang arrived with his parents at the Thuan An Center. It soon became clear that the boy could not hear well.

He communicated mainly with gestures, used his or his mother’s hands to point to things that he would like, and did not know the names of even simple and familiar objects. The hospital diagnosed “mid-range hearing loss”, and the doctor recommended that the parents obtain a hearing aid as quickly as possible so that little Khang can finally learn to speak.

The parents, both peasants, were in despair. They spent a whole year searching for a hearing aid for their son. They did their best, they talked to their child more loudly, let him read their lips, but the small boy did not make progress in his language development. His Vietnamese teacher therefore waited for Paige Stringer’s next visit to Vietnam, and successfully petitioned her for a hearing aid for the now 5-year-old. Almost overnight, the boy’s life was changed, within a short space of time; he learned to speak, with the teacher who has been specially trained in the project.

Five months later, he hardly gesticulates any more, but is already speaking clearly and briskly— almost like a child with normal hearing. “Khang got used to the device very quickly”, explains his delighted mother. “He can hear with it, so he loves it!”



WHEN LIFE PLACES TOO MANY OBSTACLES IN PEOPLE'S PATH...

In a place where children search through refuse dumps for re-usable waste instead of going to school, where every day countless people fall prey to life-threatening infections because they are under-nourished and live in dirty slums – there lurks a disease we thought we had overcome long ago: leprosy.

In 1995 the WHO, together with other aid organizations, resolved to establish worldwide distribution of medicines for leprosy patients free of charge. As a result the number of leprosy infections has gone down markedly. But anyone who thinks that this dreadful disease has been vanquished is wide off the mark. Officially, there are still around a million people with the disease, and the hidden figure is much higher. The problem is that there is hardly any other disease that stigmatizes patients so much as leprosy. Many people notice the first symptoms, keep quiet about them, and do not even dare to go to the doctor, particularly since the disease generally affects those men, women and children who in any case are amongst the poorest of the poor and have no access at all to medical care.

Hearing loss is but one of the symptoms of this disease. To start with, patients suffer the well-known skin lesions, but later on *Mycobacterium leprae*, the bacterial agent responsible for leprosy, leads to neurological deficits and, amongst other things, attacks the cochlear nerve in the auditory system leading to hearing damage and balance disorders. The disease can, in principle, be brought under control with early diagnosis and treatment. Effective treatment of leprosy involves a combination of three drugs. Due to the stigma attached to the disease, many avoid going to the doctor and conceal their symptoms as long as possible – by which time it is often too late for the patients, who are in any case under-nourished and weakened by infections. Limbs are then beyond saving. But how is a person without arms, for example, ever able to work again? Severely disabled, the victims are often cast out by their families and die in poverty and loneliness, even though help could be available – a tragic misfortune that can only be reduced with a great deal of educational work!

The lack of state medical provision and poorly paid doctors encourage corruption in the health system.

It is precisely the marginal groups of society that form the focus of All Ears Cambodia (AEC), an organization based in Phnom Penh that has been committed for many years to providing audiological care in the country. For two years now, the *Hear the World* Foundation has been supporting the 8-strong group around the Englishman Glyn Vaughan. This group, the country's only organization in this health sector, has set itself the aim of making a decisive improvement in the medical care of 14 million Cambodians. Together with AEC, the *Hear the World* Foundation wishes to improve knowledge about the subject of hearing amongst the population, in order to reduce the number of cases of avoidable hearing loss.

“Chronic infection of the middle ear in particular is a clear consequence of poverty”, says Glyn Vaughan. The causes are varied. Often it starts with the fact that many children cannot be breastfed, their immune system is under attack in any case through malnutrition and they also have to live in close proximity to one another in



Leakhena – one girl and her hard struggle for life

No-one knows how old Leakhena really is. Forest workers found the baby when they were felling trees: she was lying in the undergrowth, covered in twigs – no doubt left there by over-stretched parents. Her emaciated body was covered in insects, and she was close to dying of starvation. The workers brought Leakhena to the orphanage in Phnom Penh. There, she received initial medical attention and was then brought to the clinic run by All Ears Cambodia.

It took a great deal of time to remove dirt and ants from her auditory canals so that she could be examined. The diagnosis was that Leakhena is not only blind in one eye, but with the other eye she has only limited vision. In addition, she has hearing loss of the inner ear on both sides. In the clinic, the child had hearing aids fitted, and was taken back to the orphanage. She now attends the local school for children with hearing loss and is learning sign language. Although Leakhena is almost completely deaf and her vision is very limited, she shows great intelligence and a strong character.

Leakhena does not let things get her down. When you look at her today, you see a girl with an incredible sense of humor, who is always making those around her laugh. A wonderful example to show how a strong human spirit can win through against all odds, and can overcome so many hurdles!

conditions of poor hygiene, so that infectious diseases are passed on quickly. These infections are seldom treated and there is a great danger that they are aggravated, so complications ensue. The list of such infectious diseases is a long one, ranging from leprosy, malaria, dengue fever and tuberculosis to meningitis, influenza and rubella.

“If inflammations of the auditory system are treated at all, generally they are treated wrongly”, explains Glyn. “Some people, thinking they are doing good, place the innards of dead animals on the ears, others pour gasoline into the inflamed ear. This causes damage which in 50 percent of cases would have been avoidable. We want to do something about that!”. But educational work is not so easy in a country where the target group generally cannot read and write. All Ears Cambodia is attempting to alert the public to the subject of ear diseases, and how to protect hearing, with posters and films in the waiting rooms of clinics, and training courses for local doctors.

Regardless of whether hearing loss is the result of leprosy, inflammations/infections, or is down to genetic causes, the *Hear the World* Foundation is also supporting the organization AEC in establishing an audiology service in Cambodia. Through audiometric examinations and exact fitting of good hearing aids, the aim is to enable those affected to have a little normality and the chance of a more autonomous life.

Did you know?

- According to estimates by UNICEF, there are around 670,000 orphans in Cambodia.
- In the 1970s, Cambodia was still regarded as “the Switzerland of Asia” – one of the countries in the south-east Asian region with the highest standards of living. Since the civil war, it has been one of the poorest regions in the world.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND CHILD POVERTY – A COUNTRY OF OPPOSITES

Almost 90 years ago, School No. 203, for children with hearing loss, was established in Georgia's capital, Tbilisi. Some of its roughly 200 students, aged between 6 and 20 years, usually from impoverished families, live in the affiliated boarding school.

Even if the family enjoys a very high status in Georgia, there are still many desperate, penniless parents who see no alternative but to give their children away because of their handicap. Even in the vacations, these children have to stay in school because they have no-one who could take them in for a visit, reports the principal. For two years, the *Hear the World* Foundation has been supporting the project that is led by the Swiss Jürg Krebsler and his Georgian wife Ketevan. With the aid of the foundation, more and more children have been supplied with hearing aids, including, most recently, the 150 children of preschool age from the affiliated kindergarten.

"The results are overwhelming", reports Krebsler of his last trip in May 2011, made together with members of the Schaffhausen Rotary Club. "It exceeded my greatest expectations, how quickly the little ones learned to talk, even though they had been given their hearing aids just a few months before". Until recently, lessons in the classrooms were possible only with a large number of aids. So, for example, in the rooms as well as in the dining hall and in the corridors, red lamps were installed to signal the beginning and end of lessons. Now, these are hardly needed. The students can now hear much more of the lesson, communicate with one another, and little by little they are finding their way out of isolation, into 'hearing' society. "After just a few months, children who previously could not hear and could hardly speak are able to answer the teacher's questions with clearly comprehensible speech, without hesitating or faltering", says the visibly moved project leader.

