



**Supporting
Development
in Christ's Name
1961-2011**

Summer 2011

Outreach Abroad



In this issue:

- Jubilee Celebrations
- Sewing and Bee-keeping in Zimbabwe
- Thailand Action Team
- LEADS in Sri Lanka



Celebrating God's Goodness over 50 years

By Chris Haig, Secretary of OA

As we celebrate the fifty years of service that is Operation Agri, we thank God for the faithfulness of those within the Baptist Men's Movement and BMS World Mission who had the vision to come together and begin the work.

In Revelation John, bringing encouragement to a small group of Christians who were expressing Christ's love in the midst of difficulties, writes, "God says, when I open a door no-one can close it." We thank God that he continues to keep doors of opportunity open to OA. Fifty years on, over £5 million sent overseas and now supporting 33 projects in 14 countries including farming, health, education, urban renewal – life changing help for some of the world's neediest people. Who would have thought it?

God tells the Philadelphians, "I know everything you have done. You were not very strong, but you obeyed my message and did not deny that you were my followers." Here is an encouragement for us, looking at the problems in society around us, the credit crunch, the pressures on Christians, the opposition of extremists in society. It can feel as if we are working alone and that people do not understand the demands to which we are responding, but God assures us, "I know what's going on and your service is not in vain."

As custodians of the heritage we have been given, challenged to continue to seek to make a difference in the lives of some of the least fortunate people in the world, I am encouraged that God keeps on providing people who step in and take responsibility, and by the way he stimulates people to give so that needed funds continue to flow.

God says to us, "I will protect you from the time of testing that everyone in the entire world must go through." The future is secure because God oversees it.

Do join us in prayer and in giving. Continue to share in what God is still doing, expressing his concern for people for whom Christ died and rose again.

Change of Treasurer, Change of Trustees

John Durrant of Llantwit Major is OA's new treasurer (on the right in the photo). Also pictured are **Jacqui Wells** (Coventry, on the left) and **Mary Hart** (Taunton) who



Jacqui Wells,
Mary Hart
and John
Durrant.

became Trustees last Autumn and are now helping OA's liaison with overseas partners.

Michael Putnam has retired as treasurer while continuing as a Trustee and one of OA's nominees on the BMS Development Committee. Michael was founder-secretary of OA when launched by the Baptist Men's Movement in 1961. A presentation during the Jubilee event in London in June recognised his outstanding contribution to Operation Agri.

Presentations were also made to three retiring Trustees: **Sue Headlam's** first link with OA was when, as a BMS worker at the Christian Hospital, Chandraghona, Bangladesh, we supported her weaving project. Since returning to this country Sue has served OA as assistant overseas secretary.

OA similarly supported **Gill and Glyn Jones** when they were BMS workers in Albania. Back in the UK and as OA's Editor, Glyn managed the transition to the full colour A4 magazine while Gill served as Projects Officer and pioneered Presents with a Purpose.

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Front Cover Photograph:

Former drug addict now growing coffee thanks to Christian rehabilitation work in Thailand (see pp. 4-5).

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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.

Morning Star shines for neglected families *by Gill Jones*

BMS workers Kevin and Gill Jones have responsibility for developing BMS work in Zimbabwe. Kevin specialises in development work and Gill in HIV related work.



above: Ladies from the sewing class, with the aprons they made. **right:** Products from the sewing class.



'Morning Star' ranch is a 3000 acre wilderness in the eastern Matobo Hills, just to the south of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe. The Hills are the biggest outcrop of exposed granite in the world, 1200 square miles of pristine grandeur, recently proclaimed a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. It is an area of low rainfall, between 40 and 60 cm annually, the majority of which falls between December and the end of February. It is prone to drought. The oppressive political regime of the governing party has been eased slightly in the last two years by the power-sharing administration, but the area 'chiefs,' who are appointed rather than elected and who receive payment from the government, are from the party that has ruled for most of the past 30 years. This creates a local 'elite' and any resources sent to the area by government are firstly channelled to these very few people.

Over the years these few factors, to which can be added poor education and almost unobtainable healthcare, have left many families with little or no income. Many of the men have left home to find work in neighbouring South Africa and so often their return adds to the extremely high incidence of HIV/AIDS infection, which in turn leads to many 'child headed households' and orphans. Many of these children are looked after by grandparents, who struggle to support their families.

