

Outreach Abroad

Supporting rural and urban development projects in Christ's name

Autumn 2016



Esther with her
piggery project
– see page 15

In this issue 55.3

Spotlight on Operation Agri 2

Sri Lankan Recovery 7-9

Transforming slum communities 11

Recollections of Nepal 12-13

Oasis 2015/16 Report 14-15



Operation
AGRI

Spotlight on Operation Agri

Where to channel scarce resources?



By **Russell Ashley-Smith** – OA Chairman

THE NEEDS ARE STILL GREAT

We could be discouraged; poverty in the world doesn't decrease. Are Operation Agri and similar agencies achieving anything? Our specific call is to show the love of Jesus.

Where do we start? That was easy in the early days when OA met the material needs of workers of the Baptist Missionary Society. A letter would arrive asking for vegetable seeds or young chicks or a wide-wheeled tractor, they were bought and sent.

Today the requests are for funds. How should OA decide where to send the money that you so generously give?

There are many hurdles:

- The project must be led by Christians.
- The development must be sustainable with the effects still likely to be evident five years after it finishes.
- We must receive a satisfactory project proposal.



THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASSESSMENT

OA's procedure for assessing proposals and reports is rigorous. Our panel of experts is experienced at critically evaluating development proposals; they analyse aspects such as:

- Is there a clearly defined aim with, ideally, a survey in advance so that the effect of the proposed work can be effectively measured?
- Have those in charge of the project the experience and abilities to carry it through?
- Will the project benefit the neediest in the community and at what cost per beneficiary?

- Is the budget clearly laid out; separating capital from running costs?
- Will OA be able to have the progress of the project independently evaluated?
- What is the relationship between the project and the local church (where there is one)?

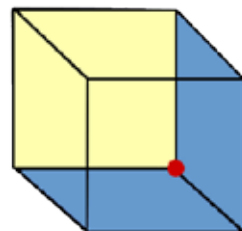


OA's Overseas Secretary, Martin Butterworth, heads up the Grants Group with responsibility for managing the annual overseas budget. Many projects run for more than one year; each tranche being conditional on OA receiving a satisfactory report with independently audited accounts.

Most of the projects OA supports are run by established partners, many of whom are associated with BMS or Oasis – but not all. Unfortunately in today's financial climate there is little opportunity to fund entirely new projects, though there are exceptions such as the work in Mozambique.

TO 2017 AND BEYOND

Operation Agri is currently reviewing its strategy. Long-standing partners still need our support. New requests to support development work in some of the most deprived countries arrive. The OA budget is not unlimited. Please pray with the Trustees as we debate this enigma.



NEW! 2016
APPEAL

Help for Health & Harvest

Remittance Slip

Please use this slip when sending gifts.

IMPORTANT—Please do NOT send gifts to Baptist House at Didcot.

To the Administrator, Operation Agri, 361 London N13 5LX

I enclose our cheque for £ _____ (payable to Operation Agri BMM)

This is from (name of church, including _____)

Please send your receipt to - (at _____)

Name (Ms/Miss/Mrs/Mr/Dr/Rev) _____

Address _____

Position in your church _____

NB Please be sure to include the gift envelopes of the details on the rear of the envelopes, asking OA to reclaim

Help for
Health & Harvest

Thank you for your gift
to Operation Agri

Operation
AGRI

CHRISTIAN
LOVE
IN ACTION

Operation
AGRI

Supporting development
name around the world through
• Agriculture and food
• Health and housing
• Job-creation and
• Pre-schools and



others at a village clinic, rural Nicaragua.
there's no doctor nearby – but a local
nurse is trained in basic healthcare.

It's not too late to order and use your pack.

Contains:

- ✓ DVD
- ✓ Posters
- ✓ Resource Book
- ✓ Envelopes
- ✓ Remittance slip
- ✓ Order form
- ✓ Bookmarks

Coffee mornings
Family events
Church events
Home groups
Children's Groups
Youth Groups
Socials
etc. etc. etc.

