

outreach abroad

SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT IN CHRIST'S NAME 1961-2011



This magazine features: Smokeless Stoves in Nepal; Health in Bangladesh; Thailand Action Team; Jubilee Celebrations; Eye Care Improvements in Afghanistan; Paul Kyalimpa – Farmer Trainer.

From Tiny Acorns

Russell Ashley-Smith, our chairman, marvels at God's creation

Thousands of acorns fell to the ground that autumn, perhaps 150 years ago, throughout what remained of the great North Wood (now Norwood in South London). Squirrels and other animals feasted on many of the delicious acorns, others vainly strived to grow where they had fallen and (this seems to ring Biblical bells!) just a few successfully grew into saplings, escaping the rapacious appetites of deer.

A number of decades later when one of these oaks had become an appreciable size, a house was built ten metres away from it. The oak continued to grow in stature and generations living in the house enjoyed this grand tree which overshadowed them and whose roots also undergirded them. Then came the especially dry summers at the beginning of the 21st century. Our oak is unrelentingly sucking up to 50 gallons of water every day from the ground which, being London clay, shrinks. The result - serious cracks throughout the house and a major insurance claim. All because an acorn fell into the ground, germinated...

Many years after the house had been built, in an entirely unrelated action, an Englishman in what was then East Pakistan, seeking to help local people improve their farming, sent a simple request back to his mission's HQ in London, "Please send me some seeds and day-old chickens." Over the subsequent five decades what he started has grown into a large oak, not to cause damage but rather to help improve the lives of tens of thousands of poorer people in the some of the most deprived areas of the world. Our Englishman (David Stockley who is now with his Lord) could have had no idea what his acorn would become fifty years later.

What, in the years ahead, will become of our oak trees— that alongside the house and the other one called Operation Agri?

We give thanks to God for the magnificence of his creation. We also praise him for the way in which he provides for and leads his people who seek to follow him. As this year we rejoice in fifty years of Operation Agri's ministry, please pray with us for the future. May we be obedient and responsive to our Lord's calling wherever it may lead.

From tiny acorns...

Scanning OA's archives

We would like to digitise a complete set of OA's newsletters and magazines from 1961. Could you help by scanning these for us? If so, please get in touch with Malcolm Drummond – see back page for contact details.

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Front Cover Photograph: ACET (Aids Care, Education and Training) market gardening project in Zimbabwe, which supports AIDS orphans and child-headed households. See p. 14 for an update. Picture: Andrew North, BMS.

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This edition of Outreach Abroad was compiled and edited by Stan Crees and Malcolm Drummond. To be added to the mailing list, contact Malcolm Drummond (administrator) – see back cover.

Smokeless stoves save lives in Nepal

By Alan Penn, a BMS World Mission worker seconded to UMN, and Russell Ashley-Smith, OA's Chairman.

Exposure to smoke from traditional cooking stoves and open fires is estimated to kill over one and a half million women and children each year, and causes countless more cases of pneumonia, lung cancer, emphysema and other diseases. According to the World Health Organisation, cooking smoke is responsible for more deaths than malaria. See <http://www.justmeans.com/Sustainable-Development-Cleaning-up-Kitchen/33576.html>.

Operation Agri is tackling this problem in a small way with its carbon offsetting programme in co-operation with partners UMN (United Mission to Nepal).

The problem affects nearly two million people who burn wood, charcoal, vegetation and dung for heating food. The United Nations says inefficient stoves can be as bad for health as smoking two packs of cigarettes a day. Not only do open fires fill the house with smoke, but they require a lot of wood or other fuel, all of which has to be collected each day, hastening de-forestation. Open fires are also a real hazard for small children.

Healthy and efficient cooking stove are however benefiting

some fortunate families in Nepal thanks to a programme financed by Operation Agri's carbon offsetting scheme. The open fire is replaced with a closed-in stove with a chimney. Operation Agri's partners, United Mission to Nepal (UMN), are teaching a local non-government organisation how to install the new stoves.

Carbon Offsetting

Operation Agri have linked the provision of these efficient stoves to their carbon-offsetting scheme. The more that is raised by the scheme, the more stoves that will be installed in Nepal. Donors can choose the alternative of financing solar-powered water heaters for families in Afghanistan.

The improved stove being installed in Nepal reduces wood consumption by 75%, so in one year use of each stove cancels out a lot of carbon produced by car or plane travel.

Operation Agri has so far been able to send £1,000 overseas under this scheme.

The scheme is very easy to use. Visit www.operationagri.org.uk and follow the links to carbon offsetting. Alternatively you can phone Malcolm Drummond (daytime, evenings and weekends) on 020 8803 0113. Offsetting the carbon produced by a family of four flying from Birmingham to Barcelona and back, for example, costs £19 towards a cooking stove.