Into these situations, Chris and Norma Ferguson are seeking to serve their local community and bring a little relief to the people among whom they live. They are

doing this with the aid of a grant from OA to create some small income-generating projects. They are hoping eventually to be able to do several projects, but initially they are starting with sewing and bee-keeping and then moving on to making soap and paper products.



below: Making beehives from straw. **bottom:** Covering the straw beehive with manure.



Credit: Kevin and Gill Jones, BMS.

The sewing project is going well. A lady from Bulawayo comes out to stay at Morning Star every other week, and teaches the local ladies group sewing. At present it is all sewing by hand, but they are hoping to find some treadle machines in order to show other ways of sewing. Some of the products have already been sent to the States to be sold there.

They are just beginning to start the bee-keeping. They have had one 'training' by a local organisation for some of the women in the area with the bee-keeping course, which was very well received and are now buying materials to make more hives.

Chris and Norma are also involved in other activities in their area, including feeding orphans, helping with literacy in the local schools and also building a community centre on one piece of their land by the 'main' road to benefit the whole community. Here they want to be able to encourage the local youth in sport, as well as having a place where a church could be planted once the building is complete.

Operation Agri has provided £6,492 towards this project.

A world of difference

Gill Ashley-Smith writes about the background to this year's Jubilee Appeal

In this Jubilee year for Operation Agri, the "Harvest of Hope" pack of resources spans the world, with film from projects in three continents. Operation Agri began by helping farming missionaries with agricultural projects, and although many types of development work are now supported, agriculture remains a particular interest. The three projects featured this year all have an agricultural link, bringing a harvest of hope to many families.

Uganda: Back to basics agriculture

In Gulu, northern Uganda, the Acholi people are returning to their land after the long-running conflict there. For 20 years they lived in camps, and now have the challenge of farming again, while facing issues like population growth, division of land among family members, and land disputes, leading to a decline in the amount of farm land per farmer, with increasing pressure on trees for timber, fuel and construction.

Rev Paul Kyalimpa of the Uganda Baptist Union, with Operation Agri's support, is helping them. He says in the past small scale farmers used slash and burn practices to clear land, which is environmentally destructive, causing deforestation, air pollution and soil erosion, and contributes to global warming, with the danger of increased droughts and floods.



These women received goats as loans, and will later pay back a goat kid.

In his monthly farmer field schools Paul teaches farmers how to change to sustainable, organic farming practices. This helps them to get better productivity from the available land, improving the soil, and conserving water, trees and wildlife.

Oxen, provided by Operation Agri, have been a great encouragement. Using oxen rather than hoes to prepare the land makes the farmers' tasks easier, saving time and labour, but also increases yields and incomes. Using oxen improves the soil structure and fertility by ploughing the vegetation into the soil, rather than burning it off which results in soil degradation.

- Paul demonstrates to farmers how compost retains water in the soil, even in hot dry periods. Crops grown on compost look healthy and green, whereas those without it are dry, wilting and unhealthy.

- Women are given loans of pigs or goats. This helps lift the women's status in the community, and manure from the animals helps fertilise the crops.
- Families are encouraged to grow fruit trees, planted in compost, for food, cash crops and shade.
- Farmers learn to slash and mulch, instead of slash and burn – putting cut grass around crops to suppress weeds, conserve moisture and prevent soil erosion.

For these families who have been unable to farm for so many years, all this encouragement and practical advice is bringing good harvests, and hope for the future.

Ojoko Charles and his family – their pawpaw tree is grown on a compost pit which helps it resist the long drought heat, and it provides fruit throughout the year.



Credits: Paul Kyalimpa.

Brazil: Trapiá bees are busy

The rain started early this year in Trapiá, Brazil, which is good news, as last year many crops failed due to drought. Everything is now green again, although some crops are in danger of being waterlogged!

The bees have been busy, and some of the bee-keepers have harvested two batches of honey, with more to come soon. The school teacher, Edilson, has encouraged two new men, Oziel and Zé, to start keeping bees. Their hives now all have bee colonies installed, and they will soon be able to harvest honey to sell. Both have families to support, and no regular income. It was in order to benefit people like these that Mike and Daveen Wilson, of BMS World Mission, started the honey project.

