

Outreach Abroad

Supporting rural and urban development projects in Christ's name



1961-2021

**Commercial Farming
Training Project
provides a lifeline
in the midst of
the pandemic**

*Growing
hope in
Mozambique*



**Operation
AGRI**
Christian love in action

NEW YEAR 2021

The writer to the Hebrews said, “*And let us consider **how** we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds*”. Hebrews 10:24

Taking this to heart, three Trustees and Josh, who writes the Youth Page, have each taken on a fund-raising challenge for 2021. In the Spring edition of Outreach Abroad, (April 2021), there will be more details about what they will be doing, and how you can sponsor them during May to August.

You might like to take up the challenge as well. Choose an activity that is safe for you to complete. It could be ‘live’ or virtual, depending on the national situation later in the year – or capable of being undertaken in either mode. You may seek sponsorship from friends, relatives, neighbours, and colleagues. Here are three possibilities:

1. Walk a short route as did Captain Sir Thomas Moore.
2. Run 5K or 10K.
3. Armchair activities such as a chess or draughts tournament.

Please adhere to any prevailing Government restrictions and social distancing.

For more ideas, or to register your participation, please email nigeljones@operationagri.org.uk or write to the administrator at the address on the Response Form.

Children’s Page answers for the last issue are:

Crossword – 1A Cake, 3A Card, 5A Birthday, 1D Candles, 2D Party and D4 Present.

Word Game – ‘Operation Agri will be 60 years old in 2021.’

The OA 2021 Map

As part of our 60th Anniversary we have produced a World Map, which shows the location of the current projects on one side, and something about them on the other side. Also provided is an overview prayer request for each project. Please unite with the Trustees and Advisors in prayer for the projects during the year. The Prayer Page in the magazines, the Instagram and Facebook posts and the email newsletters, always add more information for your prayers.

London Marathon 2021

As a result of our first Webinar, Operation Agri now has a runner for the 2021 London Marathon. More details will follow in April’s Outreach Abroad.



OA Day, One Day, One Gift

Many of the most disadvantaged people in the world can be brought out of poverty by your generosity.

Please give a special gift on **OA Day, Thursday 22nd April**, via Text Giving, (see the Youth Page), alternatively go to [Donate](#) or [Presents with a Purpose](#) on our website OperationAgri.org.uk.



[Donate](#)



[Presents](#)

Michael Putnam died in November 2020

Russell Ashley-Smith writes:

When in March 1961 the Baptist Men's Movement, at the request of the Baptist Missionary Society (now BMS World Mission), assumed responsibility for Operation Agri, three young professional men volunteered to take the lead.

Thus, started Michael Putnam's more than fifty years with Operation Agri, (he took a short gap in the early 1970s). With typical enthusiasm and efficiency, he held a variety of roles over the years including attending, and at times chairing, joint committees with BMS World Mission. He visited a number of the overseas projects in Congo (now DRC), Bangladesh and Brazil, encouraging the missionaries and making recommendations.

Michael, a world-recognised expert in animal nutrition, advised agricultural missionaries on animal feed, utilising locally available plant products.

Over the years, OA changed radically; Michael never stood in the way but was always insistent that the original aim, to provide development help to some of the world's neediest people, should not be watered down.

At the turn of the century when OA was carrying forward large balances, Michael was one of those who helped OA broaden the range of grant recipients. As Treasurer he kept a tight rein on OA's finances, but was proud that the charity was an early pioneer in the use of on-line systems.

In 2017, as his hearing declined, Michael decided it was right to end his time with OA. His wife Ilid had died some years earlier. Michael was a life Deacon of Carey Baptist Church, Hemel Hempstead.





Children playing marbles



The road leading to the project

Kalwa Community Development Work

By Sulekha Thapa, Regional Head – West
at Oasis India

Challenging Work

Operation Agri's partnership with Oasis India dates back to 2005 when they supported the Community Development and Empowerment work in Bandra, and later in Borivali. Both of these slums were a challenge, as the interventions had to cut across belief systems and cultural practices where women were not allowed to go out of the house, girls were not sent to school, parents did not give much importance to education, and environmental sanitation was a huge concern.