Contact:

Malcolm Drummond

Operation Agri, 361 Firs Lane,
Palmers Green, London N13 5LX

T 020 8803 0113

E admin@operationagri.org.uk

ACT!
NOW!

Children's page

By **Janet Streeter** – friend of Operation Agri.

Last time **Oppy** was at the Olympics in RIO DE JANIERO, Brasil.

The flags shown last time were -

1. India (0,1,1,120)
2. Nepal (0,0,0,7)
3. Afghanistan (0,0,0,3)
4. Uganda (0,0,0,21)
5. Tanzania (0,0,0,7)
6. Bangladesh (0,0,0,7)
7. Nicaragua (0,0,0,5)
8. Sri Lanka (0,0,0,9)

The numbers beside each country show how many gold medals, how many silver medals and how many bronze medals they won. The fourth number shows how many athletes took part. Why, do you think, the numbers are very low?



Oppy is off on his travels again – can you rearrange the letters below to see which country where Operation Agri works he is going next?

N D A A U G

Oppy may see this animal in the country he's visiting. Join the dots to see the animal.

As we move towards Advent and Christmas you may hear about Operation Agri's Presents with a Purpose.

The answers to the crossword below are all connected with Presents with a Purpose. I have put in all the 'O' and 'A' letters for you.



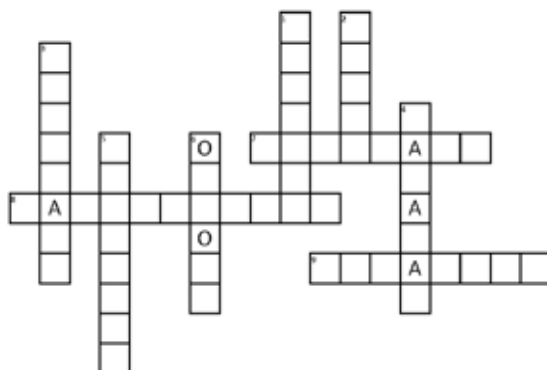
Clues

Down

1. Where black and yellow insects live
2. Donald is a famous one of these
3. Where you might see young salmon (4,4)
4. Yellow fruit
5. You hope to receive these at Christmas
6. Vegetables that make you cry

Across

7. You might need one of these kits if you cut yourself (5,3)
8. Provides clean drinking liquid (5,6)
9. Needed for health



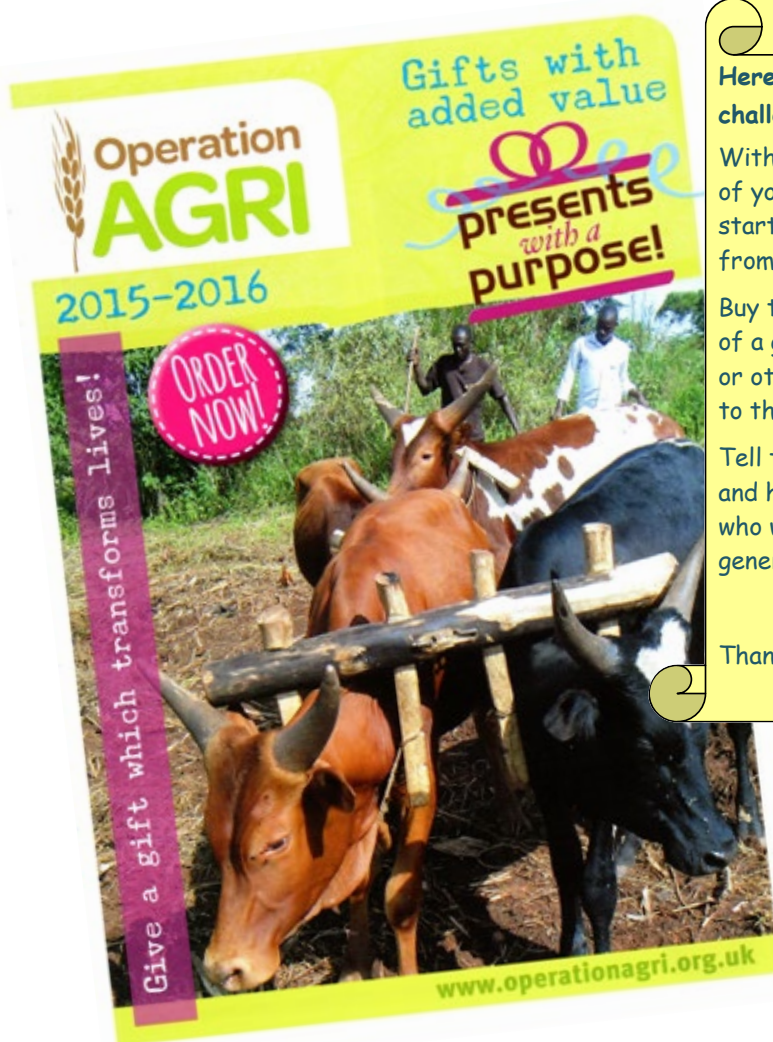
Youth page:



