

Outreach Abroad

Supporting rural and urban development projects in Christ's name

*The LEADS
SHG meets
to deposit
weekly
savings*

Self Help Groups are
formed to promote
household savings and
domestic financial
management beyond
the project lifetime



1961–2021



Operation
AGRI
Christian love in action

SPRING 2021

Building Resourceful R

By **Nadeesha Rajakaruna**, Manager, Community Transformation, LEADS
Photos by **Nadeesha Rajakaruna, Ilayarasah Suganthan and Devshan**

Who We Are...

LEADS is a Sri Lankan agency and approved charity where children come first in all we do, recognising the child as part of a family, community, and the nation. Our work takes an integrated approach to support holistic, socio-economic development in rural underprivileged communities.

An Invaluable Partnership

Our programmes are designed to create awareness, capacitate, and empowerment for families in target communities, so they can raise their children in a safe and healthy environment to reach their full potential. In this, Operation Agri has been an invaluable supporter of LEADS for many years, funding varied interventions such as livelihood support, access to safe water, Self Help Groups, educational support, and capacity building.

The current programme is entering its 3rd year of implementation in Killinochchi District of Northern Sri Lanka.



Farmer enjoying a lush green homegarden

“By the people, For the people”

“By the people, for the people” has always been the driving force for LEADS. The village community is mobilised to work with an existing Community Based Organisation, (CBO), comprised of elected village leaders who identify and prioritise the needs. The



Nadeesha Rajakaruna

CBO leaders engage in the whole process, from beneficiary selections to programme implementation and monitoring. This builds ownership and emphasises their commitment to sustain activities beyond project phase out.

Poverty, COVID-19, and Food Security

Although it is 12 years since the end of Sri Lanka's 30-year civil war, support for holistic socio-economic improvement has been scarce in Killinochchi. Most of the target families earn a meagre daily wage through farming, due to lack of skills and opportunities in any other occupation. Raised market prices are an issue for households living on the poverty line. Food supply and availability is a problem in rural areas due to remoteness and poor access to markets, made worse by long periods of COVID-19 lockdown and isolation.



Supporting preschools

Resilient Communities – *Where every step counts!*



Organic farming training in progress

In a community dependent on agricultural income, lack of water for cultivation, and inadequate income, threatened food security. Through the support of the Operation Agri Programme, LEADS focused on improving household agriculture for target families who have received training, and have been provided with seedlings, gardening tools, and water sprinkler systems to irrigate their home gardens.

LEADS promotes organic farming to protect the environment and produce vegetables rich in natural nutrients. A large proportion of family income is spent on food supplies, leaving little or no room for other necessities. However, because of the home gardening support, they are now able to save most of their daily wage income for other household needs.

Growth and Sustainability

Aiming at sustainability by raising awareness and capacity, building workshops, village leaderships are developed to become advocates for social change. Self Help Groups are formed to promote household savings and domestic financial management beyond the project lifetime. Community wells are handed over to the CBO for maintenance and upgrades, while individual wells are maintained by the beneficiaries, and the link between the grassroots level government officers and the community is strengthened, to ensure access to public services in the long term.

"Being a part of this programme has truly been a blessing to our family," are the words of Rajeshwary – a grateful beneficiary who echoes the sentiments of many others.

10 Years Ago

In 2011, 10 years ago, we celebrated our 50th Anniversary and shared the news that Operation Agri had sent over £5 million to overseas projects, we now support 33 projects in 14 countries and bring life-changing help to some of the poorest people in the world. We also shared the news that 81% of all our funds have made it directly to those that need help, which is massive achievement. Today, we celebrate our 60th Anniversary, we thank you for enabling us to send another £1.9 million overseas in the last ten years.



Operation Agri

– A Significant Development

As part of our on-going development the Trustees of 'Operation Agri BMM', have created a new charity, 'Operation Agri' – a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The 'BMM' referenced the Baptist Men's Movement which adopted Operation Agri but closed a few years ago.

I want to assure you that the work of Operation Agri is continuing with unaltered aims. Our new charity, **Operation Agri**, has the charity number **1189098**. It is a successor charity to Operation Agri BMM.

Part of the process of setting up the new charity is the establishment of a new bank account. The details are:

Bank: Bank of Scotland
Name: Operation Agri
Account: 20935768
Sort Code: 80-22-60

Gifts sent to the Operation Agri BMM bank account will continue to reach us safely for the next few weeks, but when convenient, please will you take the following action as appropriate to you.

