



Issue 56

Newsletter

Spring 2024

£10,000 raised for Send a Silo project

For small scale farmers in Uganda, access to the simplest technology can make all the difference. For instance, most farmers store their crops in traditional granary stores made with dried mud and grass where food is easily spoiled.

Our simple and effective solution is to **Send a Silo to Save a Harvest.**

Hermetically sealed metal silos reduce food losses to zero. This provides food security to vulnerable farming communities and a source of income to pay for essential needs such as healthcare and education.

We now have a queue of smallholder family farmers asking for a silo and thanks to your incredible support, FOAG has raised £10,000 through its summer and Christmas appeals, which equates to 60 silos for smallholder farmers, and a combined storage capacity of 75 tons!

Help us send more silos! £133 will buy a 1,250-litre silo for the next farmer (see back page 'how to donate')



Join the FOAG family

FOAG is nothing without its loyal supporters. We would like more people to join the FOAG family for an annual fee of £20, or more, to help our work in Uganda. We keep members up to date with the projects they are supporting, and the impact their generosity has on the lives of Ugandans. If you are already a member, please spread the word. If you are not yet a member, why not join today! Send an email to info@foag.org to get the ball rolling.

First impressions of Uganda

Every year FOAG sends a monitoring visit to check on our projects in Uganda. It is also an opportunity for people interested in FOAG's work to join. In 2023, Cecilia Dean accompanied the monitoring trip and wrote a blog. Here are some excerpts where Cecilia describes her adventures.



"I wondered how long I had until my alarm went off... except... I hadn't set my alarm! Argh it was 8:15. I staggered to shower and tried to come to life. I went down to brekka and had my now "usual" pineapple and coffee followed by an omelette by the guy that smiles a lot. We discussed the plan for today.

We saw many farms and the journey between them hilarious. One of the ladies gently pointed out something on my shoulder. It was "spiderzilla" I'm not scared of spiders but this guy probably had his own printed cards with "web designer" written on them that he gave out at functions.

They are in the midst of a severe drought here. Everything is dying because there is no water. Rain is desperately wanted. It started to slightly spit with rain. The ladies from the back were loving it and singing and dancing with joy.

We went and looked round Kumi hospital. We checked out the generator that FOAG supplied. It looked well looked after and well used. Good stuff FOAG, good stuff!

We were greeted by lots of nuns and farmers and people whose lives had been changed by FOAG.

Nabil asked the sister in front of me if they were slaughtering a cow in our honour. She said: "Of course! He is over there tied up! Why else would he be there?" Oh good god no. After many speeches sister Catherine handed me a huge knife and said: "It is time". She dramatically removed a cloth from the table in front of us and a cake with all our names and "welcome" written on it was there. She laughed wickedly and invited me to "kill the cow".

I'm actually struggling to comprehend it all. I cannot change the world. But maybe one step at a time, maybe if I can change the fortunes of a few - it's not enough but it's better than nothing. Apparently Mother Teresa wrote "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples". Hmm maybe I can".

Experience Uganda? If you want to learn more about FOAG's projects on the ground, let us know! You can read Cecilia's full blog here: https://www.foag.org/first_impressions_of_uganda

Developing life skills for special needs children

We continue to support the Pearls of Africa Special Needs Centres (PASNEC) Foundation which has two sites – Kanyanya and Seguku – near the capital city Kampala.

The centres help children, from age two upwards and with a mental or physical disability, to develop skills for a fulfilled life.



Kanyanya Centre has transformed its main room into an early learning centre.

Patti Squire, who helps run the centres, said 25 children had been helped in 2023.

One example is Livingstone, a teenager who could hardly read and write a little when he arrived about 5 years ago. His father had died of AIDS leaving the family with little support. FOAG has helped the family with food parcels and help to top up his fees.

Livingstone now writes: “You (PASNEC and FOAG) have always stood by our family during challenging times. I do not have enough words to thank you”

Help us? School fees are £40 a month. *(See back page ‘how to donate’)*

Sponsoring students to get an education

In Uganda, many children miss out on a chance to go to secondary school, college or university. Often this is simply because families cannot afford school fees, or it could be because their children have a disability.

With your support FOAG is currently supporting 20 students who would otherwise have missed out. You have helped to change their lives and given them hope to have a career and earn a good living.

Jane Sturdy, FOAG trustee and coordinator of the sponsorship program, said: “I wish to thank the kind and generous sponsors who have been, and those who are still continuing to sponsor students. Without their sponsorship the students would not have been able to qualify as teachers, nurses and accountants.”

