

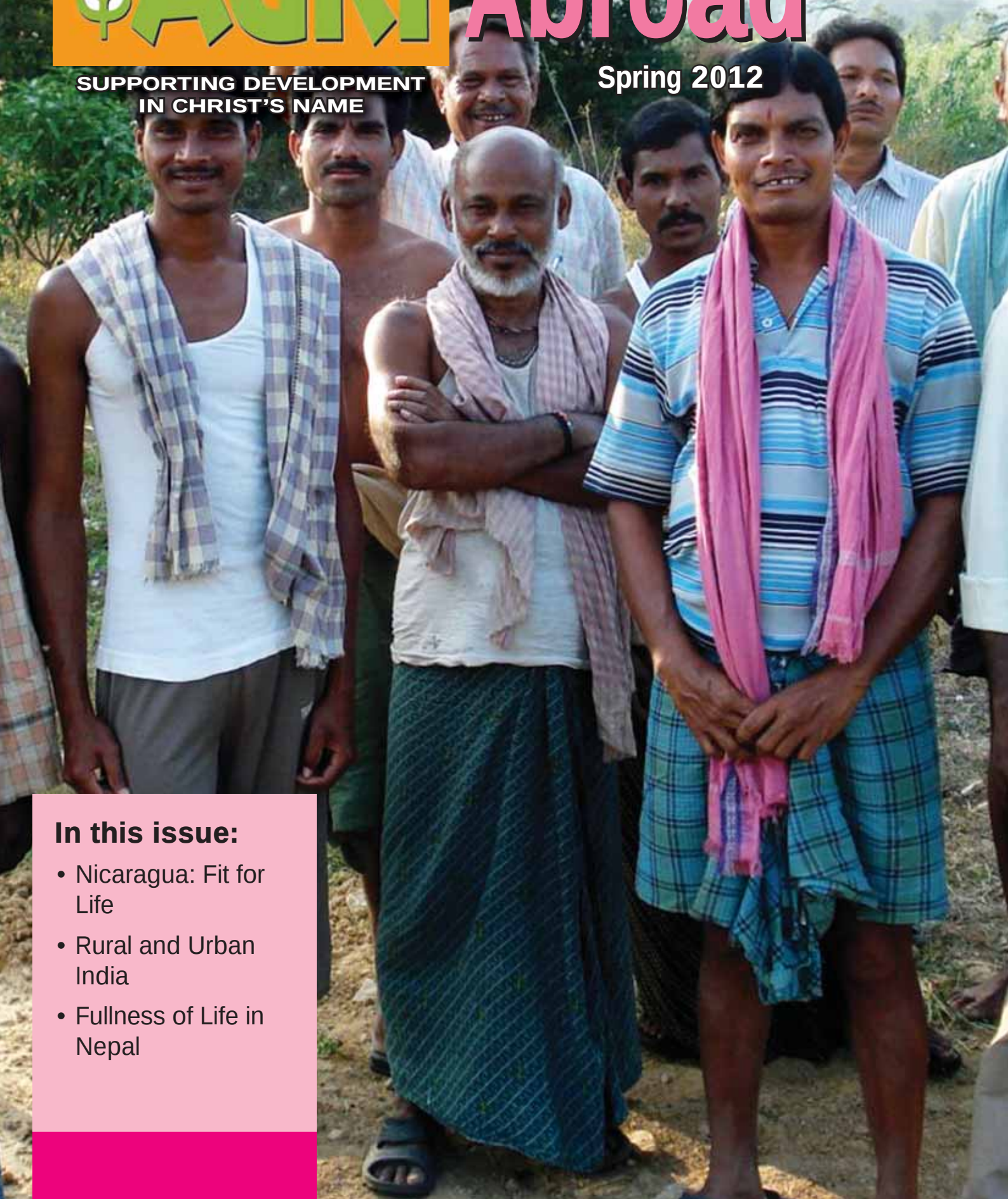


Operation
AGRI

Outreach Abroad

**SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT
IN CHRIST'S NAME**

Spring 2012



In this issue:

- Nicaragua: Fit for Life
- Rural and Urban India
- Fullness of Life in Nepal

Two encouraging stories from the Oasis India project based in Mumbai

From an Oasis Global Ghatkopar report.

