

Outreach Abroad

OPERATION AGRI'S MAGAZINE



TANZANIA:
Growing a
sunflower
business

INDIA:
Promoting *holistic*
development

Supporting
rural and urban
development
projects in
Christ's name



Operation
AGRI
Christian love in action

AUTUMN 2023



Operation Agri

Freepost

OPERATION AGRI

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Operation Agri,
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Operation Agri is a CIO

Operation Agri works with local Christian partners in ten countries. Operation Agri helps grow food, increase incomes, teach skills, empower women and much more.

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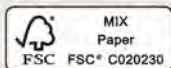
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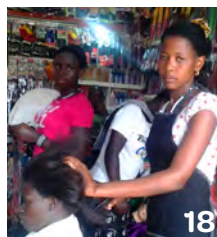
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Welcome

from the Editor

Soaked and Sizzling

Spoiled holidays and abandoned cricket matches; just two of the many disruptions caused by this year's highest ever July rainfall in the UK whilst parts of Europe were ablaze with wildfires wrecking homes and livelihoods.

Without major changes to our collective lifestyle the UK might witness temperatures of over 40°C, (104°F), become 'normal' by 2050.

Imagine what that would mean for farmers in the hotter, drier, and more vulnerable parts of this world.

PRAY + ACT, for the sake of the world's next generation.

Every blessing,
Nigel

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operationagri.org.uk

Cover image: Imarika group harvesting sunflowers in Tanzania

Changing lives together

James Townsend brings the Treasurer's Report to Year End 31 October 2022

'Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.'

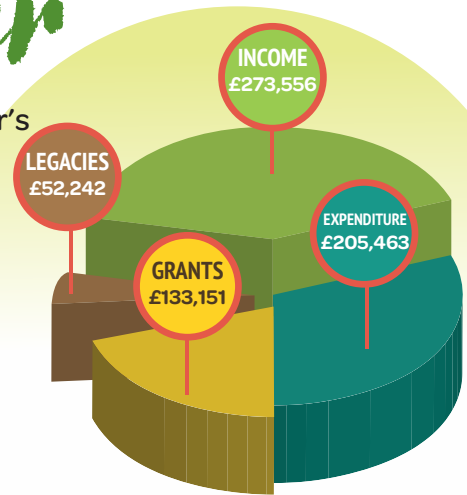
The Bible is full of verses of encouragement and over the last year the Trustees of Operation Agri have been overwhelmingly encouraged by the on-going generosity of our individual donors, churches and partners.

Following the pandemic in 2020/21 we have been amazed at just how God has supported the work of Operation Agri through your generous giving.

Income increased from £162,793 to £273,556, (consolidated OA CIO and OA BMM), and expenditure from £178,793 to £205,463 which included an increase in grants from £110,747 in 2021 to £133,151 in 2022.

The increase in income enabled us to continue the support of our in-country partners, who, in turn, encourage, support and change the lives of so many people in ten countries, on three continents, through sixteen projects.

THANK YOU that for over 60 years Operation Agri has been able to transform the lives of so many families and communities, enabling them to increase harvests, and improve livelihoods, health care and education.



'When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat, and when I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. When I was a stranger, you welcomed me, and when I was naked, you gave me clothes to wear. When I was sick, you took care of me, and when I was in jail, you visited me.'

Then the ones who pleased the Lord will ask, 'When did we give you something to eat or drink? When did we welcome you as a stranger or give you clothes to wear or visit you while you were sick or in jail?'

The king will answer, 'Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me.'

MATTHEW 25:35–40

We look forward to continuing the encouragement of each other and changing lives together, with the Lord's help, in the forthcoming year.

James Townsend



Working in urban slums

Sulekha Thapa discusses how community empowerment has made a substantial difference in the Kalwa community in India

Over the past three years, Oasis India's Community Empowerment Project has been unfolding, bringing positive change and transformation to the Kalwa area of Mumbai. Levels of literacy in this urban slum vary, but most adults are engaged in menial work in areas such as construction, cleaning and rag-picking. Every morning large numbers leave the area to work or search for work.