Here are some of the students you have supported:



FOAG Trustees Jane and Christopher Sturdy with Sofia who has now graduated.



A warm welcome sitting under the mango trees as the students sang and danced for us at St. Joseph's College Padhola, Tororo.



Jane Sturdy with sponsored students of St. Francis Secondary School for the Blind, Soroti.

Help us? Get in touch if you want to sponsor a child. (See back page 'how to donate')

Deborah's story: How evergreen agriculture can transform lives

In 2020 FOAG teamed up with a local Ugandan NGO called EADEN in eastern Uganda to commence a four-year project to promote the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, sometimes called regenerative, conservation or evergreen agriculture.

Here we tell the story of Deborah Adongo, a resilient and determined woman from Nakawa Village in the Buluguyi Sub county of Uganda, who joined the project in March 2021.

At 49 years old, Deborah not only shoulders the responsibilities of being the matriarch of her six-member household but also navigates the challenges of single motherhood and being a farmer.



Her transformative journey began in March 2021 when she was selected as a demonstration farmer for the Evergreen Agriculture initiative.

Despite facing numerous challenges, including poor soil quality, unpredictable weather patterns, theft of crops, animal destruction, water logging, and the trials of single parenthood, Deborah embraced the opportunity presented by the initiative.

Deborah cultivates four acres and dedicated a quarter acre to the project. Before starting, her soil fertility was poor and the region's unreliable rain patterns posed a significant challenge.

Through the project she received essential training in good agronomic practices, with a focus on soil and water conservation. She learned precision planting, mulching, composting, and fertilizer application skills.

Additionally, she embraced intercropping leguminous shrubs like *Sesbania* and *Gliricidia*, along with incorporating cover crops like *Desmodium* and pigeon peas (picture right).



Speaking about the leguminous shrubs, she said, "The leguminous shrubs are magic as they soften the soil, provide shade to the crops, and at the same time feed the crops."

The project also provided her with inputs including fertilizer, seeds, pesticides and a 500-kilogram silo for storage.



The introduction of a silo ensures efficient storage but also protects the grains from pests and environmental factors

The impact on Deborah's farm has been remarkable. Her maize production soared from 50 to over 300 kilograms on her quarter-acre trial plot.

She successfully intercropped groundnuts, yielding an additional 150 kilograms. Last season alone, she produced 100 kilograms of peanut butter, generating UGX 1,000,000 (around £200) that helped pay school fees.

Deborah also noticed a positive change in soil texture, from brown and hard to black and soft. Buoyed by these successes, she plans to expand her garden from a quarter acre to a full acre in the upcoming season.

In a strategic move for value addition, Deborah has now acquired a peanut grinding machine. By independently processing peanuts into products like peanut butter, she has financial independence and a secure future for her family.



Deborah and her daughters preparing peanut paste from ground nuts.



Deborah grinding groundnut into peanut butter for sale

Deborah's journey is an inspiration. Through the Evergreen Agriculture initiative, she not only improved her family's food security but also diversified her income streams to support her children's education, healthcare, and nutrition. Her once barren land has become a symbol of hope and resilience, showcasing the potential for sustainable farming practices in the community.

Already, more than ten neighbours have expressed interest in learning from her garden, underscoring the ripple effect of positive change initiated by her journey.

Help us: We need support as we continue to engage more farmers. (See back page 'how to donate')

Building food security at the rehab centres

At FOAG we support a number of children's rehabilitation centres. Given we work in some of the poorest parts of the country, we are often asked to provide donations to help meet food bills. This never-ending, hand-to-mouth cycle got us thinking – what if the centres could grow their own nutritious food and be self-sufficient? And with that, the Grow More Food project was born.

We have worked with four of our rehabilitation centres (Budaka, Butiru, Pamba and YOUFRA) to train staff to grow their own food sustainably, through conservation agriculture.

The project kicked off in 2019 and it is delivered by Patrick Walusansa, a qualified Ugandan agronomist with a passion for conservation agriculture.

Crucially, the project aims to help the Centres to become food secure and to provide them with an income. The land now has vegetables to both sell in the local market and vary the children's diet.

In addition, farmers' groups of between 16-20 families were established around each Centre to learn conservation agriculture methods, such as minimum tillage, planting cover crops, growing trees and intercropping with leguminous crops like beans. The children learnt at the same time too!