Oasis India has been working to empower the Ghatkopar slum community through self-help groups which have been set up within the community. These groups unite to form a federation. The federation owns a bank account and collects a particular amount from each member every month.

Sujata, 40, is the mother of four school-going children. At the beginning of the academic year she finds it hard to manage the expenses that have to be met for the children's schooling. It is during these financial crunches that the federation comes to the rescue. Sujata managed to secure a loan of Rs.7000/- through the federation and has comfortably paid the children's fees and purchased the books and uniforms. Moreover, Sujata has been able to pay off the loan as well!

After hearing about the Balwadi (pre-school) functioning at the Ghatkopar community

centre, Parjana began sending her girls there in order to prepare them for school. Initially her daughters were not talkative and would refuse to mingle with the other children. Now, the girls are active, they love to dance, they talk a lot about their studies when at home and look forward to attending the Balwadi.

Parjana is also very pleased with the teachers and the relationships they have developed with their children. She says: "The children are now very well disciplined and well-behaved. They maintain good hygiene and are neat in everything. My husband and I are hopeful that our children can grow up to be doctors someday."

In the final year of Oasis involvement at Ghatkopar, OA contributed £11,000 to help support its activities.

Credit: Oasis, India.



Women's thrift and credit meeting in Mumbai.

“Everything needed to live a healthy life!”

By Stan Crees, OA's Overseas Secretary, with Chuk Rana, Executive Director, MCDS, Nepal.

In the introduction to his bestselling book HIMALAYA Michael Palin writes of the region: “We found people living at altitudes higher than the highest mountains in Europe; ancient civilizations surviving on arid wind-scoured plateaus; gorges two and a half miles deep, through which traders have found their way for thousands of years... we found a Himalaya... permeated by every sort of human activity.” He later touches on some of the poverty and need he found in the area and it is at this personal level of human activity that Operation Agri is seeking to bring deeper meaning to life as it supports the Multipurpose Community Development Service (MCDS) in its commitment to some of the people of this region.

One such project is located in the foothills of the Machhapuchhre Mountain, which is to the north of Pokhara town. There are nine wards in Machhapuchhre VDC, among them, the targeted wards – numbers 8 and 9 – are the poorest in the district.

This is how one villager speaks of the changes being experienced in the area through the OA funded MCDS project known as CHEST:

“My name is Banisara Pun. I am an inhabitant of Rumja, Ward No. 8. It used to take me more than half an hour to fetch water from the stream. The water was not safe and pure to drink but we had no option. Rumja was the most seriously affected village. We suffered a real scarcity of drinking water. One day the CHEST project came to our village and constructed a drinking water supply system which blessed us with access to safe and pure drinking water. Seasonal diseases like diarrhoea and dysentery have very much decreased in comparison to previous years. Access to good drinking water has made our lives very much easier and the time spent in fetching water is now used productively in the kitchen garden and for income generating activities.”

As Banisara tells us, clean water systems are bringing many benefits to Rumja and other local villages. In total 57 households were pleased to see tap stands arrive in their communities. But more than this, the project has been busy training and educating the women in health matters. Mobile clinics go into the villages offering free health check-ups; medicines and ointments are prescribed where necessary and instruction provided to improve oral health and sanitation. Despite the hard work and busy schedules of the women in these communities they spared time to attend the training and awareness sessions. Their enthusiasm and



Community women disposing of village rubbish.

thirst for learning contributed significantly to the success of the programme. Subsequently women in both of these communities banded together to collect waste around the villages and disposed of it in defined locations by burning. This not only created a clean environment but also lifted morale.

Three days of training were provided for farmers in the locality. This focused on types of soil, planting methods, plant diseases and pest problems and the value of home made fertilizers and composting. Seeds were distributed to the participants in this training and as a result health giving vegetables are being produced in many kitchen gardens.

As one of the men from Bhalaundi village puts it: “This project has contributed a lot to improve our health and has given everything needed to live a healthy life. I therefore salute and extend my gratitude to the CHEST project.”

A total of £18,661 was provided by OA for this project in 2011.



Banisara Pun now has access to safe drinking water.

Credit: MCDS, Nepal.

That they may have life...

By BMS worker Martin Butterworth, Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor, Programme Team, United Mission to Nepal. (We apologise to readers of the printed version of our magazine that this article was wrongly attributed there to Martin Beck.)