Amazing and Exciting Changes Have Occurred

Now, the scenarios in both the communities are completely different. Over 10,000 families have been impacted with education, health care, skills, and personal and community safety interventions. Children who went through the Pre-school programme, excelled in Primary school. Women who learned tailoring, went on to teach others or took up self-employment opportunities.

All girls in the community go to school. Women continue to enrol for skills training. People have become responsible for their own health care, and environmental sanitation has improved. The local municipality has improved the infrastructure of the communities.

The impact was beyond the immediate community and extended to local schools and government agencies.

The Kalwa Project

After a year's gap, Operation Agri approached Oasis in 2019 expressing their desire to continue supporting work in the communities; just as we were considering initiating work in Kalwa. OA was happy to support us.

The immediate goal was to reduce causes of damage to the community and its people. For about 100 families, in the Bhaskar Nagar, Kalwa East region, there was a focus on education, health care, youth interventions, and promoting community safety through awareness.



t office



The project office

The project, due to start in April 2020, was prevented by the COVID-19 lockdown. Even though lockdown is still not completely lifted, and public transport has not fully resumed it was possible to initiate the work at a slow pace in October 2020.

The Project Co-ordinator, Mr Lakhan Malavi, visits the community twice or thrice a week and has connected with over 20 young people. He has interacted with them; most of whom are addicted to alcohol and drugs.

After much encouragement and motivation, eight have enrolled for the Job Readiness Programme. This equips youth with spoken English, Basic IT Skills, and Life Skills and later helps them get a job. The classes are being conducted online over JioMeet App. These boys are regular and

will be awarded certificates at the end of the course.

Purnima's Story

Purnima (name changed) is 20 years old and lives with her parents and two siblings. Her father, who works in a flour mill, has always been supportive of her education and encouraged her to complete her graduation in Management Studies. The biggest hurdle however is speaking and writing in English. She could not get help as her father earns only enough to provide daily meals.

Lakhan met her during a community visit and suggested joining the Oasis India Job Readiness Programme. Purnima has been regular for one month, is growing in confidence and learning English. This opportunity will enable her to get a good job and support the family.

Climate Change

Over 10 years ago when climate change wasn't discussed as frequently as today, Operation Agri worked on a carbon offsetting programme with UMN, (United Mission to Nepal), to tackle a vital issue regarding traditional cooking stoves. It was reported that they killed over one and a half million women and children each year. Operation Agri worked with local non-government organisations to teach them how to install new, safer closed stoves. Linked to their carbon offsetting scheme, this activity led to 75% reduction in wood consumption.



Children's Page

As you may remember, Oppy retired from travelling to the different Operation Agri projects. However, as part of Operation Agri's 60th birthday celebrations several of the friends he met on his travels have come to visit him in the UK.

The first visitor to arrive was Rusty the Red Panda and he brought news about the projects in **NEPAL**.



Rusty reminded Oppy about the vegetable crops that were being grown in one of the projects. Can you work out what the crops are?

00JSN _ _ _ _ _

LLJH0 _ _ _ _ _

MATTOOSE _ _ _ _ _

AABBeG _ _ _ _ _

There was also news of other projects where Operation Agri is involved in helping to improve health and education and undertaking building work. Can you find all the words in the Wordsearch on the right?