Expanding access to education

Efforts have been made to ensure that every child has the opportunity to attend school, regardless of their socio-economic background. Educational Support, tuition assistance and After School Programmes (ASP) have been established to support children from disadvantaged families. More than 500 students have benefitted from the ASP programme. By removing barriers to education, the project aims to create equal opportunities for all children and pave the way for a brighter future.

Promoting holistic development

Extra-curricular activities, sports activities, National/International Day celebrations, life skills sessions, and cultural programmes were organised to nurture talent, promote teamwork, and instil values. Health and wellness initiatives, including health awareness sessions and access to healthcare services, were integrated into the educational framework. By prioritising

holistic development, the project promotes academic competence and emotional resilience.

Om Vishwakarma, a 12-year-old boy from a financially struggling family, joined Oasis ASP for educational support. Through taking part in activities and life skills sessions, he transformed from a troublemaker to a responsible and caring student.

Community engagement and parental involvement

Workshops and awareness sessions were conducted to educate parents on the value of education and the role they play in supporting their children's learning journey. Parent-teacher meetings were conducted to facilitate communication and collaboration between parents and teachers.

Improving learning environments

Classrooms were renovated, a library was established, and play areas were created to promote holistic development. In collaboration with local schools, 1200 students attended sessions on Personal Safety Education.

Promoting physical health and well-being through sport

Local sports organisations, schools, and community centres got together to establish sports programmes and activities. Community sports facilities, such as playgrounds, were made available



Art and craft session



Parent-teacher meeting

to provide safe and inclusive spaces. The project organised sports practices, training sessions, and physical exercise sessions in disciplines such as cricket, kabaddi (a game played between two teams of seven players, in which individuals take turns to chase and try to touch members of the opposing team without being captured by them), and athletics.

It is hoped that now all young people have had the opportunity to experience the benefit of sport and to therefore combat a sedentary lifestyle, obesity, and related health issues. Overall, 60 young people are regularly involved in the sports and the practices.

Skills development and empowerment

Various workshops and training sessions were conducted, covering a wide range of subjects, such as financial literacy, entrepreneurship, job skills, and personal development, digital literacy and leadership. These initiatives not only provide valuable learning experiences but also equip participants with practical tools to enhance their livelihoods. This year Oasis India has started the Education and Training Centre where participants receive training in basic computer skills, English speaking, and personality development. Thirty students are part of the six month

basic computer course. A Tailoring Training Centre is set to begin as the project recognises that many women are willing to learn tailoring skills but, due to their customs and traditions, they are not always allowed to pursue these skills. This training unit focuses on women's participation and empowers them through tailoring skills.

Success

Rohit's life took a remarkable turn when Oasis offered him training in Hotel Management. Despite facing tragic circumstances and a lack of guidance, Rohit's determination, and Oasis's support, paved the way for a successful career in Hotel Management. With dedication and enthusiasm, he excelled in the course and landed a dream job at Hotel Taj, a 7-star hotel.

Recent challenges

The demolition of more than 500 homes in Kalwa East, has created new difficulties. The authorities argue this action is necessary for environmental reasons, but in the short term it has led to the displacement of an already marginalised population. This topic will be looked at in more detail in the next issue of the magazine.

*Sulekha Thapa, Deputy Director
Oasis India*



Continued in the January edition of *Outreach Abroad*

C H I L D R E N ' S

P A G E

WORD-SEARCH



**BUSINESS, SCHOOL, GRADUATES,
MOTIVATED, READING,
WRITING, NUMERACY**

There is also an extra hidden word which means 'a group of related people'. It appears 11 times in the Summer magazine.

(Answer on page 11)

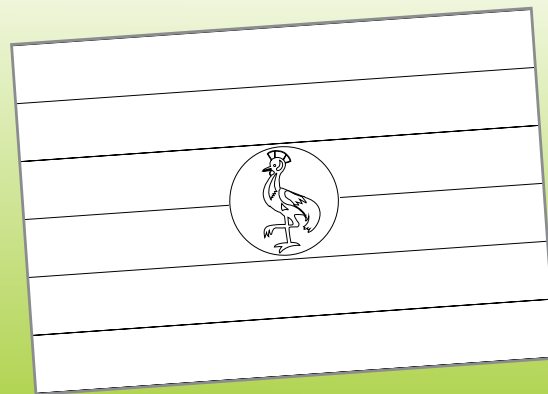


Operation Agri supports the Women's Adult Literacy Project, (WALP), in Uganda, which is a country in the continent of Africa. The reading and writing you learn in your early years at school is not available to many people in this and other parts of the world.