Standing Orders: Please amend your standing order to the new bank details. The Standing Order Form in this magazine has all the new details as above. Please consider increasing your donation.

Gift Aid: If you have completed a Gift Aid declaration for Operation Agri

BMM please complete a new one. You may scan it and attach it to an email to admin@operationagri.org.uk

Legacies: If you have made provision for this in your will, we thank you. The Charity Commission has recently reviewed this and takes the view that "a gift to a dissolved unincorporated association would take effect as a gift for the purposes of the association. It would therefore be proper for it to be applied to the successor charity where those purposes were the same or very similar". You do not need to take any action, but if you choose to revise your will to nominate 'Operation Agri charity number 1189098', you may do so.

The Trustees have requested that Operation Agri BMM be placed on the "Register of Mergers" at the Charity Commission. This will ensure continuity, and provide for any legacies made to the original charity to be transferred to Operation Agri. We believe the transition will be smooth but if you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

Operation Agri BMM is an unincorporated charity with the charity number 1069349 - this is the charity which you may, currently, be supporting.

Nigel Jones
Secretary Operation Agri
on behalf of the Trustees.

Please note...

Donations

For a variety of ways to donate to Operation Agri please go to:
www.operationagri.org.uk/donate



Donate

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility, (CSR), is a diverse approach to activities such as philanthropy and volunteer efforts. CSR activities can help to increase morale and engage both employees and employers with the wider world in which they live.

Lobby someone yourself or encourage others to ask their employers to participate for Operation Agri. Gifts of finance, goods and time are equally valuable.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meetings of Operation Agri BMM and of Operation Agri, will take place from 11am onwards on Thursday 17th June 2021. The meetings will be on-line. Please contact Malcolm, admin@operationagri.org.uk if you would like to attend.

Random Acts of Kindness Day

Random Acts of Kindness Day was 17th February, so it's gone for this year! It was the opportunity to do something nice for a complete stranger, a family member or a co-worker.

What about turning April 22nd this year, (Operation Agri Day), into an opportunity to contribute to an Act of Kindness Day; no need to be random. Presents with a Purpose will be a great way to show kindness, compassion, love:
www.operationagri.org.uk/item/presents-with-a-purpose



Presents with
a Purpose

Webinar Success

Following two very successful Operation Agri webinars a third one is planned for Monday 7th June at 7pm.

If you would like attend on Zoom please e-mail Malcolm, admin@operationagri.org.uk, to request a link.

Special Webinar

We held our first webinar for Ambassadors in March. It was also for anyone who wanted to know about this programme. If you missed it and want information, please e-mail Russell:
RussellAshleySmith@operationagri.org.uk

Helping Subsistence Farmers in Tanzania

By **Ibrahimu Abdul**, Team leader, Emmanuel International Iringa Office, Tanzania
Photos by **Andy Sharpe, Jesca Mгимба, and Ibrahimu Abdul**

IMARIKA Project

Emmanuel International has been taking this development initiative to rural villages around Iringa, Tanzania for 4 years, strengthening local churches and using them as a springboard to impact rural households. They are subsistence farming families, struggling to make a living on increasingly depleted soils, affected by environmental degradation and climate change.

The IMARIKA Project addresses these real needs to improve local agriculture, environment, and livelihoods, through seminars, training and demonstration, and the results have been revolutionary for many.

From an Interview with Neema Sengele of IMARIKA Agape (Mangawe) Group

In January 2021 Neema Sengele told us about implementing agricultural conservation techniques in her village. Before joining the IMARIKA activities she



Neema Sengele



Ester Group and Ester tree seedlings



did not see the importance and value of caring for the soil. Now, she is a role model for these techniques in her village. Her major challenge was an unsupportive husband who, not being part of the IMARIKA training group, did not appreciate the agricultural conservation principles. He often disagreed on the use of green manure in the field, but after the good yields from the IMARIKA demonstration plot has allowed her to use some green manure which has encouraged Neema. In 2020 she cultivated a quarter-acre field as a demonstration and harvested 390kg of maize; double the typical yield using traditional agriculture methods.

