

Outreach Abroad

Supporting rural and urban development projects in Christ's name

Autumn 2019



Not an everyday sight on the streets of the UK, but for farmers in Busia uncooperative oxen can be the norm. See inside for Larry's article on his return visit to the project in Uganda. Operation Agri's practice is to help fund development projects – that means the work goes on after the project ends. This is one such project.

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BUSIA – Joining up the

By **Larry Poole**

Editor's note: Some OA supporters will remember the Busia Project, which started over 15 years ago. Larry Poole was instrumental in getting the First Phase started and supported it through African Pastors Fellowship (APF), along with OA. He's now made a return visit; here's his story. It started with a Summer Team visit.

A BMS Team

My first visit to Uganda was in 2001 with a BMS Summer Team, accompanied by Ralph and Jane Hanger from APF. I had recently retired, having worked for the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) an inter-governmental development organisation which improves peoples' lives by solving problems in agriculture. I was an administrator not a scientist.



Larry and June shelling ground nuts

I returned from that most humbling of trips with an idea about supporting subsistence farmers. They wanted tractors, but talking with Pastor Paul Kyalimpa, I came to appreciate that what they needed was education in sustainable farming. A proposal for Paul to train a group of Farmer Trainers was taken up by OA and the Busia five – year project began. Pastors were taught how to utilise their farms more productively, to produce cash crops to enable them to break into surplus farming and how to train other farmers.

A second phase was completed, and I kept in touch with Pastors Paul Kyalimpa and Hillary Wafula (Project Administrator), both of whom visited us in UK, then late last year,



Pastor Paul conducting a baptism in the swamp

my wife June asked if I fancied going out to Uganda to see the impact of the project a few years down the line. I jumped at the suggestion, and we made plans with the help of Paul and Hillary, and the wonderful Gerald Isabyre, who had been a youth worker with a Kampala church at the time of the original visit.

In January we arrived in Kampala, collected our 'budget' 4x4 and set off for Busia in the east of Uganda. Hillary arranged our programme which started with a classic Ugandan feast at his modest house with his entire family – about twenty of us.

Visit to Bukhabole

This is a nearby village where we stayed in 2001 and was involved in the Busia Project.



Pastor Jean-Paul and family



Successful ploughing demonstration

We were met by Pastor Jean–Paul, who runs a very successful small-holding, then we went to the church the summer team had helped to build.

We were greeted by a lovely crowd, singing a welcome. We then visited other farms in the area. There was a ploughing demonstration with oxen not co-operating, and another one which was highly successful. Another farm specialises in chicken production, and several farms have diversified from traditional mealies (maize) and cassava (starchy root) into oranges, mangoes, yams, pineapples, etc. A very encouraging day!

More Farm Visits

We met a farmer who had been part of the original project – a wonderful character who keeps an immaculate and productive farm. He breeds chickens and is hoping to plant a substantial orange orchard this year but needs permission. We were invited to meet local farmers over a lovely lunch and learned all about the Busia spin-off projects. It was

very encouraging to hear folk co-operating to help solve problems. Most of all, we learned about the power of the mobile phone keeping farmers up to date with market prices, so they are not cheated by the first merchant to turn up with a truck.

These farmers still need technical information about crop protection issues. I hope that my former position in CABI will enable them to become beneficiaries of the information service known as PlantWise.

West to Kyenjojo

We stayed here for three days with pastor Paul Kyalimpa – no running water and no mains electricity – but absolutely masses of adventurous, environmentally-promising, alternative facilities – but that's another story!

We learned that the farmers are now in a much better place to manage their lives with cash crop income, as well as growing a greater variety of food for their own consumption.

Spotlight on a Partner

Diordre Moraes, Manager, Resource Mobilisation, LEADS

Having Children and Supporting Children

Getting married and starting a family at a young age, I was always happy being a stay at home mum, driving my three children around from one activity to another. As the children grew, I realised I was blessed, and knew it was time for me to volunteer for the benefit of other Sri Lankan children. With this passion I sought work in the Non-Governmental sector, and joined World Vision Lanka as a volunteer to support the translation of letters from the vernacular into English and vice versa. My passion drew me to do more than translate letters, and whilst looking for opportunities, I worked in the Humanitarian Response Team supporting the Drought Relief Response in 2001.