Lack of family support is the number one reason why children with hearing loss often do not manage to become integrated into society.

The chances of success are greatest in children aged 4-5 years, reports Dr. Mikheil Tushishvili, the audiologist who is providing treatment. That is why it is so important to treat hearing loss as early as possible. For this reason, the *Hear the World* Foundation has once again provided additional devices. The highly motivated teaching staff at the school and the kindergarten, who work for a monthly salary of less than 70 Euros, make an essential contribution to the good development of the children. In order to entertain the overseas visitors, and to demonstrate their newly-won hearing, a group of children performed Caucasian folk dances. "A number of visitors could hardly believe it, and were so moved that they had tears in their eyes when they saw the zest for life in the children's beaming faces", reports Jürg Krebsler.



Oliko Chikvaidze, principal of the kindergarten for School No. 203 in Tbilisi, which a few months ago received hearing aids from *Hear the World* for the kindergarten children.



Eight-year-old Sopho Pizkhelauri at the dance performance.

Did you know?

- Education is highly valued in Georgia. With 30 students per 1000 inhabitants, this small country – around one and a half times the size of Switzerland – has more graduates than, for example, Switzerland or Germany (for which the figure is 22 in each case).
- Just under 20 percent of Georgians have no health insurance.
- Child poverty in the southern Caucasus has risen from 19 to 23 percent in the last 5 years.

INTERVIEW

Oliko Chikvaidze, principal of the kindergarten of School No. 203

Hear the World: “What effects do the hearing aids have on the children who have now been supplied with them?”

Chikvaidze: “99% of our children have some residual hearing. With the hearing aid, they can hear language and non-linguistic sounds better. The younger they are, the better their progress.”

Hear the World: “How do you practice with the children?”

Chikvaidze: “Besides language, non-linguistic sounds are very important in order to understand the world around us. We combine hearing and seeing very heavily. For example, we show pictures of water when they hear the sounds of water.”

Hear the World: “Has the children’s everyday life changed?”

Chikvaidze: “Very much so. Before, they only had

contact with their peers from the kindergarten. Now they are able to play with other children in the street and in the neighborhood. That is enormously enriching; they are on the way to achieving an almost normal life.”

Hear the World: “How do the devices stand up to everyday life?”

Chikvaidze: “The new devices are lightweight, handy and easy to use, making them perfect for children. They need them to live, like water and air!”

Hear the World: “Can you describe to us the progress that has been made, taking the example of one child?”

Chikvaidze: “There is, for example, Sopho Pizkhelauri, not quite 6 years old from the Tbilisi area. She has always been a lively, pretty and affectionate child. Her parents are poor and not in a position to support her. Since she has had a hearing aid, she has shown a quite extraordinary talent for dance and a great sense of rhythm and has already taken part in shows here. Her life is now quite different from what it was a year ago.”

SCHOOL IS NOT JUST ABOUT LEARNING – LEISURE TIME ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

For 10 German hearing impaired students, five sunny days on the Isle of Wight in Britain, in June 2011, were the high point of their year. The *Hear the World* Foundation, together with the Saturday Club for Deaf Children, had invited the students, aged from 11 to 17, for a short holiday.

Building sand sculptures on the beach, picnics in the meadow, a paper chase through the castle gardens – but above all strengthening friendships made in the previous year when the British students visited Heidelberg. Friendships were made right from the first day, the two groups got on famously and many of them had corresponded with each other since the British students had visited the year before. After all, communication between the students is the most important thing. An interesting mix of spoken English and German and – when that was not adequate – a mixture of English and German sign language kept all the participants in a good mood. “Can we come again next year, and then stay for a whole week?” asked one student from the German group.

The Center for Hearing and Speech in Neckargmünd, whose students took part in the trip to Great Britain, is an advice center near Heidelberg which provides services for children who require specialized support, in particular they focus on children with hearing loss. In addition to playgroups, there is a school kindergarten and also a primary school which pupils can choose to complete in either 4 or 5 years. There is a vocational secondary school with the offer of a bridging year and a special commercial school, all structured to offer special provision for students with hearing loss. For children who live far away, there is also a boarding school. Modern technology helps the students to follow the lessons as well as possible. All classrooms are equipped with special hearing and speech systems, interactive whiteboards support media education and help to visualize the lesson material accordingly – a factor that is tremendously important for students with hearing loss. Trips such as the one to the Isle of Wight give children with hearing loss an opportunity to come into contact with young people of the same age from another language background.

*“I think I have
made friends
for life here.”*

Rebecca, 14 years old



Did you know?

- In Germany, around 16 million people are affected by hearing loss.
- In Germany, 99.7 percent of the population has health insurance.

FACING THE FUTURE WITH SELF-CONFIDENCE AND OPTIMISM

In recent years, the trend within the education system in Great Britain is towards integrating pupils with hearing loss into mainstream schools. The intention is to further the social contact between children regardless of their hearing ability.

This trend, however, is not suitable for everyone and can leave them feeling very lonely. This is because, for those affected, 'poor hearing' often brings with it the risk of social isolation. The quotation from the German philosopher Immanuel Kant reflects this nicely – "Blindness separates us from things, but deafness separates us from people." In order to protect children from this, in 1976 the 'Saturday Club for Deaf Children' was established on the Isle of Wight in Great Britain. "Our aim is to promote, in every respect, the education but also personal development of children with hearing loss, regardless of their origins, religion, beliefs, clinical picture, gender or family background", says Helen Foster, chair of the club.

Twice a month, the 36 members meet for excursions, sports or picnics, go rambling or sailing, act or do cookery courses. From time to time, there are also skiing trips or camping weekends. All this is undertaken with a very clear goal: to improve communication skills, to gain self-confidence and to work on establishing independence. "We would like the children to face challenges with a positive approach, and to master set tasks with self-confidence", says Helen Foster. A support network for the families has also been set up.

The Hear the World Foundation also helps the Saturday Club to support intercultural exchange, as shown by the example of the visit by a group of 10 German students from the Neckargmünd Center for Hearing and Speech (see also the project report on p. 24). Many of them had never been abroad, so it is important for them to experience that, amongst people with hearing loss, there is a kind of 'world culture'. The visit by the German group to the island lasted for five days, during which time they lived, worked and played together. A year before, 10 children from the Saturday Club had visited Heidelberg. Friendships were quickly forged on boat trips, an outing to the castle and a barbecue evening – and language was no barrier.

PERSONAL REPORT

Club member Beth, aged 13, tells us why the Saturday Club is so important for her:

"At my school, I am the only person with hearing loss. That is why for me it is great to meet others at the club who have the same experience. Since I have been going there regularly, and have found lots of good friends there, my self-confidence has improved enormously. For example, we swap information about our hearing aids and talk about all sorts of things that are important for people with a hearing loss in everyday life. We also do lots of interesting and fun things, so sometimes my hearing friends are a little envious!"

It was really nice when a group from Neckargmünd visited us this year. I really hope that I can go to Germany too next year, because we made great friends. I think I shall now choose German as a foreign language and then I will be able to say a few sentences in their language too!"

NO SPECIAL STATUS – ONE CHILD AMONGST PEERS

“She is no longer ‘Maia, the deaf girl’: now she is just ‘Maia’! Since my daughter has been a pupil at the Mary Hare School, for the first time in her life she is not the exception, but the norm”, explains Erica Pavord at the school’s open day.

