

IN PARTNERSHIP

October 2019



Sakrin and family, Thailand

Sakrin wanted to help his family earn more money by learning how to raise chickens. But through the joys and struggles of their community chicken project, he was able to help his daughter discover a great gift that she hadn't known.

Like others in his community, Sakrin's family struggled with a small income. His job from selling second hand items needed to support not only himself, but also his wife and her four children. Sakrin wanted to grow his family's income.

The community chicken-raising project was created to help people like Sakrin. In 2017, the members of Phet Phaitoon Church in Thailand noticed that some of their community members did not have enough income each month for themselves and their families. They wanted to help these people across the wider community. They thought teaching people to raise local chickens could help provide additional income, and many people were interested in learning.

Despite enthusiasm for the project, they knew it wouldn't all be easy. With the help of Churches of Christ Overseas Aid (COCOA), the church was able to assess the risks and costs, and put together a plan that had the greatest potential for raising skills and providing sustainable income.

Sakrin heard about the project and decided to attend the training. After, his whole family decided to join the program, and together they began raising chickens.

His daughter found that she had a gift for taking care of them, and became very skilled at helping the others. After caring for the chickens for 75 days, they sold the chickens for a profit of 7,545 Baht (AUD\$350).

However, the next cycle of raising chickens didn't go as planned. They could not sell the chickens. Sakrin and his family had to continue feeding and caring for the chickens. Finally, on the 95th day they were able to sell the chickens – but at a loss.

Despite this outcome, Sakrin and his family were not discouraged. *"We talked together as a family and came to the conclusion that it doesn't matter. Even though we lost money, we will give thanks to God, because we have learned many lessons from raising chickens."* Sakrin said. *"When we face difficulties, we will face them together, and when we have good times, we will enjoy them together."*

Sakrin and his community still need help to make reliable incomes for their families. The gift he and his daughter have for raising chickens still needs encouragement to grow.

With the generous support of people like you, COCOA has continued to establish the project further by providing an incubator and slaughterhouse. Ongoing support will help people like Sakrin and his family to grow their chicken business, and make it sustainable for their future.

Your gifts can help people like Sakrin develop their gifts. Generous supporters help give families training and start-up support, including chickens, chicken coop materials, food supply, and medicine for good animal health. These gifts keep on giving, as community members grow and realise their own gifts.

Now, Sakrin's daughter has taken charge of raising their chickens. The family is still going to put their new skills to use – much like many others in their community.

Sakrin's daughter discovered her gift for raising chickens through the support of people like you! Many others are lacking the time, energy or resources they need to realise their gifts and fulfil their potential. Your great gift can make a real impact on their lives.

You can find out more and give a Great Gift by going to:

www.gmp.org.au/great-gifts-2019

News & Events



Great Gifts

When you give a Great Gift, you help support people realise their own gifts. It takes real impact to achieve ongoing positive change. People can use their gifts to fight poverty, build local Christian communities, and develop a strong and positive future.

You can find out more and give a Great Gift by going to www.gmp.org.au/great-gifts-2019



The Justice Conference November 15-16

The Justice Conference is a global movement, uniting followers of Christ as they pursue justice in their contexts. We bring together the local church to be equipped and encouraged as they hear from leading theologians, practitioners and artists. Will you join us? Find out more or register online at www.thejusticeconference.com.au/

Annual Report 2018-19

Get up to date with everything that's happened over the last 12 months at GMP. The GMP 2018-19 Annual Report will be available soon. The report will be available at www.gmp.org.au/about-us/annual-reports



A Rolling Water of Justice

This past week I have been driving BJ and Chipo Mpofu through rural Victoria. How green it is! It has made me very aware of the contrast for communities in NSW, Queensland and other places still in the grip of serious drought. The contrast is stark – green and brown, lush and dust.



BJ and Chipo Mpofu

Water is such a valuable commodity. It is so available and in such short supply. When it flows it makes a wonderful change – communities come alive again.

Amos uses the image of water sources to talk of the desire of God for the whole world (Amos 5:24). He does so to contrast the failure of Israel in its community life. Their worship and sacrifice are rejected and set aside. Amos directs people to God's desire for justice and righteousness. He uses two adjectives to emphasise the abundance of this – "rolling" and "ever-flowing".

What could the rolling water of justice and ever-flowing

righteousness create? Can you imagine the desert of injustice, suffering and inhumanity overwhelmed by the water of justice; and the drought of unrighteousness, wrongdoing and evil ended by the ever-flowing water of people doing what God wants of us?

A new world of hope would emerge. We would see people flourishing with access to resources for daily life, communities freed from discrimination and oppression, families finding security and safety and people living in poverty lifted up, with God's presence being central. A world flowing with righteousness and justice would see Mary's song lived out (Luke 1:45-55).

...mercy extended... from generation to generation...

...scattered those who are proud in thoughts of their hearts...

...the powerful brought down and the lowly lifted up...

...rich sent away empty and the hungry filled...

