

Giving hope to deaf people in Peru



Sign language pupil and teacher Abigail (right)

Can you imagine not being able to communicate your ideas, feelings and desires? This is what was happening to many deaf children in the town of Moyobamba, capital of San Martin department in northern Peru. They were not able to study as they were not permitted to attend normal schools and no schools for deaf people existed. Their family members did not understand them and they were isolated in their rural communities, where many people thought their deafness was the result of witchcraft or divine punishment. The desire to give these children the chance to express themselves and get an education led Paz y Esperanza to develop sign language courses.

Abigail was one of the first students of the PyE programme. She was ten when she started learning sign language. The first step for the team was to help her affirm her identity and teach her how to say her name and age. Roger Mendoza, Director of PyE Peru, said: "Being able to communicate helps deaf people become less isolated, to make friends with other deaf children and communicate with their parents and

siblings." Abigail now talks with her hands and facial gestures and can communicate whatever she wants to. She even teaches basic sign language to the parents of deaf children.

PyE runs sign language courses for children, young people, parents and teachers in Moyobamba. For the children, the courses also try to improve their self-esteem. The courses for parents help them overcome the grief they often feel when they learn their child is deaf. There is often a huge transformation in family dynamics when family members learn how to communicate with each other. For the teachers the aim is to show them how to teach mathematics and other subjects to deaf children. PyE have managed to get the local authorities to appoint a teacher to help the children learn.

Roger said: "Our dream is that the state implements an inclusive education policy which leads to the opening of a school for deaf children and the development of a regional plan for inclusive education. PyE has already secured a piece of land and the next challenge is the building of a school."

“We want deaf children to be able to use sign language to get an education so they can get out of poverty and improve their quality of life in the future”.

Since the start of the programme, children in Moyobamba are now part of a community and are no longer so isolated. Many of them now feel proud to be deaf. PyE hopes to continue its work promoting the inclusion of deaf people, the teaching of sign language and ultimately reducing isolation and social exclusion.



Sign language class

THANK YOU TINEKE!

Tineke Harris recently stepped down as a trustee of Paz y Esperanza UK after three years. Thank you so much to Tineke for her time, energy and passion and everything she has contributed, including doing a sponsored 20 workouts in 20 days to celebrate PyE's 20th birthday this year. We are looking for new trustees and would love to hear from you if you are interested in getting involved.

PRAYER FOR ROLANDO

Rolando Pérez of Peace and Hope International suffered a heart attack on 22 July while on holiday with his wife and daughter. He has had surgery and is now out of hospital and recovering well. Please pray for a swift return to full health and for strength for him and his family.

PRAYER FOR PERU

Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (PKK), the new president of Peru, was sworn in on 28 July. Please pray for him and his government. In his inaugural speech he said he longed for the country to be more just and equal. Pray he will achieve this and bring greater peace and hope to the people through his policies.

PLEASE PRAY FOR PAZ Y ESPERANZA:

- Please pray for the Paz y Esperanza team in Peru and their work with people who are deaf.
- For Abigail in her important work teaching sign language. Give thanks for her patience and passion.
- For new sources of income so that Paz y Esperanza can continue its services and build a school for deaf people.

BOOK A SPEAKER for your small group or church, to equip you to stand alongside those silenced by oppression and injustice across Latin America.

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