The Mary Hare School is a beautiful old building surrounded by idyllic landscape with green fields in Newbury, Berkshire, 80 miles west of London. The boarding school educates and houses 240 children with hearing loss. The Mary Hare School has become the pre-eminent school in Great Britain for children with impaired hearing; some of them even come from distant countries. The results achieved by the Mary Hare School are impressive. Pupils have often previously attended a mainstream school: their language acquisition is delayed, and intensive support is not possible there. After a few years at Mary Hare, most of the pupils manage the leap onto an academic path, and go on to university after leaving school.

What makes the Mary Hare School different? “We believe that all children with hearing loss should receive the education and support that enables them to achieve their full personal potential”, says Tony Shaw, Head of the Mary Hare School. Many children at mainstream schools suffer from being stared at; they try to hide their hearing aids under their hair, as they are often embarrassed, and many lose their joy and enthusiasm for school and are unhappy. The children blossom when they are in Newbury – finally being one amongst many lifts a great burden from their shoulders!

But it is not just the sense of equality that characterizes the school. An important focus is the individual and efficient support for the children. The technical equipment used for the lessons is of high quality. Since great value is placed on the correct learning of spoken language at Mary Hare – transition in to mainstream schools and universities with only sign language is very difficult – since 1992 they have had the ‘Mary Hare Group Hearing Aid’: a hearing aid system for the classroom which enables teachers to talk to the whole class, as well as to communicate with individual pupils directly via their hearing aids. The system automatically regulates the volume individually for each child, who answers via his own microphone.

*16 percent of
people in Great
Britain are affected
by hearing loss.*

The Hear the World Foundation is equipping the school with 285 new ‘interface boxes’. These enable the pupils to wear their own hearing aids instead of headphones, so their hearing aids can be connected directly to the ‘Group Hearing Aid’. Dr. Ivan Trucker, chairman of the Mary Hare Foundation, explains: “This way, the pupils have a much better environment in which to learn, and they can develop their speech and reading skills much faster.” For Maia’s mother, the most wonderful gift remains the time when her then small daughter came home at the weekend after spending the first three weeks boarding at Mary Hare, and said: “I love my new life! Now I have two homes, one at school and one back home.”



INTERVIEW

Student representatives Arran Thomas and Natasha Sullivan Monks, both 17 years

Hear the World: "How did you hear about the school?"

Arran: "A foundation in Nottingham told us about it."

Natasha: "A friend of mine from primary school came here and he recommended Mary Hare to me."

Hear the World: "What is the difference from mainstream schools?"

Natasha: "The class sizes are much smaller and I can follow the lessons much better, as we are all connected through headphones."

Arran: "Yes, the 'Group Hearing Aid' makes everything much easier. I have also made more friends here than I could ever have imagined possible."

Hear the World: "What were the main difficulties you had when you previously attended a mainstream school?"

Arran: "My social life was very difficult. I felt excluded and so then I was not able to concentrate well on learning."

Hear the World: "In what way do you get support at the Mary Hare School?"

Natasha: "For me, it is important that through the technical link I can hear what the other students are saying in the class."

Arran: "Before, I could only hear the teacher – now I can hear everybody."

Hear the World: "What is special about everyday life here?"

Natasha: "There is always something to do, and everyone is included, no-one is left out."

Arran: "It really is a friendly, community atmosphere."

Hear the World: "Is there anything about your personal experience that you would like to pass on?"

Natasha: "Before I came here, I was very insecure and did not have much fun. But now I feel great, in a way I could never have imagined."

Arran: "Before coming to this school, my hearing loss determined my whole life. Since I have been here, it has been irrelevant."

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

So many children around the world have few opportunities to hear well. Some are born with hearing loss while others suffer diseases that damage their hearing. So it is all the more important to protect those who are born with healthy hearing and are now at risk of causing lasting damage to this wonderful gift, or of losing it altogether, as a result of noise.

Noise is the most rapidly rising factor in hearing loss, says the Hearing Foundation of Canada. More than 3.3 million Canadians of all age groups are affected by hearing loss. For this reason, Canada's largest organization for people with hearing loss has developed the 'Sound Sense' program, a program in which selected elementary school students in Canada are educated about protecting their hearing. A good and important idea, which the *Hear the World* Foundation thinks should be supported and is helping with the funding to ensure that the program can run for a year in 450 schools throughout Canada! Back in 2009, the *Hear the World* Foundation had already supported the pilot project 'iHearYa!', which was aimed at preventing noise-induced hearing loss, in some schools in Canada.

The program, which lasts around an hour, teaches the children, in either English or French, how their hearing works, shows them what effect loud noise can have and how they can protect their precious ability to hear by simple means. The information material the pupils can take home, then indirectly includes the parents in this important message. The training is facilitated by students and graduates of an audiology course. It offers valuable experience for people at the beginning of their audiology careers to gain practical experience through this program. 99 percent of teachers whose classes have taken part in this course report that their pupils now have extensive knowledge about their hearing, and are also noticeably more aware and careful about noise in their surroundings. They turn down the volume on their music and TV and on the street they avoid sources of noise.

Noise is the second most common cause of hearing loss.

Did you know?

- Just 15 minutes of exposure to very loud noise of 100 dB(A) or more, can be enough to cause permanent damage to hearing.
- Hearing loss costs the Canadian economy up to 18 billion dollars a year.
- Amongst American children and young adults, one in eight is affected by noise-induced hearing loss.



Gael Hannan, a member of the Hearing Foundation of Canada, helped to develop the 'Sound Sense' program for Canadian school students, and teaches 9- to 12-year olds across the country.

Gael Hannan, Manager of the "Sound Sense Program" of the Hearing Foundation of Canada.

Hear the World: "How long has this program been around, and what was the main reason for developing it?"

Gael Hannan: "We developed and introduced 'Sound Sense' in 2005. I myself have had a severe hearing loss since birth, and it breaks my heart to see some children and young people exposing themselves to high volumes of noise, putting themselves at risk of damaging their hearing. I also wanted to educate children about the value of good hearing and the relevance of good communication.

Studies have shown that with 'Sound Sense' we can really make a difference in the pupils' behaviour. So far, human hearing and how it works has not been included in the elementary school curriculum."

Hear the World: "At what age do pupils take part, and what criteria are used in choosing the schools?"

Gael Hannan: "Our target group is pupils between the ages of 9 and 12, and there are several reasons for this. At this age, many children are already exposed to activities with high noise volumes: loud music with digital audio players, video games or concerts. But they are also old enough to grasp the medical connections and take an active part in discussions.

We look for publicly-funded schools across the whole of Canada. Since the costs are not covered by school budgets, we need donations from companies and foundations such as *Hear the World* in order to be able to offer the program free of charge."

Hear the World: "What exactly happens at schools in this training program?"

Gael Hannan: "The children learn about how their hearing works, how hearing connects them to the world, and what a negative influence noise in their surroundings has. We give them simple tips about how they can protect their hearing, we give them ear plugs and also a leaflet to take home to their parents. In the course, we watch a child-friendly and lively DVD together, and subsequently, in a sound check, they can measure the volume of their own audio player or iPod."

Hear the World: "Are there any studies to assess the extent to which the children's behaviour changes after taking part in the program?"

Gael Hannan: "Studies carried out together with the University of British Columbia and St. Paul's Hospital have shown that there is increased use of ear plugs to protect hearing, and the pupils pay noticeably more attention to high noise levels in their surroundings."

Hear the World: "Is there any experience that made a strong impression on you personally in these courses?"

Gael Hannan: "In general, I am thrilled by the interest shown by all the children who take the course. But there was one experience I found very touching. At one training session in a school in northern Canada, a little boy sat very close to me. He joined in the discussion very enthusiastically. When the DVD was shown later on, the teacher told me that this boy was hard of hearing, but refused to wear his hearing aid, for fear of being teased. After the movie, I showed the whole class my own hearing aid, and told the children that I love wearing it because it allows me to hear all the wonderful sounds in the world. Even though I did not look at the boy directly, I am sure that our course made a difference to his life!"