We all have life, but what kind of life is it? What kind of life does Operation Agri, as a Christian development organisation, want to give the people it works for? What does a “good” or full life really mean? As Christians we turn to Jesus’ words in John 10:10 – “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” I serve with BMS World Mission whose own mission statement is to “share life in all its fullness.” A big part of my daily life here in Kathmandu is as Evaluation Advisor with United Mission to Nepal, whose organisational vision starts: “Fullness of life for all...”

Always we are thinking about the wider implications and impacts of our work. Over the last couple of years at UMN we have structured this thinking around what “**Fullness of Life**” means to us. We’ve identified six aspects to a full life.

At UMN we’re using this to assess our own work, and we think it could be useful to others in similar work, such as Operation Agri.

Operation Agri supports the Community Health and Education Project (CHEP) of the Nepal Baptist Church Council’s MCDS. Last year three women took a tailoring course organised by CHEP and subsequently started their own small tailoring business, not only making clothes but training others to do so. Have these women and their families experienced “Fullness of Life”? Their three families now have an income which helps provide food. This is a very direct change to family **Well-being and Security**. But what else has changed for them?

Having a job also gives the women **Dignity and Respect**. We all know people who are unable to find work and can appreciate how important this is. Maybe the family also get on better now that the women have work and income, bringing **Peace and Reconciliation**? It may be that through the tailoring business they, and other women locally, have become better friends; more **Peace and Reconciliation**.

It’s not essential that everything we do brings change to every aspect of people’s lives. Part of the purpose behind Fullness of Life is to help us think what else we could be doing to broaden the impact of our work. Does the way the tailoring business operates make a positive contribution to **Environmental Sustainability**? Are there issues of **Justice and Equity**, perhaps relating to how women are treated as business owners? And did these women find **Hope and Freedom** through this change? They may think they did, but as Christians have we told them who we believe is the source of real **Hope and Freedom**?

Operation Agri also supports the Community Health and Engineering for Social Transformation (CHEST) project of MCDS. CHEST has been working in a remote high hill area of Nepal to improve health through clean drinking water, toilets and health education. So how does drinking water supply contribute to Fullness of Life? The obvious impact is reducing disease, so that’s **Well-being and Security**. This is almost always the



Diagram used with permission of United Mission to Nepal.



Guman Singh explains how to lay pipes.

most immediate impact of development work and we shouldn't underestimate its importance to people who don't have their basic needs provided. But again, Fullness of Life helps us look beyond this.

Construction of the drinking water supply pipes and holding tank involved the whole community as they dug and carried, and later agreed to contribute to a maintenance fund. We hope this encouraged Peace and Reconciliation between families as they worked together. Selected people were trained to maintain the pipelines and taps, contributing to their individual Dignity and Respect.

What else is happening here? The individual households were given help to construct toilets. Compared to using the edge of fields and paths as a toilet this must reduce the spread of disease, so improving health: more Well-being and Security. Using the jungle as a toilet is

not sustainable with increasing populations, so having enclosed toilets surely contributes to Environmental Sustainability.

I was also struck by the comments of the community at the project closing ceremony. The CHEST staff were mostly Nepali Christians and lived in the community, eating the same food and using the same toilets (or jungle). It's perhaps sad that this was seen by the community as a radical thing for outsiders to do, but what a distinctive witness in a culture obsessed by status! Guman Singh Pun said "we know about other organisations working here but to date we haven't seen any committed, transparent and trustworthy project like CHEST." Banisara Pun (also quoted in the previous article) said "We are very much grateful to CHEST for their unselfish concern and love towards us." After seeing how the CHEST staff lived and worshipped, local people like these came to them asking for prayer. The life and witness of CHEST is not just bringing health. It is bringing **Hope and Freedom** too.

Water, food and employment are important, but Fullness of Life is much more and that's the added value Operation Agri brings as a Christian organisation.



Learning about pipes and pipelines for the water supply.

Credit: Martin Butterworth, BMS.

Breath of life in Nicaragua

By Gill Ashley-Smith, OA Appeal Resource Manager.

Last summer, Russell and I visited the AMOS Health and Hope project in Nicaragua, and were delighted to meet doctors David and Laura Parajon.

We accompanied Laura and AMOS team members on one of their monthly 6 hour journeys to the village of Sabaleté, deep in a rural farming area in the hills of Matagalpa. There is a road of sorts, maintained by the villagers, so the AMOS four wheel drive vehicle can reach there, but the community of 600 people have no means of transport apart from walking, except for the few better off folk who own horses.