The Story of Ikuka Group

Last year EI trained the Ester group at Ikuka in tree planting; their first such experience. We thank God that they have done very well. They have grown 1,400 avocado seedlings,



Ibrahim

2,000 guava seedlings, and over 1,000 other tree seedlings. Pastor Mlula of the Anglican Church has been an enthusiastic group member and is a good example in the community. Pastor Mlula says, "The idea of planting trees is a blessed thing because we are re-creating our environment after a lot of environmental damage."

The group has promised to give 10 tree seedlings to all the institutions in the village for the purpose of improving their environment. The group has done well with its Savings and Loans scheme, (VICOBA –

Village Community Banking). We thank God that many people are now asking to join this group. They started with 27 members and now have 34 who are role models in the community. The community leaders say that the Ester group work will be sustainable for many generations to come.

COVID-19 Impacts

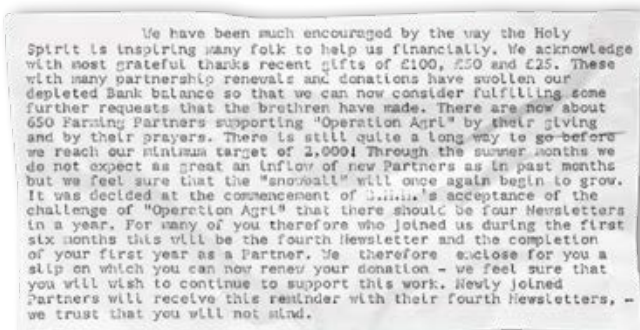
We are thankful that in 2020 our IMARIKA project was not affected significantly by COVID-19. Virus infection rates have not been high, but for some of the time we were unable to visit the villages. Instead, we selected a lead farmer for each group with whom we could communicate. They helped us manage the agricultural work with the groups. We thank God that this worked well and led farmers to develop their own leadership skills.

Operation Agri has supported the El IMARIKA project over the last 4 years, encouraging churches in 11 villages and reaching about 25,000 people. Thank you to Operation Agri for partnering with us to make all of that possible.

Back to the 1960s

In July 1962, (Newsletter Number 4), we shared the following information, "We have been much encouraged by the way the Holy Spirit is inspiring many folks to help us financially. We acknowledge with most grateful thanks, recent gifts of £100, £50 and £25. These with many partnership renewals and donations have swollen our depleted bank balance so that we can now consider fulfilling some further requests that the brethren have made." Words taken from the actual newsletter, see image.

In today's money £100 would be worth £1,830, £50 would be worth £915 and £25 worth £457. Please continue to support Operation Agri, all your donations over the years have allowed us to continue our work across the globe.





By **Nigel Jones**, Operation Agri Trustee

A Favourite Saying

A wide variety of television programmes investigate and then present facts about people and events of the past and, in so doing, provide us with a wealth of understanding of the life and times of our ancestors. When someone from the past has been shown to have developed or invented something significant, that has subsequently affected the world, the presenter often says something like, "They changed the world forever".

When I hear those words, my usual response is that the statement cannot be proven. Logic suggests that things could revert to their former state or future developments could occur which bear no relationship to the event that was heralded as a 'global forever change'.

A Favourite Saying Modified

If we were to make a change to the statement; "They changed the world forever" and make it read "They changed their world forever", I am more content with the intention. Localising the observation rather than globalising it makes the prospect of proving the truth of it, more likely. If we uncouple the 'they' who made the change and the 'their' whose world was changed, we have a representation, or picture, of the work of Operation Agri.

Let's start with the 'they' who made the change. This would be the countless number of supporters who have, over the course of sixty years, sent their pocket money, overtime pay, or money from other sources of income to Operation Agri. Whether it was pence or pounds it has all counted towards making life-changes for people they never met. In the last ten years alone, this has amounted to almost £2 million. Some of that has come from disposable income and some from truly sacrificial giving. It all counts! Thank you!

Now let us move to the 'they' whose world has been changed. Elsewhere in this magazine you will read about Rose and her children, of Rajeshwary, of Neema Sengele, and of the disadvantaged youth in the slum areas of Kampala whose lives are being changed, for the better, and in a lasting way.

They, and many more, now live lives that have been improved from bare subsistence to nutritious meals, education, employment, health, and community welfare.

Thank you

The vast number of people you have helped are not able to thank you personally. On their behalf we, the Trustees of Operation Agri past and present, thank you and give thanks to God for your support.