HARVEST of HOPE



Building alterations to the Honey House.

They are also helping Edilson to make the required changes to the Honey House by adding on two bathrooms, male and female, as required now by officials in the Ministry. Daveen comments this ruling is ridiculous as they don't have water for even one flush loo, let alone two! The old bathroom will become the sterilisation unit. Hopefully they will soon get the permission needed to filter, bottle and sell the honey to commercial outlets.

Daveen asks prayer for protection for the hives. A jealous neighbour stole Edilson's honey last year, and destroyed several hives. The two new bee-keepers have put their hives by Edilson's, and between them they are keeping a close watch, but this neighbour actually shot Edilson's dog dead recently.

Of all the original beekeepers, Edilson and his wife Raniela, who feature in OA's Jubilee DVD, are the ones who've truly worked to include others. But they have also suffered the most, experiencing what Jesus said – you will be hated because of me, but stick with it (Mark 13v13). Kingdom work is not accomplished without opposition, so pray for protection and perseverance for them.

There was a joyful service at Trapiá church on Easter Sunday, when 10 people were baptised. Some have had difficult times, but people in the church have been encouraging them.



Beekeepers Oziel, Edilson and Zé.

Credits: Daveen Wilson, BMS.

Thailand: Reforming lives through coffee

The Karen Baptist Church in northern Thailand has for many years had a programme to help drug addicts. Opium grows readily here, and heroin and amphetamines are also available. The Karen people don't grow opium themselves, but other tribes have traditionally been involved, and then have enticed Karen people to try it. It can really hold them in bondage: it's very hard to give up.



Nohan

Nohan has worked with drug addicts for over 23 years. They stay at a church centre for three months and gradually come off drugs, helped by herbal medicine to detoxify them, plus lots of support and encouragement – but most of all through learning that Jesus can set them free. Finding faith in Christ makes all the difference. Over 70% going through this programme have come off drugs for good.

When they leave the centre there is a danger that people who sold them drugs before may try to entice them to start again. So for the past 5 years Nohan has been involved in rehabilitation: training former addicts to grow coffee, with Operation Agri's support. As they return home, he follows them up with advice and help to cultivate coffee bushes, giving them a new focus and source of income. The rest of the village is encouraged to grow coffee too.

The best quality coffee grows at high altitude, and these hills at 3000 ft are ideal. Much of the land is given over to terraced rice paddies, but coffee bushes grow well in the forest above. They sell the coffee beans at a guaranteed price to the Tribal Coffee Co-operative. The extra income helps them support the family, send children to school, and buy medicines if they are sick. Nohan has seen many blessings as lives have changed.

Last summer Nohan went to Bangkok to receive an award from the Thai Prime Minister for this work with drug addicts, notably their 70% success rate, much higher than other detox centres. The PM also acknowledged the importance of coffee growing, providing the reformed addicts with an income. This was a great honour for Nohan and for all involved in the project.

OA celebrates at Market Bosworth and Blackpool

OA's 50th anniversary AGM was held at the BMM Conference at Market Bosworth in March

Our Chairman Russell Ashley-Smith reviewed salutary events in the organisation's history – how OA began with the late David Stockley; the excavation of storage reservoirs at Diptipur through Alan Casebow's food-for-work programme; Sue Headlam's community health initiative in Bangladesh. Russell then interviewed some of those supported by OA over the years – John and Jean Smith, who 55 years ago started the farm demonstrations at Diptipur in India which OA has supported ever since; Jacqui Wells, who worked with the tribal groups in North Thailand; Michael Putnam, OA's Treasurer, who has been involved at the UK end for most of OA's history.

John Passmore vividly and humorously illustrated his links with OA, first as a missionary (*"What's a broody hen called in Bengali?"*) and then as a BMS Regional Secretary recalling that *"It's in His Name that we did it."*

Conscious of the countless thousands who have benefited from our support over the years, we concluded the anniversary celebrations by ourselves enjoying a slice of OA's 50th birthday cake!

Glyn Jones (Recently retired OA Trustee)

The 2011 Baptist Assembly was a great opportunity to celebrate our Jubilee with our Baptist Family

From the main platform, in the exhibition hall and in the seminar programme the work of Operation Agri was acknowledged and supported.