Balancing both work and home, I became more involved in the Emergency Response and Disaster Management Team, and enjoyed working as a Relief Coordinator. I was involved in the 2004 Tsunami Response,



Black Sunday Relief



Diordre Moraes

coming in to work on December 26th and staying until the small hours. This gave me confidence to work independently on projects related to Good Governance, Spiritual Nurture of Children, and Education.

Answered prayer

I enjoyed working with various project teams, but I was approaching my 50th birthday and I asked myself: "Where should I be heading next or what should I be next?" I asked the Lord to enlarge my territories since I had, by then, worked for twelve years at World Vision Lanka.

As an answer to prayer I was invited in January 2014 to join the Management Team at Lanka Evangelical Alliance & Development Services (LEADS) as Partner Liaison Manager. This was a totally different role but I accepted the challenge. As a people person I loved the change in career;



Diordre Moraes

corresponding with the friends and partners of LEADS in different time zones! A highlight was Resource Mobilization; working with partners within Sri Lanka.

My role gave me the privilege of travelling to the rural parts of Sri Lanka. Being an extrovert I have the ability to pick up a conversation with anyone, although I may not be proficient in the local language. As a mother of three children I am naturally attracted to children and use my limited vocabulary to start talking. As the faces of the older children light up I become aware that my skill (or lack thereof) in speaking in Tamil is the cause for the smirky smiles. I laugh aloud breaking down the barriers and opening the door to conversation.

A highlight in 2018 was my secondment by LEADS to be the event co-ordinator for the 7th Micah Global event. It was an experience since the Micah Global secretariat was in the UK, the event was to be in the Philippines, around 400 participants from all continents were to attend, and I was based in Sri Lanka!

Partnering with Operation Agri

One of my first field visits was to the Northern Province in 2014 with Rev. Elgan Evans, a Trustee of Operation Agri. It is a privilege to work with Operation Agri as an organisation willing to walk alongside partners, sharing similar values and not

acting just as a donor. The Northern Province was the worst affected of the nine provinces of Sri Lanka and Operation Agri chose to work mainly in this area where the need was greatest. That visit to Nagar Kovil, Jaffna gave us the opportunity to see some of the 182 families who had benefitted from a project by having access to water, improved sanitary facilities and support with home-gardening to increase income and improve childrens' nutrition. We also visited children having catch-up classes under thatched roofs, eager to learn as most had missed out on schooling in the conflict.

We also visited a community of 20 families who had been refugees for three years but resettled to their own land in 2011 with very minimal facilities. Based on the report of Elgan Evans, we were able to support this community (Arumugathankulam) by providing them with a well, toilets for their homes, and bicycles for the children. enabling them to cycle the nine miles to school. As a new recruit at LEADS, the visit will always be etched in my memory.

Covenant Based Enterprise

Operation Agri has, over the years, been partnering with LEADS to support communities. This year, LEADS is seeing a new beginning with the launch of Social and Kingdom Enterprise, in the Northern Province with one of the pilot projects being the model farm in Mannar. The goal of the project is to demonstrate how communities can derive income through sustainable and environmentally friendly farming.

As the Word of God reminds us in Deuteronomy 8:18 – 'For it is HE who gives ability to produce wealth and so confirms HIS covenant which HE swore to your ancestors as it is today'. Our enterprises are

1. **Pro poor** – God is for the poor.
2. **To the vulnerable** – God is the God of the vulnerable, the widow and the orphan.
3. **Mandated** – we are entrusted with a mandate from Creation to care for creation.



Training for adults

Highs and Lows of 2019

I was privileged to deepen my knowledge and to receive encouragement to be a 'Resident Alien' of Sri Lanka through training, (8th to the 22nd May), at the Viaa, Christian University of Applied Sciences, Zwolle, Netherlands. I was equipped to be a leader – the woman God wants me to be! I was strengthened through new partnerships and have a sense of fulfilment. ***My humble prayer was, 'Lord I am available and I know you are able'.*** Then a very sad day came on April 21st.

My family customarily attends the Easter Sunday service at the Peoples' Church Assembly of God. Afterwards we enjoy time as a family and this year we were to go to my parental hometown of Negombo. It was not to be. News that churches and hotels were being attacked glued us to our TVs to watch in horror. The worst affected area being

Negombo, my home town, with horrific scenes coming from the church. Phones were ringing as people checked on each other asking, "Where are you?" "Is everyone safe?" The toll was 259 people dead and nearly 500 wounded.

