



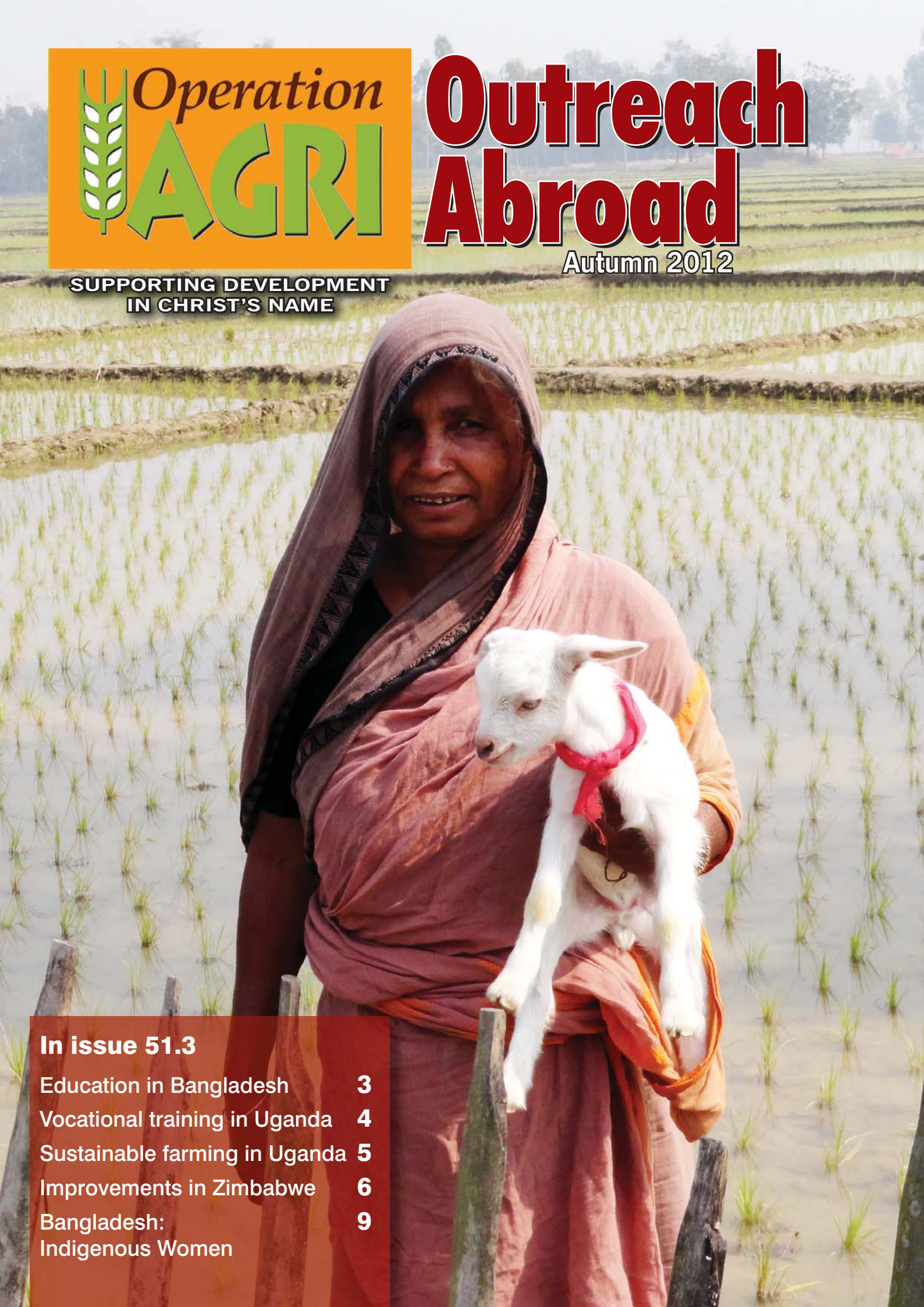
Outreach Abroad

Autumn 2012

**SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT
IN CHRIST'S NAME**

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Rejoice in the Lord!

By Russell Ashley-Smith, Chairman of OA

Drawing up the chair at my desk, debating what should be the theme of this editorial, I clicked my radio remote control. In an instant the room resounded gloriously to Handel's anthem, "Rejoice in the Lord!" What better place to start!