"The United Mission to Nepal has been demonstrating Christ's love in very practical and significant ways for nearly sixty years," says Alan. "UMN is known throughout Nepal as a Christian organisation, committed to the people of Nepal, particularly the poor. Installing these efficient stoves is just one way in which many families are experiencing Christian love and concern. Who knows what spiritual seeds are waiting to sprout?"

"Using Operation Agri's scheme you know that all the funds raised are benefiting some of the poorest people in the world and the schemes are witnessing to the love of Jesus Christ," adds Russell Ashley-Smith, chairman of OA.



Traditional stoves fill the house with smoke.



That's better – for her health, for her children, and for the environment.

Contributing to MDG targets in Bangladesh

By Dr Rachel Sabates-Wheeler. Rachel works in Sussex University's Institute of Development Studies. She is a member of the BMS/OA Development Committee and is an OA Trustee.

In light of the Summit on the Millennium Development Goals, held in New York on 20-22nd September 2010, we reflect on one of our long-running projects and the strides it is making in rural Bangladesh to contribute to eliminating poverty (MDG #1) and health service provision for all (MDGs #4 and #5).

The Community Health Programme (CHP) of the Christian Hospital Chandraghona (CHC) started operating fully in January 2007 to provide a quality service to the marginalised people of Kodamtali Union, Rangunia Upazila. Kodamtali Union is only 3 km² with a population density ten times greater than the national average which provides CHP with a challenging environment in which to work. CHP currently works in 75 villages with a total population of 23,705.

Basic Medical Workers

The main aims of the CHP are to increase medical services to people and communities economically or geographically cut off from modern health care and to improve the socio-economic status of the people. At the very heart of the CHP is a network of female Basic Medical Workers (BMWs), selected from the communities that they work and serve in. These dedicated workers perform a range of tasks, including:

- **Diagnosing and treating minor illnesses:** covering provision of iron supplements, pre-natal and post-natal care as well as referrals;
- **Data collection:** registering deaths, births and pregnancies, as well as keeping up-to-date statistics on migration and short surveys for monitoring purposes;
- **Health protection:** mobilising women and children for immunisations as well as encouraging uptake of mobile clinic services;
- **Health education:** education on immunisations, nutrition, sanitation, and pregnancy.

Mobile Clinics

Mobile Clinics (MC) are just one of the innovative activities that BMWs support as a form of out-patient service to poorer communities. Since the CHP began the mobile clinics 3 years ago the CHP has treated 28,162 patients of Kodamtali who would otherwise have had to come to the hospital in Chandraghona or even go without care altogether, since they would not have been able to afford the high cost of private practitioners. Furthermore, monitoring of Mobile Clinic attendance shows that the seasonal variation in patient attendance is much lower than is usually the case in rural areas without



Issuing de-worming tablets at the children's clinic.



Drilling a deep tube well to provide safe water.

mobile clinics. Moreover, as the Mobile Clinics have a solid reputation within both poorer and middle class communities and given that patients from outside the area are in attendance, the clinics encourage and facilitate social cohesion through class mixing.

Service provision

Women's and child health are critical issues for the Community Health Programme. To this end, the MC and BMWs focus on antenatal care (ANC), appropriate immunisation of pregnant women, and delivery of free iron/folic acid tablets to all registered pregnant women in the project area (since Sept 2009). CHP is also working with Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA), most of whom are untrained, to reduce their harmful practices and develop a healthy relationship with them. Monitoring statistics show that in the project area in 2009 there were no maternal deaths for the second year running. It is progress like this that indicates that this CHP project is contributing significantly to achievement of the national MDG target for 2015.

Health education and promotion is a very important aspect of the work of CHP, as it is through this that they are most likely to make a sustainable difference to the overall health of the community. In 2009 the CHP conducted a total of 449 activities and reached 12,577 participants. Topics addressed included diarrhoea, self-hygiene, maternal care, deworming and HIV/AIDs. A

summary of outreach and influence of the promotional side of the CHP is shown in the table below.

LOCATION / AUDIENCE	No of SESSIONS	No of PARTICIPANTS
Mobile Clinics	339	7095
Public Street Plays	4	1360
School teachers	10	56
Primary school pupils	12	2521
Community Leaders	17	534
Women's Groups	64	938
Traditional Birth Attendants	1	23
Focus Groups:		
Rickshaw pullers	1	32
Youth Groups	1	18
TOTAL	449	12,577

In addition to the above, the CHP also organises and participates in other events such as Community Meetings, Mass Awareness Campaigns and special Health Observation Days such as World Health Day, World Malaria



Public talk on health and hygiene.

£27,000 has been provided by OA towards this programme in 2010.

Day, National Immunisation Day and World AIDS Day.