We were there to see the work, take photos, and organise filming with Cassie Butler, our camera operator. We all slept on camp beds in the clinic, and were well fed on traditional rice and beans.

On the clinic day, mothers arrived, carrying their babies, often with other children and relatives. Many homes are far from the clinic, and some had walked an hour or more along muddy paths. The Health Promoter Pedro Pablo and his helpers were very busy, and it was noisy with crying babies objecting to being weighed, or to having a finger pricked to test for anaemia!

Dr Laura counselled some mothers, and also spent time double checking the weighing, temperature taking, and the giving of medications that Pedro Pablo and his helpers were doing. AMOS regularly checks that the Health Promoters understand and are following the procedures that they have been taught.

In the afternoon, we filmed around the village, until heavy rain started – we had been warned to take wellington boots!

By evening, it was dark in this village with no electricity. They have one solar powered light in the clinic, but torches are essential. Laura checked Pedro Pablo's paperwork. Record keeping is taken seriously, and next day a photo was taken of each page. The data is entered on computer at the AMOS HQ and statistics produced, such as changes in the prevalence of diarrhoea.

After Pedro Pablo had gone home, a mother arrived with a baby that was desperate to breast feed, but kept



Mothers wait their turn at the clinic.



Dr Laura working by torchlight.

breaking off, crying and panicking. Laura followed the Health Promoter "protocol," testing that the instructions were clear and effective. After taking the baby's temperature, she asked the mother to remove the baby's vest, and calm it on her shoulder. Laura watched the baby's back, counting breaths per minute. The respiration rate indicates if it is a serious disease, or pneumonia, or just a cold.

She diagnosed pneumonia, and gave two puffs of an inhaler with an attachment over the baby's nose and mouth – the yells

and gasps for air ensured it was inhaled! Laura diluted antibiotic to a baby's dose and helped the mother insert it by syringe into the baby's mouth – who first spat it out but then took it.

After talking quietly to the mother for half an hour, Laura counted the baby's breathing which was much improved, with the baby calmer and able to feed. Laura was delighted their procedure worked well! Otherwise she might have sent mother and baby in the AMOS van to the government hospital, as an emergency – a long difficult journey in the dark.

The mother took antibiotic to give at home, and returned next morning with the baby much better. Russell and I felt privileged to see a baby being saved from a life threatening condition – a real breath of life!

A grant of £11,630 was recently provided by OA as this year's contribution to the work of AMOS

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Response Form

I enclose a personal gift towards the work of **Operation Agri:**

£

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

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

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Any cheques should be made payable to 'Operation Agri BMM.'

God at work through Operation Agri

By John Durrant, OA Treasurer and member of Bethel Baptist Church, Llantwit Major, Vale of Glamorgan.

We see God at work in so many different ways. In this magazine we read of the dedication of our overseas partners in preparing and managing projects to help disadvantaged people. God is also at work through the concern of individuals, churches and other groups as expressed in the generosity of their giving. This has been particularly evident during this period of economic difficulty when, as individuals, we are experiencing a squeeze on our finances. As with many other charities OA has seen its overall income decline and this has brought into increased focus a commitment to keep our ongoing costs to a minimum whilst maximising our grants to overseas partners. Regrettably there have been some reductions in these grants. We have used £60,000 from our reserve funds to help maintain existing projects and support new projects, but our remaining funds are now down to a level which can only support the essential costs of OA. We are thus entirely dependent on income from donations.

The pie charts illustrate the sources of our income and the headings of our expenditure. Let me highlight some points when compared with the previous year.

Income

- Regular giving from partners was down by over £14,000.
- Donations from churches and other groups was up by £1,000.
- Donations to projects was down by over £1,500.
- Income tax refund was down by £6,500; this was the result of a smaller amount of income which was gift aided.
- Legacy income was down by £27,000; although this is particularly subject to fluctuation, it is a very important source of income.
- Income for our appeals was at a similar level.

Our Jubilee Appeal has been a key feature of our celebrations this year and giving to this appeal has been encouraging, with donations still coming in.