**BRIDGES, DAMS, EDUCATION, HEALTH,
LATRINES, LOANS, WATERSUPPLY**

X	G	V	H	K	A	W	E	A	L	T	Y	F	H	S
L	A	T	R	I	N	E	S	O	X	V	L	H	E	Y
C	B	S	D	B	B	D	A	I	R	A	P	C	A	D
E	X	R	R	C	I	N	J	P	Q	G	P	G	L	G
A	M	A	I	B	S	N	I	P	Z	Z	U	R	T	P
D	K	T	K	D	A	C	F	A	P	N	S	R	H	Q
Y	C	G	X	X	G	T	P	N	G	H	R	X	T	G
W	O	W	T	B	Z	E	O	Q	T	U	E	F	E	S
F	B	J	H	J	Z	I	S	C	D	J	T	N	S	U
O	C	A	F	L	T	J	X	R	U	E	A	Z	E	G
B	S	F	X	A	E	Q	V	D	L	C	W	V	C	X
A	K	W	C	L	X	R	M	N	G	A	N	M	D	A
P	Y	U	Z	H	S	F	Q	Z	X	M	V	V	F	S
N	D	R	C	F	Z	S	M	A	D	R	N	F	Q	Z
E	X	Q	P	T	C	M	B	M	K	A	I	M	F	L

Have a sponsored run
This could be as short as 5K or you could go further and challenge yourself.

Youth



Page

Sponsored cycling
You could go for a cycle around your local area or try a scenic route and enjoy nature.



Well, it's 2021 and this is a very special year for us here at Operation Agri! It's our 60th Anniversary.

Over this year we will be covering our exciting projects, OA's history, and important figures who helped to set us up!

In this issue we are talking about fundraising and how you can help.

Between now and October 26th we are running a challenge for you to raise much needed funds.

On this page there are some ideas for you.

Hold a garden party
Open up your garden to your friends and neighbours and sell cakes or do a BBQ.

Please support Operation Agri by giving:

- Via your church
- Online at www.operationagri.org.uk
- Or donate to OA by text now:

Text: OPAGRI1 to 70660, to give £5

Texts cost £5 + std rate msg. OA may contact you.

To give £5 with no contact, text: OPAGRI1 NO

100% of your gift goes to the charity. Check with bill payer before sending text.
Operation Agri MMR registered charity: 1063346. Tel: 0120 8853 0111

Sponsored silence!
For those who don't want to do something active, try this and see how many days you can go.



Growing Hope in

From Oasis Mozambique

The last six months have, rightly, been described as being 'unprecedented'. For many people around the world however, regular times of struggle and loss are far from unprecedented and have become normal, and this is very much the case in the Mozambican community of Manga, where Oasis runs its Commercial Farming Training Project with support from Operation Agri.

The Trauma of Cyclone Idai

Manga is a suburb of Beira where Cyclone Idai, one of the most powerful and destructive tropical cyclones ever to make landfall, hit the coast in March 2019. Everyone in the community was affected, and as houses are largely made from breezeblocks, bamboo and tin roofing, most homes were damaged, and many destroyed. After much hard work rebuilding, sharing

stories, working through trauma, and simply starting again, people in the community were looking forward to a better 2020. Then came Covid-19, and once again, the community has been hit hard – especially economically. Many people work in the informal economy, finding work on a day-to-day basis, or earn a meagre income through small-scale trading of basic goods from their homes. But, with the city locked down and businesses not allowed to operate, many people were unable to earn anything leaving them unable to buy food or basic provisions.

A Lifeline

Oasis' Commercial Farming Training Project has provided a lifeline in the midst of the pandemic. Over the last three years, around a thousand people – 'mother leaders' – have been trained to grow their own basic

Farming Training



Mozambique



Farmers Being Trained

vegetables such as cabbage, onions, garlic, lettuce, carrots and spinach – easy crops that grow quickly. The project trains these ladies to grow plants from seed in the small plots of land next to their homes; and, once trained, they in turn train and support their neighbours. During the lockdown imposed by the national government, although unable to go to town, these ladies have been able to both tend their own plots, and also to teach and support their neighbours, which has meant that around a thousand families in the community have had food to eat throughout the difficult months of the pandemic.