Here is a word-search with some of the words used in the WALP article in the Summer edition of *Outreach Abroad* – see pages 16 and 17 of that magazine.

The words can be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal. See if you can find all the words.

The Ugandan flag is outlined for you to colour – with a picture to show you the colours you need. Draw the flagpole on the correct side of the flag.



Youth Page

presents
with a
purpose!

Presents with a Purpose is OA's gift service. Struggling to work out what to gift a family member this year? Gift someone a present for someone else! As Christians, we want to spread love at this time of year. These gifts include resources for learning, animals for farming or life-changing technology that helps people produce crops.

On a different note, this will be my last Youth Page. I (Josh) have been writing the youth pages here at OA for the last 5 years! I have loved being a part of OA but as life changes, I've felt it's time to step back. The youth pages will be continuing and more interesting stories and projects will be covered. Thank you if you've read anything that I've written over the last 5 years! Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas!

Farmers' training in Malawi adapts to climate crisis

STOCKADOB.E.COM:SERHII

Pastor Lloyd Chizenga underlines the importance of conservation agriculture in combating climate change

The last few years have been very tough in Malawi. Erratic weather conditions increasingly affect our country. In 2022, Tropical Storm Ana destroyed many crops, left thousands homeless and damaged infrastructure.

Then, early this year, Cyclone Freddy hit the Shire Valley area. Flooding and landslides washed away many homes. Six months' worth of rain fell in just six days, ripping up roads and drowning farms. The government estimated that over one thousand people lost their lives in southern Malawi

during the storm. The rain used to be predictable and reliable. Now we are finding that we get all of it in torrential storms and then nothing in longer and hotter dry periods. There has been a serious decline in food availability. This year's maize harvest saw a fifty percent decline in some areas and a corresponding price spike.

Prices in Nsanje, in the far south of the country, shot up 400 per cent during March. This might sound profitable for a farmer looking to sell surplus crops, but most smallholders cannot do this. They rely on high

interest loans to buy food for their families until they harvest, but without crops to sell and with debts to pay, life becomes very precarious.

Soil Degradation

Changing weather patterns are just one of the reasons we continue to work so hard on our conservation agriculture training programme.

As General Director of New Life Christian Church – a network of about two hundred churches across southern and central Malawi – I work with my small team from Blantyre. We continue to

use New Life's strong reputation in rural communities to provide our training programme to village groups.

Where fields are not protected with a good mulch cover, heavier rainfall and longer, hotter, dry periods mean that soils are being washed or blown away. The Shire River basin is a hotspot for this problem. While soil erosion is a challenge for an individual farmer, it is causing knock on problems across the entire country. Nearly all our power is generated from hydro-electric power stations on the Shire River and Lake Malawi, but the sediment running off the fields is reducing their capacity and means power cuts.

Growing Greener

This year, with further funding from Operation Agri and support from African Pastors Fellowship, we are working with a new cohort of villages in Nsanje, Chikwawa, Blantyre Rural, Ntcheu, Balaka, Mangochi and Machinga Districts.

The training we give, which started in 2016, has adapted with our experience and the changing pressures on farmers. We still focus on good soil management, such as creating planting stations rather than following the traditional practice of earthing-up which damages soil structure, and mulching. As the price of fertiliser has doubled, knowledge about making thermal compost is a lifeline. Now, however, we also promote 'climate smart' agriculture by teaching about trees which add fertility to the soil

and protect crops like the acacia tree. We include more about managing farm finances, helping farmers to think carefully about borrowing, saving and marketing surplus crops. We also think it is important to create opportunities for communities to come together and discuss the traumas they have faced and begin to heal.

Farmers who follow the training make a profit which they invest, and so we now have teaching on animal care. Livestock provide an excellent income stream as not only can the young be sold, but they also produce manure for compost. One

important aspect of our training is linking our faith and farming practices to our responsibility to care for creation. It is so important that Christian farmers know that caring for the land God has given them is central to their faith.