For your prayers please

This time it really is: “in the words of our Partners”.

Paul Kyalimpa, Uganda.

Pray that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic will not continue to disrupt life.

Bangladesh / CMCY.

May God bless the humanitarian work you do in the severe crisis of the Coronavirus.

- We are very thankful and grateful to you all.
- Pray that we can continue a child-focused development in the slum area Duaripara, Dhaka.

Malawi / African Pastors Fellowship.

Malawi has been badly hit by COVID-19.

- Give thanks that seed was successfully distributed, and the crops germinated well.
- Pray that the weather will be favourable, and a good harvest will be produced.
- Pray that COVID-19 will be contained and not prevent field workers making advisory visits.

Nicaragua / AMOS.

- Give thanks that we have the resources needed for the Annual On-site Training of rural community health promoters.
- Praise God that our staff, health promoters, and community volunteers remain healthy as they continue offering critical health care services.
- Pray for the training of new health promoters to ensure continuity in the event that current promoters retire or becomes unable to continue.

Pakistan / LFTN.

I would like to say you are the light that guided me and inspired us to work for his people. So, I want to say to you, thank you so much... “For nothing will be impossible with God.” Luke 1:37

- Pray for the distribution of sewing machines, and that the business started will prosper.
- Pray for the centre we started last May and for a second centre in Phase 2.
- Pray for the team who will select the ladies so that we choose good, deserving ladies.
- Pray for the new business management training, where ladies will learn how to save money and start a small business.
- Pray that the husbands, fathers, and brothers will support this new phase.

Tanzania / FPI.

- Give thanks that:
 - Pro 80% of participants in the latest phase adopted the new sustainable methods as taught.
 - 65% of farmers in earlier phases are still largely using the sustainable methods.

A final word from India / Oasis India.

Whilst it's been an unpredictable year, and COVID-19 got in the way of all the project plans, we thank you for your patience and for always extending the required support.

Children's Page from Janet, a friend of Operation Agri

Just to remind you that Oppy has now retired from travelling to the different Operation Agri projects. However, as part of Operation Agri's 60th birthday celebrations, some 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 who brought news from the projects in **NEPAL**. Now Vikki, the Vervet Monkey, has brought news from the projects in **UGANDA**.

Here is an Easter craft for you:

Make an Easter card for someone, and decorate it with colourful Easter Eggs, using paints or Crayons.

You can add glitter if you have some.



Vikki told Oppy how she had seen the Small Scale Farmers growing crops of bananas along with grass and maize. The grass and maize are used to feed the chickens.

See if you can help the chicken reach the maize through the maze.



Here is another Easter craft for you:

Find an oval potato and do some potato printing like this one, using different colour paints.

If you punch two holes in the print and thread some string through them, you will have a hanging decoration.

Keep safe: Ask an adult to cut the potato.



If it is too late for Easter, make birthday cards instead.



Answers to the puzzle in the last issue:
ONIONS, CHILLI, TOMATOES, and CABBAGE

Nicaragua

This project seeks to address the determinants of health, such as community, poverty, gender inequality, and now, socio-political violence, which present significant challenges for their communities.

Malawi

Local farmers are taught environmentally friendly and sustainable farming techniques, such as making local compost from manure, mulching and other methods.

Nepal

The activities of the CHEP project focus on the principle needs of people and their living standards. Activities include safe water supply, early childhood development, environment protection, and livelihood development.

India

This project seeks to ensure that the most vulnerable and marginalized people in the community are taken care of i.e. women, children at risk of trafficking and abuse, and men and orphans who are in need of training.



For many of us, 2021 has been much the same as last year. But here at OA, this year is very special!

This year is our 60th Anniversary!!
In this issue, we are talking about fundraising and what that money goes towards. We will focus on our projects from around the world as well as how you can support them.

How you can help!

Many of the members of OA are undertaking fundraising events over the summer which you can support - I will be doing a sponsored cycle ride! I will also be doing a video for the next Youth Page, so keep your eyes out for that!!



The C-Sixty Challenge has been taken up by four people who are keen to support Operation Agri by way of sponsored events but **Watch This Space** there might be others!

Details of how to sponsor one or more of them will appear in the July issue of Outreach Abroad. In the meantime, please support them in prayer and by sharing this information with family and friends who might like to contribute to the sponsorship.