Indeed, let us give thanks and rejoice with our God at what is being achieved by Operation Agri's overseas partners. On the scale of worldly need, it isn't perhaps much, but the Bible encourages us to get on with what is before us: good works prepared for us in advance (Eph 2:10). We trust God to multiply the effect - what were five loaves and two fish when five thousand men were to be fed (plus their families)?

But it's more than 'what,' because it's people who are being helped - men, women and children whom God wants to be able to share fairly all the wonderful resources with which he's endowed this world.

Latrines might seem remote from preaching Christ, especially when the local people have to be persuaded that it's indeed sensible for the whole family to use this one clean little building on a daily basis for a fundamentally dirty function

which Nepali tradition teaches should be carried out in the forest in a different place each time! But testimonies aver that the way in which the national Baptist Church teams do this, respecting the local people, taking time to listen and discuss - coming back again and again as necessary - this does point to Jesus Christ, and furthermore his Church is being built as a result.



As we read the stories in this magazine, let's try as best we can to put ourselves in the shoes of the men and women, boys and girls, whose lives are being changed. May they not only thank our partners and OA, but also come to "Rejoice in the Lord!"

With my very best wishes in the Lord, with thanks for your partnership in this exciting work.

Russell Ashley-Smith

OA Chairman



Run in the London Marathon

Operation Agri has a single Silver Bond place for the 2013 Virgin London Marathon, to be held on Sunday 21st April.

As a small charity we only qualify for one place every five years, so we would like to make the most of it. If you have a serious interest in running in the London Marathon next year, and think you can raise a good amount of sponsorship money for our projects overseas, please get in touch with the administrator, Malcolm Drummond, on admin@operationagri.org.uk.

Peter Westbury ran for us in 2008, and raised nearly £2,500. Could you do at least as well?



Peter Westbury training for the 2008 London Marathon. Who will run for OA in 2013?

Talia – a life-changing experience

By Lovely Angela Mondon, Duaripara Project Manager.

Talia was 8 years old when she joined the Oasis Bangladesh 'Duaripara' project in 2008. Her parents moved from their village to Dhaka in search of a better life. Without land in the village they had little opportunity to earn money. Now living in the Duaripara slum community, her father works as a bus driver and her mother works in the garments factory, but life in the slums is tough – housing and sanitation is poor and earning enough money to support a family is challenging.

Operation Agri has been privileged to assist with the funding of the Duaripara Family Development Project over the past four years. The project was set up to support and empower vulnerable families, with a particular focus on helping girls to access education – an opportunity which many girls in Bangladesh are denied. For most girls, adult life begins at around 12 when they are either married or sent to work in garments factories to earn money for their families. Yet these girls have dreams of a different future where they can study, learn and pursue a career of their choice – one which would ultimately be more beneficial to them and their families.

Operation Agri continues to provide funding for the project and has given £12,150 towards its support in 2012



Children gather at a slum shop, a lean-to against a garden wall

to change. Talia was elected by the girls as a member of the Children's Committee where she became a very active and conscientious committee member, able to freely share her thoughts and ideas to the other committee members and happily taking up the challenges that arise through committee discussions.

Having made good progress in the Catch-Up programme Talia was able to start attending a good quality local school with some of the other girls. She did very well in the extra English and Bangla lessons run by the teachers at the project and was able to progress to Class 5 in January this year. Socially she has also changed - she now talks nicely with her friends and teachers and you can see confidence in her face.

One of the important things the Duaripara Project does is to encourage parents to support their daughters' education through the paying of school fees, which for many is a big step when there are many demands on the little money available. Talia's parents are now faithfully paying school fees and are very supportive of her continued schooling. Talia is very grateful to Oasis and would love to see this project growing in future so that other girls could get the opportunity to study and fulfil their dreams.



Cycle rickshaw 'taxi rank,' where the drivers wait to be hired

Talia is now 12 years old. Her first experience of the Duaripara project was through the 'Catch-Up' education programme for girls who had missed out on significant periods of schooling to prepare them for mainstream school. In the early days Talia had some learning and behavioural difficulties - she couldn't concentrate in the lessons, she fought with her friends in the classroom, told lies and started to steal money or possessions from her friends and teachers.

The teachers started to keep a close eye on her, took special care of her, and showed her love. They spent extra time with her and engaged her in the Children's Committee to help her develop responsibility. She started doing really well and made a really good effort

Talia starting the programme



Going where we are *most* needed

By Dennis Ssettaala, Director of the Vocational Training Project, SDKF* in Uganda.