Finally, CHP has a vision for enabling the whole of Kodamtali union to have access to safe drinking water (tube wells) and healthy sanitation. Collaboration with local elected chairmen and chief government health officers is required, as the provision of safe water and sanitation is a shared responsibility. The hope is that these measures will greatly reduce the number of patients with diarrhoeal diseases. Another added benefit of this kind of work is that the local area and water courses are not contaminated with faeces. This helps in the route to reach MDG #7 – environmental sustainability.

The Christian Hospital at Chandraghona continues to provide low or no cost elective or emergency facility-based care for patients and also provides a base for the BMWs to debrief, share experiences, and to gain further training. The Mobile Clinic innovation introduced by CHP has clearly led to impressive results. The BMWs continue to dedicate their energy to outreach, health service delivery and education. The promotional and sanitation activities add to the holistic nature of this community outreach programme. All of the indicators suggest that this programme will continue to facilitate positive social transformation by supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Based on the Annual Report of the Community Health Programme, Kodamtali.

Case study: Water is life for a School

Our CHP team conducted an orientation program at Bonogram Government Primary school, at Kodomtali Union, attended by 350 children. One of the members of the team began to talk about sanitation and safe drinking water. In that area, many people - especially children - suffer from waterborne disease like diarrhoea, worms, typhoid and some malnutrition diseases. Children and teachers raised the problem that lack of safe drinking water sources is the main difficulty for them. When they come to school for a whole day they have to drink unhygienic and unsafe water from the other sources. There are no safe sources near the school so they often get stomach problems and their school attendance gradually decreases, affecting their annual school results.

The headmaster asked the team if there was any possibility of providing a tube well for school students,

saying this would be highly appreciated. The school authority had previously tried to make a shallow tube well but this ended in failure. A deep tube well was therefore required for the school - more costly than a shallow well. The CHP core team decided to provide a deep tube well and started with the support of community people, children and teachers.

Finally they were able to complete the deep tube well. Now all the students and teachers are happy, they are getting fresh and safe drinking water. School attendance rate has improved, there are fewer water-related cases, and they hope that school results will also improve. Whenever the CHP team visits the school, they meet with the head teacher and follow up the health outcomes. Teachers, children and community people are all very grateful for these improvements.

BMS Thailand Action Team links with OA

By Stan Crees, OA's Overseas Secretary

Four young people from UK are to help install a clean water supply for villagers in northern Thailand. The BMS Thailand Action Team, currently in Chiang Mai, will spend a couple of weeks with Mike Mann, worker with the American Mission, who leads the Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP), supported by Operation Agri since 1996.

This special link-up in OA's fiftieth year will enable the Action Team, when they tour UK churches, to speak about their OA-linked activities alongside their other experiences.

The Thailand Action Team introduce themselves as:

Pete (18) from Leamington Spa - the team's handyman.

Sarah (18) from Rayleigh, Essex - communications exec!

Hannah (18) from Fleet in Hampshire - spiritual warrior.

Ross (20) from Stevenage - financial whizz kid.

Discover more about these young folk by visiting the BMS World Mission web site <http://www.bmsworldmission.org/Profile.aspx?id=7204> and click on the relevant download letter on the right hand side. Whilst in Thailand they will be engaged mainly in BMS-linked activities - schools evangelism, teaching English and working with children with disabilities. Their prayer points can be found on the above web site.

What will they be doing?

ITDP's primary target group is resource-poor families in hill tribe villages which suffer poor infrastructure, and are receiving little or no other development assistance.



Laying the water supply pipeline.

Mike Mann and Stan Crees.

ITDP is providing water and sanitation improvements, agricultural extension including coffee production and marketing, and education and social development.

Ever since ITDP began work in Thailand it has sought to help the semi-nomadic hill tribe groups that populate these isolated villages in the upland and highland areas of Thailand. They face a range of uncertainties. Many villages can no longer depend on their present water sources and consequently villagers have to walk further and further to collect clean water. The shortage of clean drinking water increases the need for medical interventions to combat intestinal diseases that cause diarrhoea - a particular problem among children.

Clean water is required for drinking, bathing, washing dishes, etc., and water is also needed for animals and irrigation. Water is collected from a protected spring, sometimes 1 or 2 km away in the mountains. Pipes are laid towards the village and after filtration water is delivered into a storage tank set above the village. From there it is piped down into a few locations in the village, giving easy access to tapped water and so saving much time and effort for especially the women and children of the village.

It is in this provision of clean water into a needy village that we anticipate the Action Team will be set to work for a week or ten days. It is expected that they will be involved in cutting and bending reinforcement bars, trenching, gluing pipes, mixing cement, carrying rocks and sand, etc. They will build a filtration system, storage tank and connect taps. They will interact with villagers, learning culture, tradition and customs, have a chance play sports, fish the hill tribe way, learn about animism and share their Christian faith.