full-on challenges for you

Autumn has arrived which means you are now back to school or college, starting university or you may be settling into a working career. It also means that Advent and Christmas are not far away. You may even have a birthday or other celebration coming up before then.

Here's the first challenge: go to www.operationagri.org.uk/oa/Presents.html and choose a present for your birthday or Christmas present. Let your family and friends know your choice and how to buy the gift. Tell them that the purchase of this present will benefit someone you may never meet.



Here's your second challenge:

With the other members of your youth group or club start a fund to buy a gift from the web site above.

Buy the present on behalf of a group leader, teacher or other person you want to thank for great service.

Tell them what you've done and how it will help others who will benefit from your generosity.

Thank you



Support through

JustGiving™

www.operationagri.org.uk/oa/Donate.html



Remembering OA in your will:

www.operationagri.org.uk/oa/Remember_OA_in_your_Will.html



this year's appeal

www.operationagri.org.uk/oa/Appeal_Pack.html



www.operationagri.org.uk/oa/Presents.html



Give as you Live™



workwithus.giveasyoulive.com - then type in Operation Agri



Recycle 4 OA

www.operationagri.org.uk/oa/Recycle4OA.html



The weakness of the pound sterling is causing OA to increase grant amounts to ensure that the projects receive full funding in their own currency.

Two life stories from the Sri Lankan recovery

By **Gnanavelichcham Watkinson** – LEADS District Officer, Kilinochchi

Mukkan Manikkam - Reaping a Good Harvest with a lot of Hard Work



Farmer Mannikam in his garden

WE LOST EVERYTHING

I am Mukkan Manikkam, a farmer living in the remote village of Malayalapuram in Kilinochchi district. I started farming about fifteen years back on my own land. It was more like a home garden but now it has expanded to over two acres through a lot of hard work. I am very proud of been a farmer because it provides for my family and today my children have reached great heights academically.

*“Never, Never, Never give up” ~
“In Kilinochchi we have rich red soil and good supplies of natural water for everyone to do farming”*

We faced a war that spanned three decades with many hazards and dangerous situations. We lost everything but never gave up hope. Through it all I was committed to my livelihood. Even though we were displaced I established a small vegetable garden in a temporary land. This helped me look after my children during the war. After six months we returned to Malayalapuram.

STRUGGLING TO REBUILD

I tried to re-build my farming structure but security forces captured two acres of land and used it to park their vehicles. They filled the land with gravel and stone not knowing the long-term damage this causes to agriculture land. Day by day it lost fertility and moisture. However I re-started farming on the remaining land.