Operation Agri has recently provided
£2,230 to support this project.

Life in the Slums of Kampala

Can you imagine the poverty?

Kyebando-Kamwokya slums are a labyrinth of interconnected corridors between the haphazardly constructed slum homes that line them. Most of these are on a gradient, so when it rains, water cascades down the valley through the poorly built homes and drains into the river. The area becomes a muddy mess. Daily life in the slums consists mostly around the essentials, food, clothing and shelter.

Most homes are about 10 x 10 feet square, dirt floor, no running water or electricity. Slum areas not only look gross but the smells make the experience a full sensory overload. Everywhere you walk in the slums you'll step on trash of one sort or another. The places are filled with children and youth, many are on the streets begging or taking drugs. In most cases these youngsters are always dirty, sick and hungry.



Vocational training (tailoring) in action.

Lack of skills and education bring little or no income, guaranteeing a hand-to-mouth existence and empty horizons from one generation to the next. Vulnerable groups of individuals found in this location are young children and youth. In addition to the mainstay effects of poverty, they are at risk of experiencing curtailed education, assumption of the role as a carer, at risk of rape, pregnancy, abuse and prostitution, leading to

the increased danger of contracting HIV/AIDS and the possibility of becoming street children. The skills they develop on the streets are for survival. To bring them into the main stream of society, which is the primary objective, they need vocational training where they can earn their own living.

How can we bring about change?

SDKF Vocational Skills Training Project, located in the middle of the slum area where most of Kampala's poor live, recruit children and youth who are orphaned due to the effect of HIV/AIDS. Our training in computer basics, coupled with tailoring and design seeks to equip them with skills to earn a living, so lifting them out of the cycle of poverty.

Who will help us achieve this?

Since 2007, our partner, Operation Agri has been supporting our Tailoring and Design section. This support has enabled us to: pay the trainers, hire the training premises, pay for utilities, buy students practice materials, buy and run a motorcycle to allow field visits. More recently, we have started a revolving fund to enable graduate students to have their own sewing machines enabling them to be self-employed. Each year we offer this course to 45 students.

What are the encouragements?

Sewing clothes is a good business in Uganda. Markets exist in the making of school uniform and traditional African wear. With the resources provided disadvantaged youngsters

in Kampala can have a better future through vocational skills training.

Every morning we provide spiritual input through devotions. We pray with the students and teach them from the word of God. Over the years we have seen God changing lives and transforming many. On Sundays we run a service to encourage all our beneficiaries. Many accept Jesus Christ under our hands.

So far we have trained 720 beneficiaries of which 75% are in employment, while others have gone back to school to further their education.

We are very grateful to our partner Operation Agri for their financial support enabling us to provide these skills to the disadvantaged young people of Kampala.

* Setting Development and Keeping the Foundation



The motto of SDKF's training scheme.

Paul Kyalimpa – Preparing the way

By Ralph and Jane Hanger, who have extensive experience in East Africa.

OA is funding this work by
£12,919 this year.

New opportunities in sustainable farming in Uganda

It is many years since I first met Paul Kyalimpa. Knowing that I was an agriculturalist, he showed me a project he had submitted to the Baptist World Alliance for funding (without success) and asked my help. What he had in mind was helping small scale farmers all over Uganda to farm more efficiently and more organically. Although a pastor, he had completed a course in Sustainable Agriculture at Reading University, and was keen to put his new knowledge into practice, and to help others do so as well. That first proposal was very ambitious and seemingly unachievable!

It was suggested that he did a pilot project, but there wasn't even funding to help with that. As those of you who have been following this great story will know, Operation Agri became involved. After a very small pilot project in his home area, which he funded himself, OA helped him set up the Busia Sustainable Agricultural Project. This was carried out over a number of years in several phases. It has made a huge difference in the

area in which he worked. Farm incomes have increased, the women have been relieved of heavy work (by oxen) and the children are better fed with improved education. What he taught spread much further than just to the farmers in his many groups. At one end-of-course celebration I attended, the local Government Agricultural Officer asked if it would be possible to fund the whole of his area, as Paul's work had been so successful.