You will be able to meet members of the Action Team at the Baptist Assembly and at OA's Jubilee Thanksgiving service in London on June 11 (see p.8).



The BMS Thailand Action Team – Ross, Pete, Sarah and Hannah.

Postcards from Thailand



Jacqui Wells was until recently a long-standing BMS world mission worker to the Karen tribes people in Northern Thailand. She has now become a trustee of Operation Agri. This Autumn she revisited Thailand, and saw a coffee project, supported by OA, which is helping people who have been cured of drug addiction to earn a living. Jacqui writes:

I arrived in time to see the green rice seedlings being planted out, with wonderful views over the terraced paddy fields. It's hard work but the Karen work together joyfully, hoping for a good harvest, sufficient to feed their families for the whole year.



My friend, Sittisak, manager of the Coffee Project at Baw Gaow with one of the helpers. Seedlings are distributed to many villages in the area. The farmers grow coffee as a cash crop which really helps their economic situation. They get about £2 per kilo of green coffee beans - equivalent to a day labour's wage in mountain villages.



Yoshu (Joshua) was addicted to heroin for years. He told me that he thought he would never have the joy of a wife and family. Everything was dark and hopeless. But this changed when he went to the drug rehabilitation centre at Baw Gaow. He came off drugs and found Christ as his Saviour. He has now graduated from the Karen Bible School in Chiang Mai, and is married with 3 children. He is a Church Deacon and supports his family growing rice and coffee.

In the evening, after a hard day's work in the rice fields, I met with the villagers of Mae Cha Ta for worship in the Pastor's house. They gave thanks to God for giving them the strength to plant their fields and prayed for his blessing on the rice crop.



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www.operationagri.org.uk.

Or by post from Malcolm Drummond, Operation Agri, 361 Firs Lane, Palmers Green, London N13 5LX

Malcolm will be pleased to help you buy your perfect gift.



Operation Agri's Jubilee

Fifty years ago this spring, as a result of a challenge from BMS missionary David Stockley, the Baptist Men's Movement accepted responsibility for "Operation Agri" - raising funds and despatching goods to the four agricultural missionaries who by then were working overseas. Since then OA has become an independent charity, supporting agricultural and other development work carried out through Christians partners, showing the love of Jesus in action in many parts of the world.

In this Jubilee year, there are several special occasions when OA's work will be remembered:

- **Birthday celebrations:** 11th-13th March, Baptist Men's Movement conference at the Bosworth Hall hotel, Market Bosworth, Leicestershire. OA's birthday will be celebrated during the weekend, which also includes our **AGM** on Saturday 12th March at 3.30 p.m. Members of the Baptist Men's Movement and other individuals and representatives of churches and other organisations who regularly subscribe to the work of OA are, in accordance with section E of the Constitution, entitled to attend.
- **Baptist Assembly:** 29th April – 2nd May, at the Norbreck Hotel, Blackpool. OA's contribution to Baptist life and service will be marked during the assembly, with special guest **Rev Dr Roshan Mendis**, executive director of our partner organisation, LEADS, Sri Lanka.
- **Operation Agri service of thanksgiving and dedication:** 2.00 p.m. on Saturday 11th June at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, with key-note speaker **Rev Dr Paul Beasley-Murray**, and other specially invited guests with links to Operation Agri's work over the years. *OA supporters are welcome to come to this service.*

"Harvest of Hope" OA Jubilee Appeal resource pack

Operation Agri's Annual Appeal resource pack this year will look back to the past, and forward to the future.

The theme is "**Harvest of Hope**," with film from projects that OA is supporting in three continents:

- **Asia:** A coffee project in Thailand among the Karen tribal people;
- **Africa:** Help and training for farmers in northern Uganda, returning to their land after years of conflict;
- **South America:** Honey production in Brazil, developed by BMS World Mission workers Mike and Daveen Wilson.

The resources will include PowerPoints with historic photos from projects that OA has been involved with over its 50 years.

The pack can be used at harvest, or at any time during the Jubilee year to celebrate OA's support for agricultural and other development work in Christ's name.

OA's finances in this Jubilee year

A footnote from OA's chairman, Russell Ashley-Smith

We are grateful to God that our income has remained steady during these years of financial stringency. We have been able to maintain the level of remittances in support of our overseas partners' work. They have been very understanding, in some instances holding back planned project expansions or seeking top-up funding from other sources.

Over the past decade OA's trustees have agreed deficit budgets so as to reduce our balance carried forward each year, which had become unreasonably large. Over

the next couple of years we must however return to a balanced budget.

This means that with a steady income we have to reduce our budget for support of overseas projects. We expect to continue to support all continuing projects but our ability to adopt new projects will be severely limited. The trustees are however praying that there will be an increase in income whereupon a modest expansion of project support may be possible.

Operation
AGRI

This year is our 50th birthday, and we are inviting you to celebrate with us.