LONELINESS IN THE SECOND LARGEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD

Vast and striking landscapes, endless unpopulated plains and beautiful, unspoiled nature – that is Canada. The country with the highest immigration rate in the world and in which 70 percent of the country is made up of nature reserves.

What people in densely populated Europe associate with a great sense of freedom, for Canadian children with hearing loss, the vast size of the country often means loneliness and isolation. It is difficult for these children with hearing loss to meet other children with the same challenges and they are usually the only pupils in the whole school wearing a hearing aid. So it is all the more important for these children that there is an organization such as Northern BC Children and Families Hearing Society, which is supported by the *Hear the World* Foundation. For 30 years, parents, educationalists and doctors have been working on a voluntary basis to create a space for children with hearing loss, where they can meet others like them and feel that they are understood and are in good hands.

“We want to give children who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as their families, strength and energy. We want to make them strong, connect them to one another, and give them the feeling that they are not alone. The better the development of their communicative skills, the better their education and training is, and the easier it will be for them to find their place in society”, says Tana Woodward, the program coordinator of Northern BC. In order to achieve this objective, the organization undertakes a great deal such as a three-day adventure camp, theater workshops, sports weekends and even an annual Christmas party with a sleigh ride. But it is not all about fun and action. There are also many information evenings, playgroups for the little ones and opportunities for further speech development. Parents can borrow books in the organization’s own library, obtain legal advice, find out about technical advances in hearing aids and see teachers and educators for tips on how they can best support their children.

All the members of the organization work without pay. The *Hear the World* Foundation is funding the post of the program coordinator, Tana Woodward, for a year. This is the only way that the service provision can be maintained, from which as many children as possible are intended to benefit from.

PERSONAL REPORT

A little boy with a difficult start in life

Little Alistair MacMillan was born on July 8, 2009.

Because of a congenital diaphragmatic hernia, his stomach and other organs were pushed up under his chest, pushing his heart to the left and folding his lungs together. Since then, the hearing of the now 2-year-old boy has become damaged and even the doctors can provide little information about why that is.

When Alistair was one year old, his mother came to the Northern BC Children and Families Hearing Society. Wearing a hearing aid is no problem at all for this happy little boy: “Alistair loves music more than anything and he already knows that he can only hear properly with it. This aid is incredibly important for us and makes our lives so much easier”, Alistair’s mother, Julie MacMillan, points out.



One cannot tell from just looking at Alistair MacMillan just how much this cheerful little boy has had to go through in the course of his young life.

THE FIRST CARIBBEAN AUDIOLOGY DEGREE

The University of the West Indies (UWI), founded in 1962, is the oldest university in the Caribbean. It is the only regional academic institution where the content is focused on the needs of Caribbean countries.

The UWI, with its rich traditions, has more than 40,000 registered students and produces 6,600 graduates each year, however, there has been no audiology course – until now. Professor Maureen Samms-Vaughan has obtained the assistance of Dalhousie University in Canada, to set up an audiology degree. The *Hear the World* Foundation is supporting the UWI, by funding the technical and administrative equipment. “In Jamaica, we urgently need audiological provision, courses in speech therapy and pediatric care can also be improved”, explains the Jamaican doctor, backing this up by reference to research studies she has carried out herself.

A comprehensive hearing screening program for newborns is also to be introduced, which has not existed on the island, or in the other Caribbean countries. In order to ensure such provision, what is first required is solid training, which forms the basis for professional health services. In order for this objective to be achieved, in September 2011, the first “Master’s Programme in Audiology” was launched at the Jamaican university. UWI is the only university in the world to have campuses in four different countries: Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados and the Bahamas. This newly developed degree course, which will start initially in Jamaica’s capital, Kingston, is intended to spread more widely. “I would like my work and my research to make a real and noticeable difference in the lives of Jamaican children”, says Maureen Samms-Vaughan about her prime objective.

PROF. JOHN BAMFORD AWARD

Prof. John Bamford is a member of the *Hear the World* Foundation Advisory Board and was the Head of the Audiology Department at the University of Manchester in 2007.

He retains a strong interest in childhood screening, pediatric audiology, and service development and improvement. He recently chaired a review of audiology services for the Irish Health Service Executive, and is now advising on the implementation of a new Audiology Clinical Care Programme in Ireland.

The UWI was chosen for the Prof. John Bamford award because of its longterm sustaining vision, for example training up a new workforce, and because the project links in with a high quality programme in Canada.

Did you know?

- One Jamaican in five lives below the poverty line, even though Jamaica is one of the richer countries in the Caribbean.
- Schooling is not compulsory, and only primary school is free of charge to attend.
- With an average age of 23.7 years, the Jamaican population is very young (in Germany, by contrast, it is 42.1 years).

COOPERATION BETWEEN TWO HOSPITALS – ENRICHMENT FOR BOTH SIDES



Hearing screening for a newborn in the children's hospital.

An earthquake that left 25,000 dead, a difficult path to independence, conflict with neighboring countries and an economic embargo – a lot to cope with for a country that is just two thirds the size of Switzerland. For over 30 years now, Armenia has had to deal with difficult circumstances.

For 20 years, the children's hospital in the capital, Yerevan, has been receiving active support from Zurich/Switzerland, in order to ensure good medical care for its young patients. Improving the treatment of children with hearing loss – that is one of the objectives on which Swiss and Armenian colleagues work together. "Our aim is to detect any hearing loss in children as early as possible and to treat it as quickly as possible", says Christian Heldstab, an audiologist from Zurich. For 13 years, he has worked on a voluntary basis in Armenia, so that, for example, hearing screening programs for newborns are established, and children who are sent from the surrounding local clinics to the children's hospital in Yerevan are accurately diagnosed.

Special two-week training courses at the children's hospital, run by Swiss doctors and audiologists, teach how a detailed audiometric examination should be carried

60 percent of health spending in Armenia has to be paid by the population out of their own pockets.

out, particularly on small patients. Regular e-mail contact between colleagues from the two countries continues the education and the exchange of information. The *Hear the World* Foundation shares the funding of these training measures, in order to make it possible for the Swiss to come to Yerevan and enable corresponding training courses there. In addition, the *Hear the World* Foundation funds hearing aids as well as technical instruments for measurement and sends them to Armenia's capital. The huge demand and great satisfaction with the devices that were supplied led to *Hear the World* Foundation pledging to send additional equipment in 2011.

There is more to it than diagnosis, adjustment and hearing aids. Heidi Heldstab-Nef makes sure that children with hearing loss find a good route into everyday life. In order for these children to be successfully integrated into mainstream schools, it is also necessary for the educationalists to have further training. Heldstab-Nef teaches and also motivates speech therapists, psychologists, as well as the parents of the children. "Only if we all pull together will we succeed in giving these children a good start in life".

Lusine Babayan, Pediatric Audiologist at Arabkir Hospital in Yerevan

Did you know?

- Armenia, which has been independent from the Soviet Union since 1991, is one of the few countries of the so-called Second World in which a communist party has never been involved in the government.
- The game of chess has a long tradition in Armenia, and many world champions come from this country. Garry Kasparov too is of Armenian origin.
- Armenia has more doctors per square kilometer for its inhabitants than Germany does (370 to 337 in Germany).



The first-grader Aram and his mother are delighted with the new hearing aid.



In Yerevan, great importance is attached to the exact adjustment of the hearing aids.

“Our hospital is known throughout the country as the address for people with hearing loss.