Roshan Mendis, the Executive Director of our Sri Lankan partner, Lanka Evangelical Alliance Development Service (LEADS), spoke at our seminar. Using the stories of two beggars he illustrated the difference between charity (the giving of alms) and development. Charity may temporarily alleviate poverty but development seeks to eliminate poverty by tackling the causes. Below is a summary of some of the challenges and questions he brought to us.

What is the Gospel?

Our understanding of the Gospel will affect our understanding of mission and our approach to development. The Kingdom of God, which is central to Gospel, is the rule and authority of God being worked out on earth.

What is our mission?

Our mission is to pray for and act to bring in the Kingdom of God. In Jesus' healings, in his nature miracles, in his forgiveness of sin and in his ministry among the poor and marginalised he proclaimed the rule of the Kingdom of God had begun in Him.



top: John and Jean Smith at our AGM during the BMM Conference.



left: Sarah from the Thailand Action Team taking part in our Assembly Seminar.



above: Roshan Mendis of LEADS, Sri Lanka, speaking at our Seminar.
Credit: Gill Ashley-Smith.

What is development?

Is a society where an 85 year old person stays in an old people's home, lonely and isolated from family but with all modern facilities more developed than one where people may only live to be 65 but are surrounded by their family, children and grandchildren throughout their lives? One is poor in relationships and the other is poor in resources and services. As we seek Kingdom Development what are we trying to bring into people lives, resources or relationships?

What is the Christian motivation for development?

Equality is one of the basic motivations for development. At the core of equality is the Christian conviction that each person is of infinite and therefore equal worth and should be treated as such.

What characterizes Kingdom Development?

- **Work** – Throughout scriptures, the dignity of the poor is preserved by allowing them to work their way out of poverty.
- **Freedom** – the Kingdom of God advocates help for the poor through freedom from oppression.
- **Respect** – The scriptures teach us to "defer to one another" – we need to identify local people who are already making changes, and draw alongside to support their efforts.
- **Partnership** – The central and primary theme of development efforts should be to equip the local saints for the work God has called them to and for which he has uniquely gifted them.

Mary Hart (Newly appointed OA Trustee)

“Excellent videos.
Interesting and
inspiring”



**HARVEST
of HOPE**



“Wide variety
of resources”

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Operation Agri BMM a Baptist development organisation, supporting church-linked rural and urban development projects in 3 continents.



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The BMS Thailand Action Team help to install a village water supply

In March 2011, at the end of their time in Thailand, three of the BMS Action Team – Sarah, Ross and Pete (Hannah was unwell) – spent 5 days working in a remote North Thailand village helping to install a clean water supply as part of the project work of the Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP) which OA supports through our partner Mike Mann. This is the record of their work and witness during that period.

After a long and bumpy journey we arrived at our destination. As the village lacked running water we were to connect pipes from the water source at the top of the mountain down into the village. We climbed the mountain, carrying a number of pipes to the water source. The Karen people were so agile and speedy it put us foreigners to shame, as we battled with the scorching afternoon heat! Later the task was complete and we were able to enjoy a running shower and there was a water source for cooking in the village!

Perhaps the biggest struggle was the language barrier. The village is Po Karen. We had been living with Skor Karen people so we had to deal with a completely different language, and a people who were very shy in using their Thai. They soon recovered from their shyness and we communicated well together. Translating for the Americans who were with us provided a real example of how God equipped us for his work, and used us in a way that we never expected.

The villagers expected us to have a day off on Sunday as we are Christians. We began the first of the Vacation Bible School sessions (VBS), teaching the children a Bible story and then helping them in craft activities. These special times continued on Monday. It was such a privilege to be able to share the gospel with them.

Monday began with the girls heading up to the site of the holding tank, where they, along with many of the villagers, began laying the frame for the base of the water holding tank. Meanwhile the boys were hiking up the 700m mountain, where they began working their way along the connected piping, trenching and burying it, to ensure it was not damaged.

On Tuesday we continued the water installation tasks, the boys completing the trenching and girls laying the first ring of the holding tank and then moving on to help to build a toilet for one of the homes in the village. Some of the female villagers offered to help and this became a great opportunity to build relationships. Work of this nature continued through the day followed by opportunities for fun and relaxation with the villagers.

