



**SUPPORTING
DEVELOPMENT
IN CHRIST'S NAME**

New Year 2012

Outreach Abroad



In this issue:

- Hydro-electricity in Afghanistan
- Mumbai community celebration
- Postcards from Nicaragua
- Nepal: marginalized people

Joys and sorrows

By Russell Ashley-Smith, Chairman of OA

What have been the delights of my involvement with Operation Agri over the years? Where do I start? The highlight must be the privilege of meeting some of the people whose lives, thanks to the help given by OA partners, have been radically changed – men and women, children and young people, given hope, lives lifted out of unending drudgery or unrelenting bad health, the opportunity to develop God-given abilities. And all pointing to a loving Saviour.



staff of our overseas partners, some may unfortunately lose their jobs.

Joy – through the faithful gifts and prayers of many brothers and sisters, primarily in the UK, thousands of people continue to be helped. To paraphrase Luke 7:

- better farming techniques are being taught,
- women are gaining self-confidence,
- families are enjoying healthy lives,
- clean water is readily available and safe hygiene is practised,
- teenage girls are gaining hope,
- villagers are experiencing the benefits of working together,
- families are enjoying income they've earned for themselves,

and through it all, the Gospel is being shown in practical action!

Operation Agri is in good heart as we move forward from our Jubilee year. We look forward to learning what God has in store for us in 2012.

There have been sorrows – when projects have not achieved what had been hoped of them, committed development workers have died or move on, occasionally there have been disagreements with partners. But no greater sadness than that facing us now.

Cut-backs

For the first time ever in OA's fifty year history the budget the trustees have reluctantly had to adopt for the current year involves significant cut-backs. We have had to write to our overseas partners warning them that sadly we expect to be able to send them less than they are probably anticipating.

Why? In common with most charities, our income from supporters was significantly down last year. Interestingly the number of donations was very similar to the previous year, but the amounts given were lower, especially from churches. We attribute this to the credit crunch and people's financial uncertainties. Also, very few bequests were received.

This year's budget is based on gift income being about the same as last year. The trustees are watching the situation carefully and if receipts exceed this, then we hope it will be possible to relax some of the cut-backs. Please join us in praying that we will be able to do this – see page 15.

Sorrow – that fewer of the world's most needy people will be helped this year. And because a large proportion of OA's grants pay the salaries of the dedicated development

Contents of Vol. 50 No. 4

Page

Editorial	2
Bringing change to a Sri Lankan village	3
Hydro-electricity in Afghanistan	4
Mumbai Community Celebration	5
Gardening in Zimbabwe	6
Postcards from Nicaragua	7
Notice Board	8
Your Response	9 & 10
Self help success in Beersheba, Uganda	11
Nepal: marginalized people	12
Exciting Journey in Tanzania	13
News in Brief	14
Prayer Points	15

Designed and printed by CPO, Worthing, on chlorine-free paper manufactured from wood from sustainably-managed forests.

© Operation Agri BMM 2012. Articles may be freely extracted for use in local church publicity in UK and Ireland provided due acknowledgement is given to Operation Agri. All enquiries in this regard should be addressed to the administrator.

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.



Front Cover Photograph:

Chitra Menike, the secretary of the women's society in Oryanwatte, Sri Lanka, shows the award they won for their dedication to providing a better quality of life (see next page).

LEADS brings change in Oryanwatte village

By Nadeesha Rajakaruna of LEADS, Sri Lanka. Edited by Gill Ashley-Smith. LEADS in Sri Lanka is a Christian agency that works with impoverished village communities.

Water pipes and meters

Surrounded by mountains, the village of Orayanwatte has a scenic setting, but until recently, access to water had been one of the big issues faced by this village near Kandy in Sri Lanka. Many women were burdened with the task of walking miles to collect and carry water for their families.