Over the past seven years, the *Growing Greener* project has seen so many changes in the lives of those involved. We see food security, livestock purchased, school fees paid, and homes roofed with iron sheets. We are especially grateful for the additional support we

received to help farmers in the lower Shire Valley buy seed to replace the crops lost to flooding after Cyclone Freddie.

Thank you for all your support.

Pastor Lloyd Chizenga



“

Where fields are not protected with a good mulch cover, heavier rainfall and longer, hotter, dry periods mean that soils are being washed or blown away.

Prayer we invite you to pray

God can't stand pious poses, but he delights in genuine prayers. PROVERBS 15:8 The Message

Malawi – Africa

Growing Greener in Malawi

Farming in Malawi

- Pray that the replanted maize is successfully harvested before the rains start.
- Pray farmers understand the new plan for planting local maize this season and save the short season maize seed for emergency use if floods or cyclones occur in 2024.

Tanzania – Africa



Imarika: Mobilising churches, building livelihoods, improving the environment

Farming in Tanzania

- Give thanks that so many farmers are benefitting from the knowledge and the new ideas gained through IMARIKA and

have the opportunity to save and borrow through the community Banks (VICOBA).

Uganda – Africa

BUU Sustainable Agriculture Farming Initiatives, Phase K1 Farming in Uganda

- The first Phase in the new area of Kyegegwa is almost complete. Pray for wisdom in planning for future work. Give thanks for the success of the Black Soldier Fly Larvae project.

Uganda – Africa

WALP Women's Adult Literacy Project Education in Uganda

- Give thanks for the success of the expansion into new villages. Pray for the women from the original villages as they continue to learn and use their new skills to improve their livelihoods.

Bangladesh – Asia

Duaripara Family Development Project

Empowering Girls in Bangladesh

- For the health of the project girls and their families. Pray that Sharmin (pre-schooler), her mother, father, (who is a rickshaw-peddler), and her six siblings will be fully cured from the tuberculosis they are all suffering.

India – Asia

Community Development – Kalwa Hub, Mumbai Community Development in India

- For the safety and well-being of the 500 families who have been displaced after demolition of the slum near the project area. Pray for wisdom for project staff to handle this crisis.

Sri Lanka – Asia

Enhancing the Economies of Vulnerable Communities and protection of children in Killinochchi District,

Sri Lanka Community Development in Sri Lanka

- For strength and protection of project staff as they travel on motorbikes to reflect the light of Christ in the communities, especially as there has been an increase in accidents in Sri Lanka in recent months.

Tanzania – Africa

Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Sustainable Agriculture in Tanzania

- Pray that Field Workers Apollo and Boaz and Project Facilitator Agnes, work with passion and love. Pray that trainees will practice what they learn and reach more people through their groups, for rural community development.

Pakistan – Asia

Women's Empowerment through Literacy and skills training

Empowerment in Pakistan

- As OA's partner, Light for the Nations, begins to expand this successful work please pray that God will be with the team and guide them forward.

Mozambique – Africa

Commercial Farming Training Project

Farming in Mozambique

- As the fish farming setup

year ends, we give thanks that the ponds are intact, and the fish harvested. Pray that the community continues to be empowered and protected to expand the work further.

Nepal – Asia

CHEST: Ghusel village Holistic Community Development in Nepal

- Pray that skills and knowledge imparted will be sustained and strengthened as the Ghusel project starts its final year.
- Give thanks for the partnership between OA and BMS World Mission that made the project possible.

Nepal – Asia

CHEP: Kankri, East Rukum Community Development in Rukum, Nepal

- Thanks for the final outcomes of this ambitious project. For all that has been learned and can be used to underpin the new East Rukum project which started in July 2023 in a neighbouring area.

Nicaragua – Central America

Community Based Primary Healthcare Activities in Nicaragua Healthcare in Nicaragua

- Please pray for the

AMOS Health and Hope staff in Nicaragua as they train leaders in rural communities to prevent and treat common illnesses, helping to save the lives of patients living hours away from a hospital.