Wednesday was our last full day in the village, and turned out to be the busiest and most productive day of all as we completed many of the jobs started earlier – pouring concrete, sifting sand, carrying stones to the water source – all in what seemed to us to be the hottest day of all. This our last full day concluded with a wide variety of entertainment. Looking at the stars that night made us realise how beautiful the country is, and how powerful and supreme our God is. He was with us in everything during our time in Thailand, and I can't even begin to express just how blessed we are!

We are so grateful to OA for their encouragements during our time there, and I know we are all eager to return to Thailand!



Villagers construct a clean water supply system with the help of the BMS Action Team.



Credits: BMS.

Memories and thanks from partners

Earlier this year we asked some of overseas partners to comment on the help they had received from Operation Agri. We presented some of their responses in our previous issue. Here are a few more.

Ian Pitkethly* – Congo, 1960s and 70s

CEDECO became an agricultural centre in the sixties and seventies. We raised chicks until they were six weeks old and gave them to people in the villages who had visited us and spent time learning how to care for the chicks. This was to improve the quality of the poultry in the villages. Also MAF flew day old chicks to agricultural centres all over Congo for us.

OA provided us with an incubator and 400 chicks from England which became the foundation stock of our work, enabling the Africans to be self-sufficient. Thank you so much OA!



Ian Pitkethly with day-old chicks.

Credit: BMS.

Peggy Gouthwaite* – Brazil, 1970s

Frank very much appreciated the support he received from Operation Agri, especially advice and interest in the project in Potinga, Brazil. We went as non-farmers to a rural subsistence farming community and in many ways Frank's greatest contribution was as an advocate for the people and as a Bible teacher.

However at CEBADER, Potinga, animal husbandry was also modelled and actively taught. Vegetables were grown for consumption. Passion fruit was grown for sale although the small factory that would have made this a viable alternative for the farmers remained beyond our reach. It was at CEBADER that we began experimenting with pre-school for 4-6 year olds. When Frank realised that the failure rate for first year school had fallen from over 90% to under 20% in a few years, he was inspired to enlarge and develop this work when we moved to Campo Grande in West Brazil in 1986. Operation Agri members continued to offer encouragement. Friendship Houses were opened in a number of shanty towns and linked to churches. They were places where young children could come for pre-school and mothers could come to learn skills to use in the market place. Many came to know Jesus through these centres and many were kept off the street.



Friendship House.

Credit: BMS.

Through the years we always knew that the members of Operation Agri were there praying for us and willing to answer questions or source materials needed for the work. We thank God that they are still doing that work. God bless you all.

Sue Headlam* – Bangladesh, 1980s

"I will always be grateful to OA for supporting the Chandraghona Community Health Programme so generously since 1984. In 1985 OA took the challenge of funding our weaving programme for destitute women. This was very successful, enabling hundreds of women to take a step out of poverty. Lives were changed for ever."

...and from the hospital leadership... "All of us at Christian Hospital Chandraghona would like to thank all the workers and supporters of Operation Agri for their generosity and dedication in supporting God's work to the needy and deprived people of our remote part of SE Bangladesh.

"We send greetings and congratulations on your 50th Anniversary, and wish you continuing success and God's blessing on your work for many years to come."



Chandraghona weaving project.

Credit: BMS.

Tools with a Mission – 1980s onwards

We send our best wishes and congratulations to our friends in Operation Agri on this very special occasion of their 50th Anniversary Celebrations. In the early days of TWAM we enjoyed their support for our work, which continues to the present. OA's help in this direction has enabled us to provide support to many needy people and projects.

It has been our privilege to have shared in OA's ministry of bringing hope to those who needed a helping hand to feed themselves and enabling them to expand their horizons.

Whilst giving thanks for 50 years of activity we pray that God will enable OA to go on to achieve even greater things for the future.



Tools with a Mission sorting and repairing used tools.

Credit: BMS.

past and present... continued

Nepali tap stand.

Credit: OA.



Tlana Hnamler* – MCDS Nepal, 1990s onwards

When we joined MCDS in 1998 we had written a proposal not knowing who would provide the funding. Our help came from the Lord through the generous assistance of OA. One of our biggest successes was in Taplejung where we installed drinking water supplies in 1999, providing clean and safe drinking water for hospital, schools, the local jail and for families. The project was completed within 120 days, and now after 11 years there are no major problems, the beneficiaries are increasing.