Home-made Remedies

Sandra is one such lady. She is twenty-three, has three young children and has been part of the project since 2018. She makes the point that although before this she tried

to grow vegetables, she could not afford the ‘medicine’ (fertilizer and pesticide) that was necessary to enable the plants to grow well. However, through the project she has learnt how to protect plants with ashes and other ‘home-made remedies’, and with the harvests that she gets, she has not only been able to feed herself and her children, but also has been able to sell enough to pay for school supplies for her oldest daughter, who is now at school. Moreover, she herself is also now going to school to catch up on some of the education that she missed.

In the midst of yet another setback for communities in Manga, the Commercial Farming Training Project has offered people hope – a way to feed themselves and their families, earn some money, and have meaningful work to do.

Selling produce



A Moment of Reflection

As Operation Agri turns 60, we reflect on the amount of visits the Trustees, Evaluators and Film Crews have completed across the globe. They have been to communities and projects to encourage, record and assess. Climate change and Coronavirus have required significant changes to these trips. Trustees meet more frequently since March 2020 using Internet conferencing tools, and on several occasions, have been able to bring partners to the UK; virtually of course. We also reflect on the many thousands of hours of service given to OA by dedicated people over the last 60 years. The beneficiaries are truly grateful.



RESPONSE FORM

I want to support the work of Operation Agri BMM:

- ☐ I enclose a personal gift towards the work of Operation Agri BMM £
- ☐ I enclose a cheque / postal order / CAF charity voucher to the value above made payable to Operation Agri BMM (*Please cross out words that do not apply*).
- ☐ I enclose a gift from our church / organisation towards the work of Operation Agri BMM £
- ☐ I enclose a cheque / postal order / CAF charity voucher to the value above made payable to Operation Agri BMM (*Please cross out words that do not apply*).

Please send me the free "Outreach Abroad" magazine by post every 3 months Yes / No

Please send me the Operation Agri email newsletter Yes / No

BLOCK CAPITALS please:

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

Church or Organisation and Position (If applicable):

Address 1:

Address 2:

Town/City:

County: Post Code:

Email address:

GIFT AID DECLARATION

Gift Aid makes a very big difference to your generosity without it costing you any more money. If you are a tax payer please complete this declaration. Thank you.

giftaid it

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

Name of charity: Operation Agri BMM

I am a UK tax payer 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 the difference.

My Details: (In addition to those above)

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.

My Bank Details

To The Manager:

Bank Name:			
Bank Address 1:			
Bank Address 2:			
Town/City:			
County:		Post Code:	
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 to the charity. (Please cross out words that do not apply).

Signature:

Date:

Please detach this Response Form from the magazine and send to:
The Administrator, Operation Agri BMM, 361 Firs Lane, Palmers Green, London N13 5LX
A photocopy copy of this form is acceptable.
Scanned copies or other images may be emailed to admin@operationagri.org.uk

Other Ways to Give

Gifts to Operation Agri BMM may be made online: www.operationagri.org.uk/donate

GDPR

We have procedures to keep your personal information secure. We comply with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

We never sell your data and we will never share it with another company or charity for marketing purposes. We only share data where we are required to do so by law.

Legacies

Please remember Operation Agri BMM in your will. Many projects have been funded from legacies. For guidance please ask the Administrator.

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



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Promoting Local Resources and Indigenous Techniques

By Pastor Heavenlight Morice Luoga

What is Farming Partner Initiatives?

Farming Partnership Initiatives, (FPI), is a Community Based Organisation operating as the Development hands of Deeper Life Bible Church, Karagwe.

Our major aim is to promote and improve production and income generation. FPI does this by encouraging the use of local resources, materials and indigenous techniques in order to reduce costs.

FPI Activities

Although FPI had to stop visiting farmers for a good two months, (April and May 2020), because of COVID-19, we were able to restart in June 2020.

We offer training and a change of life to rural farmers through Operation Agri's support. Our main activities focus on providing training to farmers, and small loans. From the beginning of the project we based our work on the old Chinese proverb: ***"Give a person a fish: you have fed them for today. Teach a person to fish: you have fed them for a lifetime."***

At FPI we believe in training; to teach the person how to utilise the surrounding local resources and materials, in order to produce certain products, and to process and package them for local markets. This stimulates more farming products and economic development.