Expenditure

- Overseas project expenses were up by just over £1,000.
- Grants to projects were significantly down by £125,000; regrettably our expenditure on grants as a percentage of our total expenditure fell from over 82% to just under 73%.
- We have already incurred expenditure of nearly £6,000 for the 2012 Nicaragua Appeal.

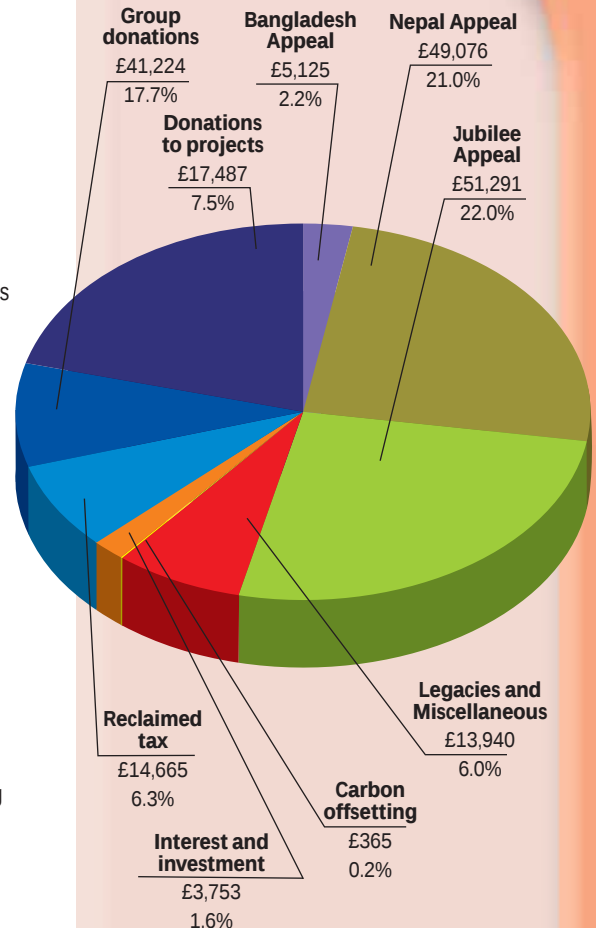
Administration costs have been kept to a minimum with one part-time administrator and our reliance on volunteers. Many of our costs such as those relating to overseas project support, advertising, the production of Outreach Abroad, and the preparation of materials for appeals are associated with promoting the work of our overseas partners and keeping our donors informed.

We are stepping out in faith in our budget for the 2011-12 financial year. This budget anticipates that grant making to our overseas partners will remain similar to that for 2010-11. However, in putting proposals together our partners have been asked to reduce by 10% their anticipated income from OA.

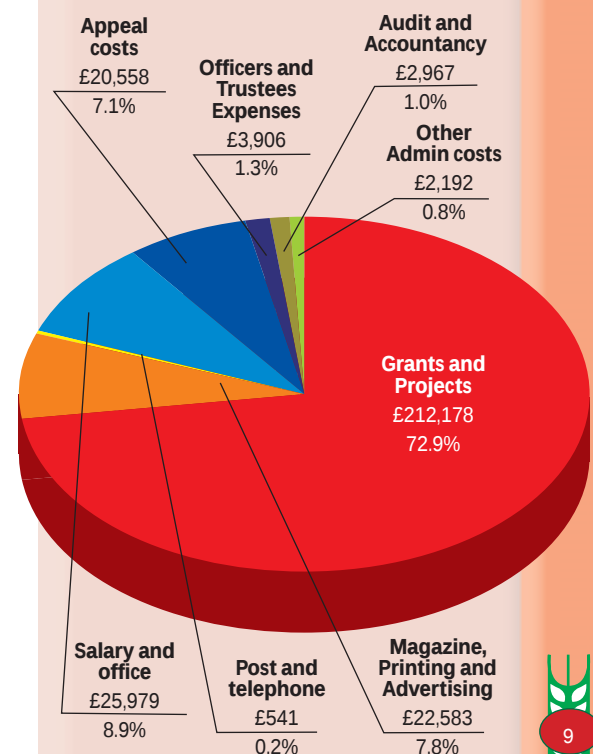
Without these grants to fund project workers, equipment and resources, disadvantaged people would not see the improvements to their lives reported in this magazine. For instance in Uganda the Beersheeba Community Development Programme, managed by Oasis and supported by OA, has seen marked improvements in the educational standard of the children in the numeracy and literacy catch-up and life skills programme in schools. Those people within the programme who have received individual grants, for instance to help them become more self-sufficient in subsistence farming, have demonstrated the confidence to face life and have been able to support their families and keep their children in school.

