

Outreach Abroad

Supporting rural and urban development projects in Christ's name

Autumn 2018



It's not a catwalk in Paris, Milan or London but to the ladies of the foothills of the Mountains of the Moon this fashion shoot it's vastly more important. They are showing what they have used your gifts of knitting wool and other supplies to create; to wear and to sell. See pages 12 and 13 for the whole story.

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Creation Care – A challenge!

By **Stan Crees**, OA trustee



Stan Crees

Are we concerned?

What aspect of everyday life most causes you to say, "This is so unjust?" It could be any topic in the news that seems unfair, dishonest or lacking integrity. One issue we want to address here is the injustice caused by our lack of concern for God's creation. Yes! It is an injustice! Whenever we fail to care for creation we bring about a situation of destruction and loss to ourselves, to the natural world which God created but also, significantly in the context of this article, to our fellow humans in other parts of the world. A careless action or a failure to care locally can have serious repercussions for overseas communities and their livelihoods.

Are we really aware?

The dawn of awareness for many people was the Blue Planet series on TV last autumn. Since then our newsfeeds increasingly feature issues of discarded plastic which block our sewers, pollute our rivers and bring harm to life forms far out to sea. Industry is beginning to recognise the need for action but, sadly, there are still significant sections of society who are unimpressed and continue to dispose of their 'rubbish' thoughtlessly.

Are we active?

It is not enough to be aware – we need to take action at every level. Careful recycling, ethical shopping and investment, organic growing and limiting air travel (or offsetting miles travelled through Climate Stewards) are a few obvious examples. Alongside these actions we should find fresh inspiration by joining organisations that can give us the resources and ideas to bring about change (see below)...and **we can pray**.

Are we there yet?

There is still much that needs to be done to bring significant change. We must continue promoting necessary lifestyle changes if we, as individuals or church groups, are to help to restore the beauty of God's wonderful world. When we look overseas we recognise that in countries where Operation Agri supports projects there are many urgent needs to be tackled that must have priority. As we go about the business of improving lifestyles through the activities of our partners we can work together towards a restored relationship with our world. Sustainable development comes through sustainable living, our generosity, compassion and simple lifestyle and, most of all, through hope in Jesus. Just and helpful attitudes to creation care emerge at every level of life.

This quote has inspired many to play a part

in caring for God's world and should be a challenge to us.

"Climate change is simply the most obvious symptom of a much, much deeper sickness. At the heart of it is this: as human beings we have got our relationship with the planet all wrong. It is not just that populations are growing and energy hungry lifestyles increasing, but that we have been living in a way that simply cannot continue. We cannot solve this problem simply by better technology and a few hard political choices. It goes much deeper than this, right to the heart of who we are. We need to rethink not just how we treat the planet and its creatures, but who on earth we think we are as human beings."

From the introduction to 'Planetwise – Dare to care for God's world' by Dave Bookless who is Director of Theology for A Rocha International.

Sources of inspiration:

- ♥ Planetwise (Dare to Care for God's World) - by Dave Bookless of A Rocha
- ♥ God doesn't do Waste (Redeeming the whole of life) - by Dave Bookless of A Rocha
- ♥ Living a just and fair life – <https://arocha.org.uk/our-activities/living-lightly-take-action/>
- ♥ Ruth Valerio's book on lifestyle living <https://ruthvalerio.net/publications/l-is-for-lifestyle/>
- ♥ Ethical Consumer magazine www.ethicalconsumer.org/



Life with a dignity...

By the **MDCS/CHEP Team**



Self Help Group members

Successful project

The Community Health Education Project (CHEP) of the Multi-Purpose Community Development Service (MCDS) completed three years of project duration in Kerabari, Morang, in the Eastern part of Nepal. CHEP helped the community people to upgrade their living standard and well-being through different programmes on health and sanitation, education, school support, environmental protection, socio-economic development and leadership capacity building. The project was successful to impact 7,166 individuals (1,302 families). Mrs. Parbati Risidev is one of the beneficiaries of the different integrated programmes of MCDS/CHEP.