The project has not been without its challenges. For instance, a fantastic looking crop can also look attractive to wandering cattle and poultry. Establishing trees and shrubs can be hard with unreliable rains. And Covid disrupted available staff and workers.

Despite these difficulties, the project has helped the Centres and around 80 farming families towards more sustainable food production.

FOAG made a major funding commitment to this work and it is thanks to all those who donated through The Funding Network, Big Give, FOAG's regular appeals and by just being a member.

Our ambition is now to support the farmers to keep growing sustainably and we are in conversation with potential partners in Uganda to keep the momentum going!



Young people at the Lira Youth Centre (YOUFRA) helping to bring in the harvest.

Life changing operations for 36 children

FOAG supports four children's rehabilitation centres – Butiru, Budaka, Pamba and YOUFRA – where parents who do not have the means to support their children with physical disabilities can ask for assistance.

The Sisters in charge of the centres prepare the children for their operation and refer them to local hospitals for treatment (usually Kumi or CoRSU), before continuing their education and rehabilitation back at the centre to help the children to live a full life.

For example, FOAG works in partnership with Elspeth Robinson, a physiotherapist, and her charity Kumi Community Foundation to support operations in Kumi Hospital. Elspeth has built a team to identify children in need and bring them to the hospital for corrective surgery.

Thanks to the financial support of our members, FOAG has given 36 children access to life-changing operations in 2023, including 13 at Kumi, 12 at CoRSU, and 11 at St Anthony's hospital.