Sustainable Agriculture

FPI aims to improve the lives of rural communities through Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in two

districts: Karagwe and Kyerwa. Through Operation Agri we have succeeded in providing new farming skills, methods and techniques, without ignoring the indigenous techniques and technologies. We make sure that OA funds are utilised effectively and efficiently, by encouraging and promoting the local techniques for long-term income projects and poverty reduction.

Beehive Testimony

We have a local beehive project which uses locally sourced materials to keep the costs low, and applies indigenous techniques in modern ways.

The Nyota ya Jamii Group, (The Community Star), has 500 local beehives, they build their own hives, harvest the honey, process and package in local ways to lower the cost, and meet the local market's requirements. The project has been successful in income generation and changes the lives of the members.

Beehives from local materials



Photographer: Emmanuel Waziri



Heavenlight (left) and Denis stacking beehives

Mr. Evodius Mhenga is one of the members who built his beehive, processes the honey locally, and packages it for the market.

This project has three benefits, and all of these have achieved:

- I. Improving and promoting the indigenous skills which benefits the communities.

II. Environmental protection: people stop burning trees and bushes.

III. Promoting income generation.

Expand, Expand, Expand

FPI aims to expand this programme into Kyerwa district in phase six, which has been approved by Operation Agri. This project follows the National Policy of Beekeeping of March 1998 (which focusses on the three key areas shown above), and The Act of Beekeeping No.15 of 2002 and its bylaws of Beekeeping of 2005.

This project doesn't need big capital, but the production and incomes gained after a short period, provides opportunities to create self-employment, and contribute to family food security by producing and selling bee products.



Beehives ready to receive bees



Making beehives

Presents with a Purpose (PwaP) –

By Gill Jones

Buy a gift for someone that makes a real difference to their life.

PwaP is a progression from what had previously been done. Churches would write asking what specific projects they could support, and I would write back with a list from which they chose. They then asked me for details, with pictures if possible. Stan Crees was a mine of information!

In January 2003 Outreach Abroad carried the advertisement:

'Excite your Church - adopt an Operation Agri Project!' In

April 2003 there was a 'Projects' Booklet' and by April 2006 it had become **'Presents with a Purpose'**. The name came out of the phrase I used to convince the committee; "It will be a book of presents which have a purpose, not just socks!"



Encouraging Small Scale Farmers to Break the COVID-19 cycle

By **Pr. Paul Kyalimpa**, Project Manager SAFI Project.



Christopher with his wife Annette Ahebwa and his family on their farm

The World Bank has estimated that the combined impact of climate change, and the damage done by the COVID-19 pandemic, will push another 132 million people into extreme poverty.

Bold action is being taken by the SAFI Project, (Sustainable Agriculture Farming Initiatives), in the Kyenjojo district of Western Uganda to address these two destructive forces, to ensure local communities respond and recover, and realise a sustainable future. SAFI is funded by Operation Agri.

Reinforcing Livelihoods

The Coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the severe limitation of our food systems

including its deep inequities and lack of resistance to diseases in Uganda, and the world over.

The SAFI Project is reducing the impact of diet related diseases, hunger and malnutrition, by highlighting and enriching the role of Small Scale Farmers, (SSFs), in Uganda. The project outcomes, healthy diets and enhanced health, reinforce the livelihoods of the farmers.

This is being achieved through the farmers' creativity and innovation. They improve the soil health and produce nutritious food that enables people to thrive in the community. Farm-made manures and compost increase yields at least seven or eight times and make crops resistant to disease attack.



Harvesting bananas



Using farm made manures and compost

Advancing Regeneration and Ecology

SAFI is advancing the adoption of regenerative and ecologically sustainable farming practices to provide secure food systems for now and the future.