The situation changed when the LEADS district officer came to the village. With LEADS guidance and assistance, a Community Based Organisation (CBO) was formed, and the villagers started working on a project to provide safe water to benefit as many homes as possible. Pipelines were provided, and water meters - so people can pay according to what they use. The aim is to create responsibility among beneficiaries, so that their village can maintain and manage the water system. Ruwan Jayasekara smiles when he talks about this project – it is greatly easing the people's hardships and is bringing great joy. The surge of community spirit has encouraged the people to grow trees around the water source to help conserve water. "LEADS has really helped us in many ways to fulfil the primary needs of our village" Ruwan says with gratitude.

The women win a prize

Chitra Menike is the Secretary of the women's society in Oryanwatte, and is dedicated to serving the community. She states that the village had many needs and since most people are daily-wage labourers they did not have the capacity or resources to make a difference. Yet today,



Sama Kumari with her sewing machine.

through the support of LEADS, the village has benefited in water, health, livelihood, and education and Chitra wants to see this continue sustainably to ensure a better quality of life for the future. She proudly explains how the Orayanwatte women's Society obtained 1st place among the women's societies in the District Secretariat division. This was achieved through the sheer dedication and determination of all the members. They have used the prize money to conduct a sewing training course for 10 people.

She was one of those trained, and now she is training 15 others herself.

New income through sewing

Sama Kumari has really been helped by the sewing classes. She and her husband have a family of 5 to support, but her husband's income as a carpenter is sporadic, depending on



LEADS officers with Chitra.

Credit: LEADS, Sri Lanka.

available work. So Sama decided to start her own tailoring business, but needed to buy a sewing machine. Through LEADS she was able to get a livelihood grant of Rs. 20,000. She now sews for her family and saves a lot of money on clothing and school uniforms. She has also started sewing for her neighbours and earns an income. Looking forward, she hopes to develop her business and supply garments to small shops in the village and near-by town.

Plans for the future

LEADS workers bring encouragement, respect and loving care to communities with multiple problems, which were feeling ignored and neglected. LEADS works with a village for about 3 years, helping them to have confidence in what they can achieve by working together, so they can then carry on the good work. Chitra says the community is extremely appreciative of the assistance provided by LEADS – and she now has a vision for other improvements – such as the renovation of the community hall and setting up a library, as these are felt needs that have risen in the community, now that they feel empowered to work for change.

A total of £23,400 was provided by OA for Leads projects in 2011.



Ruwan Jayasekara with a water meter.

Micro-hydro projects as an opportunity for peace building

By Martin Beck, Manager of the Renewable Energy Sources Programme (RESAP) in Afghanistan.

IAM/RESAP's goal is to provide electricity for rural regions with Afghan made technology and to build up a renewable energy industry in Afghanistan. In 2011 RESAP wants to complete about 30 MHPs in 5 different provinces which will give electricity to more than 3,000 families. RESAP is also involved in wind power and solar water heater production. RESAP's projects are community participation projects which require a certain unity and agreement within the communities.

Seeing and hearing the daily news from Afghanistan it is easily imaginable that this spirit of unity and agreement is not always present in Afghan villages. This is one of the biggest challenges for our work. But for us it is even more important to help the communities to solve their internal disputes rather than only providing electricity because it will enable the communities to take further steps in terms of development and also to use and maintain the electricity projects well.

For example in two villages the construction work had already progressed when the problems started. A smaller group of people complained that they wouldn't be involved in this project and that some strong men wanted to use these micro-hydro projects for their private advantage. Then another group came to our office and would say that the first group would only be known trouble makers. But the two groups did never talk with one another. Finally the first group threatened all of us to destroy the projects as soon as these would be completed. So we decided to stop all the activities for the time being and to first have a meeting with



Setting up electric distribution lines.



Installation of pipes to control water flow.

and he said he would come when the month of fasting (Ramazan) has passed. But again he didn't turn up. Slowly the reason for his refusal came out: he owned part of the water rights and didn't want to give these for the community project. At last we engaged the district governor.

All the important people from the village including the owner of the water rights gathered in the office of the district governor. After tough discussions for a few hours they finally all signed a letter of agreement and the work in their village has now started as well.