Leadership training

From a marginalised community

Parbati Risidev (33), a resident of Kerabari, lives with her family (husband and four children). She belongs to Mushahar tribe, one of the marginalised communities (Dalit) in Nepal. She got married at the age of 13 as girls



Parbati Risidev

normally marry at the young age. The main profession in this community is collecting firewood and selling it in the market as well as being a wood cutter. They work as daily wage labour. Recently her husband went to Qatar as migrant contract labourer and sends some money for household expenses. The community women along with Parbati hesitated to be part of a Self Help Group (SHG) at the beginning because they had bitter experience with micro saving and credit groups. Later, they joined a SHG formed by MCDS as MCDS/CHEP organised vision casting and training about SHG management and mobilisation. She shares her transformational story, *"I was very reluctant to be part of a SHG when MCDS approached at time of*

formation because of past bitter experience of fraudulent acts. MCDS conducted interaction and training on Self Help Group mobilisation, saving and credit. I collected some information on MCDS and learnt many new things about concept, process, function and management of SHGs and then joined the group.

Our entire community has benefitted with various programmes of MCDS/CHEP. Personal and family health with sanitation has been improved because of health and nutrition training and easy access to drinking water supply as we all worked together to



Pig raising

construct village drinking water system. Pig raising training with pig distribution has been an additional support for our income generation. I have been able to get income from pig-raising and have spent those earnings for my children's education, domestic purpose and health. Importance

of school has been taught to community people with ECD kit support at school made parents to send their children to school regularly.

The knowledge and attitude of women has



Classroom support

increased because of different leadership and skill development training. Leadership capacity and participation in social work has been upgraded.

We were living under deprived situation as we had no individual respect in the community and it was difficult to raise our voice but now we live with dignity. We don't have to spread hands in front of people as we get financial and moral assistance from our SHG.

I am confident enough to take care of my family and give good education to my children for their better future."



Health awareness training

With New Hope for New Beginnings

By **Diordre Moraes**, Manager Partner Liaison, LEADS (Sri Lanka)

Hope after suffering

Kamala (a given name to protect her identity) wakes up early every morning with hope and starts her day by checking her poultry, after which she prepares breakfast for her daughter. Only a few years ago she was without hope and discouraged and could not smile due to the conditions of the war. *"During the conflict times, we suffered a lot,*



Kamala and her daughter

we had to leave our home and keep moving in search of a safe place. My husband was a pastor in the local church and my daughter was captured by the armed terrorist group. It was a really sad time for us," she says, as a shadow of sadness crosses her face while recalling the past.

It was a daunting experience for Kamala and her family after the war. They returned to nothing but bare land in the village. They had to rebuild their lives from scratch while caring for their daughter who was disabled as a result of an injury suffered in the conflict.

Water, food and sanitation

Shortly after their resettlement, LEADS, (Lanka Evangelical Alliance & Development Services), came to support this community. Partnering with Operation Agri, LEADS launched a three year intervention to build up and develop the community of the Malayalapuram village in Kilinochchi. Through support to livelihoods, this intervention helped many families who depend on farming or wage labour, and who were previously struggling to survive on a daily income of Rs. 800-1,100 (roughly £4 or £5), to become resilient. Families received access to clean water, food security and basic sanitation facilities as well as increased awareness of health practices. Through the support of Operation Agri, LEADS has been able to reach out to more than 150 families within this village, the majority of which are women-headed households. For years these women were challenged to provide for their families to ensure a better standard of living.



Kamala and her poultry



Market garden beneficiary

More children now attend school thanks to the creative learning environment made for them through the initiative. Furthermore, the rights-based approach of the programme has fostered awareness amongst parents, youth and teachers on basic laws and regulations relevant to their lives.

Capacity to realise potential

The programme's activities, be it the construction of a well, support in livelihood or agriculture or even a word of encouragement to join in a saving group, has provided these once neglected households with the capacity to realise their potential. Some recipients of livelihood support have even reinvested to generate more income through mushroom cultivation, or to strengthen their current livelihoods by purchasing additional livestock. Some of the women receiving support for agriculture activities are even determined to improve the quantity of their production to negotiate agreements with the local supermarket. This is only the start of their family growth plan. Yet, each little step taken by them is adding to a journey of transformation, for themselves, their families and their community at large.

Today Kamala has a better future

The Government Agent who met with Kamala's family recommended that they become a recipient of livelihood support so LEADS provided Kamala with 100 chicks and materials to build a poultry pen. She was most grateful for their assistance.

"With the start of the poultry business I am able to earn about Rs. 20,000 a month (about £150). This is a great help for me to take care of our needs and look after my daughter."

Kamala says with great joy.