Uganda – Africa



SDKF Vocational Training Skills Training in Uganda

- Pray that all the newly recruited students will always report on time and be in good health. Pray for those who have completed their course that will use the acquired skills to better their future.

UK – Europe

Operation Agri Trustees and the work of the charity.

- As some projects come to the natural end of their lifecycle and new ones present themselves pray that the Trustees will have God's wisdom in choosing the right ones to support.

ANSWER to hidden word on p6:
FAMILY



Growing sunflowers and faith in rural communities in Tanzania

Chris Manktelow, from Union Baptist Church, High Wycombe, reflects on a recent visit to the Imarika project

Late July is the time to harvest sunflowers in Tanzania. When a friend (Andy Sharpe) and I arrived in Utengule – a village at the foot of the Mbeya range in the south of the country – the Imarika group had already cut down the sunflowers they had planted by hand. Men and women, sitting on mats, were hitting the dead flower heads with sticks to remove the seeds. The seeds were then gathered up into sacks, ready to be sent to the market in Iringa to be sold and processed into sunflower oil.

VICOBA

Imarika means ‘to be strengthened’ in Swahili. It is a rural development project

that aims to mobilise churches, build livelihoods, and improve the environment. Local churches start village community banking, (VICOBA), groups with training support from Emmanuel International. These VICOBA groups improve lives as members save shares and take out cheap loans to pay off debts and run rural businesses. The 47 group members in Utengule had decided to use a loan to buy a plot of land to grow sunflowers.

Salesia Kastori Kalawa, who has been an Imarika group member since 2017, told us about how the Imarika group are planning to expand their sunflower growing business. She says, ‘We are saving money to



“

Before I was part of Imarika, I couldn't afford the school fees for my seven children.

◀ Chris Manktelow with the IMARIKA project group

buy a machine that will help us harvest the sunflowers more quickly.' Salesia has also benefitted personally from being a group member. 'Before I was part of Imarika, I couldn't afford the school fees for my seven children,' she comments. 'Now I can afford to send my children to school by getting loans from VICOPA.'

Conservation agriculture

Imarika group members are given training in beekeeping, animal husbandry, tree planting, conservation agriculture, and entrepreneurship. Beekeeping provides honey, which has health benefits, and can be used to provide an income. One hive can produce up to 20 litres of honey. This can be sold for up to TZS 200,000 (about £60). Animal husbandry provides a source of protein and generates an income as village groups sell eggs, meat, and milk.

With conservation agriculture, group members are taught how to look after the land through mulching, planting cover crops and minimising how much they disturb the soil. Group members also learn how to plant fruit trees and about how to grow trees for timber. The entrepreneurship training gives group members the skills they need to understand business laws and how to run their own business.

Josephat Chang'a

One Imarika group member, Josephat, offered to show us how he had put the conservation agriculture training into practice on his farm. We followed him on his motorbike to a field full of maize, avocados, courgettes, lemons, and potatoes. 'I've learnt how to improve the soil through the Imarika training and how to graft avocados,' he tells us. 'We now have better



Josephat Chang'a with one of his avocado trees

yields for our avocados. We have also used the money we've saved to purchase three cows, which we use to sell milk. I can use this money to buy more shares for VICOPA.'

According to Josephat, the community leaders can see that there is something different about the Imarika groups. 'The community sees that there is a benefit to having Imarika,' he says. 'The community leaders know about other VICOPA groups, but the difference with Imarika is the training that comes with it, like learning about how to graft avocados. They also pray before the start of the group, but the other VICOPA groups don't do that.'

Growing faith

All the Imarika groups receive Christian discipleship training from Jesca Mgimba – also incidentally our translator while we were there – who works for Emmanuel International (EI). Members always pray before the start of meetings and EI staff usually lead a short Bible study to encourage group members and to tell them the good news about Jesus Christ.

It was very encouraging for us to see how the kingdom of God is growing, both physically through the planting of sunflowers, and spiritually as group members believe in the gospel and grow in their faith. With God's help, we are sure that the Imarika groups will continue to transform lives in rural communities in the Iringa region of Tanzania.