But there are also villages without problems with good and wise leaders. One of these 'persons of peace' is Zamat Khan*. The turbine in his village started operation in spring this year. Meanwhile the project of Zamat Khan's village gives also electricity to two smaller neighbour villages, something which is quite unusual in this country where people and communities don't care a lot for others except their close relatives. Zamat Khan also helped to introduce our project activities to other villages further up in the valley.

* Name has been changed.



Meeting with the village men is key to getting everyone's support.

In another village one important person was missing when we signed the installation contract with the elders. First it didn't seem to be a problem. The other elders said, we will send this person to your office and he can sign there. But he didn't come and the work didn't start. We called him by phone

Operation Agri provided £9,355 towards RESAP's work last year.

Credit: RESAP Afghanistan.

For People and Community

By Becky Swamickan, Communications and Fundraising Manager, Oasis India

Oasis believes in rallying people together - not just around an issue but in enabling them to understand the power of standing with each other. The heading for this report emphasises this as well - for people and community!

For over ten years, Oasis India has worked in one of the neediest areas in a locality of Mumbai. Five years ago, women's self help groups were begun to be set up. These groups were to enhance economic empowerment whilst addressing issues that loomed large like infrastructure, land and others. Helping people understand that Oasis would stand with them if they really saw a need within these issues, is most challenging.

An event in January 2011 changed that and encouraged those working within poorer communities. The leaders of the women's self help groups, at their monthly meeting, asked the question - how can we bring the community together?

They came up with a simple solution. They've never had an occasion to celebrate together at all, apart from religious festivals - the majority of them being Hindu and a small percentage, Muslim. A large portion of the community was Marathi, while others were Punjabi and a few others were from Uttar Pradesh, a northern state. But what would they celebrate? **Themselves!!!**

Celebrating themselves!

And so the delegation of responsibilities was shared out among the leaders - some were to raise funds, others were to plan the programme but all had to be involved in bringing their neighbours to participate. Hectic preparations began and for a month, from speaking to the

local members of the Legislative Assembly to learning a dance, scripting a drama, inviting the officials of the Union Bank, the workforce grew. Soon, the community felt the buzz and there was an air of festivity that surrounded it.



Introducing community leaders.

The day quickly arrived. The cooking fires were put out early, the clothes hung out on the line, the dishes done and women turned out in all their finery. Each of them was exuberant and proud of what they'd achieved, for they had managed to:



Community celebration at Ghatkopar, Mumbai.

Credit: Oasis, India.



Young dancer at the celebration.

- bring the Bouddhas, Marathas, Kolis and Jats (Indian communities) to dance together
- get the place for free from the Trust that owned it
- collect enough money from among themselves for the day - about 40,000 rupees
- involve the local leaders, bank, police and others
- transcend any language barriers
- learn how to dance from a 55-year old and not miss a step
- stage a drama on girl child and dowry; issues that grip the entire nation.
- distribute prizes to every person that came
- be covered by the local Marathi newspapers
- video the whole programme so each lady could have a copy as a memory
- enjoy the day not just by themselves, but with each other

In 2011 a grant of £11,000 was provided to assist with this programme.

The impact of this is seen to this day - as people come together confidently, in unity and with growing trust seen in the happenings of every day.

Gardening in Paradise!

By Alex and Jackie Vickers. Alex and Jackie are BMS workers in Uganda. Alex is a soil and water management expert who recently paid a visit to Zimbabwe, and Jackie is educational consultant to the Baptist Union of Uganda.

Appearances can be deceptive!

Standing at the edge of a vegetable garden by a small village inside the Matopos National Park in Zimbabwe you might be forgiven for thinking you are in something close to the Garden of Eden. Surrounded by other-worldly, rounded granite tors, like the bald heads of long buried giants, it is like few places on earth. Look a little more closely, however, and everything is not rosy in this garden.

Since its inception two years ago OA has provided £2,000 towards this programme.

Zimbabwe has experienced profound economic turmoil for a number of reasons. It finds itself bottom of the UN's Human Development Index

for 2010-11, AIDS is rife and people live with crushing poverty and diminished hope.