Children could collect 5p coins in the special gift box which will be enclosed with the next issue of this magazine. Those a little older could collect 50p coins in the same way. Or why not make a special one-off Jubilee Golden Gift of £50 or even £500?

If you can send us a picture of your celebration, we will print as many as we can later this year.

➤ I am an **Operation Agri Partner**, and enclose my regular gift of:

£

➤ I enclose a one-off gift towards the work of **Operation Agri:**

£

➤ I want to **become an Operation Agri Partner**, and enclose my first regular gift (recommended minimum £10):

£

Please send me the "Outreach Abroad" magazine by post every 3 months:

Yes/No

➤ I enclose a gift **from our church/organisation** towards the work of **OA**:

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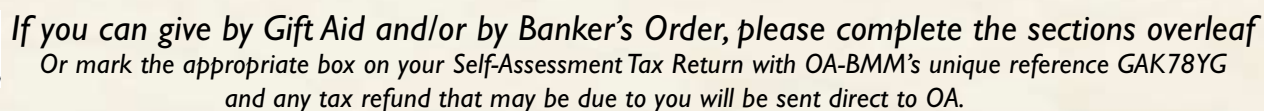
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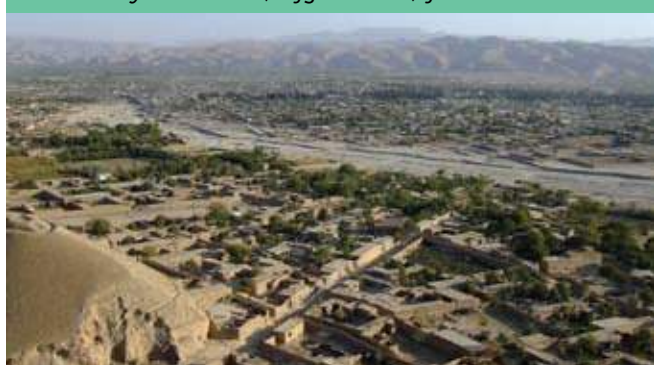
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Eye Care Improvements for Faryab Province, Afghanistan

This article was written by Brian Germann, an American trained in engineering, management and leadership. He has spent seven years in Afghanistan as the MOC Project Manager.

Faryab Province, Afghanistan, from the air.



Maimana Community Eye Centre is an outreach programme of the International Assistance Mission, coordinated by the Mazar Ophthalmic Centre Project (MOC) to make eye care more accessible to patients in Faryab province. Faryab province has almost a million people, and it is estimated that approximately 90% live in rural areas. The provincial capital, Maimana serves as a market and commerce centre for the entire province. Having a well-equipped facility with affordable eye care in this city will meet multiple needs.

At present approximately 10% of MOC's 35,000 patients seen in a year come from Faryab province. We anticipate that half of this demographic will shift to the Maimana CEC within the first year. One patient from Faryab reported that he came six hours by road and spent about 300 Afghani (£4) just in transport. That's two full day's wages for many rural workers. He came to the NOOR facility, because of its reputation, yet he had a very simple problem that could have been treated at the facility in Maimana.

Once opened, the facility will save patients up to four hours of travel time. More importantly, those in isolated regions who cannot travel all the way to Mazar-e Sharif will have an eye care facility within reach.

Quality of Service

IAM's involvement in the Maimana CEC allows the facility to function in a realm that affords it greater freedom



IAM.



Dr Niamat performing an eye-test.

to reach the poorest people with the best quality of service. The private sector typically charges high fees, uses lower quality instruments, and has less regulation of cleanliness and efficiency. It also allows doctors and medical staff to negotiate prices with patients which at times results in refusal of services. Operating under the auspices of a non-government, non-profit project gives the ability to be well equipped, better monitored, charge affordable fees and even provide free care to the poorest patients.

Dr Niamat who runs this clinic was chosen due to his years of loyal service and his demonstration of proficiency with little or no supervision. His wife is also an Ophthalmologist trained at MOC and they will together set up the program, hire its staff and manage administration and reporting. They hope to spend the first year establishing a presence in the Maimana community as a clinic which offers services similar to other NOOR facilities. Logistical help will be provided

**Operation Agri has provided
£18,100 towards enabling this
project to commence.**

by NOOR along with limited oversight and training as available. The goal, however, is for this clinic to be completely independent of operational funding. The clinic will charge agreed fees and the income will then be used to cover operational expenses and the doctor's salaries.

In the past, NOOR has carried out eye camps (mobile clinics - one or two per week) and has conducted hundreds of surgeries in rural locations in Faryab province. These mobile clinics serve a huge need in the North, but have equally huge limitations. They come only once every two years and only serve only two or three villages out of many. They have a difficult time doing follow up past a few days. These limitations exist all over the country. If the Maimana CEC succeeds in mitigating the needs addressed by eye camps, it could provide a model that the government and other NGOs could implement in other areas.