The network works quite well. The small clinics that are spread throughout the country send their patients to us, so that they can get an exact diagnosis here. We also try to detect any hearing loss in children as early as possible and even newborns are examined as quickly as possible. The earlier we can intervene, the better it is for the children’s development. We fit the first hearing aids for children as young as 6 months old. But in the research, we still lack objective methods for carrying out accurate hearing tests for such small children.

Convincing the parents of the immense importance of good hearing is sometimes quite difficult.

We are often dealing with very diverse types of parents here in terms of education, levels of knowledge awareness and mentality. Many of them have significant financial problems and cannot afford hearing aids for their children at all. In those cases, in addition to providing medical care, we often have to help these families so that they can access grants and subsidies in order to cover their costs. Psychological factors also play an important role which can prevent parents from responding appropriately to their child’s hearing problems.”

SPECIAL OLYMPICS – COLORFUL DIVERSITY FROM 170 COUNTRIES

The Special Olympics are the world’s largest sports movement officially recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for people with intellectual and multiple disabilities. Over 3.5 million children, young people and adults from 185 countries take part in the sports, events and competitions.

From June 25 to July 4 2011, the summer games of the Special Olympics took place in Athens, with over 7000 athletes from 170 countries taking part.

In 22 different disciplines in team sports and individual sports, from swimming to kayaking, riding to track and field athletics, the participants competed for medals. But the atmosphere that characterizes these games is not just one of ambition and competitiveness. Throughout there is an air of warmth and comradeship. Wherever one looks there are laughing, happy faces amongst the athletes as well as the 25,000 volunteer helpers and 40,000 fans and family members. US President Barack Obama has enthused about the ambitious athletes, saying “Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the founder of the Special Olympics, has shown us that no physical or intellectual barrier can conquer the power of the human spirit”.

Behind their cheerful faces, many of the athletes still have to contend with problems which may not be obvious to others. “Our athletes represent a section of the population that is not like any other. Many of them have a much higher risk of additional health limitations, such as hearing damage or visual impairment, and often this is accompanied by poor nutrition and vitamin deficiency. The access that these people in particular have to adequate medical care is heavily restricted, above all in the poorer countries. Besides the sport, the Special Olympics also offer the world’s biggest health program for people with intellectual disability”, says Dr. Timothy Shriver, chairman and director of the organization.

From this year, the Hear the World Foundation has been involved in the “Healthy Athletes” program, in which within the framework of sports events, medical check-ups are carried out for the athletes free of charge. “Healthy Hearing” is one of seven areas of health promotion and

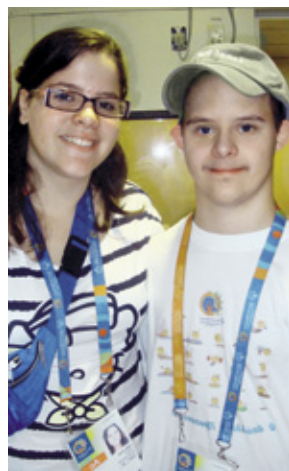
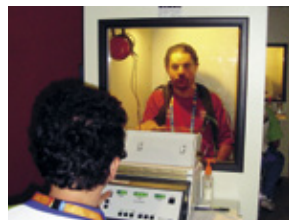
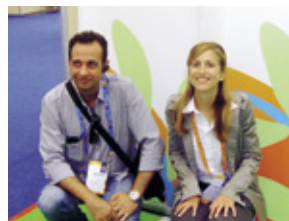
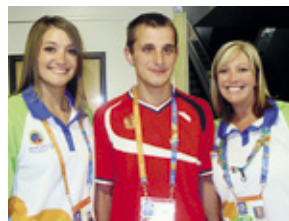
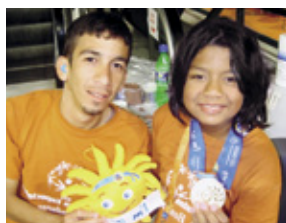
prevention. Around 25 percent of participants, for example, have hearing loss, which has often been undetected. Many have never had an accurate diagnosis, and at least as far as athletes from the developing countries are concerned, only very few can afford a hearing aid. During the summer games in Athens, 2658 athletes went through hearing screening and 600 of them were diagnosed with hearing damage. The *Hear the World* Foundation provides 344 high-quality hearing aids to athletes from 72 countries. 40 athletes were provided with the device during the games, whilst the others received a voucher to get the device in their home country, including fitting and follow-up examinations, from relevant Phonak partners there. “We are especially pleased to enable the athletes at the Special Olympics to enjoy better hearing,” says Alexander Zschokke, President of the *Hear the World* Foundation.

PERSONAL REPORT

Energy and self-confidence

“At the Special Olympics, we saw how the athletes competed for medals with immense energy and enthusiasm, and showed that they all form a great community. Everyone is acknowledged here – it is a unique atmosphere! Within the framework of the “Healthy Athletes” program, as volunteer helpers with the *Hear the World* Foundation, we checked the athletes for hearing loss and distributed vouchers for hearing aids. For us, these games were a unique experience, and the most impressive project that we have ever been involved in.”

Theodore Dalios, President of Advance Hearing SA
Dimitrios Dalios, Vice President of Advance Hearing SA



THANK YOU!

Victor Ifesinachi, an athlete at the Special Olympics summer games in Athens

"I have no gold or silver to give, no box of chocolates to forward, no scent of roses to send you – I have only these words to express my appreciation:

"THANK YOU". Many, many thanks for everything that you have done for the Nigerian team of athletes around Victor Ifesinachi and Victor Okon, so that they finally have the opportunity to hear! I do not know how I can best express this. May the Lord Almighty give you strength!

Warmest wishes! God bless you! Victor"

AUDIOLOGISTS WANTED! – A CAREER WITH A FUTURE ON THE ISLAND

“I was actually a Psychology student and did casual work in a pizza parlor in the vacations. I was not really very interested in audiology”, says 25-year-old Gustavo Linares. “But then I met Donna Carkeet from EARS Inc., and worked in a project in Santiago.”

“Seeing just what can be achieved in our country absolutely changed my mind. Just one week later, I got all my papers together and switched to the Audiology course.”

The *Hear the World* Foundation has been supporting the Australian organization EARS in the Dominican Republic for the last two years. Donna Carkeet is the highly motivated and committed audiologist who is leading the project. The *Hear the World* Foundation contributes funding in order to enable the training of future audiologists, and to establish a good technological standard for audiological diagnosis and subsequent care. Donna is responsible for training. There are around 10 audiologists under her supervision, each creating for themselves the basis for a career with a promising future, in which they will be in demand. It is not always an easy path for these budding audiologists, it requires a great deal of energy and most of the local students do not have wealthy parents, so for them full-time education is often challenging.

But here too, Donna supports them and endeavors to gather donations for a scholarship. Over and above that, she examines any number of children with hearing problems, makes accurate diagnoses, organizes suitable hearing aids and the corresponding fitting. Her energy extends to running campaigns for preventive programs and trying to establish the hearing screening program for newborns on the island. “This screening program in particular is so important for identifying hearing loss in children as early as possible”, explains the student Gustavo. “Right at the beginning of my studies, I assisted Donna when an 18-month-old child came to our clinic. She was – with Donna’s support – so to speak my first patient, the first diagnosis that I was able to make myself. I have now been working with this child for two years, and it is always incredible to see what progress the girl is making. It’s a great thing to have a profession in which one can achieve so much”, beams Gustavo.

Worldwide, just 10 percent of all children with hearing loss receive an education, and thus have the opportunity to become a full member of society.