Russell and Gill Ashley-Smith

Russell and Gill Ashley-Smith will be celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary in July this year and have decided to use this opportunity to invite gifts for Operation Agri instead of for themselves. They are, therefore, inviting family, friends, and Operation Agri supporters to subscribe to a fund which, they hope, will reach £1,000 and pay for a village water system in Nepal.

Josh Andrewartha

Josh has been working with Operation Agri as a volunteer for three years and has produced the Youth Page for much of the time. After completing his A Levels in 2019 he worked his gap year at his church, alongside the Youth Pastor, and is now a Teaching Assistant. Always anxious to share his faith and be involved in practical ways, he is planning, and preparing, for an adventurous cycle ride to attract your sponsorship.

Nigel Jones

Nigel instigated the C-Sixty Challenge and thought it right and proper to volunteer himself. After much consideration he has settled on walking 60 miles, but not in one go! Instead, he will attempt 10 walks each of 6 miles in as short a period of time as his body will allow.

Snippets from the 2nd OA Webinar

How can my church become more involved in OA?

Form a support group

- Church, family, friends, neighbours
- Share the magazine and social media platforms
- Come to OA with development suggestions
- Pray

Encourage people to volunteer

- We have 10 trustees, a part-time administrator, and several great friends of OA
- Always room and a need for more
- Specific needs: Chairperson and Magazine Editor
- Most of the trustees in recent years came by the 'tap on the shoulder'

Social Media and Digital

Email newsletter

- Forward to others and ask them to register for themselves

Facebook

- Like and Share is important to how Facebook relate to us

Instagram

- Like and Share is important to how Facebook relate to us – they own Instagram

LinkedIn

- Encourage family, friends, and colleagues to relate to OA there
- Ministers are often listed!

All can be accessed for login at the bottom of our Home Page – www.OperationAgri.org.uk

Operation Agri Digital Update

By **Nicola Ellul**, Marketing Advisor

Stay Updated with Operation Agri



We hope you are following us on social media and have signed up to the newsletter; if you haven't, please visit our website, (OperationAgri.org.uk), to find out how to:

- receive our digital communications
- find us on Facebook – Operation Agri
- find us on Instagram – @operationagri
- find us on LinkedIn

Future Digital Events

After the success of our first ever digital event in November and our second event in March, we are releasing further dates



to our followers and donors to join Trustees as they share news, updates, and ways to become more involved in Operation Agri.

Look out for dates for an Ambassador Only Digital Event! This is for existing Ambassadors, and for anyone wanting to find out more about being an Operation Agri Ambassador to help us share our positive message.

All digital events include a Q&A session, where you can share your thoughts and ask us questions about the charity. These events are a great way to interact with other like-minded people, and to find out how your donations make a difference to our partners and projects.

We found our marathon runner for this year through our webinar in November, this will

now allow us to take part in The London Marathon 2021, should it go ahead.

Stay tuned on our digital channels to see our runner in training.

New Social Media Channel

We are now active on LinkedIn so, if you are a professional and have a LinkedIn page,



please follow our journey and updates on this channel, and share our news and stories as well as on both Facebook and Instagram.

We have some very exciting campaigns for 2021, these will mainly be focused around our big 60th Anniversary. Support us from your church or individual social media accounts by liking our posts and sharing our content. This helps Operation Agri grow a new and wider online audience.

60 Moments and Memories

As we celebrate our 60th Anniversary while still living with some pandemic restrictions, we will share 60 moments and memories throughout the year.

If you have a memory relating to Operation Agri, please let us know. We would love to feature your story on our digital channels.



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.

All replies to: NigelJones@OperationAgri.org.uk or Operation Agri, 361 Firs Lane, Palmers Green, London, N13 5LX

Rose's Birds

By **Pastor Paul Kyalimpa**, WALP Project Manager,
Kyenjojo, Uganda



Rose with her pig

Meet Rose Kebirungi

Rose Kebirungi is a 32-Year-old woman who was illiterate; she did not know reading or writing before joining the WALP project, (Women's Adult Literacy Project), two years ago. She is married with four children, but her husband left her for another woman five years ago.

She lives with her children in a temporary mud house with a tin roof, that the husband built 15 years ago on his family's land of two acres. The house is old and is about to fall down. They walk 10 km, (6¼ miles), to reach the town of Kyenjojo to get treatment and to sell their produce.