Miracle of Asia

Sri Lanka, known as the 'Miracle of Asia' was, in October 2018, placed number one among the Lonely Planet's top 10 countries to visit in 2019. We have retained the top spot for our food, scenic hills, historic sites and sandy beaches, in spite of the Easter Sunday attacks; the deadliest since the end of the civil war in 2009.

The war caused significant hardships for the population, the environment and the economy. Sri Lanka is once again experiencing a severe economic downturn; tourism has dropped by two-thirds from last year. The bombings have re-ignited debates on a number of issues which will have an enduring impact on our lives: security, freedom and peaceful co-existence.

The Challenge of the Future

Many families lost their breadwinner in the attacks, and people suffered life-changing injuries forcing them to give up their jobs. With the rising cost of living in the country and the hit to the tourist industry, regaining our economic and emotional strength and looking to the future has become a great challenge.



Easter attacks

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nigeljones@operationagri.org.uk

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you a penny.



CHOOSE A LIFE ENHANCING GIFT



CHILDREN'S PAGE

By Janet, a friend of OA

Oppy's last visit was to:

BANGLADESH

He has now retired to:

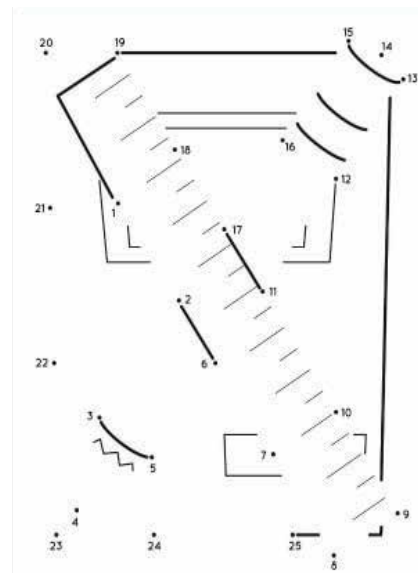
DIDCOT, OXFORDSHIRE

Well done if you got those answers right!

Although he will not be travelling to the different countries where Operation Agri works, he will still have great interest in the work, and has decided to support a competition – with prizes – so watch out for that next time !

In the last issue of the magazine we read about the people learning to read in Uganda. They do not have all the things you have for school! Can you do the dot to dot picture opposite which shows some of the things you might have in your school bag?

The answers to the 'Continent' challenge last time are – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, and Nepal are in **Asia**, Kenya, Malawi , Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda are in **Africa**, and Nicaragua is in **South America**. **Did you get them all right?**



Can you
work out
what is
in this
schoolbag
by
unscrambling
the
letters
below?

LINCEP

RUBRBE

RUELR

RIGDAEN KOOB

PAPRE

CLUNH

NESP

1	2	3	4	5	6
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EASTER ATTACKS IN SRI LANKA **TERROR IN OUR TIMES**

The whole world mourned with the island nation of Sri Lanka, as the lives of hundreds of innocent people were claimed in the Easter Attacks on 21 April, 2019. The three explosions which took place in churches celebrating the feast of Easter in Negombo, Colombo and Batticaloa, and the explosions that affected luxury hotels in the heart of Colombo, snatched away 259 fathers, mothers, siblings and children. Now, months later, the wounds are still raw. The systematic attacks of religious places and hotels, not only claimed lives, but spewed hatred in a country still recovering from a 30-year ethnic war. The religious extremists who orchestrated the suicide attacks succeeded in turning neighbours into enemies, and business partners into criminal suspects. As the country prepares for a Presidential election, the questions of the nation's youth who lost their family, friends, faith and future, will go unanswered and their petitions will be unheard. The tense situation in Sri Lanka is still unresolved and there is much fear, suspicion and sorrow in the hearts of its people. (From our partner in Sri Lanka).

**Hey again, its me Kernel Corn,
join us today as we focus on a big
issue that impacted the world in the
last year! See above and pray.**



So, it's the run up to Christmas and if you are anything like me, buying presents for friends and family can be hard work.