Génesis, another of Donna’s enthusiastic audiology students, describes the commitment shown by parents in a particular case. (see box p. 37): “One day, a small boy called Kayner came to me. This child had severe hearing loss, but was a highly intelligent little guy. We explained to his mother that her child urgently needed a hearing aid in order to be able to develop well. Like so many impoverished local people, this mother could not raise the costs for this, and started an exemplary ‘campaign’ to help her child. She began to sell all sorts of things from her household, talked to high-ranking politicians and asked for their support, tried to collect donations – she fought with immense energy to be able to give her small boy what he so urgently needed.” A moving demonstration of commitment, which time and again reminds all those involved in the project how important their work is!

*Génesis Troncoso Ortega,
aged 20, Audiology student.*

“I myself come from a low-income family; we live in the Los Alcarrizos community. I got to know Donna at church, and she introduced me to the idea of studying Audiology. I was speechless when she told me about her everyday work. I was incredibly impressed by how many children and adults she was able to help with her work, who would otherwise not have known who they could turn to with their hearing problems on our island. For me, it is a source of deep satisfaction to see that with my training, I can bring children with reduced hearing so far that they can attend a regular school and can achieve their personal potential to the full.

Just to achieve the result that these children can simply talk to their mothers and hear their voices is something quite wonderful. But it is just as important for me to help those who have healthy hearing. To show people how they can protect their hearing, to be aware of potentially harmful noise, and to give them tips on having their hearing tested in a clinic. For me, it is a gift to practice this profession, and I am working hard on becoming better and better.”

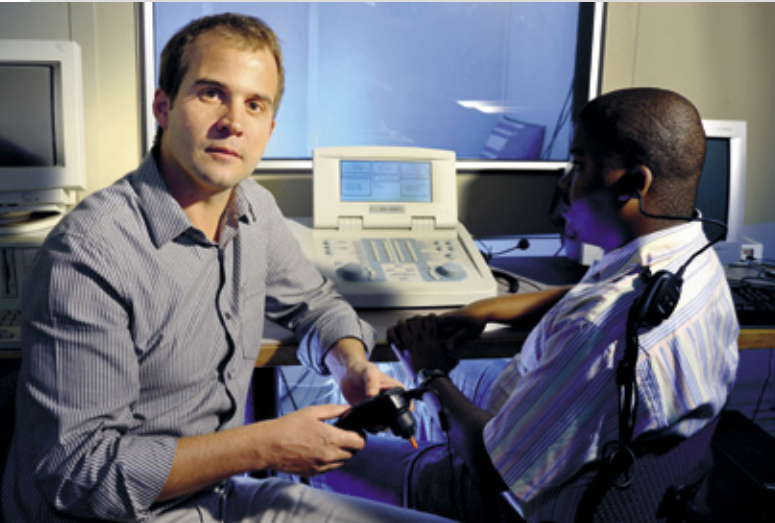


A man who has found the right job for himself: Audiology student Génesis Troncoso Ortega.

Did you know?

- The well-known fashion designer Oscar de la Renta is one of the most prominent inhabitants of the island.
- There are two types of medical provision on the island: the state ‘hospitals’ are cheap but achieve only a minimum level of care, whilst the private ‘clínica’ offer good services but are prohibitively expensive for most local people.
- 32 percent of the inhabitants are aged under 14 years.
- Only 20 percent of the population have health insurance.
- With 44,000 beds, the Dominican Republic receives the largest number of tourists in the whole of the Caribbean; the tourism industry is the country’s main source of income.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL!



According to the scientist, accurate hearing tests are fundamental for choosing the right hearing aid.

Interview with the expert on hearing loss in children in developing countries, Professor Swanepoel.

South African Professor De Wet Swanepoel is Associate Professor at the University of Pretoria and the University of Texas at Dallas. For many years, he has been conducting research in the field of pediatric audiology and is also involved in numerous projects for greater justice in health provision for children with impaired hearing in developing countries.

Hear the World: “Why is hearing loss, specifically in children who live in developing countries, such a neglected topic?”

Prof. Swanepoel: “People here are now even speaking of a ‘silent epidemic’. It is referred to as an epidemic because hearing loss is very much more widespread than people think. It is thought of as ‘silent’ or ‘insidious’ because hearing loss is not generally detected by routine clinical checks. In contrast to countries of the First World, where a hearing test for newborns is routinely carried out in 95 percent of all babies, 90 percent of all children worldwide have no access to early detection measures. Besides that, hearing loss is not life-threatening, and as a result it does not receive high priority in global health care agendas. Furthermore, you cannot tell by looking at

“Around the world, 90 percent of all children with hearing loss have no access to audiological early detection measures.”

Professor De Wet Swanepoel

a person whether he is hard of hearing – hearing loss is invisible! Another point is that it is precisely those children affected by it who often cannot express themselves well without early intervention, with the result that they are not in a position to stand up for their interests openly and effectively.”

Hear the World: “In your opinion, why is early detection of hearing loss in children so important?”

Prof. Swanepoel: “Even if poor hearing does not pose a direct threat to life, nonetheless often one’s whole livelihood is threatened – especially in developing countries. There are few topics that at first sight appear so ‘inconspicuous’, but nevertheless have an enormous range of consequences for the lives of the children affected: language development is delayed or even absent entirely, attending school is often not possible. Without the ability to read, write and express oneself there are naturally limited job prospects – often these children lead a twilight existence of complete isolation. We must not forget that 90 percent of all children worldwide are born in developing countries, so we are talking about enormous numbers: every year, around the globe approximately

798,000 babies are born with hearing loss – or acquire it within the first few weeks of life – of whom 9 out of 10 have no access to audiological care and intervention. Besides the individual fates, one must also consider the enormous economic potential that is lost to these countries.”

Hear the World: “But not all hearing loss is congenital. What can be done to protect healthy children and their hearing?”

Prof. Swanepoel: “That is true, we have to make a clear distinction. On the one hand, it is important for us to detect any congenital hearing loss as early as possible, through screening programs. The other subject concerns avoiding infections leading to loss of hearing later on. Meningitis, measles and rubella are still the main causes. For example, every year we have up to 30 million cases of measles infection in children, almost all of whom live in developing countries. Immunization campaigns need to be strengthened here in order to avoid such complications. But HIV and malaria too are a major factor. In 2008, 243 million people were infected with malaria, and 863,000 of them died of the disease – the majority of them were children under 5 years of age. People who live with the disease often suffer from hearing loss. Although maternal HIV does not seem to directly cause congenital hearing loss, the indirect consequences of immune suppression lead to more secondary infections which may result in congenital or acquired hearing loss. Furthermore, the exposure to ototoxic medications, including antiretroviral drugs, in HIV/AIDS patients pose a further possible risk for acquired childhood hearing loss. There are of course also many other risk factors such as malnutrition of children, or even a lack of nutrition in the womb, low birth weight or lack of oxygen at birth – all these can affect hearing. According to a study from Nigeria, for example, 50 percent of children with hearing loss were under-nourished.”

Hear the World: “Where – particularly in African countries – no hearing screening programs are carried out, how and at what point is hearing loss generally discovered?”

Prof. Swanepoel: “It is typically a passive process. The family first of all notices that the child does not begin to talk like all the others. Often, however, it is ignored

initially and sometimes even confused with a lack of intelligence. Many people may think that the child is particularly stubborn or awkward if he behaves differently. It takes quite a while before people think of hearing impairment. In Angola, the median reported age at which hearing loss is noticed was 6 years, and in Kenya it was reported as 5.5 years. That is of course much too late, for it is precisely in the first year of life that a great deal of the foundations are laid for subsequent language development. In recent years, the WHO has already made efforts to establish early detection, but so far in South Africa, for example, only 7.5 percent of all public health care hospitals offer hearing screening.”

