



Issue 52

Newsletter

2020 report

Improving lives in rural Uganda

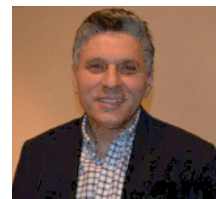
2020 was tumultuous, but with your help, Farmers Overseas Action Group (FOAG) has continued to improve the lives of some of the most vulnerable families in rural Uganda. Over the past 12 months, working with our superb Ugandan partners on the ground, we have:

- Enabled life-changing operations for 26 children
- Helped 1,100 farmers to waste less food and provide food security for their community
- Sponsored 34 children and young adults through school and university
- Helped 4 children's rehabilitation centres to grow their own food sustainably, providing food security for hundreds of children
- Launched a new sustainable agriculture project
- And much, much more!

This newsletter gives you a snapshot of some of our projects, and we hope it inspires you to continue to support the people in Uganda that are most in need. I would also like to pay tribute to Betty Hudson, a FOAG trustee who was dedicated to helping people in Uganda, who sadly died this year (see insert for more).

On behalf of all of FOAG's trustees, I would like to thank you for your continued support and to wish you a fulfilling 2021.

Best Wishes,
Nabil Jamous, FOAG Chairman



Nabil Jamous - FOAG Chairman



If you want to become more involved in our work, we are always on the lookout for volunteers and fundraisers and you can write to us at info@foag.org.

To donate, please visit www.foag.org and hit the 'donate' button. You can also donate while you shop at Amazon – see more information on the last page of this newsletter.

OUR HEALTH PROJECTS

FOAG aims to support healthcare through the provision of equipment or funds, corrective surgery for disabled children and the training of nurses. Here are some highlights from our health projects.

Funding life-changing operations

Our project in a nutshell: We support 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.

Impact on the ground: Thanks to the financial support of our members, FOAG has given 26 children access to life-changing operations this year.

A young girl with club foot: cost for corrective surgery is around £135



A four-year-old boy with knocked knees: cost for corrective surgery is around £175

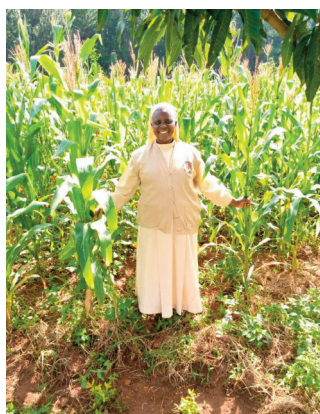
Many of our education projects, featured later in this newsletter, also support operations and rehabilitation for disabled children. Read on to find out more.

OUR AGRICULTURE PROJECTS

FOAG supports smallholder farmers to grow more food in harmony with nature and to reduce food waste to improve food security. Here are some highlights from our agriculture projects.

Growing food in schools and 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, a project was born.



Our project in a nutshell: We are working with four of our rehabilitation centres (Budaka, Butiru, Pamba and YOUFRA) to train staff to grow their own food sustainably, through conservation agriculture. Conservation agriculture is a climate resilient approach focused on protecting soils and increasing water retention through minimum tillage, crop rotation, and use of leguminous shrubs and cover crops. The integration of vegetable growing not only helps improve the children's diet, but any surplus is sold to provide an income stream.

Sister Margaret Awar, from YOUFRA rehabilitation centre, in a field of maize. The grow more project has seen yields increase 60% at YOUFRA

Impact on the ground: Sister Sylvia Aketch runs Pamba, a rehabilitation centre for 42 children. She says the project has relieved the stress of trying to buy everything from the market with a limited budget. “It was sickening at times to take food on credit,” she says, adding: “The children and staff now have enough to eat and with a better diet.” The enterprise has also provided an income stream, as excess vegetables are sold at the local market. “We are grateful for the support,” she says.

Patrick Walusansa, our country manager, adds: “Adopting conservation agriculture is more sustainable, providing better yields at less cost, resulting in improved income and improved soils.”

Thank you for all your contributions to our Summer Appeal that helped support this project.

Helping farmers waste less food

One third of all food harvested in Uganda is lost before it gets to the people it is meant to feed. Most of this is due to poor post-harvest handling and lack of adequate storage. This level of inefficiency has huge economic, social and environmental impacts.

Our project in a nutshell: We have partnered with a local Ugandan NGO called CIRIDE to set up a Waste Less Food project in northeast Uganda. The project works with 300 farmers to reduce food waste on their farms, provide improved grain storage such as air-tight grain bags and metal silos, and maintain a 30-ton store to ensure food security in the community. Since providing the initial funding to set it up in 2016, the project has become self-sufficient and continues to benefit farmers and the local community every year.

In 2018 we expanded the project, partnering with a local NGO called EADEN in eastern Uganda to build a second Waste Less Food project with 400 farmers and a 40-ton community store. And in 2020 we expanded again to set up our third project with another 400 farmers!