Life Before Joining the WALP Project

Before joining the project Rose, who lived in extreme poverty, did not know how to read or write. She used to make handmade crafts, with the wool donated by Operation Agri and, on her two-acre land, she worked very hard to plant and harvest sweet potato, cassava, maize, and beans for consumption within her home. From her handmade crafts she earned a small amount of cash to support her family's needs. Life was so hard to make a living and more so without a husband around.

Rose's Inspiration Through WALP

As part of the WALP project, Rose received literacy training on how to read and write, and on Biblical principles of sustainable livelihoods. As a result of this literacy training Rose captured a vision of farming local chickens, goats, and pigs.

Rose's Plan to Use What She Has

Initially, after being inspired, it was difficult for Rose to figure out how she would achieve her vision given her present conditions. She had large family needs, no husband, and very little cash. But in all these situations she came up with a plan, with the support WALP's technical project staff. With her little savings from handmade crafts, she started a chicken breeding enterprise. She bought two chickens which she multiplied and then sold the reared chickens. This helped Rose feel empowered within her Myeri village WALP club, and she was excited to learn about the dynamics of literacy education they were receiving.

Rose's birds are now known in the community, and she makes sales in the markets around. Her birds initially produced eggs for her family's consumption, but



Rose and her children and mud house



Paul Kyalimpa

given the growth of this small enterprise, they decided to start selling grown-up chickens to nearby families, which is generating much needed cash for the family.

The family has improved their diet and now have a better financial income to buy clothing and medicines etc., which were previously difficult to obtain.

Rose Has Invested

Rose has invested her savings from handmade crafts and chicken sales into a

goat and piggery enterprise to raise further cash to support family needs. She can now afford to educate her children, but the children are not going to school just now because of COVID-19.

She has achieved good results herself so far and her dedication and effort have helped improve her family's living conditions.

She is so thankful to God for bringing them the support they needed from Operation Agri.



Training at the WALP project

Archives

As we look back through the archives we read over stories and news from trustees, past and present, and hear about updates and progress in our projects. We wanted to share with you some of our old front cover designs and colours.



Vocational Skills Training for Self-Reliance

By **Pastor Dennis Ssettaala**,
Executive Director SDKF



Hairdressing training

Devastating Impact of COVID-19

One of the most devastating impacts of COVID-19 pandemic is the sharp rise in unemployment.



Pastor Dennis Ssettaala

The International Labour Organization estimates a global increase in unemployment of between 5.3 and 24.7 million. According to the United Nations, young people, who are already three times more likely to be unemployed than adults, will be severely affected. One factor is that the pandemic has particularly impacted zero-hours contracts and the informal sector, which accounts for

77% of the types of employment held by young people.

Vocational skills training is one of the pathways for the disadvantaged youth to attain gainful employment. For the 'out of school youth', who may not have made it to secondary school due to the loss of parents or poor family backgrounds, this is the most promising solution to employment and sustainable livelihoods as well as socio-economic integration.

The Way Forward

SDKF Uganda, (Setting Development, Keeping the Foundation), is implementing a Skills Training Project facilitating tailoring, hairdressing and motorcycle mechanics courses for the disadvantaged youth in the slum areas of Kampala.

This ensures they are economically empowered to engage in viable employment for sustainable livelihoods, especially those with limited or no formal education. These are the most disadvantaged young people.



Motorcycle mechanics in training

Initially, the project catered for tailoring and hairdressing students, which attracted mainly females. The male disadvantaged youth requested us to start a motorcycle mechanics course which would help them earn a living.

In February 2020, this course was started, and progressed well until the country went into Lockdown for over 9 months. In January 2021, after receiving the go-ahead from the government, we resumed our training, but with a lot of fear from the community due to COVID-19.

Turn-up rates by our students are still low but it is progressively increasing. The low turn-up is due to fear by some people who avoid gatherings until they have been vaccinated.

We believe that as time goes on, all our training will return to normal.

The Bodabodas Opportunity

Uganda has over 3 million motorcycles which are also known as Bodabodas. Bodabodas are like taxis which are used to transport people all over the country. Commercial cities have the majority of these Bodabodas with almost 70% of them and Uganda has the highest number of BodaBoda in Africa. This course was started to close the gap in a country that does not have enough qualified people

to repair them when they break down. Training young people as motorcycle mechanics, closes the gap as well as creating employment for young people.