Kamala is one of many brave women who strive to improve their lives by creating an impact with something that starts small and grows. The future for this courageous lady is promising as she has bright hopes, ambitions and plans. Prosperity has dawned on the entire community thanks to the transformation that has taken place there.



Savings Group

Photos are 'Courtesy of LEADS'

Children's page

By **Janet**, a friend of Operation Agri

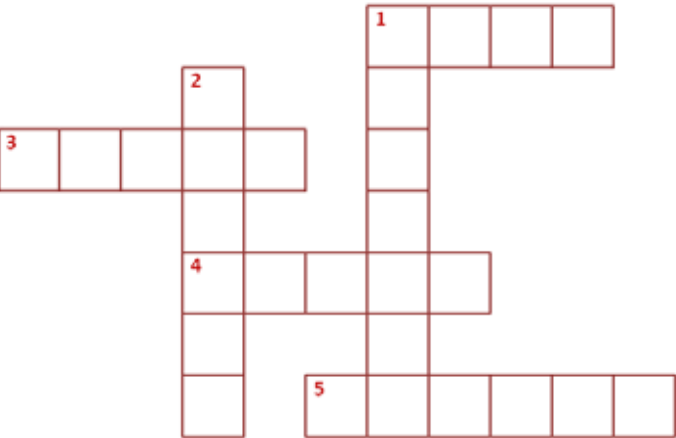
Last time **OPpy** was in **TANZANIA**

To find out where he has travelled to this time rearrange these letters:

G A A N D U



See if you can do the puzzle below. If you need some help – all the words are in the article about the programme on pages 7 and 8 of the Summer edition of Outreach Abroad.



Across

- 1. Where crops are grown
- 3. A meal at mid-day
- 4. The name of OA's partner
- 5. The country of the anagram above!

Down

- 1. Another word for eating
- 2. Where you go to learn

Can you complete the dot to dot below to see one of the animals used in the programme?



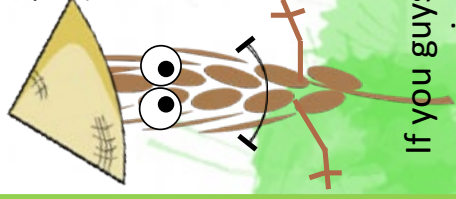
The answers to the quiz in the last edition are: Volcano Mombacho is in Nicaragua; the Gorilla was in Uganda; Oppy saw the Taj Mahal in India; Mount Everest is in Nepal and the Lions were in Tanzania. How many did you get right?

Youth Page

Hi guys, my name's Josh and I'm going to be writing the Youth Page for Operation Agri from now on.

I'm 17 (midway through my A levels!) and have been working alongside OA for about 6 months.

When I was asked if I would write this page I felt that it was an exciting opportunity to connect with the youth across the UK and, potentially, worldwide.



This here is Kernel Corn, he will be featuring frequently in these pages as he will be taking us through some issues being tackled by OA and its partners around the world. He'll be showing us how we can help support people affected by different events.

If you guys have any issues you would like me to go over in these pages be sure to let me know by emailing me on: id@operationagri.org.uk



This is a very easy way to give to Operation Agri. All that's involved is for you to register with OA on **ebay** so that some of the money you spend will be instantly donated to OA.

How cool is that?

Important: If you are under 16 please get your parent's (or other responsible adult's) permission before buying or making a donation.

How we can help!

OA Gift Cards

If you are like me, you may find it tough to get a good gift for that person who seems to have, well, everything. OA gift cards are, literally, a life saver as they allow the other person to choose a gift to send from the Operation Agri website to *support a family in need*.

Let me know how you get on with this super idea.

Presents with a Purpose

As we are now in the run up to Christmas, we are getting excited about the presents we want to receive. However, this isn't the case for everyone.

For some people this will be a very difficult time of year as they don't have the basics to provide for their families. This offers us the chance to buy items for them such as *fruit tree seedlings* or the ability to look after chickens.

To access the Presents With a Purpose page scan here or go to:

operationagri.org.uk/item/presents-with-a-purpose/



From the Editor's pen . . .



Preparation for any of our Outreach Abroad magazines begins just as the previous one goes to press. As you read this edition of the magazine the process for the production of the next one has already begun. Therefore, this magazine, the last of 2018, started life as we enjoyed (or endured) the very hot days of summer. Trying to cool off a little in the shade I needed to think about the cold of winter that would surely come upon us and about Christmas. The 'Reason for the Season', as someone once said, is a celebration of praise and thankfulness for all that the Lord has done for us and in particular through the birth of Jesus. What a wonderful and unique gift!



