

Damadi Centre — newsletter no 20, December 2023

Greetings & Blessings

I do not know how to start this newsletter. However, Dianne and I would like to thank our faithful supporters of Damadi Home, Yangon Myanmar for your continued support. We apologise for the lack of information for the past 18 months or so. There have been many reasons for this. The last newsletter was published in April 2022, Newsletter No 19. It has been very difficult and challenging for Martin and his church community in Myanmar with the ongoing civil unrest/war. We thank God that the children at Damadi Home have been relatively safe in the home and the area they live in and go to school.

Dianne and I would like to extend Christmas greetings and blessings to you all. As in the words of Isaiah 40:3 4 'A voice of one crying, "In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."'

Jesus came to the world at Christmas to save all mankind and we need to celebrate this and share the Gospel of Jesus with others. Jesus is coming again at the second coming. We wait expectantly for his return to take us up in to the clouds to be with Him.

Callington Show Fundraising Stall—Damadi Home—Myanmar

God's hand of blessing was on Sunday 29th October 2023, as the weather was ideal for the Callington Show and our fundraising event with a record crowd of about 4500 people attending. It was the 10th year that the Murray Bridge and Monarto Lutheran communities came together to raise much needed funds for the Damadi Home, Myanmar (formerly Burma).

Gloria Pohl along with her reliable and faithful group of helpers once again did a fantastic job. This group of helpers have been there over the past 10 years. This year we raised just over \$2100 for the



Monique, Coralie, Jan, Gloria & Dianne with a mountain of cakes to sell at the Callington Show.

Damadi Home. The funds will be sent to support the home through Asia Focus Australia.

Our stall included the Cali trail which attracted children and families. We witnessed our Christian faith by handing out bookmarks and stamping sheets with a Christian message of hope and love.



Damadi operates under Pastor Martin and Mary's leadership, Lutheran Church of Myanmar. Damadi Home, Yangon (Rangoon), continues to function well despite the ongoing civil war which started almost 3 years ago. We are praying fervently that the war will end soon and we can organise a mission trip again to Myanmar.

Thank you to all of the people who have cooked cakes and biscuits. We thank you for your prayers and support. Dianne and I on behalf of Asia Focus Australia would sincerely like to thank all those who have made the fundraising stall such a success.

Even Covid did not stop this group of supporters as in 2020 we had a different kind of fundraising event, a music concert in lieu at the John Dohler Hall, and still raised funds for Damadi Home. Special thanks must go to Gloria Pohl for being the main coordinator of this fundraising initiative for the past decade.

Damadi Home— Pastor Martin shares

Currently, we have 20 children (11 boys and 9 girls). Six more children were added to the group this year who came from war-torn areas in Kabaw Valley. (Located in Sagaing Division north-west Myanmar near Indian border.) Now is monsoon season in Myanmar, and most of the children are facing dengue fever and diarrhea because of mosquitoes and weather changes. They continue their studies at the government school. The newcomers are still having problems catching up with their studies at school, and we hope their problems will settle down next year. I'm sending a new profile of the boys and girls and some photos of children from the Damadi home.

Because of Covid and the political crisis, our children have missed out on three school years during that time. Some of the older children think they're old enough to get a job outside and would like to stop their education. We encourage them to continue their studies, but we cannot hold some of them back from their desire to work. So, they left Damadi. Rebecca **Lalrawngbawli** is currently working in Oman as a domestic worker. **Biakthuama** went back to his village, and a few younger children

went back home to be with their guardians. Next year, I think 2-3 children will leave the home, and we might have to look at taking in some new children.

Kya Hae, who is the oldest at Damadi, wants to discontinue his studies next year and pursue vocational training in mechanics. I will be glad if there is anyone who would like to sponsor him for his vocational training and also for getting a new driving licence. I believe he will be very useful for driving the light truck from Damadi if he receives the driving licence.

Mary's parents will continue serving Damadi until 2025. Pastor Sanglura works part-time at Damadi Home and at our new resource centre called "Lighthouse Resource Centre". The primary purpose of the centre is to provide Lutheran resources and focus on training for church leaders in Yangon and other mission fields of the church such as Bago and Tahan.



Children from the Youth Camp →



Youth Camp during the Water Festival

**Urgent need for Back-up Solar System—
from Pastor Martin**

The power shortage still exists, and the Damadi Home gets electricity for 14 hours per day, and blackouts happen very often in between. The generator is very useful, but since diesel is very expensive nowadays, it is impossible to use the generator for too long. When the electricity blacks out at night for more than 3 hours, the children are unable to study for long and have to sleep early in the dark. We are thinking about low-cost solar-powered electricity for the children and will be glad if there are donors for this important project. It will cost around USD\$500 for the solar panel, inverter, battery, and cables. (Approximately \$760 AUD) This solar system will give power for lighting for a couple of hours in the evening so students can get their studies done.

**Myanmar Institute of Lutheran Theology (MILT)
Pastor Martin shares**

Due to the current political crisis and lack of infrastructure for MILT, the board has decided to move the opening of MILT to next year, 2024. We will try to recruit students next year. Due to security reasons, we will think about opening the Bible school only when we have green light from the local authorities to keep the young people in the housing apartment in front of Damadi Home. All our students went back home, and some of them became PDF soldiers (People's Defence Force) and fought the military regime to protect their villages.

Sponsorship

Due in April each year to March the following year. \$720 p.a. or \$60 per month. Any extra financial support is always welcome and very much appreciated.

**Cheques to be made payable to
Asia Focus Australia Inc,
PO Box 911,
Gympie, QLD, 4570**

**or EFT to
Asia Focus Australia Inc,
BSB: 124 047
Acc No: 22597127
Reference: Sponsorship Damadi Myanmar**

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Testimony from Mr. Lalrawngbawla