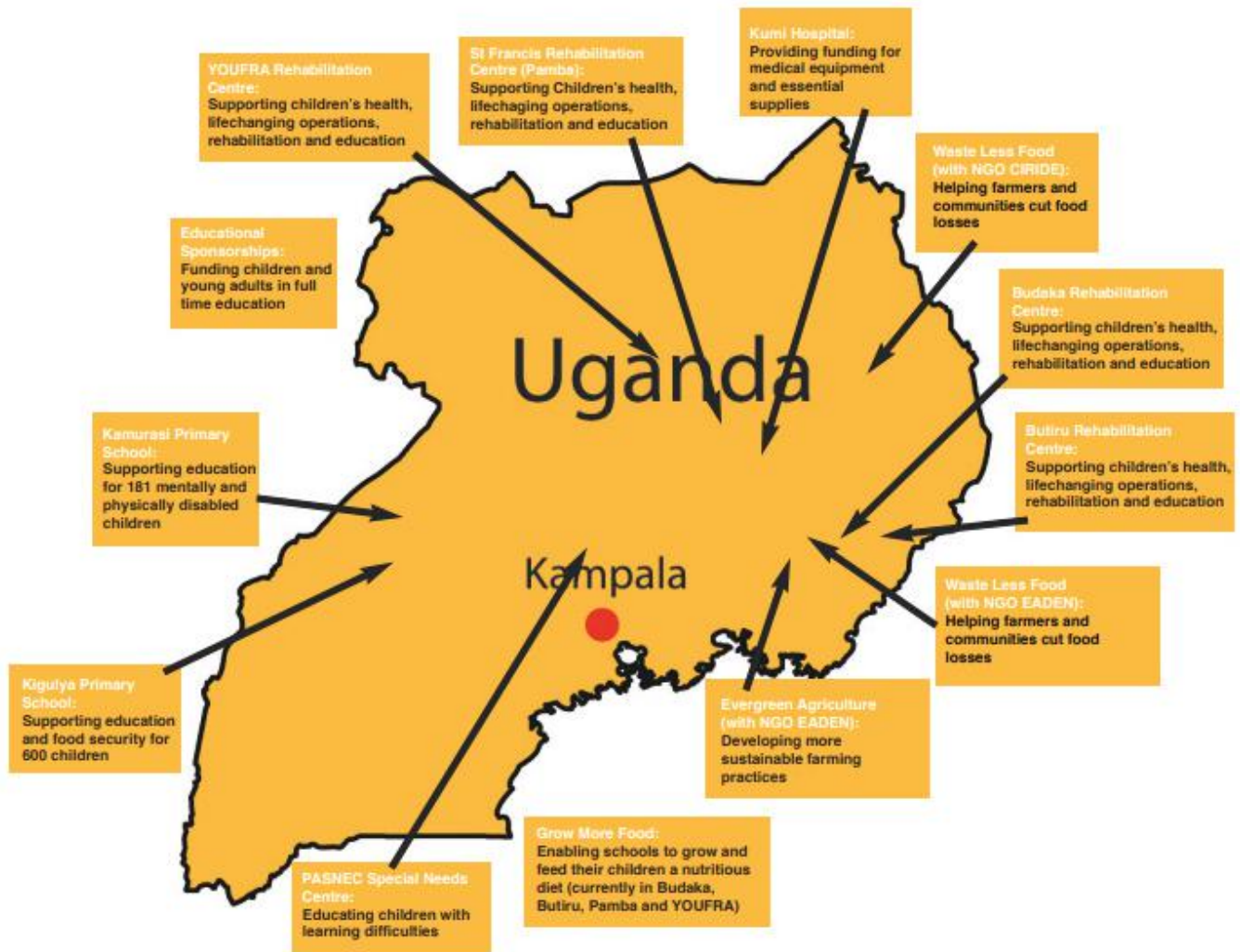


Three children, post operation, heading back to YOUFRA for rehabilitation.

Help us? £200 can pay for an operation to change a child's life. (See back page 'how to donate')

Where we work

Here is an overview of our current projects.



Come to our concert!

We are once again partnering with the Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra to put on a concert on 22nd June 2024 at Pershore Abbey where you can listen to fabulous music while also supporting FOAG!

What: A selection of French masterpieces:

Bizet: *Jeux d'enfants*

Emmanuel Séjourné: Marimba concerto

Saint-Saëns: Symphony no.3, *Organ Symphony*

When: Saturday 22nd June at 7.30pm

Where: Pershore Abbey, Pershore, WR10 1BL

How: Tickets are £20 for adults (£10 for students and free for children under 16), including a free drink. Tickets can be ordered from the FOAG Office on 01886 853295 or by sending an email to info@foag.org



Donations – Thank you

Since 1981, when FOAG began its work in Uganda, your continued generosity has helped us to keep supporting some of those most in need in Uganda.

Over those 42 years, we have quietly improved the lives of a great many Ugandans – by enabling them to have the life-changing operation, a secondary education, to grow and store food in a much better way, and more... We do this by channelling your donations to where they make a difference.

On behalf of our Ugandan partners – thank you.

There are number of ways you can donate – all of which are listed below!

Online

Via Bank Giro Credit

If you have an Internet Bank account

You can pay make a donation to FOAG through our Nat West account -

Account name: Farmers Overseas Action Group

Sort Code: 53-81-33

Account Number: 08376158

Please email us at info@foag.org to say that you have done this. Please give your name, and if possible, your post code, as the reference so we can identify and acknowledge your donation.

Via Paypal Giving

If you have a PayPal account – you are able to enter the link below:

<https://www.paypal.com/uk/fundraiser/charity/3230519>

Please tick the Share my Name box so that we can acknowledge your donation. PayPal do not charge us for this transaction – FOAG receives 100%.

Via Stewardship

Stewardship allows you to donate single amounts or regular amounts. FOAG's donation page is at <https://www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/20023984>. Then simply choose the frequency and amount you would like to donate. Please tick the box to share your contact details so we can acknowledge your donation.

A charge of 3% is taken from the donation, and from any Gift Aid collected from HMRC, so the above methods yield more for our projects.

Though this is less than charged by Justgiving, it does mean that we do not receive the full donation.

Payments will come through as “Anonymous”, from both PayPal and Stewardship, if you do not agree to your contact details being shared with FOAG. This may be what you want, and we respect this. Though FOAG, of course, would prefer to know who has made the donation.

By Post

Via a Cheque or CAF Voucher

Please send your cheque or voucher, made payable to FOAG, to Robin Dean, FOAG Administrator, Rectory Cottage, Stanford Bridge, Worcester, WR6 6ST.

The importance of Gift Aid

Whichever way you choose to donate, recovering Gift Aid on all eligible donations is particularly important as it increases their value by 25%. We hold completed declarations from many of our members. However, when a donation is received where we do not hold one, our Administrator Robin Dean, will forward you the necessary form and ask you if you are able to complete and return it, when he thanks you for your donation.

Have you considered leaving a Legacy to FOAG?

Over the years we have been very grateful to supporters who have left FOAG a legacy in their Will, and have been honoured to set up or support projects in their name.

We welcome new FOAG Supporters

For an annual fee of £20 (or more if you can manage it) for an individual or a family, we will send you our newsletter and details of any of our special appeals. You can pay the annual fee by Bank Giro Credit (Via Bank Giro Credit above) and sending an email to info@foag.org or by post (By Post above).