Hear the World: “Is hearing screening for newborns the most effective way of early detection?”

Prof. Swanepoel: “Yes, indeed it is. There is no other early detection measure in the world that is as successful as hearing screening. It is by far the most effective method of reliably establishing impaired hearing right at the start of life. The first year of a child’s life in particular is a very critical period, in which the foundations are laid for many skills – particularly in the area of language. For this reason, it is essential that we work on establishing such early detection as a routine examination in developing countries too. Even though WHO has already recognized this problem, and is increasingly calling for prevention and preventive care in developing countries, there are still only very few countries in the Developing World that actually have systematic newborn screening programs. A further difficulty is of course the fact that well-trained audiologists are rare in developing countries. There are hardly any opportunities for young people to train in this profession. South Africa is the only country in sub-Saharan Africa to offer a professional qualification in audiology. Further work on that is needed too, since early detection of hearing loss alone is obviously not enough – it is only the first step.”

Hear the World: “What is your response to the argument that comprehensive hearing screening programs for developing countries are too costly?”

Prof. Swanepoel: “Funding is of course an important topic. But there is no other early detection program

that is as effective as a hearing screening program for newborns. Particularly in this area, the subsequent costs are enormously high if a member of society is reliant on state support for their whole life and – without an occupation – cannot contribute to society themselves. Studies on cost analyses also show that it is considerably cheaper to carry out these measures within the community in which the children live rather than in hospitals, and, for example, to combine it with immunization programs. A comprehensive screening program is also, surprisingly, more economical than measures aimed at target groups. It is only with effective pilot projects that we will manage finally to do justice to this subject. The main problem is that hearing loss in children is not included in the calculations of the global burden of disease report yet. Something must change here if fair treatment of children worldwide is to be ensured!”

Hear the World: “Are there any concrete proposals for implementation yet?”

Prof. Swanepoel: “This is of course anything but an easy task. It needs careful consideration alongside other health care concerns in these countries. Planning must also take into account the limited funds available. From one country to another – and often even within a country – the demographic and geographical circumstances vary greatly. All initiatives must therefore work with a macro top-down approach and a micro bottom-up approach. This means that we have to achieve the maximum effect across the broad population with low expenditure and minimal funds. Cooperation with the respective national governments and global aid organizations is important in order, first of all, to select a few regions for pilot projects. Pooling our resources, we must then raise awareness on the ground amongst the population, and educate them about the importance of early detection for hearing loss. At the same time, it is indispensable that in parallel with this, we train good audiologists, so that the sustainability of such projects is ensured. A professional and rapidly expanding information network that works with modern communications technology, for example also in the area of “telemedicine”, may also become an increasingly important part of the concept. Pilot programs provide the opportunity to assess protocols, whilst generating important epidemiological data, which can be utilized for public health

“Every year, around the world just under 800,000 newborns are affected by hearing loss.”

Professor De Wet Swanepoel

care planning and prevention. These pilot projects should become centers of excellence in which affected families obtain the necessary medical and audiological care. Once sufficient experience has been gathered here, regardless of whether this is in the form of successes or failures, further, improved programs can be initiated on this basis.”



“Good hearing is essential for acquiring any language skills,” says communication expert Prof. Swanepoel.



THANK YOU.

Your contribution helps children regain their hearing.

Support our project "A bright future for children in Nairobi", where we are enabling a support network for children with hearing loss – providing diagnostics and hearing aid fittings right through to speech therapy and a self-help group for parents.

Together we give children the chance of a better future.

Donation account: UBS AG Zürich • Account: *Hear the World* Foundation • Reference: Nairobi
IBAN: CH12 0023 0230 4773 8401 U • SWIFT: UBSWCHZH80A • www.hear-the-world.com/foundation

Hear the world
FOUNDATION

52 CHILDREN – A LITTLE HELP, TO GREAT EFFECT



Applications

The *Hear the World* Foundation receives applications for the “52 Children” project throughout the whole year. Further information can be found at www.hear-the-world.com/foundation.

With the “52 Children” project, the *Hear the World* Foundation gives 52 disadvantaged children from all over the world improved hearing. These children receive not only hearing aids, but also long-term, professional care through a local representative or partner of Phonak.

For people in need, obtaining medical care in Iran is difficult. There are no government agencies to provide financial support that would enable them to get medical support and to buy hearing aids. So a few months ago, the

Hear the World Foundation received an inquiry from Mashad, Iran’s second-largest city. A private aid organization contacted the foundation with a request for help for 15 children with hearing loss. Despite severe hearing loss, the children, all between one and fifteen years old, had no hearing aids up to that point – with serious consequences for their development. With the help of the local Phonak distributor in Tehran, by mid-October it was ensured that all 15 children were provided with hearing aids.



A festive ceremony was held in honor of the children.



The children proudly receive the hearing aids.

WHO WE ARE – FOUNDATION BOARD AND ADVISORY BOARD

The *Hear the World* Foundation was founded in December 2006 by the Swiss hearing instrument manufacturer Phonak as a nonprofit organization headquartered in Zug, Switzerland. The purpose of the foundation is to support projects related to the topic of hearing and hearing loss both financially and by providing technology and informational material. The *Hear the World* Foundation receives financial support from its founder, Phonak, on a regular basis. It is, however, legally and organizationally independent with further funding provided by donations.

The foundation is managed by the Foundation Board. An Advisory Board supports the Foundation Board and evaluates suitable projects and candidates suggested to the Foundation Board to receive funding. People associated with the purpose of the foundation serve on committees based on their attitudes and/or prior commitment. The members of the Foundation Board and the Advisory Board work on a voluntary basis. Expenses are reimbursed. Additional work-intensive services may be reimbursed accordingly on a case-by-case basis.

Foundation Board:

- Alexander Zschokke, Group Vice President Channel Solutions Sonova, President of the *Hear the World* Foundation
- Ora Bürkli, Vice President Product Marketing Phonak
- Maarten Barmantlo, Group Vice President Marketing Sonova

Advisory board:

- Prof. Dr. Richard Seewald, Distinguished University Professor Emeritus, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada
- Prof. Dr. John Bamford, Honorary Professor of Audiology, University of Manchester
- Plácido Domingo, tenor, conductor and director of the Los Angeles Opera and the Washington National Opera
- Dr. Clemens Hellsberg, chairman of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
- Prof. Dr. Heinrich Rohrer, Swiss physicist and Nobel laureate

ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1. General information about the foundation

The objective of the foundation is to provide global education on hearing, with the objective of helping prevent hearing loss. The foundation also provides technological and financial support to groups, public facilities and private individuals working to prevent hearing loss or to improve the lives of those with hearing loss.

According to the foundation charter, the initial dedicated capital of CHF 500,000 does not have to be maintained.

All capital is available to the Foundation Board for grants.

The Foundation Board is made up of the following persons:

Valentin Chapero (until March 31 2011),
Alexander Zschokke, Ora Bürkli.

The business operations of the foundation comply with the statutes dated December 4, 2006 and the foundation rules of procedure dated December 4, 2006. PricewaterhouseCoopers AG served as auditors for the fiscal year. Their selection for the following year has been confirmed. Their mandate is based on legal regulations and generally accepted accounting principles.

2. Accounting and reporting principles

The annual financial statement is prepared in accordance with the accounting principles under ARR 21 so that as reliable an assessment as possible can be made of the foundation's net assets and earnings situation. It also contains the previous year's figures.

3. Valuation principles governing individual items in the annual financial statement

Liquid funds include cash in an account held with UBS AG in Zurich.