Eye surgery in a rural clinic.

Paul Kyalimpa – Farmer Trainer

By Ralph and Jane Hanger, who have recently retired from African Pastors' Fellowship, with whom OA has partnered as together we work with Paul in sustainable agriculture.

Africa Pastors Fellowship and Paul Kyalimpa.



Farmers making notes at one of Paul Kyalimpa's seminars.

Sitting, sometimes under a tree and sometimes under a canvas cover, Uganda farmers are working towards one of the Millennium goals – the eradication of Poverty. Trainer Paul Kyalimpa is sharing with them not only information which will help them develop their farming skills in realistic and practical manner, but also something of his passion for sustainable organic agriculture.

Having been trained in Uganda, Denmark and with the Kulika project in Reading, UK, Paul is convinced of the importance to Uganda, and elsewhere, of this kind of training and farming.

Busia – SE Uganda

His original enthusiasm was for a massive venture in many centres throughout Uganda, but initially this was trimmed down to the Busia Sustainable Agricultural project in the South East of Uganda. This has been heavily supported by OA, through 4 phases over 7 years.

Each group of farmers was started with 4 young oxen which were trained, together with the farmers, to plough the fields, turning a potential of ½ acre worked by hoe and hand into 14 acres of cultivated land.

Monthly training sessions have been a key part of this project. In each phase, two CFTs (Community Farmer Trainers) from each of 8 groups of 30 farmers have been invited to attend Paul's monthly training and then pass on what they have learned to the other members of their groups. The sessions have moved around each month so that other farmers from the host group can join in the training.

One of the first sessions was on making and using A frames to enable the planting of pineapples around the contours of the land. Pineapple slips given as part of the course soon

produced a good crop of lush pineapples, which acted as a spur and encouragement in the early days of the project.

When I joined in one of Paul's courses in Busia, I learned the delights of organic composting and making leaf tea and liquid manure and watched as farmers started their compost pits. A year later I went to the same area, but visited a farmer who was not part of the project. She was also making compost. 'My neighbour, Wanyama, showed me what to do,' she said. Wanyama is one of the key CF Trainers from the Busia Project. Paul's training had spread!

A certain amount of time on each course is spent in direct 'teaching' with flip charts and note books. A large part however, is spent looking at the host farm and actually trying out some of the techniques being discussed. On another course participants went out to collect garlic, African marigold and even tobacco leaves. These were chopped up and soaked in the appropriate amount of fluids. Paul then produced the mixture he had made 3 weeks earlier and they went out on the farm to learn how to spray citrus plants against aphids.

Each month, during the relevant phase of the project, Community Farmer Trainers learn a different skill. Gradually Paul has taught a wide range of topics to these farmers. As a result significant improvements have been made in the agriculture and livelihoods of not only the more than 900 farmers who have taken part in the scheme over 4 phases, but also of others in the community who have learned from them.



Preparing to plough with new oxen.

Karagwe – NW Tanzania

The Rev Heavenlight Luoga, an indigenous missionary working in and around Karagwe heard about OA and made contact. OA enabled him along with two others to attend one of the regular training courses at Busia run by Paul, in April 2009. Heavenlight was so impressed with what he experienced there that he asked for similar help in Tanzania and he established FPI (Farming Projects Initiatives). Through 2009 and 2010 OA has funded a series of residential training courses for up to 20 farmers which Paul has run and these will continue throughout 2011 and 2012.

Gulu – NE Uganda

For over 20 years the North of Uganda suffered tremendously at the hands of the Lord's Resistance Army. A high proportion of the population of North and North West Uganda were forced away from their homes and into Internally Displaced People's camps. That threat seems to have been removed from the area over the past couple of years.

Paul reports:

'Today, as the war is over, people are going back to their land in the rural communities. Most of these returnees are returning with nothing. They have no house, no farming tools or farming skills to improve their livelihoods.'

This is where Paul's 'Farmer Field Schools' as he called them in his last report, come in. He comments:

'Farmer Field Schools are an ongoing project programme to improve farmers' capacity in organic/sustainable farming skills is supported by an Operation Agri grant to improve rural livelihoods, social equity and environmental sustainability among small scale farmers in Gulu district in Northern Uganda.'

In the same way as he did in Busia, Paul has started training Community Farmer Trainers in basic skills such as compost making. He writes:

'Learning skills of compost making, the small scale farmers of Gulu district in northern Uganda are keen to improve rural livelihoods, social equity and environmental sustainability. In many cases small scale farmers do not have enough money to purchase external inputs, so they exhaust the soil in their farming systems. Exhaustion of the

Operation Agri has contributed £16,800 towards this work in the past year.

soil leads to decrease in production and this in turn leads to poverty, famine and environmental degradation.'