There are many people around the world who don't get Christmas presents. Operation Agri offer Presents with a Purpose, which allows us to buy essential items such as tree seedlings, ducks and water filters, for the most disadvantaged people in the world.

This Christmas, visit the OA website, and buy one (or more!) items for family or friends.

The last thing that I would like to talk about this time are the Gap Year opportunities being offered by OA for 2020. For those who don't know me, my name is Josh, and I am currently on my own Gap Year. OA can arrange a placement in a community where you can play a part in one of the projects helping to improve the quality of life for families.

If you are interested or have any questions please feel free to email me at

YP@operationagri.org.uk



Responding to Cyclone I

By **Geoff Holder**, Project Coordinator, African Pastors Fellowship
 Photos by **Lloyd Chizenga**/NLCC/APF

Climate Change and Tropical Storms

Scientists are by nature cautious types, careful not to make generalisations, draw unsubstantiated links or make conclusions when there is doubt. This is especially true in Climate Science. With so many variables in weather patterns, temperatures, ocean currents and wind, enormous funding and computer modelling power is required to determine, for certain, whether climate change has influenced a specific natural disaster such as a drought or storm.

However, Climatologists have made general conclusions about rising temperatures and tropical cyclones that suggest that Cyclone Idai, which hit Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi in March, had been worsened by an ocean made warmer by climate change.

While the overall number of tropical storms in the Indian Ocean does not seem to have increased, the frequency of high-intensity cyclones, like Idai, has. Warmer seas mean there is more energy available for cyclones, which only form when the sea reaches 26°C.

Cyclone Idai in Malawi

Many of you will remember seeing terrible pictures of the city of Beira as Cyclone Idai crashed into the Mozambican coastline. Homes destroyed, roofs ripped off, streets and fields submerged in flood water. In the Southern Hemisphere, Idai ranks as the second-deadliest tropical cyclone on record.

As the storm moved inland towards Malawi it weakened, but not quickly enough for many participants in the Operation Agri funded Growing Greener agriculture project. Managed with the support of African Pastors Fellowship, the Operation Agri funded project is run by New Life Christian Church (NLCC) in southern and central Malawi. NLCC church leaders, led by Pastor Lloyd Chizenga, train local communities in conservation agriculture: mulching, composting, and zero-till soil management techniques, to overcome years of dependency on expensive synthetic fertiliser and soil degradation.

In Malawi, the disaster made nearly a million people homeless nationwide, killed 60 and



Idai in Malawi

injured hundreds more. When the power grid was restored, Lloyd e-mailed explaining that many were living without shelter or were being housed in schools and churches, dependent on donations of food. Homes, household utensils, livestock and crops had all been lost. Seven members of his church network had lost their lives.

Responding Quickly

Lloyd's biggest immediate concern, however, was the loss of crops. Before the cyclone hit, project participants were looking forward to a good harvest. Now, they had lost their key source of income, and starvation loomed.

Keen to respond, Operation Agri and African Pastors Fellowship quickly pooled resources and funded the purchase of replacement seed for the most affected project participants. As the flood waters receded, Lloyd and his team worked hard to identify beneficiaries and distribute the replacement seed. Lloyd reported:

"I know a lot of families who lost all their crops, livestock and shelter. They had no hope, no food, no shelter. But after the seed was distributed, they are ready to have a good winter harvest. The extra seed has brought great relief. Their season has been transformed."

Tempered Success

While the replacement seed rescued the project-participants impacted by Cyclone Idai, Lloyd still worries about the insidious impacts of climate change: "The changing weather patterns have greatly affected farmers because the weather is no longer predictable. You can no longer be sure that rains will come early or late."

Nevertheless, with Operation Agri's help, Lloyd continues to support farming communities across southern and central Malawi. He estimates that to date, well over a thousand farmers have received training through the project. Better harvests are improving the well-being of thousands more in their families.

Many project-participants have used their profits to escape crippling cycles of debt, or to purchase goats and chickens. Livestock is a great way of investing money in rural communities that lack effective financial services. Livestock can be raised, bred and sold for a profit when the market price is favourable, and, very importantly, their nutrient-rich droppings can be composted to feed the soil.