Paul is now working in a totally different area of Uganda - Gulu. This is an area where there has been war for a number of years, and where people have been unable to farm. Now there is peace they need help to start again. Paul has started teaching new groups of farmers in much the same way as he did in Busia. The reports look similar to previous ones. However, when you compare the detail, you see how much the teaching has evolved to meet the real needs. Paul has shown himself very adaptable to listen and adjust as necessary. It is one of the reasons for his success.

He moves the teaching from farm to farm, so that more farmers feel they are really involved in the project – when it comes to their area. It also gives Paul a chance to see what is really happening on the farms themselves, and adjusts quickly what he is doing if he has not been understood. He also introduces new topics when he sees gaps in the farmer's knowledge.

I wonder whether I'll still be reading similar though evolving reports from other areas of Uganda in years to come. How long will it take Paul to fulfil his original vision?

Gulu fruit harvest

In the hot dry area around Gulu, Paul helped farmers to plant fruit trees, with compost for nurture, and mulch to retain water. Shade from trees also helps reduce evaporation from the soil. Paul brought in better yielding grafted orange and mango trees, and also bananas, which were not previously grown here.

Now they are receiving the first harvest of fruits, improving the diet of children, and enabling small scale farmers to earn money. The benefit will last for years, increasing local food security and family incomes by growing fruit trees in a sustainable way.

Operation Agri is totally committed to supporting others to realise the potential of sustainable farming, even on a small scale, to improve the health and prospects of individual lives for the future.

Paul Kyalimpa



Filling a composting pit to develop the material for spreading.



Preparing fruit trees for transplanting into composted soil.

Improving lifestyles in *troubled* Zimbabwe

By Kevin Jones, who with his wife Gill, has recently served with BMS in Zimbabwe development work.

Total agreed funding of OA development work in Zimbabwe amounts to £9,760 this year.

In the Matopos hills 60 km south east of Bulawayo, Operation Agri are supporting the ACET (Aids Care Education and Training) Community Care Programme (CCP) as they seek to help local people to learn skills for a brighter future at the Gulati Youth Skills Training Centre and in other centres of development

ACET CCP are active in the Matopos hills where there are many small villages and homesteads and very little economic activity other than subsistence farming. They support those suffering from HIV/AIDS, and a large primary school breakfast programme feeds 3000 children in six schools. They receive a bowl of porridge each school day morning – funds permitting. Five market gardens have been established where ACET volunteers support their patients and themselves by growing vegetables. The gardens were started through an OA grant and they are doing well, indeed one of them has expanded to 20 times the original size and others have doubled in size. As I write, this area and most of western Zimbabwe is suffering from a severe drought so getting water for these gardens is a real challenge.

The Gulati Youth Skills Training Centre (YSTC) will facilitate the teaching of sewing, dressmaking and design for young women and carpentry for young men. There will also be a small peanut butter making enterprise adjoining the centre, a good opportunity to observe free enterprise. In an area like Gulati it is so vitally important to be able to help youngsters gain a skill and gain confidence. Many of the young people in the village and surrounding area will not have



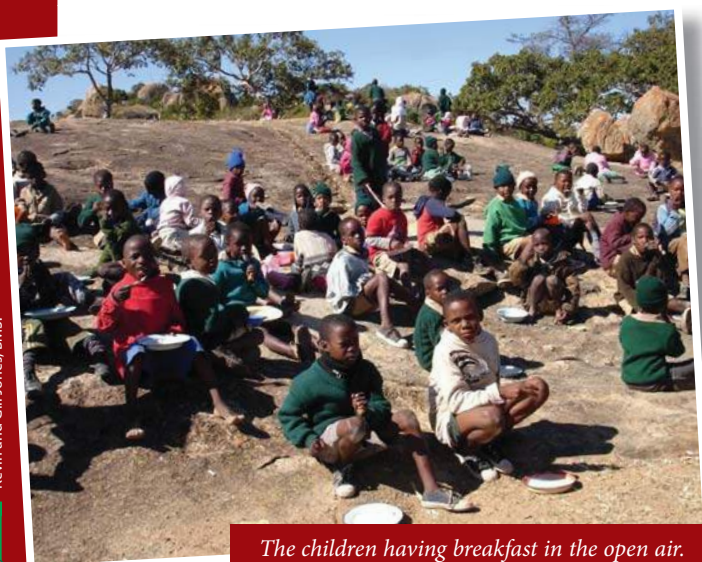
Ladies from the sewing class display the aprons they have made.

completed school to the age of 16. Many of them will be semi-illiterate because in Zimbabwe education has to be paid for and the school fees are impossible to meet for many families. ACET CCP are working with local teachers to provide the training at the YSTC and as well as learning a skill, the young participants will have life skills training to add to their knowledge. The training centre structure is now approaching completion after a few hold ups in construction, not least of all finding the water for mixing the mortar and concrete. The training will start in earnest in January 2013.