The Small Scale Farmers are trained on a two-year sustainable farming course which includes modules on:

- ✓ Organic livestock keeping and management.
- ✓ Organic farming.
- ✓ Conservation farming.
- ✓ Agro forestry.

Farmers learn about integrated livestock and crop enterprises to increase profitability and income. For example, Bananas are inter-cropped with Guatemala Grass and Maize. The grass and maize feeds the goats, pigs, chickens and cattle, whilst the livestock manure feeds the soil which feeds the plants that feed the livestock.

Building Resilience in the Pandemic

To assist Small Scale Farmers to remain resistant in the time of COVID-19 and its

economic impact, they are encouraged to remain active. They have been involved in innovation and have creatively put up farm-based enterprises that are lifting them out of poverty.

The stories of many SSFs show remarkable reductions in poverty, including that of Mr. Ahebwa Christopher, who had nothing on his farm, and believed that his farm soils were too poor and unproductive to produce food to sustain his family. He went to Kampala, Uganda's capital, to look for money but he never got it. He tried constructing houses and running a canteen to make money, but this was in vain. Then he joined the SAFI project; now his farm produces five bunches of bananas every day. Each bunch sells between Ushs. 5,000/- and 10,000/- (£1.03 – £2.06). Mr. Christopher says that the SAFI project has assisted him to grow enough food for his family, and a surplus to sell for his children's school fees. He thanks Operation Agri for making the SAFI project possible which has given him the knowledge and the skills he needed to turn his farm around.

A Three-Pronged Approach

In 1975 Colin Foulkes, an agriculturally trained missionary, was sent to Bangladesh, and he found the land to be a growers' paradise. Colin adopted a three-pronged approach - Demonstration, Integration, and Persuasion. He grew a variety of nutritious foods on demonstration plots which were visible to locals. He gave away seeds and plants, and worked with locals to persuade farmers and growers to try new products and extend their growing season. The locals were eternally grateful he had left the Western world to share his knowledge and experience. Nearly half a century later, we are still sharing our knowledge and experience to offer skills to those who need it most.



Operation Agri ~ Digital Update

By Nicola Ellul – Marketing Advisor

Update

We have been very busy recently progressing our digital plans, and would like to share some ways in which you can become involved in our digital journey. Please support us as we expand our presence in the digital environment.

Webinar News

We held our first digital Webinar back in November, which had a great response from our supporters. We shared news and updates on the charity and took questions on how Operation Agri has been impacted by COVID-19.



We had an open discussion section and asked for feedback to help us build our future events. At a time when face-to-face events are still uncertain, this is a fantastic way to meet like-minded people.

Wonderfully, as a result of the webinar, we found our marathon runner for this year. Let's pray that it goes ahead as planned.

Our second Zoom Webinar will be on



Webinar Screenshot

Monday 1st of March 2021. We would love to welcome you. It's a great chance to meet other Operation Agri supporters, followers and, of course, the Trustees. To book your place email: admin@operationagri.org.uk

Social Media

We have worked on our social media content and are more active on both Facebook and Instagram. Our focus last year, at harvest time, was on sharing our harvest and farming stories. We also shared our Presents with a Purpose activity. We have some very exciting campaigns for 2021, these will mainly be focused around our big 60th Anniversary. You can support us from your church or individual social media accounts. Please like our posts and share our content. This helps Operation Agri grow a new and wider online audience.



Social Media Collage

Further ways to support us

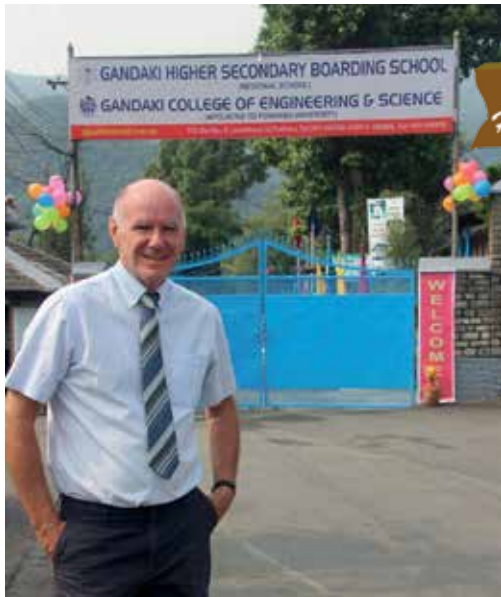
If you haven't done so already, please sign up to our monthly e-mail newsletter which includes our news and updates and please encourage your friends and families also to sign up. [Click here](#) or go to our website.