In your preparations for this annual festival think about and pray for those whose lives have been changed by the work of Operation Agri and our partners on three continents. Many people have been written about elsewhere in this magazine and some by name. There is a large focus on the role taken by women in the communities shared within these pages. They and their families would have had substantially poorer lives if you, our donors, had not been so generous. Thank you from the trustees and from those who receive the development opportunities you make possible.

At a recent church service we were encouraged to think and act on the truth of 'Passing on the Baton of Faith'. At some point we all have to let go of the baton so it is important that we pass it on rather than drop it and cause someone to have to stoop to pick it up.



Please pass your magazine to a young person in your family or congregation and encourage them to have their own free copy by contacting Malcolm (contact details are on the back page). They may become the next editor!



You could also inquire as to how you can use your gifts and skills within Operation Agri. Please contact Russell Ashley-Smith by email: chairman@operationagri.org.uk or by writing to him c/o Malcolm.

Thank you, Nigel.

Prayer Points – A time of challenge and change.

Nepal.

Our Nepal partner Multipurpose Community Development Service (MCDS) is starting a new project in East Rukum, a district more remote and poorer than communities they've worked in before.



Rukum Villagers

Give thanks for the leadership and staff of MCDS who are committed to this challenging location.

- Pray for relationships and safety of the Community Health and Education Programme (CHEP) team as they establish a new project office in Rukum, far from their homes and church communities.
- Pray that the logistic challenges of a remote location can be overcome.



Housing conditions

Bangladesh.

The Duaripara Family Development Project (DFDP) has been successfully handed over to a local charity CMCY (Christian Ministry to Children and Youth). This is their prayer:

"We thank God for His manifold blessing on the DFDP family in Bangladesh through Oasis & Operation Agri.

We praise God for the opportunity to be salt & light in the most neglected slum area of Dhaka.

Please continue to pray for the 125 girls who are dreaming to become responsible citizens through our ministry to them.

Also, remember their parents, pray for sustainable livelihood to survive in the urban markets of Dhaka".

Nicaragua.

Our Partner AMOS (A Ministry Of Sharing) requests that:

"We pray for Nicaragua after recent violence and unrest; for families mourning the loss of loved ones, or still looking for missing loved ones.

We pray that God continues to provide the AMOS Community Health Workers with the strength and confidence to share His love through their work, because they have made an incredible commitment to serve others and help save lives".

Uganda

The Pader project of Oasis in northern Uganda, where we support a project to provide meals to school children, is being extended into the community through agricultural training led by Paul Kyalimpa, a long term OA partner within the Baptist Union of Uganda.

In the words of Oasis Uganda:

We are grateful to implement this potentially impactful project for the community – first for the good of the school children, their teachers and wider community. We pray for:

- Rains that fall at the right time for a good harvest.
- Continued community willingness and participation, including after we have left.
- The 26 Participants from the Sustainable Agriculture training workshop implement the knowledge they received and share it with others around them.

Wool for Christine

By **Jane Hanger**, Trustee of Operation Agri



Jane (left) delivering the wool

A new and important skill

Did you send wool to Operation Agri for Christine Kyalimpa?

Christine learnt to knit while on a visit to Queens Road Baptist Church, (QRBC), Coventry a few years ago and needed wool so she could pass on her new skills to other ladies in her area. Thank you for those of you who helped, *back then*, it has really made a difference.

You might be surprised to know that it is cold enough to need wool clothing in Africa. However, in Kyenjojo, it can get quite cold, (even for Africa), at times. The area lies in the foothills of the Mountains of the Moon. In fact, for the whole of the QRBC team's visit *this summer*, it was cooler in that part of Africa than in the UK!

Donated wool has created livelihoods

Christine *had* taught 2 groups of ladies to knit and they now produce and sell knitted garments. Since the wool supplies which had been sent out in a container some time ago were running low the QRBC team took more wool, (vacuum packed in their suitcases), which OA had not been able to put in the first consignment. That was supplemented by further generous donations which continued to come into Operation Agri in the months following.

The team also took crochet hooks and had a session teaching the ladies to crochet. One of the ladies already knows how to do this and will help the others to become proficient.