Morning Star is another centre of training and community involvement supported by Operation Agri. This centre is about 40 minutes from Gulati by truck. Here sewing, bee keeping, paper and soap making is funded in this remote area to benefit and encourage the local inhabitants with skills training and enterprise ventures. The project is running well, but again the drought is a major challenge for everyone involved as water is collected over 3 km away from the centre. As with all skills training where articles are produced, selling them to raise revenue to continue the training is a challenge. Morning Star have worked well on their marketing and products are even finding their way to the USA.

OA is continuing to support skills training in the Matopos area and has recently approved funding to the Ebenezer Agricultural Training College on the western side of the Matopos Hills, to provide a greenhouse for seedling production which will add another dimension to the training being given to 90 young people at Ebenezer.

OA has directly and indirectly helped over 2200 people in the past 3 years with its development support in Zimbabwe. Praise the Lord!



The children having breakfast in the open air.

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

Operation Agri BMM is a registered charity no: 1069349

Addressing *poverty* among the indigenous women of Bangladesh

By OA trustee, Mary Hart who, with her husband Bob, worked with BMS in Bangladesh for 15 years.

Bangladesh literally means the Land of the Bengali people, and so it is with 98% of the population of almost 160 million being Bengali, but it is also home to more than 40 major aboriginal or indigenous communities, each with their own distinct identity, language and culture. Whilst many people in Bangladesh are poor, the poverty levels among the indigenous communities are much higher than the national average with 90% of indigenous households landless and living in poverty.

Surjomoni Kisku of Danasho Baptist Church.



SHED Board, Bangladesh.

OA has a long history of supporting development carried out by the Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha through their Social Health and Education Development (SHED) Board, and we are delighted to be asked to partner with them again in this new venture to reach out to some of the poorest and most marginalised people in their country.

The new project focuses on the indigenous communities living in Rajshahi district in the north west of Bangladesh. The indigenous people, known locally as Adivasis, traditionally owned most of this land but they have been driven away from their homesteads, often aggressively, by land grabbers. They have no paper work or legal power to pursue their rights to the land so they have been left with nothing. Most of the adults are now seasonal labourers, and for much of the year when there is no seasonal work so they are left with no means to generate income. Families are living in extreme poverty and, not surprisingly perhaps, many of the men folk have become addicted to locally brewed alcohol leaving the responsibility for running the family to the women.

These indigenous women face huge problems, including harassment when engaged in manual labour outside

It is expected that this project will commence shortly and OA is offering £6,500 in support.

of the home which can include robbery, attack and rape. Some are also subject to violence in their own homes. Girls and young women growing up in these communities have little or no education and no skills to fit them for the wider labour market and so are caught up in a cycle of deprivation. In addition there is poor access to ante-natal and post-natal health services, many of the children have poor nutritional status, and disease caused by inadequate sanitation and contaminated drinking water is common.

SHED Board have identified that the indigenous women have a lack of awareness of their social, legal and constitutional rights and a lack of support to help them solve their problems. The new project will help

the women to organize themselves in small groups and through discussion and training identify the root causes of their poverty and together find ways of addressing these.



Indigenous children and families of Sahapur Baptist Church.

A small project team will set up an Adivasi Centre with a primary school alongside. They will visit local villages talking to the women and encouraging and supporting them to establish village women's groups. Training will be offered to group members both at the Adivasi Centre and in the villages and they will be encouraged to enrol their children into the primary school. As plans develop they hope to establish a credit union and micro finance scheme to support the women who want to set up small businesses to generate income.

SHED Board are requesting not only funding from OA to establish and develop this work in an area of Bangladesh where they have not previously been involved, but also that we join with them in prayer for these indigenous communities and the success of the project.

News in Brief

Health problems swept away

Nagamma is 45 years old. She lives in a small house located in a rubber estate in central Sri Lanka. The surroundings of the house used to be very unpleasant and the family had grown accustomed to it and did not pay it much attention.