After two years it was a big challenge to recover the land's fertility. Gradually we removed gravel, sand and stone. After six months it was about 70% of its original state. I am happy that I am able to farm this land again. I have an open-duck well for watering the crops. It lacks proper masonry work so I was selected by LEADS as a beneficiary for a well construction project.

LIFE SUPPORT

I grow Okra, Brinjal, Bitter Guard, Long Beans and Snake Guard. I earn around 20,000 rupees (about £226) a month. Two of my children are at the University of Jaffna and the youngest is still schooling. I don't have other income sources but depend solely on agriculture crops. I feel happy when I am farming; it gives me immense pleasure.

In conclusion I would like to say, “Kilinochchi, has enough cultivatable land and good water for everyone to earn a good living. It is a gift from God. People should make use of this opportunity to develop their livelihoods. I offer my sincere thanks to LEADS for helping me to build up the agro well.”



Farmer Rasiya handling bees

Rasaiya Jeyarasa - A Leader: Encouraging Organic Farming Methods

AN ENCOURAGER AND A MOTIVATOR

My name is Rasaiya Jeyarasa (56), I live in Malayalapuram with my wife. Farming is my life and livelihood and I love it. I play a significant role in agricultural development in my village. As the Vice President of

Farmers' Organization I encourage and motivate others to succeed. We came to Malayalapuram in 1976 from the hill country and settled in Kilinochchi. I have one daughter and she got married a few years ago.

We faced multiple displacements through 1996-2002 and 2007-2010 during the civil war. It was a terrible experience for us. We lost our livelihoods and a few of our close relatives. I thank God for sparing my family. I suffered a minor injury during an aerial attack. For about nine years we were in Internally Displaced Persons camps moving from one secured shelter to another. After the war ended in May 2009, we returned to our village in 2010.

VEGETABLES AND BEES

We re-started our farming activities to grow Brinjal, Okra, Maize and Cucumber as cash crops. They sell well at the market and don't need too much attention. I also keep bees in my garden as an additional income for

"You don't get anything that you don't work hard for" ~ "I am a farmer. I promote organic farming in my village. It makes us work harder but we are proud to be farmers who treat the soil in which we grow vegetables, kindly"

my family. They are good for pollination and go hand in hand with organic agriculture methods.

Now-a-days many farmers use dangerous chemicals which affect people's health, the land's fertility and ground water systems. They don't understand the bigger problems

but work on short-term goals: better profits. I decided to work with a vision that keeps to organic farming. It is easy and can use naturally available resources.

TRAINED IN ORGANIC METHODS

I received training in organic farming from the Department of Agriculture five years ago. From then I have prepared organic fertilizer. I use what I need for my crops and sell the remaining stock to others for additional income. Farmers from Southern districts such as Hambanthota, Anuradhapura, Vavuniya and Kurunegala visit my garden to know about organic farming and learn how to make organic fertilizer. I am happy about that and without any hesitation I share my knowledge with everyone.

I earn a good income by selling cucumber to a large supermarket chain called Cargills and to Haleys Agro Company. I supply 650-750kg of cucumber each week. It is graded on the product quality and priced by the buyer. Through my experience I know a genuine price will be given for our produce.

They also give us technical support through the Department of Agriculture and provide some subsidies. We appreciate this kind of intervention.

AN INTEGRATED FARMER

Our village is an agriculture location the government has plans to develop. They send their officers to provide technical knowledge and encourage us. LEADS has been working in Malapuram village and have given support to develop agriculture. I am happy to be an integrated farmer and I always try my best to develop further. I earn a good income from my agriculture production – 25,000- 30,000 rupees a month and I am very satisfied.

Mukkan Mannikam and Rasaiya Jeyarasa are beneficiaries of the Sustainable Livelihoods Development LEADS program in partnership with Operation Agri, UK. The project outreach is to over 180 families in Kilinochchi district. The project also promotes improved farming skills and social cohesion through village self-help groups.