Goat Farming for Empowerment and Transformation

By **Dipak Raj Rai**, Executive Director, MCDS/CHEP
Photos – **CHEP Team**



Mr. Pur Bahadur Budha with his Goat

The Importance of Goats

Goats are small ruminants which have a high potential to raise income and uplift livelihoods for Nepali farmers and their communities. There is a strong traditional demand in Nepal for goat meat, and they can be raised by shepherding on rough ground, making them the most suitable animal for mountain villagers. Mr. Pur Bahadur Bhuda, a father of four children from Kankri-2 of East Rukum, is one of the first people in the entire Kankri Village to benefit from Goat Raising Training.

Moreover, the community of Kankri of

east Rukum has never before received any training on goat raising. The region is resource-poor and geographically isolated from all means of development. Mr. Bhuda rears some goats and sells them during festivals, as the main source of income for him and his family.

Mr. Bhuda Recalls

"I used to have lots of goats, and most of them stayed in the open, with no shed. We never had any shelter for our livestock, and followed the traditional process of rearing goats. Our community lost many animals due to sickness, and we never knew what made the goat fall



Mr Pur Bahadur Budha During Goat Raising Training

sick. Due to lack of knowledge and confidence, we never reared goats in large numbers." Furthermore, he narrates, "Whenever a goat becomes sick, we normally butcher and eat the meat instead of finding medicine to cure the animal."

During training he learned about goat husbandry and breeding, various diseases, preventive methods and treatments, and the process of making healthy fodder. He learned about what kind of shelter is needed for goats in the climate of Kankri village. After the training, each participant received some vitamins and medicine for their livestock.

Valuable Training

After the training Mr. Bhuda said, "This training has been very valuable for me, the Trainer taught us in very simple language, which I think was understood by every participant. Moreover, I have learned new and interesting things."

Happily, Mr. Bhuda said, "Life has changed a lot ever since I joined the training. I want to thank MCDS for the training that they have given us, and wish that they will give us more training, and help us build our future."

This training has built his confidence in managing goats for breeding, and motivated him to invest more time and energy in raising his goats. Mr. Bhuda is going to improve his goat shelter soon, and increase the number of goats.

A Successful Year

The first year of the Rukum project has been very successful, and there is a huge enthusiasm within the community due to MCDS; the first organisation working in Kankri. Despite having a successful year there are more challenges facing the staff and project. Carrying out work is demanding and difficult, because Rukum is one of the most under-developed and remote districts of Nepal. With such a widespread group of beneficiaries in isolated areas, it takes an enormous amount of time just to visit and encourage people to participate in the training, and other activities. It is difficult to reach into the whole community because it is so widespread. It also takes an extraordinary effort to transport building material due to the geographic terrain.



Participants with the trainer

A Very Short Project Year

It is extremely difficult to work during Monsoon and Winter seasons, which affect five months of the year. There is a big concern about staff health, due to the extreme weather and unavailability of proper medical facilities. One of the most significant challenges to working in Rukum is communication; it's so remote.

The opportunity to work is great but the expectations and trust of the community toward the CHEP project are far greater. It's a challenge to keep that trust to the highest level.

Empowering Women Thr in Pakistan

By **Nargus Azhar**, Founder and Director, Light For The Nations

Photos – **Arif Masih**



Mrs. Nargus Azhar

The Need

Pakistan is a strongly Islamic society, with many radical Islamic groups. Christians are often the targets of violence by extremists, and are treated as 'untouchables' in general. Christians face discrimination in work and education, and jobs that are considered 'unclean' (e.g. sanitation workers) are officially reserved for Christians.

Hundreds of Christian women and girls are abducted every year and forced to marry Muslim men. Christian women working as domestic servants in Muslim households are particularly vulnerable to harassment.

For these reasons, Light for the Nations, (LFTN), started providing skills training for poor women, mostly, but not exclusively, Christians. LFTN is a charitable, non-political, non-sectarian voluntary Social Welfare Organization. Its goal is to promote and implement community services, vocational training and formal/non-formal education.

The Project

One key service is providing adult literacy and dress-making skills training for disadvantaged women. At present LFTN runs two sewing and literacy centres near Lahore. Previously trainings were carried out in other areas around Lahore.

Clothing is a basic need and has a huge market. Hence dress-making skills are beneficial for poor and uneducated women. With them they can work independently and be self-employed and contribute to the development of their family and society. The ladies learn various types of hand sewing, machine stitching and embroidery, designing, pattern making, cutting, tailoring and finishing of garments for children and ladies.