Operation Agri through the decades

Russell Ashley-Smith looks at how it all started and how OA has progressed

Original requests

'We need a new Land Rover', or 'a 2-wheeled tractor', or 'day-old chicks by airfreight.' This was Operation Agri, (at that time part of the Baptist Men's Movement), when I became involved in 1968 as the Publicity Officer. OA's money was ring-fenced, meeting the needs of the BMS's agricultural missionaries, ensuring that their work was not held back for lack of equipment or animals. It couldn't be used for their stipends.

New requests

Gradually OA's emphasis broadened. 'We have water to irrigate crops, couldn't some of it also benefit the mission hospital in Ntondo, Zaire?' 'Mothers can't afford to buy food for their children, so let's introduce a weaving project to provide them with an income.'

Three situations led to change at the turn of the century:

OA's constitution specified that the charity could only help projects in the hands of BMS workers.

OA's cash balance was growing; churches and individual supporters showed their eagerness to support the outreach beyond what was being spent by these workers.

OA and BMS had been hand-in-glove and, for a number of years, had a joint harvest appeal, sharing the income 50:50.



Nicaragua 2011 AMOS project: Russell helps plant a Moringa tree seedling – good nutrition for livestock and people

It was decided to move to a more formal, professional relationship between the two organisations with a revised constitution allowing OA to support other projects.

Registered Charity

Operation Agri could now make its own decisions. UK charity law was tightening, and there was a growing understanding of what constituted good project development. First, it should be led by local people, responding to their needs, not by overseas 'experts' telling them what to do.

Next, development should be appropriate; for example, not giving farmers a tractor but getting them to share a group of oxen to prepare the land for sowing. Dependency was to be avoided if at all possible.

New Partners and Initiatives

Communities in deprived urban situations, slums, also needed help, leading to OA partnering with, for example, Oasis Global in a number of inner-city projects.

OA has also changed in the UK. Fifty years ago, the quarterly magazine I edited was duplicated; it was a notable achievement when it first carried a simple map! Communication with the missionaries was by air-letter. When photocopying became

available copies of letters were circulated by post to the OA committee. The news within the letters was edited for the magazine.

New technology

In 1986, Gill and I, visiting India, went to the Diptipur project in remote West Orissa which OA was then supporting. We took 35mm coloured slides, limiting ourselves to two 36-exposure rolls of film each day! Back in the UK Gill had her first experience of producing an audio-visual – a slide set with recorded audio commentary, which was loaned to churches.

Only in the late 1990s did video filming become popular. By then OA had moved to a colour magazine, and communication firstly by fax, and then emails, was becoming possible with some of the missionaries, but not all. Until the coming of mobile phones, the exchange of letters with certain remote stations, without landlines, could take months.

People

OA has always relied on volunteers for

much of its work, the only paid assistance being the administrator. For several years an army of volunteers despatched parcels of leaflets and posters to churches at harvest festival time. The magazine was enveloped, and packages made up in people's homes'.

We all had full-time jobs, working in the evenings and weekends. I was fortunate in that my employers in Yorkshire gave me some days' leave, with pay, to attend

meetings at BMS headquarters in London.

When OA started producing its own videos we employed local video crews, avoiding the expense of taking people from

UK. This has worked well, one advantage being that the film-crew spoke the local language.

Above all

We've never forgotten that we're serving our Lord. A by-word on one filming trip was, 'God has gone before', creating unexpected situations for us to

film which we had not imagined nor prepared for.

You don't get involved with an organisation like OA

so that you'll be blessed. But you are – your life is changed!

We are getting older! Is the Lord calling you to take our places?

Russell Ashley-Smith, Trustee

“... not giving farmers a tractor but getting them to share a group of oxen to prepare the land for sowing. Dependency was to be avoided if at all possible.

Are you being called to get involved with OA?

Sustainable agriculture ess

Joseph Alinda outlines how a SAFI project in Uganda is adopting climate smart options

The population of Africa is projected to double by 2050. There is a consensus that smallholders' productivity must increase to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and improve food and nutrition security. A shift towards sustainable agricultural systems would enhance food security without depleting natural resources.

The plan

On-farm sustainable agricultural technologies are an integrated and cleaner production approach that generally leads to increased yields especially in Africa, delivering co-benefits in the form of reduced greenhouse gas emissions and enhanced storage in soils and biomass. They may represent climate-smart options. They can also contribute to households' livelihoods, long-term agricultural development, and welfare improvement.