Farmer Rasiaya's wife and daughter help in grading cucumber

Prayers please



NICARAGUA: AMOS

Communities are still in the midst of a two-year drought. Pray for children

who are facing malnourishment and for community members and AMOS staff as they distribute food. Pray for community members and staff as they work amongst pregnant women, seeking to prevent the spread of the Zika virus.



AFGHANISTAN: RESAP

We thank God for this renewable energy project

which provides electricity to Afghan villages. Electric lighting replaces kerosene lights, reducing respiratory problems, helping children study and providing power for television. Pray for wisdom in planning as the current project ends this year.



SRI LANKA: LEADS

Thanks God that LEADS was able to respond with relief to the floods earlier

this year, although OA's project was not directly impacted. Give praise that the relief work brought blessings too, including new contacts for support and skilled volunteers.



MALAWI: AFRICA PASTORS FELLOWSHIP

Please pray for a new OA

partnership with APF (Africa Pastors Fellowship) to support the agricultural project "Growing Greener in Malawi". Pray for Pastor Lloyd Chizenga who is heading up the project which offers training across 15 rural communities coving three districts of Southern Malawi.



TANZANIA: FARMING PARTNERSHIPS INITIATIVES (FPI)

Pray for the

ongoing recovery of Boazi who recently lost two fingers when hit by a lorry while on a farm visit, and for Rev. Heavenlight Luoga's wife Kesia injured in the same accident. Please pray too for Heavenlight himself who is making frequent visits on FPI business to Dar es Salaam by bus – a 30 hour journey each way. Pray for a good outcome to the difficult situation with which he has been dealing.



UGANDA: BEERSHEBA

Thank God for the leadership of Jon Temple who has

recently resigned as Country Director, Oasis Uganda due to ill-health. Please pray for his healing and God's presence with his whole family. We lift up Phina Kamanyire, Operations Manager and the staff as they adjust to these changes. Pray for guidance and insight with the new Mbale Community project and recruitment of students to the new school and members to the self-help groups.



BANGLADESH

Please pray for the health, well-being and exam results for the

pre-schoolers who sat 2nd term exams and the 45 girls in the school support classes who sat 4th term exams in September. As a new self-help group for girls and mothers is launched, pray for faith and unity among the group and success in the new approach to encourage small savings.

Transforming slum communities

Russell Ashley-Smith – extracts from a recent project proposal

SUPPORTING URBAN DEVELOPMENT

It can seem more attractive helping the rural poor, (their crops and animals are more photogenic), yet half the world's population live in cities. Operation Agri therefore makes no apology in supporting projects run by Oasis Global, an organisation concentrating on helping the urban poor.

Forty per cent of the people of Mumbai (formerly Bombay) live in slums. Oasis, working in the centre of the Borivali slum, in the west of the city, have the vision of, 'creating vibrant, healthy communities where people, especially the socially excluded, feel welcome and able to contribute positively. "In doing this," the project proposal continues, "we seek to share the love of Jesus for all people."

EMPOWERMENT, CONFIDENCE DEVELOPMENT AND SPORT

In the past five years the project has, among other things, empowered women to support their families, and teenage children have developed confidence in taking decisions regarding their future. Sports activities have helped teenage boys make constructive use of their time, Oasis writes.

"The concentration is now to move onto youth and men, as they are the main decision makers within the community. There is also a need to have anti-human trafficking work that goes beyond awareness," the proposal continues, "as there have been cases of child abuse reported."

MAIN OBJECTIVES

In the area of community building Oasis identifies three particular aims –

- ♥ Establishing Change Agent Groups committed to their own transformation

and that of others in the wider community

- ♥ The establishment of Community Vigilance Groups and other similar organisations
- ♥ Increasing numbers of local people Involved directly in community transformation.