This is a vision that motivates, inspires and informs us. It leads to prayer and to celebrating the signs of the coming of the kingdom in deeds and actions, small and large. Join us in this wonderful hope.

John Gilmore,
Executive Officer



Local evangelists who work with Bangladesh's Mru Community

Hearing the Word of God – For the First Time!

Towards the start of September, people from many neighbouring communities came together in Kulai Village to celebrate the harvest festival. But during this time, many of them walked down to the nearby river. Evangelist Menpoi was going to baptise some new believers.

In Bangladesh, 38 different languages are spoken. While most people speak Bengali, many smaller communities only speak and fully understand their local language. This makes the work of evangelism more difficult for people like Menpoi, who reaches out to many small villages in his community, like the Mru village of Duhkhah.

MangUia and Kaipre are two women from Duhkhah. They are Mru people, and speak the Mru language. For most of their lives, they were followers of animism. But last year, when they were both more than 80 years old, they heard the gospel in their language for the first time.

Menpoi came to their village and they heard him preach, in their own language. They were able to read the Bible in Mru language, see the words and sing the songs, in their own language. Over time they learned about God, and have become followers of Jesus.

“Physically we were old and sooner or later we may need to say goodbye to the physical world without hope of second life,” the women said.

“At this age, God is truly mindful of us and given us such blessing of His salvation and so grateful and thankful to God for His love. His love is our great hope that we shall be with him in eternity even when we leave the world.”

On the day of the harvest festival many from the church and community made the five kilometre walk down to the river for the baptisms. That night, four new Christians were baptised by Menpoi. Despite the distance, their faith in the love of Christ compelled them to commit their lives through baptism.

Pastor Rambuai, the minister for the local area, said he was pleased with the way the word of God is spreading in his community, despite the challenges they face. *“We thank God for the opportunity to serve the Lord. And our humble request to pray for the Mru community to have adequate Bibles and songbooks for the new souls, and for all.”*

For those preaching to smaller communities like the Mru speakers, language can be a significant barrier. There are only a limited number of

resources – including the Bible – that have been translated into Mru language.

International Church Partnerships assists in funding the translation and production of Bibles, song books, and other resources in Mru language. It's thanks to the support of people like you that MangUia, Kaipre, and many others have been able to hear about Jesus for the first time.



Evangelist Menpoi



Discovery in Zimbabwe

Reflection on the GMP Discovery Trip, by Trevor Gordge

Until a few years ago, Africa was not on my 'bucket list'. However over the years, my wife Valerie and I have become passionate about Zimbabwe through our involvement with GMP.

We read about the ministry of Khayelihle Children's Village (KCV), we heard stories from others who had visited Zimbabwe, we hosted Boniface Mpofu (Showers of Blessings Project Director) in our home a few years ago, and we have participated in Safe Water September for a long time now.

So when the opportunity arose, we excitedly joined the GMP discovery trip to Zimbabwe!

Our group was keen to embrace as much as we could during our nine days. John Gilmore with his knowledge, and our fantastic hosts, BJ and Chipu Mpofu, contributed so much to our experiences through their dedicated organisation of the trip – God's miracles from my perspective!

Between us we were able to share at 12 different local church services. We joined in lively worship, with joyful singing and dancing. With the help of translators, we preached and shared our testimonies with the congregations. We felt particularly moved to pray for and with the people in these churches.

We were inspired by the depth of the Zimbabwean churches' commitment. At the rural Gudo church, some people had walked 10 kilometres to attend. Women, wearing the Churches of Christ red and white uniform, cooked big pots of rice and sudsa (with chicken and vegetables for the visitors) over open fires for lunch. Their generosity embodied the selflessness of Christ.

We also had the opportunity to visit some of the 240 wells that have been drilled by the Showers of Blessings program. We saw the amazing impact these wells have had on local communities, enabling them to expand their vegetable gardens, as well as having greater access to clean water for personal needs. These communities were so appreciative and are working to increase the impact of their cherished well.

I welcomed the chance to talk with Boniface again when we visited the wells. It was wonderful to see his passionate commitment for the program, and his collaborative and productive relationships with each community.

We also had the opportunity to stay at KCV and engage with the children there. Mrs. Vuma and her team were generous with their hospitality. It was encouraging to see KCV working well, despite the

Left to Right: Boniface Mpofu, Project Director of Showers of Blessings; Children at Khayelihle Children's Village (KCV); and Mrs Vuma, KCV

challenges that they face with their work.

Our proud hosts were keen for us to see the world-renowned Hwange National Park. We appreciated the local staff and spectacular park so much, although we had some discomfort with the attitude of other 'tourists'!

Victoria Falls (one of the seven 'Natural Wonders of the World') and the Zambezi River were similarly spectacular! It was great to share these experiences with so many local people, similarly enjoying the spectacle.

Even the quieter moments came with an impact. Our times driving between places were great opportunities to share our Christian journeys with one another, reflecting on common and different experiences.

Our return to Australia was only a physical departure. Our experiences of Zimbabwean hospitality, culture and joy, despite significant hardships, will never leave us.

Trevor Gordge,
SA