This scheme in Gulu is in its infant stages but should meet a real need for people at a crucial stage in resettlement.

To all who want it

With the passion that Paul has for this ministry of sustainable organic farming, he has found time to put together a 'Read and Do Farmer's Manual' to help others in this pursuit. OA has assisted Paul with the production costs. In this book, he has given all sorts of practical advice, most of it gained from experience, on topics such as - The Soil - Plant Pests and Disease control - Conservation Farming - Nursery Preparation and Farm Management - Livestock Management - Bio Gas and much, much more.

It is hoped that this manual will be a reminder to those who have been under Paul's tuition in the Farmer Field Schools as well as reaching out to a wider audience through East Africa - to those who need information and encouragement to put into practice realistic Sustainable Agriculture.

Paul has been given skills and enthusiasm to train his fellow Ugandan farmers in essential skills for their survival and development. OA is thrilled to be able to be part of his important ministry.

Learning how to plant pineapples.



News in Brief

Celebrating 35 years of service in Sri Lanka

Congratulations were sent from OA to Mr Clarence Mendis, who on October 2nd 2010, celebrated 35 years of service as the manager of Farms Lanka and also as an Agricultural Evangelist. We have partnered with Clarence in this work for the past 16 years and during that time many hundreds of individuals and families have benefitted from the small loans scheme operated under Clarence's supervision. This was a very happy day for all who joined in the ceremony – an opportunity to give thanks to God for his leading and for all to renew their commitment to the ministry. Clarence was presented with a wall clock to mark the occasion and in turn he gave a packet of vegetable seeds to all who attended.

Good news for training in South Africa

Things look set to get a whole lot better for the Thusong Training Project in Soweto, South Africa. (See New Year issue 2010). At a recent meeting of the Thusong Board it was announced that the ownership of the property is being transferred from the Southern Baptists to the Baptist Convention of South Africa. This in turn means that the BCSA Bible College can relocate to the site bringing all their students who will be able to benefit from the skills training on offer, alongside their theological studies. The board also agreed that a partner should manage the agricultural use of the land which will benefit both the BCSA and that partner. More good news came with the approval for a partnership with an accredited learning centre which means that students will receive a recognised and approved certificate on completion of their course.

Bad news for whitefly in Zimbabwe

The schools market gardening project reported in our last issue is now going well thanks to an urgent intervention. An application was received for funding for a further school garden and at the same time spraying equipment and appropriate insecticide was requested to deal with an infestation of whitefly and cutworm. It was realised here in UK that if we didn't respond quickly there might not be any crops left to treat by the time funding was approved. Appropriate funds were sent immediately, and photographs taken since show what a good decision that was! In this



AIDS medication enhancing herbs being grown (foreground) at Nyumbawe.

picture the herbs growing in the foreground have been found to enhance the effectiveness of AIDS medication when mixed with their normal food. Behind these herbs the carrots are doing well as are the spinach and onions in the background.

A goat to the rescue at Diptipur

Mihir Sagar, the manager at the West Utkal Agricultural Centre in Orissa, India, reports that many farmers come to the centre for help with the difficulties they face in their farming practise. Through the long established Resource Centre at WUAC they are provided with materials and training to deal with their problems. Asthami Pak, a lady with two sons, a daughter and a sick husband to support, expresses her appreciation of the goat that was supplied to her in 2006 through a Self-Help Group. This goat and the subsequent sale of its offspring have helped to see her through difficult times – "It is unforgettable," says Asthami, "how that goat stood by me, enabling me to bring up my children and provide treatment for my husband."

Tears of gratitude

The Leads district officer at Kurunegala, Sri Lanka, tells us "We faced a real problem when we could not provide assistance to all the villagers. It was a challenge to decide whom we should help. I remember an incident when a villager cried in happiness when she was told that she would receive assistance to set up a home garden that was being supported through the OA project." Another beneficiary commented: "OA helped us meet the needs of our village in the areas of animal husbandry, home gardening etc., so many people were able to earn more for their families. Our people are so grateful for the assistance provided which makes our lives easier."

Prayer Points

Please use this page in conjunction with other information in the magazine

D R Congo

- 1 While great needs in Congo persist, it becomes ever more challenging to support and monitor projects upriver. There have been more reports of systematic rape and mutilation of young women being used as a weapon of war in the East of the country.
- 2 Give thanks that the OA-supported tailoring project in Kinshasa is giving hope to women there, as is a soya and maize programme in the village of Kimbi in Bas Congo.

Zimbabwe

- 3 Life continues to be tough for people throughout this country. Pray for integrity in government, and especially remember for those for whom life is a desperate struggle to simply survive. Water shortages and insect predations are a challenge to food production. Lack of employment opportunities are another prayer challenge.