RESULTS – SHORT AND LONG TERM

Summarising impact and sustainability–

- ♥ Good rapport with the community, stakeholders, and government authorities
- ♥ Local people aware of health, safety, advocacy, sanitation and know-how to access developmental resources
- ♥ Community involved in planning and implementation
- ♥ Residents making good decisions for personal and community transformation
- ♥ People aware of issues of human trafficking and able to protect themselves and their neighbours
- ♥ Local churches mobilized and actively involved in programmes

MANAGED AND CONTROLLED DEVELOPMENT

Oasis concludes their project proposal by specifying how they will monitor and evaluate the project, including a risk analysis; plus there is a full budget.

Operation Agri is proud to be associated with and supporting this work of Oasis in Mumbai and also in Bangladesh and Uganda.

Recollections of Nepal

by **Martin Butterworth** – Overseas Secretary

WHY DO WE DO IT LIKE THIS?

I returned to England last year after almost two decades in Nepal to find myself on the receiving end of the reports and evaluations I used to write in Kathmandu. As I read them my head is full of countless meetings and visits to Nepalese communities, including some that Operation Agri are still helping, and I ponder on how we trustees approach OA's part in God's plan.

Over the years in Nepal I realised that the effectiveness, both practically and spiritually, of what I saw depended totally on the people involved. It's one of the reasons OA works through known partners. The partners represent us, a group of British Christians, and we need to be confident they're looking to Jesus as a role model. Evaluating one Christian project after another across Nepal I saw the impact of other projects as well and a picture assembled itself. Christians really are different.



Watching seeds grow; monitoring an off season vegetable growing project



Eating what everyone else eats

CHRISTIANS WALK THE TALK

Most of all the difference is about how we behave. That's what people see. Our behaviour, or that of our representatives, is how the world sees Christ. In Nepal I was handicapped by my white skin and strange accent but that challenge was an opportunity as people would observe me closely. Did they see genuine humility, respect and love in what I did and said?

Most projects are managed and delivered by nationals who are educated professionals, privileged or high up in the social structure. The people observing them are often, but not always, at the opposite end of the structure. These are the cultural norms for the relationships that we, as Christians, may not like.

I've eventually concluded that only a God who created all equal can overcome this challenge. I heard many discussions about whether non-Christian staff can represent Christ and have to concede that largely they don't. Of course there are some who, despite refusing to accept Jesus, have taken on a Christian worldview, but they are the exception not the rule.



Waiting for a village meeting - often these informal moments are the most important

FINANCE MATTERS

Then there is the money, so-called "stewardship." However much we hate talking about it, money gets things done. How we, and those who represent us, look after and use the wealth at our disposal is critical. You've probably read horror stories about how little aid money actually reaches the poor; about the high salaries of charity workers and managers; about the international travel and ostentatious vehicles. These things are noticed and gossiped, they do matter.

So how do our representatives arrive in the village: is it in a new SUV or on the bus? Where do they stay: in a shared room provided by the village or a hotel in the regional centre? The Trustees of Operation Agri expect partners to be modest in their choices of travel and accommodation and to make funding decisions accordingly.

CHRISTIANS ARE DIFFERENT

Even though projects can often look similar on paper there are differences. We're not Christ, we are his ambassadors, therefore, as best we can, we live and work the way Jesus

would. Many of the best managed projects I evaluated in Nepal used church buildings as venues for the activities and church members as voluntary or appropriately paid workers. I accept that there are areas where this is difficult and we have to be wise, but even in these situations our lives are the Gospel. That's what Operation Agri is about.

As Christians we should give of ourselves so that others can have life. It's great to be working for OA, an organisation which does just that, both here in the UK and through those we support overseas. My experience is that we usually do this well, and it doesn't go unnoticed.



CHEST protected drinking water source

Extracts from the Oasis

Oasis Hub Mbale-Community Empowerment Project (Formerly Beersheba Community Development Programme-Livelihoods project).The original report was written by Mary Mugaba with Alex Toolo from Oasis Uganda

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Our purpose in this project is to see vulnerable people having increased capacity to become financially self sufficient and significantly equipped to cater for their family needs. We are extremely thankful for the financial support from Operation Agri towards achieving this purpose in our community.