Kevin and Gill Jones* – Africa, 2007 onwards

In DR Congo, at a honey project in Lower Congo funded by OA – the local pastor said: 'We are so happy to have this help, it gives people hope and also, do you realise how important honey is? - it is very sweet and stops you being constipated!'

South Africa - Thusong project – Chester, the caretaker at Thusong said, on hearing the news that OA had granted funds for the skills training centre – 'How far away is the UK?' – 'It's about 9000kms' – (a long pause) – 'so people 9000kms away from here are helping us to start skills training again?' – 'Yes' – (another long pause) – 'Yoooo' (said with a large exhalation of breath and a shake of the head to acknowledge something that they find amazing).

A group of ladies in Matabeleland South – 'Siyabonga, siyabonga, you bring seeds and tools from our brothers and sisters – God gives us the soil, rain and sun - we will plant them and tend them and the Lord will make them grow!' (All done in song when an OA grant financed 5 market gardens run by ACET volunteers with local school children).
Siyabonga – thank you!



Laura Parajon – Amos Nicaragua, 2009 onwards

The workload is difficult but we wanted to let you know that we so appreciate the funds which Operation Agri provides. OA has always been a beacon of light for us, and we are truly grateful for your continued support over the years.

We thank you for:

- Helping children get their deworming medicine so that they don't suffer from intestinal parasites that can cause malnutrition and anaemia.
- Accompanying the work of health promoters as they help their communities to work together and organize to improve the health of all the people in their communities and to give hope.
- Supporting our team of supervisory AMOS staff to train and encourage the health promoters as they learn to treat the most common illnesses, and do that with quality care and love for each and every person.
- Helping us purchase essential medications so moms can get the antibiotics her child needs be treated for pneumonia.

And much, much more that you are helping with in rural Nicaragua.

** Indicates present and former BMS workers.*



above: Promoting good health.

Credit: AMOS.

left: Thusong skills training.

Credit: BMS.

Meeting Community Needs in Sri Lanka

By Nadeesha Rajakaruna of LEADS, edited by Gill Ashley-Smith.

LEADS in Sri Lanka is a well respected Christian development agency, and OA supports their work in two very different districts, the hills of Kandy, and the coastal area of Matara.

A core aim for LEADS is to enable very poor and depressed people to come together to develop their own community.

In consultation with the Local Authority, LEADS officers select some of the most disadvantaged villages. In each village, the LEADS field officer calls together the people to set up a Community Based Organisation (CBO) comprising representatives of the community, who then elect their own leaders.

The community then engages in assessing the needs of the community, and of each family, and identifies priorities for their village. The LEADS field officer helps them to address those needs, providing advice, funds, training, or seeking support from the local government through the CBO. As the work develops, LEADS sometimes helps set up a savings fund and micro credit facility, with proper accounting, providing a small grant to get this started.

LEADS staff member Nadeesha Rajakaruna reports on the work in one of the villages near Kandy:

"In Ukgalpaya Village the main source of livelihood for households is through daily paid labour work in the rubber estates. As a result, the parents have very little to spend on their children's education. Even though a village pre-school existed, there were many needs that had to be supplied to provide a child friendly learning environment and the parents were unable to fulfil these needs."

This was the situation, four years ago when LEADS entered the village and helped the CBO to provide an allowance of Rs. 2,000 for the pre-school teacher, Chandra Ratnayake. As a result the burden on the parents was reduced. This was a

well accepted programme by the community and has been continuing for the last two years.

Chandra, who came from Kandy, is married and living in the village. She has completed the government standardized pre-school teacher training diploma course. As a result the number of children attending the pre-school has increased and the parents show more enthusiasm in the children's school activities. The pre-school was also renovated and a fence built to ensure the safety of the children; this helped the pre-school to gain registration at the District Secretariat, since this was one pre-condition to registration that was lacking.

Further, due to the opportunity of getting low interest loans from the CBO through the micro credit programme the parents have been able to increase the school fees they pay from Rs. 300 per child to Rs. 350, since they now have avenues to increase their household income level. This decision was made by the parents themselves as they have been encouraged by the keenness and dedication of the pre-school teacher to strive to give more for the betterment of their children each year.

This village did not have easy access to water. They had to collect water from far away. This was physically a very trying and time consuming task, especially for the women. LEADS helped



Chandra together with the little ones.



