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Naturally we want to avoid suffering, but we live in a world crushed, broken and torn. May we understand the privilege of serving Christ as we pour ourselves out for others.

”

Alejandro **Deane**

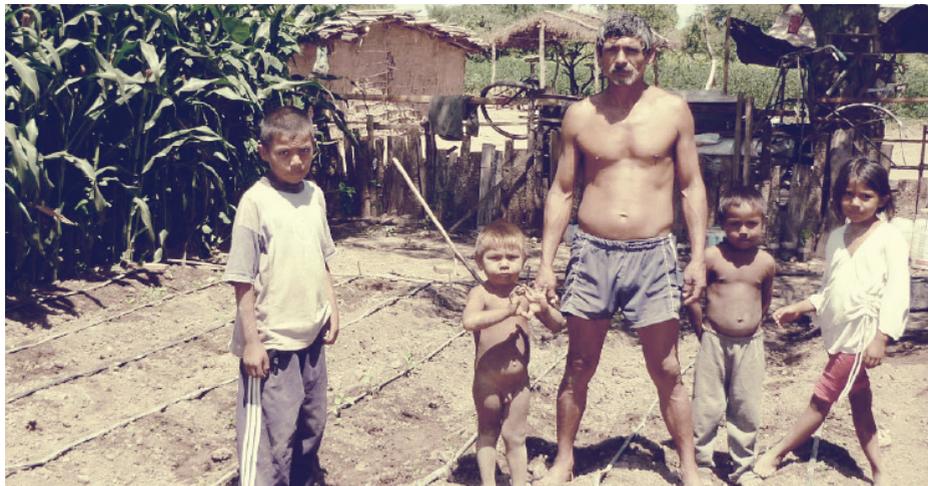


## Alejandro **Deane**

Alejandro Deane, affectionately known as “Alec” grew up in the bustling city of Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina. He left his familiar surroundings and moved to Northern Argentina where he has been working for 30 years alongside the Wichi people. The Wichi are traditionally hunter gathering forest dwellers, indigenous to the tropical lowlands of Northern Argentina and Bolivia. Alec has been involved in several successful initiatives with the Wichi people over the years and has set up the Siwok foundation (a Charitable Trust selling beautiful, hand-crafted items made by the Wichi Indians). He remains a passionate advocate for the rights of this indigenous group. Alec is now using his expertise in agriculture to develop a garden project with local Wichi. Alec is married to Ivon and they have a two year old son called Lucas. They are members of the local Anglican Church in Salta.

## Garden Project **Overview**

Alec’s Garden Project came about after a young Wichi girl died of protein deficiency. Wichi families have traditionally grown a few crops to supplement their diet, but this has proved more difficult in recent times. Vast areas of Chaco land have been cleared so that commercial farms can grow crops such as beans and cotton. The environmental changes caused by this deforestation means that there are higher summer temperatures and more frequent droughts and flooding.



*A local Wichi family participating in the Garden Project*

Alec, who has a background in agriculture, felt sure that the situation for Wichi families could be improved, if they had some support and good gardening techniques were incorporated. Thus the “Yachuyaj wo” (Wichi word for Gardener) project was born. The secret to good harvests is incorporating drip irrigation and providing people with good seed. Alec’s vision is that the Wichi can live sustainably and with dignity in their own lands, neither depending on donations nor having to migrate in search of work.

In the first year of the project, financial support came from a Christian in the UK and Alec’s family. With the drip irrigation method and good seed donated by companies, the results were fabulous. In 2009, 32 families successfully participated in the project. This has now grown to over 80 families involved. There is even a competition for the under 12s for who has the best garden!

SAMS is now committed to supporting Alec financially on a monthly basis. This enables Alec to cover his costs and plan more effectively for the future of the project.

## Gran **Chaco**

- Around 25 distinct indigenous groups of people live in the Gran Chaco.
- There are peoples who may never have had contact with the outside world.
- Temperatures in the Northern Chaco can reach over 50°C.
- 53% of the Gran Chaco is inside Argentina and 90% of all Chaco residents live in the Argentinean Chaco.
- The word Chaco comes from the Quechua word for “Hunting Land” because it is rich in wildlife. Gran is Spanish for big.
- The Gran Chaco has the largest dry forest in South America.
- The Chaco is home to many wild animals including pumas, tapirs, rheas and giant armadillos.
- In rural areas of the Chaco there is approximately one inhabitant per square kilometre.
- In the Chaco there are 400 plant species which are found nowhere else in the world and 12 animal species found nowhere else in the world.

# Prayer **Points**

## **Focus**

Pray that Alec will stay focused on God and His plans above all else in the midst of challenging circumstances.

## **Faithfulness**

Pray that Alec will have key times in his week which enables him to read and study the Bible within a busy ministry.

## **Humility**

Pray for Alec that he will have a spirit of humility and may God grant him wisdom in carrying out his various responsibilities with the Wichi.

## **Rest**

Pray that Alec will know God's help in setting aside times of rest amid the unending tasks of coordinating the Garden Project.

## **Growth**

Give thanks for the growth of the Garden Project. Pray for Alec as he works through the numerous practical issues of resourcing Wichi

families. Give thanks for the many opportunities to share quality time with the Wichi. Pray for the young people within the Wichi community that they will be inspired as they have the opportunity to learn new skills and may they grow in confidence through this initiative.

## **Evaluation**

Pray for Alec as he evaluates the project and considers the way ahead. Pray for wisdom, patience and God's leading in all future developments.

## **Diocese**

The Diocese of Northern Argentina takes in seven federal states in the north-western region of Argentina: Chaco, Formosa, Salta, Jujuy, Tucuman, Santiago del Estero and Catamarca. The Anglican Church works within a vast and challenging context. Scattered around the Chaco region are over 100 rural congregations and all are led by their own indigenous leaders. Pray for Bishop Nick & Catherine Drayson as they oversee this vast area.

**If you would like to participate with SAMS through receiving prayer updates on Alec's ministry, or financially supporting Alec's work in Argentina, please contact SAMS.**