OA's partner in Sri Lanka, LEADS, was introduced to the community and conducted training on cleanliness and maintaining a clean and pleasant environment. This caught the attention of many of the community and they were keen to attend. Many are the topics that were covered at this training from good health habits to environmental cleanliness to a healthy and organised lifestyle.

Nagamma now says "This training was a wonderful opportunity for me and I gathered so much information I knew little about. After this training I have paid more attention to my surrounding and have made a conscious effort to keep it clean and pleasant." Nagamma is enjoying her living area. The change surprises her regular visitors. She also states that with the reduction of breeding places for mosquitoes, visits to the doctor when someone in her household gets sick have halved.

She is very grateful to LEADS, the community and all involved in initiating this programme.

Sparkling new life qualities in Afghanistan



Afghanistan national workers checking generating equipment.

RESAP, OA's partner in Afghanistan, continue their good work to improve the quality of life for many villagers in remote areas of the country through small scale electricity generation.

During a recent evaluation eight communities were asked about the impact the Micro-Hydro Projects on their lives. Some of

these MHPs have already been operating for five years. The people declared unanimously that their quality of life has increased at least 50% or around 3 steps on a scale from 1-5. They all mentioned the following improvements:

- *Saved money (no gas/ kerosene cost) 100%*
- *More time for social life / learning (more light time) 100%*

- *News from the world (TV, Radio) 100%*
- *Better communication access (Mobile Phone) 100%*
- *Better health (no oil / gas lamps smoke) 100%*
- *Business possibilities (Freezer, Fridge, Computer) 30%*

It is really encouraging to note these excellent responses.

Surveying levels of need in central Nepal

The Community Health and Engineering for Social Transformation (CHEST) Project has recently relocated to a new project area. Prior to submitting their proposal to OA for potential funding, they carried out a baseline household survey in Rayale in central Nepal. Working with the local Village Development Committee they spent 10 days interviewing members of 758 households and gathered information on age, education levels, occupations, health of the families, condition of drinking water supply, toileting habits and the need for bio-gas installation. When this data had been fully analysed it was apparent that the main needs of the community were in health awareness training, improved drinking water supply, the construction of many new toilets and the installation of a large number of bio-gas plants. These conclusions have been incorporated into a new proposal which has since been approved for funding by OA.

Catch up classes reduce drop out in Uganda

As a way of reducing the likelihood of pupils dropping out of school, our partners at the Beersheba education project in Uganda have been working alongside school teachers in Musoto. They are helping to identify 50 primary four pupils who are struggling academically or who for other reasons are likely to drop out of school. Through the 'Catch up' programme, the teachers have done a great job in helping the pupils develop which has improved on their school performance. With the establishment of our library services, the pupils have been offered an opportunity of free access to all the available textbooks. Twelve of the community children embraced this opportunity seriously and have been using the library services regularly to their advantage. The pupils also use the quiet environment at the project to be able to read and do their homework. They have shown great improvement in understanding and ability to read and write English as a result.

Prayer Points

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

Bangladesh

- Pray for Mohananda Bairagee, the recently appointed Director of the Social Health & Education Development (SHED) Board. SHED Board is the service arm of the Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha and long time partner of Operation Agri. Remember Mohananda as he takes over established projects and develops new ones.
- One established activity is the Children Education Project, providing schooling for children aged 4 to 5 years to prepare them for admission to the mainstream schooling system. Pray for the 64 teaching staff employed in this project and the 3 School Supervisors who have recently been appointed, that they may work well together to provide effective education to the 1,500 children enrolled in the schools.
- A new project, which will be based in Tanor in the Rajshahi District of North West Bangladesh, seeks to improve the lives of indigenous communities through supporting and empowering the womenfolk. Please pray for the SHED Board committee as they set this project up, that the right people are recruited to take the work forward and that the indigenous women might see the value of working together to solve their problems and establish their rights in society.
- In this context Mohananda offers a personal request for prayer – “that we be trustworthy to God, to our donors, to the Bangladesh government, to Board members, to the church and all the beneficiaries. Pray that we will also be able to demonstrate God’s love to the beneficiaries and local people, for extension of the kingdom of God.”