Into this nightmare steps the church. ACET (Aids Counselling, Education and Training) who are a non-governmental organisation (NGO) who, with support from the Salvation Army, BMS World Mission, Operation Agri and others, are doing amazing work supporting the most vulnerable people living with AIDS.

Diet is vital to get the best response from anti-AIDS drugs. Typically many people in this area only get one meal a day comprising maize meal (sadza), sometimes with beans but often alone. Boosting nutrition through a regular supply of nutritious vegetables and herbs is critical if the drugs are to be effective.

To achieve this, Operation Agri have contributed to a programme to develop community gardens and use them to teach sustainable growing techniques to the local population. Designed and built by local communities with a little expert help from BMS worker Kevin Jones, the gardens are an oasis of green in a dry,



Credit: ACET, Zimbabwe.

Keeping an eye on the garden.

rocky landscape. The soils are very sandy, hence low in nutrients and typically acidic due to the weathering of the local granite rocks. Under the normal farming practices of the area the soils are cultivated and maize is grown. This exhausts the soil not only of the few nutrients it inherently possesses but, critically, of organic matter which is the engine of any healthy soil.

Central to the sustainable system of growing is the conservation and enhancement of soil organic matter. This is done both by adding manure from the local animals, making compost and also by laying down a blanket of dead grass, leaves, branches or other organic material on the soil surface. This blanket, or mulch, not only rots down to add more organic material – it also acts as a lid to keep water in the soil. In a place with an 8-month dry season and where all the watering is done by hand, this is an important issue.

Does it work? Absolutely! These gardens are all growing a local brassica called chomolia, rich in iron and other minerals. Onions are plentiful and add, in my opinion, much needed flavour to the sadza. Other gardens are growing protein rich herbs, carrots, tomatoes, pepper and fennel.

The gardens are so successful that the local communities are now building extensions using their own resources with no outside support other than expertise. Is it all plain sailing? No – the baboons steal the produce given half a chance and despite a fence worthy of Colditz, the local goats still sneak in. Floods have washed out some areas but the communities see so much benefit they rebuild, improve and even camp out to protect the gardens.

Hope is rising in the Garden of the Matopos – thanks to the work of God's Church and the support of Operation Agri.

Learning sustainable growing techniques.



Postcards from Nicaragua

Russell and Gill Ashley-Smith write about their recent visit to Nicaragua



American Baptists David and Laura Parajón, and their 3 children, welcomed us warmly. They are both doctors, and have established “AMOS – Health and Hope.” They help 27 poor communities that are far from any government medical centre, by training local people to run basic health clinics.



After 6 hours travel on roads and rough tracks, we reached the village of Sabalete. The people helped unload the vehicle – packed with a month's supply of medicines, and equipment for testing water purity, plus everything we would need to stay 3 nights in a place with no electricity.



The next day mothers were bringing their children to the clinic. Some had to walk for up to an hour to get there. Others came on horseback!



Pablo Pedro, the local health promoter, checks each baby's progress. AMOS has taught him a set of procedures to diagnose and treat the most common illnesses.



Pablo Pedro has a map and detailed records of every home and family in the community, and he regularly visits those who are elderly or sick, and any pregnant mothers. He is committed to working for the health of this community as his Christian service to the people.

Notice Board

Help create this magazine!

Could you help bring this magazine together once a quarter? You'll need a heart for development with the world's poor, and a systematic approach to asking our team of volunteer writers to create suitable articles to agreed deadlines. Our administrator handles liaison with the designers and printers. Do get in touch (admin@operationagri.org.uk) if you would like to know more, or show this advertisement to anyone you think might be interested.

AGM

Operation Agri's AGM will be held on Saturday 24th March at the Baptist Men's Movement conference, held the Bosworth Hall Hotel, Market Bosworth, Leicestershire. 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 entitled to attend.

Help!

OA has always been run almost entirely by men and women giving their time freely. Could you help?

News Writer

We need someone to prepare stories for the media. Much exciting information comes to us in reports from our overseas partners, and the background is presented in (for example) articles in past issues of this magazine. You will distil and present stories in a form suitable for various media. This is a task which can be carried out at home, occupying a couple of hours two or three times a month.