The Project's main objective is to empower disadvantaged women by enabling them to generate income for a sustainable livelihood. As a result, the social and economic condition of the whole community will improve. Each training course lasts six months, after which the trainees are able to read and write, handle their finances, and get gainful employment as dressmakers.



Sewing Centre

Three Trainees

A Christian lady, Martha, shared her story, "My husband is a drug addict, and I worked as a maid in the homes of different people, but it was difficult to meet the expenses of my home. When this centre opened, I joined, and by the grace of God, I am learning from this centre and am now stitching the clothes

ough Skills Training



Opening The New Centre

of the people at my house. Through this, I now earn enough money to run my home. These skills have changed my life and status. I can earn money and gain respect. I am thankful to all who support us." A Muslim lady, Lubna, said, "I was a student, but my parents had difficulty paying my college fees, so they asked me to stop studying. I wanted to study so I asked permission from them to join this sewing centre. Now I have a job in a boutique because of what I learnt from this centre. I am earning money, to pay my college fees and support my family. I made new friends here and I came to know that Christians are good people. Thank you so much for making this possible."

"My name is Shazia. My husband is a schoolteacher. We have three children. My husband's salary is very low and not enough for our needs, so our life was hard. I told my husband that I wanted to work to support my family. He said, "You are not educated. You cannot work except as a child minder in a school, or as a domestic worker in some rich man's home. That would be very humiliating, and I do not want that."

"When a sewing centre opened near my home, my husband allowed me to enrol. After completing my training, I now work at home, stitching clothes for my neighbours and my husband's colleagues. I charge Rs. 300 (less than £2) for each dress and earn good money for my family. I am not a burden on my family, but a support to them. Thank you for making me successful."

Thank You

Light For The Nations, a Christian organisation, is grateful for Operation Agri's financial support, which enables this work to continue in other needy and deserving areas.

Shazia Ayub



For your prayers please

Monday: Nicaragua. Civil unrest continues.

Recent estimates predict that 51% of the Nicaraguan people may soon be living on less than \$1.79 (£1.47) per day. Our partner AMOS has heard from their health promoters that demand for medications and health care services at AMOS clinics has increased. Please pray for:

- No more violence, so that peace, health, and hope can prevail in Nicaragua.
- AMOS community health workers and staff who work to save lives and improve health for vulnerable people.

Tuesday: Nepal. Opposition growing. We partner with the local Baptist NGO, Multipurpose Community Development Service, to deliver two wide-ranging projects in very different areas, but the challenges are similar. The only access is dirt roads that are regularly closed by landslides. Internet and mobile phone signal are irregular at best in much of the area, due to the steep mountains. Getting supplies and inviting the community to events is very time consuming. Please pray:

- For the project teams, that they will know God's presence.
- That the lives of Christian staff will be a witness to God's power, love and justice.
- For patience, resilience and safety in travel.

Wednesday: Bangladesh. Our partner Christian Ministry to Children and Youth, has reported an outbreak of dengue fever – a debilitating viral infection.

"Dengue fever is spreading alarmingly over the country. Experts are worried that the dengue outbreak may continue until October or even to the end of November. Please pray for the victims and that the outbreak will not become an epidemic."

Thursday: Uganda. Our partner, Setting Development and Keeping the Foundation, provides vocational training to young people. Please pray that:

- God will give the staff knowledge and wisdom to pass on the required skills to the students.
- God will grant good health to all our staff and students so that our ongoing training can end successfully.
- All our graduate students will make an impact in our communities. Ask God to give them funds and wisdom to set up their businesses in the locations where they are needed most.
- God will keep the staff focused on the vision of helping many disadvantaged young people learn vocational skills. A lot of disadvantaged youth are still flocking to our school for training. We need God to help the administration staff to focus on their work.

Friday: Operation Agri. Our Trustees need your prayers for:

- Ongoing planning for 2019–2020.
- Decision making on grant applications.
- Trustees who oversee projects and deliver/review monitoring and evaluation reports.
- Appropriate accountability activities.
- OA's 60th Anniversary activities (2021).

Saturday: The people, projects and situations in this magazine.