This project is being made possible with funding from our long-standing partner, Operation Agri.

Impact of SDKF

This project is being conducted through vocational skills training for disadvantaged youth in the slum area. A total of 1,500 youth from the slums of Kampala city have been trained by SDKF and 85% are now in employment.



Training at the WALP project

After graduation, we furnish our graduates with business start-up kits for their enterprises. The project is aimed at enhancing the self-reliance and socio-economic integration of the target youth while contributing to the development of Uganda.



Stan's Operation Agri Journey

By **Nigel Jones**, based on an Interview with Stan Crees

From Interest to Involvement

Stan's amazing involvement with OA began in 1967 when, as part of the Carshalton Beeches Baptist Free Church's Missionary Committee, he took some responsibility for organising a harvest display. He contacted the Baptist Men's Movement, (BMM), to ask if he could display what was being sent to missionaries and was allowed to display two oil-fired egg incubators and a milling machine for preparing poultry food. Enough funds were raised to purchase these items and to ship them to Kimpese, in Lower Congo for use in the poultry project operated by Ian Pitkethly.

Noting Stan's level of interest, the BMM Secretary wisely invited Stan to join OA. After some thought and prayer, he agreed to take on the role of Purchasing Officer to buy and ship supplies to BMS missionaries working in The Congo, India, and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). He quickly learned new skills.

For several years he continued to supply David Stockley in East Pakistan, Alan Casebow

in India and Ian Pitkethly in Congo, and other BMS workers. Eventually, raised levels of customs duties caused OA to end this practice, and switch their focus to funding in-country projects. Stan then had a 'slightly easier task': maintaining contact with the overseas development personnel, becoming Liaison Officer and then Overseas Secretary.

Broadening Horizons

Stan's first project visit was to Brazil in the spring of 1992. OA was assisting four BMS missionary couples, and he visited all of them, joined by Don Gillard, a friend from early church days. With Frank Gouthwaite, Stan travelled through the Pantanal and on to the Bolivian border. Later joined by Don they met with David and Joyce Stockley, David and Jean Perry, and Mike and Daveen Wilson.

In 1995 Stan and Roger Cady, (a home church friend), visited Albania to meet with Glyn and Gill Jones who were supporting development work in and around Tirana. Stan and Roger had the exciting opportunity to fly by helicopter to visit a mountain village where OA was considering offering support.

Stan made a solo trip to Zimbabwe in 1996, where he was entertained by Steve and Pam Seymour in Harare and was taken to see the work OA was supporting. By 2001

The Turn of the Millennium

21 years ago, at the turn of the millennium, Stan Crees, the longest standing member of Operation Agri reported in the magazine on tinned seeds arriving in Lower Congo. Operation Agri began seed supply back in the 60's and 70's at the very start of our work. Having purchased a large consignment of seed supplies in 1999 and arranged for these to be sent to the Democratic Republic of Congo. These vegetable seeds were distributed to local farmers.

Look out for Operation Agri seeds in the future!!





it was time for Stan to set off again; this time it was to projects in Thailand and Nepal. Mike and Becky Mann took good care of him in Thailand and then he and Mike travelled to Kathmandu, Nepal, to visit several OA funded projects.



Finally, in 2003 he visited Nicaragua to see the Baptist Church based health work there, (prior to AMOS), and then on to Brazil for another visit.

Almost a Full-Time Job

During this time Stan continued as Overseas Secretary and Magazine Editor. Eventually these tasks were taken on by Martin Butterworth and Nigel Jones, but Stan remains content to serve the Lord as a Trustee of OA with responsibility for maintaining contact with AMOS in Nicaragua and SDKF in Kampala, Uganda.

Why work with OA?

In Stan's words: "Those many years ago God called me to fill a gap in managing OA's work

overseas. At the time I had no experience in this field, but I believe God equipped me for the task and enabled me, with much help from other Trustees and professional experts, to meet some of the practical needs of the missionaries that we sought to help. The needs have changed over the years and the problems have altered dramatically, but God continues to guide and to remind us all through His Word that His is a call for justice and a new way of living. It's a call to share the good things that God has given us with the millions of less fortunate people in our world. I am grateful to God that I have the opportunity to play a small part in this justice plan as I continue to serve as an OA Trustee."

1961

2021

Stan and Barbara Crees



1961–2021

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