Through all of this we continue to thank God for his work in prompting generous giving and encouraging faithful project workers.

**OA Income 2010-11
OA Partners**



OA Expenditure 2010-11



News in Brief

“Living out a lifestyle”

Ruth Visick-Evans, Capacity Building Director of Oasis International, recently sent us a new proposal for their work in the slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Some included comments apply to much of the work OA supports, even if we wouldn't usually state it this way.

“Beyond the major components, the project will cover many other areas to ensure the holistic development of these families. Among these are moral and spiritual values. Duaripara Family Development Project is a project of Oasis Bangladesh, and Oasis Bangladesh is Christ-centred: inspired by the life, message and example of Jesus Christ through whom God's unconditional love for all people is expressed. We are called to love God, and love others as we love ourselves. We therefore seek to work together to extend Jesus' model of the Kingdom of God on the earth by living out a lifestyle according to this inspiration.

“Oasis is all about inclusion. Oasis values equality, open relationships, integration, sacrifice, hope, perseverance, innovation and excellence and these must be reflected in our actions, behaviour and attitude so that all will feel secure and enjoy life in all its fullness. In beneficiary selection and service delivery there will be no discrimination on the basis of religion, ethnicity, caste, creed and colour. All will be treated equally.”

Meeting basic needs in Borivali, Mumbai

A recent survey of a slum area of Mumbai conducted by Oasis India reveals some disturbing facts about the lives of women and children there.

50% of the women are working on contract for roughly £1 per week. Women strongly feel that they have no authority in their society and they cannot change the situation. None of the women feel that they are empowered by other women in the society. The majority of families in the slum live in one room houses with an average of 6 to 8 people living there, which indicates that the children's basic needs of health, education, clothing, and security are not met.

There is no hygiene system in the community and the lack of water and electricity has led to a growth of illegal supply of these basic services from the mafia, which the poor cannot afford. In these circumstances the work of Oasis in this area (supported in part by OA) is vital.

Recording successes in Tanzania

John Mtagwa lives in Katembe, a village in the Karagwe District of Tanzania. He has attended the workshops provided under OA funding for two years now. This is what he said recently at one of these events:



Local farmers involved in the training in Tanzania.

“I would like to give my very special thanks to Rev. Heavenlight Luoga our project organizer, who has helped us to realize our greatest need in this district.

Although he is not from our tribe he has a burden in his heart for the people of Karagwe.

“The training that we have been given for these past two years through our facilitator Rev. Paul Kyalimpa (of the Baptist Union of Uganda), has brought my knowledge to another level. My living status has gone up. Even people who are rich come and ask me to help them to organize their farms. Many farmers have come to understand what I am doing on my farm. I teach them very simple techniques on how to make manure which costs nothing but increases yield on our farms. I appreciate the training I have been given.

“Today I can organize my land to get food and an income. I am now able to take my children to school. Let me also say thanks to our donor who provides funding for this training.”

The last word... from India

“Rukhsar Kahatoon was 18 months old when she was diagnosed with polio a year ago. Today Rukhsar is a healthy 2½ year old living in Howrah, close to Kolkata, West Bengal. She's also the last recorded case of polio in India. That India, a country which until a few years ago reported as many as 100,000 cases of polio a year — more cases than anywhere else in the world — has been polio-free for a year, is a palpable milestone in the fight to eradicate the disease globally. Although we can't say for sure that polio is gone from India yet, this is already a remarkable feat, of which India should be extremely proud.” *From a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation blog.*

Prayer Points

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

Tanzania

- Pray for 'Farming Partnerships Initiatives' as they move into the second of their two year project, training local farmers in sustainable agriculture. Exciting testimonies of the effectiveness of this project have been received. In this second year loans are on offer to participating farmers to enable them to maximise the benefit of the teaching that they have received.