Other receivables relate to withholding tax that has not yet been reimbursed.

Prepaid income relates exclusively to PwC's auditing costs.

4. Financial assets and explanations regarding assets and liabilities

The foundation does not have any fixed assets. Its assets are comprised of the foundation capital, which is deposited in a short-notice account. This capital was invested with UBS AG with an average interest rate of 0.25% and is available on a daily basis.

5. Gratuitous (free) services

All resources required for the management and governance of the foundation were provided free of charge by Phonak AG.

6. Transactions with related parties

Non-cash benefits were provided in full by Phonak AG. Instruments are charged to the foundation at production cost but are reported in the income statement at the list price for Swiss audiologists. The difference between production cost and list price is reported as a donation.

In total, Phonak AG provided non-cash benefits worth CHF 112,937.37.

7. Events after the balance sheet date

Maarten Barmantlo was elected Member of the Foundation Board in April 2011 to replace Valentin Chapero.

8. Activities of the foundation during the fiscal year

The Foundation Board determines the resources to be awarded and their allocation during budgeting.

These resources were distributed as follows during the fiscal year:

· Technological support for projects <i>abroad</i> :.....	7%
<i>in Switzerland</i> :.....	13%
· Financial support for projects <i>abroad</i> :.....	58%
<i>in Switzerland</i> :.....	12%
· Administrative expenditures	4%
· Expenses for fundraising	6%
· Other operating expenditures	0%
· Total	100%

As at the balance sheet date, CHF 178,419 in support contributions from projects was outstanding.

9. Performance report

The performance report, containing information on the purpose, governing bodies and work of the foundation, forms part of the foundation's annual Activity Report. The most recent Activity Report was published in December 2010.

*Income statement for the period April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011
(in Swiss francs)*

Proceeds from donations		562 361
Proceeds from fundraising		939
Other income		6 810
Total		570 110
Technological support for projects	abroad	-41 255
	in Switzerland	-75 589
Financial support for projects	abroad	-344 014
	in Switzerland	-68 631
Administrative expenditures		-27 312
Expenses for fundraising		-36 442
Other operating expenditures		-373
Interim result		-23 507
Financial income		574
Profit/loss for the year before allocation to organization capital		-22 933

*Balance sheet as at March 31, 2011
(in Swiss francs)*

Assets		
Current assets		
<i>Liquid funds</i>		635 199
<i>Other receivables – from third parties</i>		201
Total assets		635 400
Liabilities		
Outside capital		
<i>Prepaid income</i>		10 620
Organization capital		
<i>Paid-up capital</i>		500 000
<i>Acquired capital</i>		124 780
Total liabilities		635 400

*Statement of changes in capital
(in Swiss francs)*

Organization capital as at 04/01/2010		
<i>Paid-up capital</i>		500 000
<i>Acquired capital</i>		147 713
Total organization capital		647 713
Change		
<i>Acquired capital</i>		-22 933
Total organization capital		-22 933
Organization capital as at 03/31/2011		
<i>Paid-up capital</i>		500 000
<i>Acquired capital</i>		124 780
Total organization capital		624 780

A LOOK BACK AT PROJECTS OF THE *HEAR THE WORLD* FOUNDATION

Every year, the *Hear the World* Foundation reports on its current activities around the globe. The lasting effect of all these projects is a prime principle of our work. That is reason enough for taking this opportunity to follow up on how the lives of those affected have developed since then.

One small boy, great progress – A year ago, the now 5-year-old Dawood from Iraq finally received a suitable hearing aid in Zurich. Since then, his language development has come on in leaps and bounds.

A congenital tumor in his head is the reason why little Dawood's hearing capacity is only around 25 percent. Hearing aids are barely available in Iraq, so for the first four years of his life, Dawood had no chance of learning to talk. All that the boy's parents were able to track down in their home country was a hearing aid for adults, which, fitted poorly. It was much too heavy for the little boy and was not really capable of improving his hearing. It was only when the family received an invitation from a friend to visit Switzerland that Dawood could be examined in detail at the children's hospital in Zurich. Within the framework of the '52 Children' project operated by the *Hear the World* Foundation, he finally received a hearing aid that was tailored especially to suit him. Dawood has now been attending a kindergarten for children with hearing loss in his own country for a year. In this time his language development has made rapid progress, so that, just one year later, he can attend a regular kindergarten, and has integrated well into the community of hearing friends. His father is incredibly pleased to have been able to help his son, "Things are now much better for me too. I am really proud of Dawood and his progress. He can hear and learn much better since he received treatment in Switzerland!"

A new hearing aid can change your life – In June 2011, a Polish athlete at the Special Olympics summer games, Katarzyna Wyderska, had a new hearing aid fitted under the Healthy Hearing program run by the *Hear the World* Foundation. Now she is finally able to hear the world around her clearly.

"Ever since I can remember, I have had great problems with hearing. I would never have thought that a new hearing aid can make so much difference. My old hearing aid was neither attractive nor easy to wear. It continually irritated me, particularly during sports. But I love doing sports, above all swimming, skiing and inline skating! Also, I could only hear other people very indistinctly. Often, one not only has great difficulty in following a conversation, but one also misses many nuances, signals and comments – the ability to interpret the world around one correctly is missing. When I found out at the hearing screening in Athens that I would get a new hearing aid, at first I couldn't believe it, but was overjoyed. I can hardly believe how clearly I can now hear others. It makes contact with other people so much easier. Competing in the summer games of the Special Olympics and having this new hearing aid – these are the two best things that have ever happened to me!"



The proud father is delighted at how quickly his son Dawood has learned to speak.



Katarzyna Wyderska undergoing the examination.

One child's rescue from a disadvantaged childhood in the slums of Sao Paulo – The life of 9-year-old Yelide, a Brazilian boy with hearing loss, had a dramatic beginning: abandoned by his parents as a small child, he lived in the slums of Sao Paulo – no chance of future opportunities! But with the help of the organization APADAS, 2007 winner of the first Richard Seewald Award given by the *Hear the World* Foundation, the life of this boy has been fundamentally turned around. Advisory board member Richard Seewald describes his visit to Yelide.

“After his parents had abandoned their son, little Yelide lived with his grandmother in the slums. The two of them lived on donations of food and clothes. Social workers from APADAS discovered Yelide when he was four years old: the APADAS team diagnosed him with severe hearing loss, got him a hearing aid, and ensured that the little boy was included in a municipal support project. From that point on, things improved – not least because of the enormous devotion of his grandmother. In 2007 they succeeded in fitting the now 5-year-old with a more modern and accurate hearing aid, as the *Hear the World* Foundation had provided the APADAS organization with improved technology for hearing aid adjustment. Since then, Yelide's further development has been consistently good: not only his language development but also his social progress has been considerable! The small family has now moved from the corrugated iron shack to a small brick house, with a shower and hot water. The boy's shining eyes as he told me about it were heart-rending. For the first time in his life, Yelide has now been given new shoes of his own and a rucksack, and was able to celebrate his birthday at home – with cake and soda. A dream was fulfilled!

When I visited in September 2011, the way in which the whole APADAS organization had advanced to a first-class level since the cooperation with the *Hear the World* Foundation in 2007 exceeded all my expectations. With so much professionalism and self-confidence, it will certainly succeed in turning around the fortunes of many more children like young Yelide!”



Today, at the age of 9, Yelide is finally well on the way to a good future.

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About the
Hear the World Foundation

The *Hear the World* Foundation was established in 2006 by Phonak to support equal opportunities and improve the quality of life of people with hearing loss through financial and technical assistance. The foundation is especially committed to children with hearing loss in order to help them develop their full potential.

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