Development Intern Programme launched by BMS

BMS World Mission is to introduce an intern programme for graduates in international development. This programme is an exciting opportunity for graduates with an interest in development to use their skills overseas in a mission context. Small teams of interns will gain hands-on experience alongside BMS mission personnel. They will assist in such activities as writing proposals and reports, conducting baseline surveys and impact reports, working with local communities on stakeholder consultations, helping to produce materials, and participating in community awareness programmes.

The first interns, who will be responsible for funding their own transport and accommodation costs, are expected to fly out to Africa in September 2012. For more information visit www.bmsworldmission.org or contact Helen Brook at hbrook@bmsworldmission.org. Operation Agri looks forward to co-operating with BMS in this exciting development.



Response Form

- 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**: £

Name (Contact name if a church or organisation)

Church or Organisation

Address for Correspondence

Postcode

Tel/Email



*If you can give by Gift Aid and/or by Banker's Order, please complete the sections overleaf
Or mark the appropriate box on your Self-Assessment Tax Return with OA-BMM's unique reference GAK78YG
and any tax refund that may be due to you will be sent direct to OA.*

Please send this form with your gift, payable to "Operation Agri BMM", to:
Operation Agri BMM, 361 Firs Lane, Palmers Green, London, N13 5LX

Self Help Success in Beersheba

By Dave Caswell, Mbale Regional Manager for Oasis Uganda

Empowering women to better care for their families is one of the aims of the Beersheba Community Development Programme (BCDP), working in a disadvantaged community on the outskirts of the city of Mbale, Eastern Uganda. Through training and practical support, many women have been able to lift themselves out of poverty and see a better future ahead.



Training the women's self-help group how to make liquid manure.

Three Self Help Groups were recently set up with the women involved being responsible for producing their own rules and regulations, and for electing from within the group the offices of chairperson, treasurer, and secretary. This participation in the group formation has helped build in ownership, trust and responsibility within each group. Membership fees paid by all women ensure commitment to the group meetings through the vested interest in seeing the group move forward well.



Carer drying her produce.

Money saved by the groups can be loaned to individual members for Income Generation Activities (IGA). Training in financial management has taken place for the treasurers and in leadership for the chairpersons. Training has also taken place in entrepreneurship, and how to start and maintain a small business as the women prepare to invest loans from the group. Topics covered have included financial planning, as well as the causes of household financial pressures, and setting financial goals. The women have also learnt about 'sustainable agriculture' including: crop rotation, and the production of organic manure and natural pesticides.

Discussion of Self Esteem and Child Protection issues has resulted in positive attitude changes. One woman commented:

"I had never considered the rights of children, or how there are laws that can help guide us to treat our children well and ensure that they attend school and are not involved in child labour."

The project has also continued to see incredible development through IGA grants given out with business training and support. The stories below show the impact of these grants:

"My name is Juliet*, I am 47 years old and have 7 children. Before joining the project, life was very hard. The project supported me with a grant of 80,000 shillings (about £30) and I invested the money in a brick-making business. From this I was able to build a small house, and I have also started a small shop. I no longer have the fear of going without food or my children missing school. I am so grateful for the Beersheba project."

Operation Agri provided £7,620 for this project last year.



Kate used her grant to buy a goat.

Nankya* is a widow aged 70 taking care of nine orphaned grandchildren. Nankya had lost hope and had begun drinking, but from weekly training we began to see a gradual transformation. She managed to save some money, and then began a business selling maize flour. The local school authorities allowed her children to join school while she was trying to raise the school fees. It is now a year since she joined Beersheba and with the grant she received she has been able to develop her business, and is now able now to support her grandchildren. Nankya comments: "If it was not for Beersheba, alcohol would have killed me"

The Beersheba project is looking forward to experiencing more success stories like the ones above through our Self Help Groups and the income they generate from within their own resources. We are extremely grateful for the partnership of Operation Agri, which has been invaluable in this work.