Uganda – the Oasis Beersheba project in Mbale

- This Community Development Programme, along with other projects within Oasis Uganda, is currently undergoing a significant restructuring process. Pray for wisdom, patience and peace of mind for the staff and leadership team.
- There are plans to establish a Vocational Skills Training Course as well as a Pre-school Programme this year. Pray that the implementation of this course will be successful and remember the Self Help Groups as they proceed with their income generation activities.
- Remember in prayer Amanda Wade who has taken up the position of Country Director in the interim following the resignation of Irene. Amanda has a background of working in governance.

Zimbabwe

- Pray for an early completion of the Youth Training Centre building at Gulati, south of Bulawayo, and for the success of the training courses for local youth that will be offered there.
- Ask the Lord to guide and bless the other ongoing projects of ACET (Aids Care Education and Training) as they offer hope in practical ways to the people of this impoverished area.

Thailand

- Remember in prayer the work in the Karen hills amongst recovered tribal drug addicts and other interested hill farmers as they generate income through the production and marketing of arabica coffee. Pray that the manager Nohan and his team may be guided by the Lord in all their activities.
- Pray for Mike Mann, who carries responsibility for the ongoing work of the Integrated Tribal Development Programme and also seeks to guide many other aspects of development, both in Thailand and around the world.

Sri Lanka

- Give thanks to God for the ongoing activities of Farms Lanka under the leadership of Clarence Mendis. They continue to be active in many different fields including Family Development Ministry coupled with Income Generating Activities and Home Gardening Programmes.

- Pray that as this work reaches out to include those seeking to rebuild their lives after the civil war there may be much new hope and encouragement in evidence.

- LEADS continues its activities in four districts of Sri Lanka, reaching out to people living in marginalised communities and in serious poverty. Pray that the planned improvements to public health and hygiene through the provision of potable water, sanitation facilities and related health education will bring empowerment and encouragement to these needy communities and enable them to make their own inputs.

India

- The Oasis India team with OA's support have embarked on a new programme of activity in a different slum area of Mumbai. Located at Borivali, a western suburb of Mumbai, the project seeks to bring Community Development and Empowerment through programmes on health and environment, social education, livelihood and accessing government schemes of improvement. Pray that many of the 4,500 families in this slum will become self-sufficient and regain human dignity.
- Progress at the WUAC farm centre in West Orissa is mentioned elsewhere in this magazine. Remember Mihir Sagar as he seeks to bring new ideas and progressive development to needy villagers around Diptipur.

Afghanistan

- Praise God that development work is still able to help the suffering people of this war-torn country. Remember our partners there as they seek to improve the lives of villagers through the introduction of microhydro projects which will benefit about 700 people with electricity for lighting and power for income generation activities.

Home

- Pray for the officers of Operation Agri as they seek to take the work forward. Remember especially our financial needs, that the Lord will inspire many to continue their generous giving and bring new donors on board so that our overseas activities do not have to be further cut back.
- Give thanks for good progress with our current appeal, and pray that plans for future years may be guided by the Lord as the promotion of our ministry features each of our partners' work in turn.
- The need for new volunteers to supplement the home team is critical in some areas. Pray that we may be guided towards the right persons to carry on this vital work and bring new ideas and perspectives to the work of OA.





2012 APPEAL – NICARAGUA: FIT FOR LIFE

This year's appeal focusses on the work of AMOS Health and Hope in Nicaragua. The resource pack will be available from May onwards, and there is an order form on page 7.



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 our website to see how easy this is to do!

PRESENTS WITH A PURPOSE

Birthdays, Anniversaries and other special occasions can benefit the work we do overseas through our 'Presents with a Purpose' gift card scheme. Churches too can participate in the same way.



Inside this issue...

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A Commissioning Editor needed by Operation Agri for this quarterly magazine.

The Editor is responsible for the content, commissioning articles and liaising by email with contributors worldwide. This voluntary position will suit someone with an interest in overseas development and a good command of English. He/she will work from home, giving perhaps an hour or two each week, plus a little more as each edition approaches finalisation. Pictures are selected in consultation with OA's administrator who also liaises with the printers. The retiring Editor will help the new incumbent.

Please get in touch in the first instance with OA's secretary Rev Elgan Evans at secretary@operationagri.org.uk.

Do you know of someone in your church who might be interested in helping OA in this way?

Apology

OA wishes to say 'sorry' to everyone we sent post to recently with the wrong stamps. We'll get it right next time, we promise.



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).

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

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Front Cover Photograph: Beneficiaries of the agricultural training programme at West Utkal, Orissa (see p. 2).