The need for literacy and numeracy

One of Christine's problems is that only a few of the ladies in the groups can read, write and count, so memorising patterns and getting them right is quite a skill. She is hoping she may be able to do something about this in the future.



Christine (left) knitting with her group



Learning to crochet

Editor's note

We are grateful to Jane and the rest of the team at Queens Road Baptist Church, Coventry for eagerly agreeing to take the wool and other knitting supplies to Uganda on their trip earlier this year.

Christine's knitting project does not formally appear in the list of projects sponsored by OA but we have adopted it and appreciate that it continues to make a very significant difference to the lives of many families in Uganda.

It could be that this activity may be unique in the history of OA as it is a 'no cost' project. The first shipment went free of charge in a container shipped by another charity and this later consignment was taken by travellers in their luggage.

The trustees of OA also express their grateful thanks to everyone who has donated knitting wool and other knitting related materials. Everything we received has been sent to Uganda except the patters which were too heavy. They are to be scanned and

sent to Christine to add to everything that is still contributing to the improvements in living standards for many women and their families.

The photograph on the front cover is the Rwamukoora group exhibiting their knitted garments and one little boy sporting a fine two-tone top.



Items knitted by the Rwamukoora group

Learning to make black gold means green growth for farmers in Malawi

By **Geoff Holder**, Programmes Manager, African Pastors Fellowship

Partnering in creation

The Growing Greener sustainable farming project Operation Agri helps to fund in partnership with African Pastors Fellowship is now entering its third year. Pastor Lloyd Chizenga from New Life Christian Church, Malawi, and his small project team have been encouraged by another successful year. The conservation agriculture techniques his team are teaching in some of Malawi's most deprived rural communities may be simple, but they're ensuring that crops have the best possible nourishment, space to grow and protection from moisture loss. This means bigger yields and bigger yields change everything.



Everyone joins in

Bringing communities together

"The project has improved the lives of the ordinary people tremendously," Lloyd explained. Poor yields had driven hungry men away to the cities leaving wives to tend the fields and the home, and girls sold into child-marriages. The project, however, is



Hellen Mbewe

bringing communities together. *"Families have been stabilised, the divorce rate has dropped, and new HIV/AIDS infections are down because people are having food-secure homes. All this has happened because people are learning new sustainable farming methods."*

Investing and saving

Agriculture in southern Malawi often looks like subsistence farming, but the pattern of village life means that households interact extensively in local markets. When crop



A community at work

yields are poor, household supplies run out early and people need to borrow money for food. The loans, however, don't go far and food prices before harvest are extortionate. After harvest they must sell their crops to repay the loans, but as food is now plentiful they get a very low price. Better yields are helping farmers to break out of this cycle of debt and market failure by enabling them to invest in schooling, household assets and livestock. *"Livestock is like a bank in the villages. It's a way of keeping savings and your investment grows before your eyes. Manure improves your crops, you get milk, meat, eggs and you can sell and make money."*

'Black gold'

An important aspect of the project involves training communities how to make and use compost. Compost improves soil structure and fertility but requires a big effort as plant material and animal manure needs to be collected from a wide area. To achieve this, many participating households have organised themselves into groups and are making communal heaps. The nutrient-rich compost is divided between all those who have helped. Initially Lloyd was worried. *"We started late with the compost training*

but there was a great effort to finish in time for planting." The communities are trained to make thermal compost which, because of the subtropical climate, is ready in weeks rather than months. "Because of the compost, the soil is being revived and less people depend on expensive fertiliser. It's like black gold!"

Armyworm threat

But it's not all been plain sailing. The threat from invasive Fall Armyworm Caterpillars presents a huge challenge to Lloyd and his team. This pest from Latin America was discovered in African crops in 2016 and very soon spread throughout Malawi. While the government declared the situation a national disaster, Lloyd's team continue to explore low-cost solutions like using the leaves of neem trees, which contain a natural pesticide, or planting particular grass species that the caterpillars prefer over maize. As some of the communities graduate from the project's support, Lloyd's prayer is to replicate the work in other areas. *"Thank you for every effort that you are doing to lift up the lives of poor and disadvantaged communities here in Malawi. May the grace of God keep and bless all who stand with us in this work."*

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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

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My Details (in addition to those above)

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Signature Date

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Edinburgh, EH12 9DF

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A photocopy or scanned copy is acceptable. Cheques should be made payable to 'Operation Agri BMM'.

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