(* Names changed)

Nepal: fulfilling the vision with marginalized people

By Stan Crees, OA's Overseas Secretary with Chuk Rana, Executive Director, Multi-purpose Community Development Service, Nepal.

"All the services and works provided by this institution are quite praiseworthy. The functions... have raised our economic condition and life standard. We worship God to have his blessing for further success of this project."

This warm appreciation was expressed to staff of CHLP at the field office of Triveni Village Development Council, East Nepal. It showed a complete change in attitude of some of the local people. They were initially uncooperative with the team who came to their district at the invitation of the local Baptist church, to bring improved water supply and sanitation along with many other benefits.

So what is this project and how are the people benefitting that some should so dramatically change their outlook?



Clean drinking water from a tube well.

The project is known as "Triveni Community Health and Livelihood Programme" and is part of the work of MCDS, the development arm of the Nepal Baptist Church Council. It comprises some 605 households with a total population of 3,400. The vast

majority of the homes are built from clay tiles, bamboo, wood and mud. The assessments made at the start of the programme showed that each of the existing toilets are shared by 30 people. The community depends almost entirely on agriculture for its livelihood. The problems to be addressed are listed as lack of safe drinking water, poor sanitation and lack of income earning skills.

With the support of Operation Agri some good progress has already been made by the team.

1. Every month **health teaching classes** have been conducted by the trained Health Workers and simple medical treatments have been delivered.
2. **Training in tailoring** has been provided to a selected group of women, some of whom have set up a tailoring shop in the centre of their village.

3. Thirty new persons were selected from the marginalized communities and given **training in the care and management of goats**. The previous thirty people given such training have already contributed 30 goat kids back into the project.

4. To help with local income generation **candle making courses** were started. This ran into difficulties but **mushroom growing** proved more successful.

5. **Micro savings groups** have been set up and help is provided for participants in keeping simple records and the use of pass books.
6. Agreements were reached with the community to **construct 80 new toilets** linked to individual households. 40% of the cost of these completed toilets was born by the user and 60% provided by the project.
7. After consultation with all concerned it was decided to **repair pipeline supplies from clean spring sources and construct new water collection points** where necessary.

Comments from the villagers: *"In the drought season, before the construction of pipelines, we had to go far in search of water and in the rainy season water we collected from the river and nearby pond. This was contaminated but still we had to drink it since we had no alternatives. Consequently we used to fall sick. Now after the construction of many pipelines, clean water comes into the village and we are very happy."*

The extra supplies will allow for watering kitchen gardens and provide for domestic animals as well.

The project staff have worked well together to achieve these results. They give thanks to God for "guiding them through the many ups and downs of the work and enabling them to fulfil their vision of working with these marginalized people."

We support them with our prayers as the work goes on.



Tailoring training class.

A grant of almost £22,000 was provided for the Triveni based programme last year.

Credit: Triveni, Nepal.

Exciting journey in Tanzania

By Theo Lambourne, OA's Overseas Secretary with responsibility for Africa.

Two years ago, we reported on an agricultural project in north-west Tanzania in the district of Karagwe, close to the Ugandan border. The Rev Heavenlight Luoga had come to this area as an indigenous missionary from another part of Tanzania and early on in his work he recognised that there was a need to help the local farmers improve their agricultural skills. You may recall that Heavenlight and two others were enabled by OA to travel to Uganda to see first hand the kind of training being offered at Busia by Rev Paul Kyalimpa. What they saw there inspired them to establish with Paul's help their own two-year project, 'Farming Partner Initiatives.'

The plan in a nutshell is to provide quarterly residential four-day courses, led by Paul, through which ten farmers receive intensive practical and theoretical teaching in sustainable organic agriculture. When back home, they practise the techniques they have learnt and pass on



Bees (apiculture) project group member from Muchuba village.

these skills to other farmers around them. Part of OA's funding pays the salary of Rev Apolinary Mshembezi as the field worker who, equipped with a Yamaha DT 125 motorcycle, is able to travel round monitoring progress and encouraging the participant farmers. Paul Kyalimpa also works through the Baptist Union of Uganda running the agricultural project in the north of Uganda at Gulu, and has also helped Pastor Dennis Ssettaala of SDKF with a similar project in central Uganda.

