

Skills for life at Cairo's Deaf Unit

In Egypt, the level of unemployment is high, and for deaf and hearing impaired people opportunities are particularly scarce.

The Deaf Unit in Cairo, as well as providing a school for younger children, runs vocational training workshops where young deaf adults can learn marketable skills.

The Vocational Training Centre can currently accommodate 30 students, who learn woodwork, metalwork and textiles, but the workshops are small

and cramped. For a long time, Clair Malik, the Deaf Unit's Director, has held the dream of expanding the premises so that every year at least 100 men and

women from all over Egypt will have the opportunity to benefit.

BibleLands responded to this need by raising funds towards the purchase of some new land in 6th of October City, a modern city between Cairo and Giza, and the foundation stone for the new premises was laid earlier this year by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

'Our aim,' explains Clair Malik, *'is to improve the quality of life of young deaf people by providing and facilitating access to employment and income in order to promote their social and*

Prayer Points

Please pray:

- for the progress of the new Vocational Training Centre in 6th of October City
- for the students and tutors as they work together to make the workshops such a success
- for the Deaf Unit's important role as an advocate for equality for hearing impaired people.



financial independence.' The Deaf Unit is an advocate for equal rights, and seeks to develop a qualified workforce within the young deaf community. It also establishes links with local businesses and community organisations to help them recognise the value of employing people with strong skills.

The centre is already partly self-funding through the sale of products made in the workshops. One of Cairo's luxury hotels buys the woodwork department's high-quality furniture and food trays, and the textiles students combine traditional khayameya appliqué techniques with fashionable designs to create clothing and accessories that are in huge demand from Cairo's bazaars.

Metalwork products include furniture and decorative home items such as mirror frames and lamps, and the metal workshop has also been fulfilling an order for school benches for Sudanese refugee children.

When the new centre at 6th of October City is finished, the Unit will be able to expand all these activities and increase its sustainability. They are also keen to add new workshops teaching car mechanics, plumbing and electricity, and will be manufacturing ear moulds for clients of the Unit's audiology department.

Once the workshops have relocated, the old rooms will be put to good use as classrooms for secondary education – the Deaf Unit currently only has the resources for primary-level classes. Clair Malik told us:

'I wish to express a very big thank you to all of you – individuals and organisations – as we here at the Deaf Unit highly value your support and encouragement to us.'

'With you, we share the responsibility of caring for our family here. The children and young people send their smiles, full of love, and we pray that God will continue to bless you.' ■



Get Involved!

- To find out how to support the Deaf Unit on a regular basis, phone us on 01494 897955/56 or email caresharers@biblelands.org.uk. You can also visit www.biblelands.org.uk and click on 'Giving' for more information.
- If you're looking for a travel opportunity with a difference, why not consider joining our fundraising and volunteering trip to Egypt next November? See page 10 to find out more.