If you have any stories or memories of Operation Agri please share them with us, they may be featured in our 60 Moments of Operation Agri campaign this year; we want to hear as many stories as possible from you.

As the world continues to change and we live in new times and behave in new ways, please consider how you can share our story through digital means.

Growing Up in 2021

By Jerry Clewett – Operation Agri Trustee and International Development Consultant



For young people growing up anywhere in the world there are enormous challenges. We have all been there ... struggling through adolescence and emerging, somehow, the other side into what the world calls 'adults'. If we are honest, it is far easier for some than for others. All the challenges may be there in some form, wherever we happen to live, including mental health issues, addictions to drugs, alcohol, online games or 'the screen', chaotic family life, peer pressure, and abuse in its various forms.

The economic and social context of poorer countries present additional hurdles. You might be one of the 258 million children and youth who are not in any formal education¹, or one of the 246 million children affected by armed conflict². The experience of growing up in these situations is likely to be very different, especially if you were born a girl and not a boy since you might

be one of the 12 million who give birth as a teenager each year³; or one of the 15 million who will suffer female genital mutilation before 2030⁴.



Hope through education

Our Operation Agri In-Country partners tell us numerous stories of how young people struggle as they grow up, and how they try to find hope in their lives, often against all the odds. Like the 15-year-old boy in Sri Lanka whose 'friends' exploited his instability due to a violent household, and turned him into a thief; or the girls in the Duaripara 'slum' area of Dhaka in Bangladesh who, due to family chaos and poverty, are at risk of being trafficked and exploited both sexually and commercially; or the girl in Kampala, Uganda who was abandoned by her parents, together with her three siblings.

The solutions identified, whilst often multi-faceted, all include a focus on education or skills training. Creating a safe environment in a Christian hostel for the boy in Sri Lanka so he could focus on studies; enabling the girls in Duaripara to attend education classes; and providing literacy, numeracy and business skills for the girl in Uganda.

How do we view young people?

Young people can be very resilient. They should be seen by all societies as assets not burdens. They are there to be nurtured, to contribute, not to be exploited. They need opportunities and security. They are made, like you and me, in the image of God.

¹<http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/new-methodology-shows-258-million-children-adolescents-and-youth-are-out-school.pdf>

²<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/142/6/e20182586>

³<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-pregnancy>

⁴<https://plan-international.org/sexual-health/fgm-female-genital-mutilation>

For Your Prayers Please

As we start a New Year the legacy of 2020 leaves us, and our In-Country Partners, with intertwined challenges related to activities disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please pray:

- That the activities scheduled for 2020 but delayed due to restrictions on travel and group meetings, can now take place.
- For wisdom in modifying activity schedules as budgets for 2021 have been reduced for most projects.
- For the poor communities where we seek to change lives as COVID-19 is likely to live on.
- For awareness training initiated by our Partners on how the spread of a virus can be reduced and how those with COVID-19 should be cared for.

Please pray specifically for:

Malawi, Growing Greener with African Pastors Fellowship.

- Give thanks that 4 extra Community Trainers were able to be trained before lockdown. With these extra trainers it has been possible to teach all the farmers due to be trained.
- Pray for reliable rains to come, so that the crops planted will yield a good harvest.

Uganda, Women's Adult Literacy Project with consultant Paul Kyalimpa from Baptist Union of Uganda.