Workshops in Tanzania were held in March, June and September last year covering a range of topics. Already encouraging results are being noted in the recent report received from Heavenlight.

At Machuba village nearly all the members of the Jipime group have now dug pits for making compost, created terracing on sloping land and applied the principles of mulching to their crops. It has even been reported that some non-group members in the community, observing what is being done, have started to copy these systems and practices!



Rev Paul Kyalimpa facilitating the workshops.

Remiguis Samson also from Machuba has grown thousands of pine tree seedlings in his back yard which he will plant out with the aim of harvesting the wood in three years time. He has also dug a water storage tank

next to his house capturing rain water from his roof and so freeing his wife and children from the burden of walking some distance each day to collect water.



The field worker with the new motorcycle.

The farmers in Rugu village have established eight fish ponds and a tree seedling nursery. Between

them they own 60 beehives. The training in September included a field visit to this village to show what is being achieved.

Another aspect of the overall project is to establish a rotating loan fund to enable farmers to purchase equipment, seeds or livestock. Two farmers from the Tweyambe group have already received loans to enable them to expand their gardens. They hope to repay the loans after their first harvest.

It has been an exciting journey, seeing the dreams of three years ago, when we first heard from Rev Heavenlight, gradually turning into the reality of improved prospects for these remote rural communities for whom farming is their only means of livelihood.

OA supported the Farming Partner's Initiative in Tanzania with a grant of £8,828 in 2011.

News in Brief

New quality of life in Nepal

Chuk Rana, Executive Director of Multi-Purpose Community Development Service in Nepal writes with gratitude for our support of the work of CHEP and CHEST in the hills and valleys of Nepal. He gives thanks for God's continued guidance of their activities and the prayers and financial support of donors. The executive committee of MCDS have worked hard to touch many lives in the community and Chuk acknowledges "the lively participation and contribution of local communities as well as the cooperation of local Governments." Their vision is that communities in Nepal will be transformed to enjoy life in its fullness and that being healthy, educated and empowered they will be able to work to sustain their new quality life.



A goat can transform the lives of an entire family in Nepal.

Credit: Triveni, Nepal.

Flood alert from Nicaragua

Our partner contact in Nicaragua, Laura Parajon, has recently written to inform us of the effect of tropical storms that have caused serious flooding in many parts of Central America. Laura reports:

"It has been raining non-stop for two weeks here and flooding has affected many homes and caused loss of crops and food. Our AMOS Team has been working hard to mobilize help for those affected. Vehicles have been sent out to the affected communities carrying food parcels, the means of purifying water and medicines for those suffering from respiratory and water-borne illnesses. A state of emergency has been declared in Nicaragua and the need for a wide range of help will remain for some time."

International Ministries based in the USA have stepped in with some direct aid which has provided initial support for 274 families. Please pray for Laura and the management team, for the health promoters engaged in relief activities and for sufficient aid to reach these deprived communities.

Training Centre provides vital resources

In addition to the wide range of help provided by the Farms Lanka team as they visit numerous families in need of assistance across Sri Lanka, the Community Development Office and Training Centre based in headquarters at Moratuwa provides the following services:

- A library includes books on crop and animal husbandry, health education, self employment and some Christian literature.
- Certified vegetable seeds and some plants are available for sale.
- Educational posters are on display to help visitors understand self-help issues.
- A demonstration area is set up giving practical hands-on advice.
- A counselling facility is available for troubled families.

The general manager and his staff are always available to give illustrated talks on Christian Stewardship, Home Gardening, Agriculture and Disease Prevention. In this way the valuable work of Farms Lanka touches the lives of local visitors as well as 21 out of the 25 districts of Sri Lanka.