Tanzania

- 4 The OA Trustees have recently agreed continuing support for a Sustainable Agriculture Project that will benefit around 150 farmers and their dependent families in the remote Karagwe region to the west of Lake Victoria. Throughout the two years of funding, four-day residential training courses will be held every three months. In year two a rotating loan fund will enable farmers to buy things like oxen and ploughs, water pumps and tree seedlings to make their farming more profitable.

Uganda

- 5 OA has helped fund printing of our partner Paul Kyalimpa's book 'Sustainable Agriculture, a read and do manual.' Pray that this book will circulate widely throughout southern and eastern Africa and be a blessing to many subsistence farmers.
- 6 Pray too for Paul who lives a busy life running his own farm and also training farmers in other parts of Uganda as well as the Tanzanian initiative (above).

Nicaragua

- 7 Pray for the people of Nicaragua. During last September and October the country was deluged by continuous rain. Crops were lost, roads and paths washed away and water supplies contaminated. As a result there was an upsurge of disease in the villages.
- 8 Pray that our partners at AMOS will have the resources to deal with these situations and wisdom to know how to use them to best advantage. Pray too that National Government will not forget these isolated villagers and that communication will be quickly restored.

Bangladesh

- 9 The Children's Education Programme under SHED Board seeks to provide early age education to over two thousand children from under-privileged homes. Food insecurity is also a serious problem amongst such children. Pray that the parents will learn to value the education of their children and that their time in school may provide opportunity for many needs to be met.
- 10 Oasis Global have appointed a new director for NGO work in Bangladesh - Nripen Baidya. May he be encouraged in his new post and may his leadership be effective in building up Oasis' work in the country – this includes the OA supported Duaripara slum project.

Brazil

- 11 BMS workers Mike and Daveen Wilson continue to lead very busy lives at Trapiá in the deprived NE of Brazil. This year they have their son Paul working with them. Pray for that the whole family will know God's enrichment and encouragement in their lives. (Debbie is helping at Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church for a year; Julia is at school in UK).
- 12 Remember the people of Trapiá, particularly those who have responsibilities in the church and for the building of income generating activities in the area.

India

- 13 Tony Sykes visited the West Utkal Agricultural Centre in Orissa, India, in the autumn. Pray for the Lord's leading as the Development Committee considers his report on the various outreaches of this long-standing project.

Home

- 14 Give thanks to God for the recent appointment of three new Operation Agri trustees: Mary Hart from Taunton, Jacqui Wells from Coventry and John Durrant from Glamorgan. May they be used by God to extend the work of our charity.
- 15 The early months of 2011 will put extra pressure on the officers and committee of OA as we prepare for celebrations of fifty years of our work around the world. Pray that we may be equipped by God's Holy Spirit in all the planning and preparation.
- 16 Give thanks to God for his provision over these fifty years and pray that our celebrations may bring glory to his name and be the means of bringing encouragement to our supporters and our worldwide partners alike.
- 17 In celebrating the past we shall also be looking to the future of Operation Agri. Pray for rich blessing on the work as we continue in our God given task of endeavouring to show the love of Jesus in action amongst some of the world's neediest people.



DEVELOPMENT IN CHRIST'S NAME 1961-2011

HARVEST OF HOPE – OUR 2011 APPEAL

It's not too early to begin thinking about this year's appeal, which will focus on the future of OA's work in the light of the last 50 years, with video from Thailand, Uganda and Brazil. The resource pack will be available from May onwards, with an order form appearing in the next issue of this magazine.



YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT



Offset the carbon dioxide you release into the environment by air or road travel by making a small

donation to one of our carbon offsetting projects, providing solar powered water heaters to villagers in Afghanistan, or fuel-efficient cooking stoves to people in Nepal. Visit the website to see how easy this is to do: www.operationagri.org.uk, following the links to 'Carbon Offsetting.'

PRESENTS WITH A PURPOSE

Christmas is behind us, but there are still many opportunities for you to give through our 'Presents with a Purpose' scheme. Birthdays, Anniversaries and other special occasions can benefit the work we do overseas. Churches too can participate in the same way.



OA's WEB SITE

Information about any aspect of our work can be found on our web site, which has recently been redesigned. Visit: www.operationagri.org.uk

Operation Agri supports rural and urban development projects on three continents, attacking the basic causes of poverty amongst some of the least fortunate people in the world. Many of the projects are run by churches or organisations in partnership with BMS World Mission.

Operation Agri BMM was established by the Baptist Men's Movement in 1961.
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DONATIONS and ENQUIRIES to Malcolm Drummond: Operation Agri BMM, 361 Firs Lane, Palmers Green, London, N13 5LX tel: 020 8803 0113 (daytime or evening) email: admin@operationagri.org.uk

Visit our website: www.operationagri.org.uk