The project

Sustainable Agriculture Farmers' Initiative, (SAFI), is a Hope Community Gracious Foundation project that reduces hunger, poverty, and environmental degradation and is funded by Operation Agri in the UK. It encourages high performance among SAFI small-holder farmers.

The objectives of the project are to:

- **guide and promote small-holder farmers' research, innovation, and creativity,**
- **change the mindset of farmers,**
- **promote resilience and mitigation against climate change among small-holder farmers, through climate smart agriculture and increase employment levels through agri-business development.**

The Vision

The vision of the programme is that area groups are identified, then two farmers are trained from each group in a Sustainable Agriculture course for two years to develop their farms. They then pass on these skills and practices to other farmers in their groups to develop their farms.

The following are some of the elements SAFI uses for farm development project work. Participating farmers have a farm design or map and a farm record keeping system. This enables them to set up kitchen gardens, of non-tillage type, a system for collecting rain water or some other method for harvesting water. They are able to produce larvae and red worms for feeding their livestock and farm made manures like

“... the soil in his village was not fertile enough to give better yields of matooke until Patrick and his group members improved their soil's fertility with the help of the SAFI project.”

essential to meeting MDGs

compost. The SAFI farm enjoys the use of integrated pest management methods, a permanent source of animal manure, raised beds or mini terraces for vegetables, fruit trees, and medicinal plants. Other benefits include rubbish collection, the elimination of plastics, the use of wood saving stoves, contour strip farming and wild life conservation areas.

The results

Patrick Bright, one of the smallholder farmers in the SAFI project, says that since he joined he had acquired better farming skills, such as the use of organic manure, which he gets from pigs and goats provided by the SAFI project, and has also learned about soil and conservation practices in his farm.

Patrick says that his life has changed because he is able to provide for his family through agriculture. He confidently says that most of the villagers now buy matooke, (bananas), from his garden. This is because the soil in his village was not fertile enough to give better yields of matooke until Patrick and his group members improved their soil's fertility with the help of the SAFI project. The villagers thought this was impossible.

Grace Birungi says that before she joined SAFI life was quite difficult in terms of finances. She

and her husband depended entirely on agriculture for income but they could not get what they needed out of agriculture because they simply lacked the skills to do it.

Now life has turned around for Grace and her household because of SAFI sustainable skills. Their Agribusiness has improved so they have ventured into poultry keeping, adopted the use of organic farming to improve on their banana plantation and practice conservation farming skills. They are now able to get what they need out of living off the land.

Daniel Arikiriza says that he and his family migrated from Bushenyi district to Kyegegwa district, both in western Uganda, in search of land for farming.

They got the land, but things did not turn out the way they thought, because Daniel lacked the skills to farm on the small land he obtained. Life became harsh for him and his household. Daniel now says that his life has changed because of the SAFI project. Now he can produce better yields on his small piece of land, using SAFI skills, and is able to keep livestock on his farm such as pigs, goats and poultry.

*Joseph Alinda
SAFI Project Manager*



SDKF battles high youth unemployment in Uganda

Pastor Dennis Ssettaala highlights how every person in a new job brings hope to communities

Job creation is increasingly featuring in local political debates as the country of Uganda gears up to fight unemployment. Young people bear the biggest brunt of unemployment in the country with one in every six being jobless.

To help deal with the problem, with funding from Operation Agri, SDKF is empowering young people with skills that meet the demands of the job market, thereby, making them more employable. The results are promising.

‘Showing the love of Christ in a practical way’ has been Setting Development, Keeping the Foundation’s (SDKF) concept from the start; to ensure that people are able to improve as a whole. The skills training at SDKF’s Vocational Training Project, has meant that skills have been passed on to disadvantaged youth. Benefits are passed on as the local community sees businesses started that employ more



Robinah Nantongo

young people. Therefore, it’s important to recognise the value of skills training as a practical way of improving peoples’ lives. We found many graduate students exhibit progress in what they are doing as a result of the skills they acquired at the project.