Prayer Points

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

Uganda

- Beersheba needs: Pray for training for those working in areas of alcohol and drug abuse and for practical courses being offered to self help groups - for the catch-up and life skills programmes being offered through Musoto Primary School and for a new programme called Tackle Africa, using football as a medium to teach AIDS/HIV awareness.
- Prayer needs at SDKF. For Pastor Dennis Ssettaala and those working with him to help young people develop IT and tailoring skills in a slum suburb of Kampala and for the agricultural training work being done up-country at Nakaseke to help local farmers improve their crop yields.
- Pray for Rev Paul Kyalimpa and BMS worker Alex Vickers as they work together on a second phase of the farming project at Gulu in the north of the country.

Zimbabwe

- Pray for fair and peaceful forthcoming elections that will lead to the election of a government that will rule with integrity and justice offering equal benefits to all.
- Remember the gardening projects being run through co-operation with ACET (AIDS Care Education Training) and for Captain Willard Ndlovu of the Salvation Army as he oversees these projects.
- Pray that God will continue to bless BMS workers Kevin and Gill Jones as they work alongside new and established partners, seeking to improve the way of life for thousands of impoverished people in and around Bulawayo.

Bangladesh

- Give thanks to the Lord for the work of Oasis Bangladesh who run the Duaripara slum project. Pray that attempts to become a registered NGO with the Government of Bangladesh which would greatly facilitate their work will be successful. Pray too for the project team as they make plans for developing and expanding the work over the next three years. Of particular concern is the safety of the girls as they travel to attend school and educational catch-up classes.
- Pray for the staff of SHED Board. OA has supported a number of SHED Board projects in the past. Now a new director, Mr Mahananda Bairagee has been appointed and a new proposal for clean water in rural villages is currently being considered. We ask for wisdom for those planning the project in Bangladesh and for the BMS/OA Development Committee as it makes decisions about the proposal.

Nepal

- We give thanks for the life of Ringa Pachuau who until a few years ago led the CHEP section of OA's work in Nepal. Ringa retired from BMS in late 2008 and he and his family returned to Mizoram and served the Lord

through the church there. Remember his wife Madiki and the family at this time. Pray too for Tlana Hnamler, another BMS worker from Mizoram, who until recently was managing the CHEST project. He is suffering with renal problems and as we write, is awaiting a kidney transplant. Please remember him and his wife Madini and family at this time.

Nicaragua

- Give thanks for a successful resource visit by Russell and Gill Ashley-Smith to our partner AMOS in Nicaragua. Pray that the Health Promoters in the 27 small community clinics may continue to be well equipped in their task of caring for the anticipated 20,000 patients who will attend for treatment during the coming year.
- Pray too for Gill in particular as she prepares the resources for OA's 2012 Annual Appeal which will focus on the provision of this health care and training activities being carried out by the staff of AMOS.

Brazil

- Mike and Daveen Wilson have felt God guiding them to leave their work in Trapia later in 2012. Pray that those who carry on the work there may be encouraged and led by the Lord as they serve, and that Mike and Daveen will know God's leading as they look to the future.

Thailand

- As we write serious flooding is affecting Bangkok and many other areas of Thailand. There will be knock-on effects on those who already struggle to make a living from the land in the north. Please pray for our partners in this situation.

Home

- In late October John Mellor informed us of the sudden death of his wife Rena. John and Rena were BMS workers in Congo whose agricultural work was supported by OA for several years. Rena will be sadly missed by all who knew her. Please pray that the Lord's presence will continue to be strongly felt by John and the family in the months ahead.

Cut-backs

- Many of OA's overseas partners are having to adjust their development programmes, having learnt that their grants from OA this year will be less than they had anticipated. Pray for them, as they make painful decisions, in some instances having to lay-off workers. May the neediest people in the communities they serve continue to be those that benefit. Pray that OA's income this year will in fact enable the Trustees to restore the level of many grants.

NICARAGUA

FIT FOR LIFE

2012 NICARAGUA – FIT FOR LIFE

It's not too early to begin thinking about this year's appeal, which will focus on the work of AMOS Health and Hope in Nicaragua. 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.



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.
Registered as a charity, No. 1069349. A member of Global Connections.

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