Self Help Group (SHG) top up loans have risen from UGX 15,424,800 (Ugandan Shillings) (£3,428) to UGX 17,072,300 (£3,794). We see the women having increased capacity to handle large amounts of money for their Income Generation Activities (IGAs). They started by taking small loans of £11 but now take up £67.

Reports from Community Facilitators indicate that 126 women have been impacted by SHG loans and Top Up loans from the project. Small businesses have been set up and profits are used for weekly savings, meeting family needs, educating children and improving on shelter.



Irene tending her vegetables

IRENE NANDUDU'S EXPERIENCE

I am Irene Nandudu aged 35 years and married with 4 children. Before I joined a saving group I grew vegetables for both home and commercial purposes but I did not understand about saving and planning my income. I struggled to meet my family's needs. Since joining my saving group in 2013 training on saving, loan management and business management has empowered me to increase my income from £9 a year to £100 in a year. I was the first parent to clear my child's fees in a lower primary class and am confident that my children will study to higher levels of education. I thank Oasis and its partners for all the financial education and support I have been given.



Receiving a Top Up loan

2015/16 report



Hajira with her rice business

HAJIRA'S STORY

My Name is Hajira; I used to spend my time in the garden cultivating as a way of earning a living and had a desire to start a business to earn extra money for my family. I got a small loan of £16 to start selling avocados but the business collapsed because I knew nothing about business skills and loan management. When I joined a SHG with Oasis I received financial business training and a loan of £16 from my saving group. I invested part of the loan and I got a profit of £16 by selling 50 Kilograms of rice. I now sell 500 kilograms every week earning £11.50 as a minimum profit. I now support my family financially.

ESTHER'S TESTIMONY

I am Esther, a widow aged 39 years with 5 children. Before I joined Oasis Hub Mbale my life was a nightmare; especially in 2013 after the death of my husband. He was a pillar of finance for the family and I depended on him to provide everything I needed. I was encouraged to join the Kolanyo Ofune SHG and the saving group where I got support from members and found a safe place to stay. I was empowered with knowledge from monthly trainings from Oasis Hub Mbale.

In December 2015 I set up a small shop selling foodstuffs and charcoal. Out of the profits I save and get the basic needs for my children. I have also started a piggery project as a future investment for my children's higher education fees. I am now a happy woman with a vision. My success is thanks to Oasis Hub Mbale support.

CONCLUSION

We thank you for your support towards the transformation of lives of vulnerable people in our community. People now experience mutual support and care from the groups and are able to access loans at affordable interest and are empowered to make positive financial decisions.



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:

£

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

Yes/No

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

Full Name: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Rev/Dr

Church or Organisation

Your address:

Post Code

Gift Aid Declaration

I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to:

Name of Charity: Operation Agri BMM

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

My Details (in addition to those above)

giftaid it

Signature Date

Email address

Please let us know if your address or circumstances change.

Standing Order Form

To support Operation Agri BMM regularly by standing order, please complete the details below,
IN BLOCK CAPITALS and return this form to the OA Administrator

My Bank Details

To: The Manager,

Bank Name

Bank Address

Postcode

Sort Code

Account No.

Account Name

Please pay to Operation Agri BMM at:

Bank of Scotland, Direct Business Accounts,
Pentland House, 8 Lochside Avenue,
Edinburgh, EH12 9DF

Sort Code: 12-20-29, Account No: 00142961

the sum of £

starting date

and every * month / quarter / year

until further notice from me in writing

This order * is in addition to / replaces
my previous instructions relating to this charity

Signature

Date

* Strike out words that do not apply

Please send this form to Operation Agri, 361 Firs Lane, Palmers Green, London N13 5LX.
Any cheques should be made payable to 'Operation Agri BMM.'

Operation Agri BMM is registered in England and Wales as a charity, no. 1069349. Tel. 020 8803 0113.