Robinah Nantongo (Tailoring)

Robinah dropped out of school in primary four after the death of her father. Her current family consists of her mother and three other siblings. Robinah was approved for the vocational training course. She has successfully finished training to become a tailor.

After improving her skills and knowledge, Robinah was given a sewing machine loan by SDKF, as have other trainees, and has started her own business in tailoring. The vocational training made it possible for her to enhance her chances of employment,



consequently contributing to the family income.

She says, 'The training that I got from SDKF has provided me with economic independence and helped me to gain self-confidence and prosperity for my family.'

Robinah now has her own sewing machine and trains all her siblings. Her sister will also improve her knowledge and skills to become a qualified tailor. As a result of SDKF support, her family has become economically self-sufficient.

She works at home under her house's veranda, located in Kamwokya Trading Centre, in Kampala, Uganda's capital. With her sewing machine, she is able to earn and save about UGX 5,000/day, (about 11p), and to date she has saved over UGX 450,000, (about £9.68), in her bank account. Robinah says, 'I thank SDKF for giving me skills to support myself and my family. The future is now brighter for me.'

Evelyne Mukasa (Hairdressing)

Evelyne was born and raised by a single mother in the slum areas of Kamwokya, again in Kampala. Her mother couldn't afford her school fees, so Evelyne dropped out of school in primary six.

Evelyne is one of the students who graduated from the SDKF Vocational Training Project in 2022. After her graduation she started looking for a job in a hairdressing salon. She is now employed in a salon in Kisaasi trading centre. Evelyne is one of the few young women in her age group to have acquired skills that have the potential to change lives. She says that since most families look at girls' education as unnecessary, she was at home until she got an opportunity with SDKF Vocational



Evelyne Mukasa

“... since most families look at girls' education as unnecessary, she was at home until she got an opportunity with SDKF Vocational Training Project ...

Training Project, and this has completely changed her life.

Evelyne is earning a good living. She is still working for someone else, but saving so she can open her own salon soon.

In her free time, Evelyne teaches other people, mostly young girls, how to do hair. She is able to provide for herself which she wasn't able to do before, when she could only have one meal a day. Now she is earning more and can get better food. Evelyne says that challenges in her life have reduced. She thanks SDKF for giving her an opportunity to gain skills in hairdressing.

*Pastor Dennis Ssettaala
Executive Director SDKF*



New postal address for Operation Agri

Freepost
OPERATION AGRI

NEW!
OA
FREEPOST
address

Operation Agri is now Freepost
The Freepost address you must use is:

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- OPERATION AGRI must appear in upper case letters, (block capitals)
- Please do not put a stamp on the envelope

We are very grateful to Malcolm and Linda Drummond for having allowed us to continue to use their home address for postal communications. Any mail you now send us with the 'Freepost OPERATION AGRI' address will be delivered directly to our Administrator, Jo Jackson. Any mail in the system with the 'Firs Lane' address will still be forwarded to Jo by Malcolm.

Thank you.



Ask your friends

Chat to your friends and ask if they are keen athletes who could enter a local marathon or half marathon on our behalf. Perhaps they go to a local show or exhibition and could represent Operation Agri at one of them. Ask them to contact Jo: admin@operationagri.org.uk

What can two hours a month achieve?

The answer to that big question depends on who you are, your skills and experience and your passion. Let Jo, our Administrator, know what you could achieve in **Two Hours a Month**: form a prayer triplet to pray for OA, advertise OA to local groups concerned for creation, or ... well anything to which you can commit **Two Hours a Month**.

Contact Jo:

admin@operationagri.org.uk or write to her at:

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OPERATION AGRI

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Joseph Alinda
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Manager with
tomatoes grown in
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Bank address

Postcode

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Account name

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Sort Code: 80-22-60 Account No: 20935768

The sum of £

Starting date

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This order is in addition to / replaces my previous instructions to the charity

(Please cross out words that do not apply)

Signature

Date

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● Please fill in your name, address and email overleaf, and whether you would like our magazine.

● Please tick if you would like to:

☐ Leave a gift to OA in your Will, or would like guidance to set this up.

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Gifts to Operation Agri may be made online:

www.operationagri.org.uk/product/make-a-donation



Legacies

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

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.

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