- Give thanks that training in both literacy and livelihood principles have been able to continue, and pray that all involved will 'stay safe'.
- Give thanks that 5 groups have started to use their new skills from the livelihood training to improve their security and standard of living.

Uganda, Sustainable Agriculture Farming Initiatives with Baptist Union of Uganda

- Give thanks that training, and farm visits were able to continue, albeit with restrictions.
- Pray that none of the farmers from the groups will feel they have 'missed out' because of the changes.

Tanzania, Imarika Project with Emmanuel International and the Diocese of Ruaha

- Praise God that trees planted in 2020 are doing well.
- Remember the Mangawe group who were unable to plant out their trees, as there has been a drought.
- Give thanks that the local government sponsored Imarika to participate in the zonal farmers show, (Nane Nane Day which means 'eight eight' in Swahili, representing 8th August), of Mbeya region. This was an unexpected opportunity.

Nepal, partnership with MCDS and Nepal Baptist Church Council

CHEP in Kankri, East Rukum.

- Pray for co-ordination with local government so that activities can proceed with minimized COVID-19 risk.

CHEST in Ikuole, Bagmati Rural Municipality.

- Give thanks that a one-year extension of the project can go ahead.

Pray that this additional year will complete activities that were delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

An Interview with Theo Lambourne



Early Life

Theo was born in Africa to BMS missionaries and educated in England, but his 'heart' was, and still is, for Africa and its people. In the late 1950s he boarded at Eltham College, (the school for the sons of missionaries), in South East London. David Stockley had been sent to East Pakistan, (now Bangladesh), by BMS as their first agricultural missionary, and in late 1958, they started a project called Operation Agri to support his work.

Theo, together with other lads in the Boarders' Bible Class, set about helping to fund the project. They sent vegetable seeds bought in local Eltham shops with their pocket money although Theo freely admits they may not have been much use in Asian culture and soil! The boys also used their Bible Class Sunday offering to buy day-old chicks at 2/6d (12½p) each - air freight included!

Operation Agri BMM

In 1961 the Baptist Men's Movement took on the management of Operation Agri.

Theo remembers taking the magazine in the 1970s after returning from teaching in Kenya. He kept in touch with Operation Agri through the BMS and, in 1991, became the BMS Midlands Co-ordinator. He attended the Baptist Men's Movement Conferences from 1992 onwards to promote BMS and around 2002/3 he was encouraged by Stan Crees

to consider becoming a Trustee of OA. He was elected in 2008, (after retirement), but declined the role of magazine editor, and opted instead to interface directly with OA's projects in Africa.

Crafting Skills

In 2015 he used his wood crafting skills to produce attractive and useful products to support OA. Each year his skills result in sales which allow him to donate about £1,000 by turning reclaimed wood into pens, bowls, and similar items. Theo retired from OA in 2019 but continues to provide us with much needed funds from his wood turning.

Theo's testimony: *"I have absolutely no regrets about the time I spent as an OA Trustee – it was a very special time. I appreciated the contact with my fellow Trustees, and I especially regarded it as an enormous privilege to be able to liaise directly with the people running the projects on the ground in different parts of Africa. If anyone has got the time and availability to serve in that way, I would strongly recommend them to get involved."*

What a testimony from someone whose heart is for the Lord's work in this way.

Please get in touch with me: NigelJones@operationagri.org.uk to ask about the wide variety of ways you might serve as a Trustee, or advisor, and start or continue a testimony like Theo's. Thank you.

A Ministry Of Sharing

Operation Agri began supporting AMOS Health and Hope in 2007. Based in Nicaragua, the project works to improve the health of some of the poorest people in Latin America. Poverty, and the lack of access to primary health care, contribute to overall poor health in the community, and particularly high maternal, neonatal, and child death rates. AMOS works with 22 community-based primary health care providers. Operation Agri grants provide health promoters with education, medicines, equipment, and other much needed supplies. Over 11,400 vulnerable people benefit from this scheme.



*Theo Lambourne
in his workshop*