Preschool play area with protective fence.



Scoring the bark to tap rubber.



New well built.

Credit: LEADS, Sri Lanka

them to build a new well, and also provided water pipes to taps. Now more than 60 families have access to safe water for drinking, near their homes. The people are very encouraged by all the changes in their lives since LEADS has been working with them.

Operation Agri has recently approved grants totalling £23,400 to support the work of LEADS.

Prayer Points

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

Bangladesh

The Duaripara slum project in Dhaka works with girls at risk of commercial and sexual exploitation, sharing the love of God in practical and meaningful ways. Give thanks that the project has already been successful in bringing hope and change to lives of the girls and their families. Lovely, the project leader, had a successful and meaningful visit to South Africa for an Oasis conference. Please pray for the 20 families whose homes are being demolished as part of a Government slum clearance programme. Pray for their safety, and that they find good shelter close by so they can continue their study and link with us. Also pray for wisdom and guidance for the Project leaders as they develop a plan for next phase of the project.

Brazil

Remember BMS workers Daveen and Mike Wilson and Paul as they continue their work at Trapiá in NE Brazil. Praise God for the recent baptisms of young people and for those who have remained faithful over many years. Pray that the ongoing development of beekeeping and the improvements to health and lifestyle of these needy people will not be hindered by those who seek to destroy through envy and jealousy.

Nepal

Rana Chuk has recently been appointed as Executive Director of our partner NGO, MCDS in Kathmandu. Pray for Rana as he oversees the development activities of MCDS – that strategies and plans for the future of the work may be put together under God's guidance and that in it all the work and witness of the project may bring glory to God and a brighter hope for the future to the many served by the projects.

D R Congo

A tailoring and dressmaking project based in one of the poor parts of Kinshasa is giving hope to young women who might otherwise have ended up in prostitution. Pray for the success of this project which has the aim of training 80 students over the three years of funding provided by OA.

Tanzania

Training in sustainable agriculture is going well but successful monitoring has been difficult because the new motorcycle funded by OA has been held up in customs in Dar es Salaam for several months. Pray that it will soon be in use in and around Karagwe visiting and encouraging local farmers as they try out new ways of growing crops.

Uganda – Gulu

The people in Gulu in the north of the country have suffered war for many years and now that peace has come they are trying to rebuild their lives. Pray for the sustainable agriculture project as it seeks to offer hope for better harvests, using oxen for ploughing and sustainable organic techniques for producing better crops.

Uganda – Beersheba

Pray for the girls and their families benefitting from this community improvement project. Give thanks for the rains that have offered hope of a good harvest. Pray for safety in travel on slippery earth roads in the rainy season.

Uganda – SDKF

Pray for the new intake of students in the Tailoring class of the Vocational Training Project in one of the larger slums of Kampala as they seek to gain a skill that will enable them to earn a living.

Zimbabwe

New BMS workers Bradley and Ruth Biddulph having completed their training at BMS IMC in Birmingham are soon heading off to start work in this country. One of the projects that they will be supporting is the Green Island Vision described in the News in Brief in our last issue. Pray for them as they adapt to a new culture and seek to make a difference to people's lives in this country. Pray that the elections promised for this year do not lead to violence but will bring about change for the better for this country.

Home

Give thanks to Almighty God for his blessing on our recent celebrations of 50 years of Operation Agri's activities around the world. We had the privilege of meeting many people at the BMM Conference and the Baptist Assembly and have been greatly encouraged by such meetings. Pray that as we go forward into the new work which God has for us, we may be fully resourced in personnel and finance so that the years ahead may continue to see many needy people lifted from poverty.



HARVEST OF HOPE – OUR 2011 APPEAL

Now is the time to order this year's Appeal materials, 'Harvest of Hope.' It explores the future of OA's work in the light of the last 50 years, with video from Thailand, Uganda and Brazil. There is an order form inside this issue.

OA IS GRATEFUL...

... to those friends who include a bequest to OA in their wills. An example of suitable wording to do this is given on the website, or phone our administrator.



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

Birthdays... anniversaries... any time someone would welcome a greetings card there is an opportunity to give through our 'Presents with a Purpose' scheme. Your gift will 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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Visit our website: www.operationagri.org.uk