Nepal

- As we write Nepal is in a critical state of uncertainty. Politically there are crises at every turn with the various parties not able to agree a way forward. Protests have been going on throughout the country and people are finding it difficult to obtain food and basic necessities. Pray that a satisfactory political settlement will soon be reached, that peace and harmony will return and that the work of BMS and OA partners may continue unhindered.
- Praise God for the successful conclusion of two of the development projects that OA supports.
- Pray for the leaders of MCDS (OA Partners) as they move forward with new projects in needy areas of Nepal. The main focus will be in the development of health and sanitation procedures, raising awareness of the community to the potential they have to help themselves, and training in organisation and leadership.

Tanzania

- Pray for the work we support in northern Tanzania, FPI (Farming Projects Initiatives), as they explore the way ahead in training local farmers in the principles of organic sustainable agriculture.

Zimbabwe

- At the time of writing uncertainty continues about the date of the promised elections. Please pray for peace and stability for this nation and for fair and just government of all its people.
- Pray for the work of Ebenezer Agricultural College. May the summer rains be good, so that the vegetable seedlings raised in their new greenhouse can be of maximum benefit to the local people.

Uganda

- SDKF: Pray for the new intake of students for the design and tailoring programme as they commence their training with high hopes for the future. Pray too for those who having completed the course and been helped to obtain their own sewing machines – that they will find outlets for the garments that they are now able to make.
- Pray for Paul Kyalimpa our partner in Uganda (see article on page 5) as he travels across the country and beyond to share his expertise in sustainable agricultural techniques.
- Oasis Beersheba. Give thanks for the encouraging improvement seen in the academic ability of the “catch-up” children. Pray for unity and understanding amongst the Self Help Groups as they apply the information gained through their training sessions. Pray for Beersheba leaders as they continue to widen and extend their activities to include boys as well as girls and as they develop new work in the area of agricultural training.

Afghanistan RESAP

- Give thanks that the work of providing micro-hydro and wind energy resources in this troubled country is able to continue. Pray the withdrawal of the foreign military will not cause a general deterioration of security and make the work of development organizations more difficult.
- In the coming months the national staff of RESAP will be largely on their own. Pray that they will be able to face this challenge with good results. Many village electricians have been trained and more are undergoing training. They play a crucial part in the performance of a generating system. Pray that they will be well motivated in maintaining the plant in their villages.

Home

- Give thanks to God for the generous support OA receives from its individual supporters and the churches in UK. Pray that the officers will be given wisdom during the coming financial year, as they allocate funds within a limited budget.
- During the coming months much work will go into the preparation of resources for the 2013 appeal based on our work in Sri Lanka. Pray that those involved will be guided by God in all of this activity.

presents with a purpose!

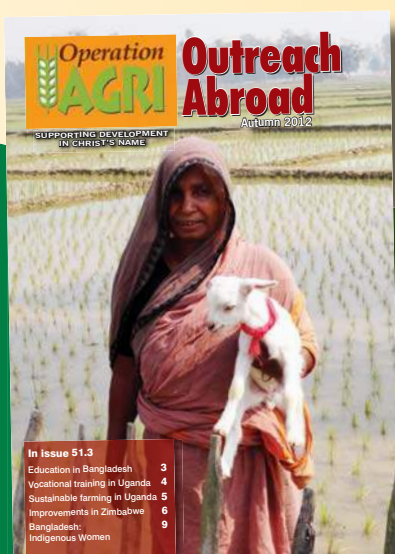
PRESENTS WITH A PURPOSE

Christmas, 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. The new brochure for 2012-13 is included with this magazine – please ask for extra copies if you can use them with your church or group.



NICARAGUA: FIT FOR LIFE. OUR CURRENT APPEAL.

This year's appeal focusses on the work of AMOS Health and Hope in Nicaragua. The resource pack is currently available for use in your church or group, and can be ordered on our website, where you can preview one of the new videos of this vital work.



Front Cover Photograph:

Indigenous women in rural Bangladesh are often among the poorest of the poor. Operation Agri will shortly be supporting a project which will help them (see p. 9). Picture: SHED Board, Bangladesh.

Operation Agri (charity no. 1069349 and a member of Global Connections) supports rural and urban development projects on three continents, attacking the basic causes of poverty among 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.

Outreach Abroad was compiled and edited by Andy Smith, Stan Crees and Malcolm Drummond. To be added to the mailing list, or for donations or other enquiries, contact Malcolm Drummond (administrator): Operation Agri, 361 Firs Lane, Palmers Green, London N13 5LX. Tel. 020 8803 0113, or email admin@operationagri.org.uk.

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

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