We now want to grow even more, and we’re looking for your support to continue – a £2 donation will buy a hermetically sealed storage bag, while £10,000 will help set up an entire local Waste Less project.

Impact on the ground: Alice Ngobi, 52, has eight children and expects to harvest 500-800kg of maize per growing season. She says without the project she would lose 200kg of maize to pests, rats and aflatoxins. Thanks to the project she has eradicated any losses, helping improve food security at home, and now has a higher quality of grain to sell to market at an improved price. A steady flow of income has helped her keep on top of school fees for her children.



Alice Ngobi with her family



Alice with her hermetic storage silos

Training farmers in ‘evergreen agriculture’

Agriculture contributes around a quarter of Uganda’s GDP and it is the country’s main economic driver; however, farmers face great challenges. Around half of the soils are degraded leading to low productivity – this is particularly challenging for Uganda’s small-scale farmers. Climate change is making their job even more difficult, with extreme weather events increasing the prevalence of floods and drought, as well as unpredictable seasons making it harder for farmers to plan.



EADEN field staff training farmers on Evergreen Agriculture

Our project in a nutshell: FOAG has joined a local Ugandan NGO called EADEN in Eastern Uganda to set up demonstration plots to promote the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices called evergreen agriculture. Evergreen agriculture is a type of agroforestry which combines conservation agriculture – the management of land with little or no tillage, maintenance of soil cover and crop diversity – with planting of leguminous trees.

Implementation of the project: The project started at the beginning of 2020 with the establishment of three one acre demonstration sites on farms in three areas. The demonstration plots will be run for two or three seasons after which neighbouring farmers will be assisted to adopt the system. Ongoing training will be delivered by the project team led by EADEN’s excellent field staff and an independent trainer.

OUR EDUCATION PROJECTS

According to the World Bank, only 15% of children with disabilities in Uganda have access to education, with special needs schools few and far between. FOAG is committed to supporting education for children in need as well as sponsoring individual students in their secondary and tertiary education, including technicians, teachers and nurses. Here are some highlights from our education projects.

Helping special needs children

Our project in a nutshell: We support the Pearls of Africa Special Needs Centres (PASNEC) Foundation which has two sites – Kanyana 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. These include basic life skills like washing, bathing, and laundry as well as education in basic numeracy and literacy and vocational skills such as woodwork, brickwork, cooking and crafts.

Impact on the ground: Patti Squire has headed the project since it began in 1985. “I do not think PASNEC could have survived without the help of FOAG,” she says. After the children were sent home during the lockdown, and with FOAG support, the centres have continued to pay 15 teachers’ salaries through the coronavirus pandemic. Many of the children returned to families who had lost their livelihoods due to Covid-19 and were in desperate need. With FOAG support, the centres were able to provide food parcels for more than 20 children and specialist care for two teenage girls who had child protection issues where they were staying. “We have no school fees coming in at the moment, so without outside help, this current year would have been a disaster. Thank you FOAG,” says Patti. The centres are due to fully re-open soon.

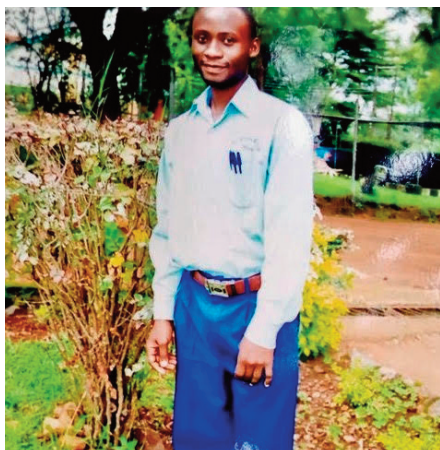


Emma Lojuan, an occupational therapist and Seguku staff member, making bricks at Seguku with three deaf former pupils

Sponsoring children’s education

Our project in a nutshell: Only 1 in 4 children who start primary school in Uganda makes it to secondary school with family issues and school fees keeping many teens, especially girls, from pursuing their education. Only 35 per cent of those that make it through secondary school end up in higher education – with many put off by the financial burden. FOAG and its supporters have been sponsoring young people through education since 2008.

Impact on the ground: In 2008, Andrew Sakaya was the first Ugandan to be sponsored by FOAG through secondary school and then Makerere University. Andrew is now a qualified teacher at Kayunga Secondary School. “I count myself lucky because if it were not for the support I would be nowhere, but rather in the village like some of my friends whose future is not known. There are so many who long to go to school but have no chance like me,” he says. Thanks to our supporters, there are currently 34 students being sponsored through secondary schools, colleges and universities. If you would like to donate, £200-300 will help a student complete a year of education.



Ocen Israel is partially sighted. He is currently sponsored by FOAG. He says: “Thank you for paying my school fees. I am enjoying studies and working hard in class.”

Andrew Sakaya was our first sponsorship – he is now a teacher

Supporting abused mothers and their families

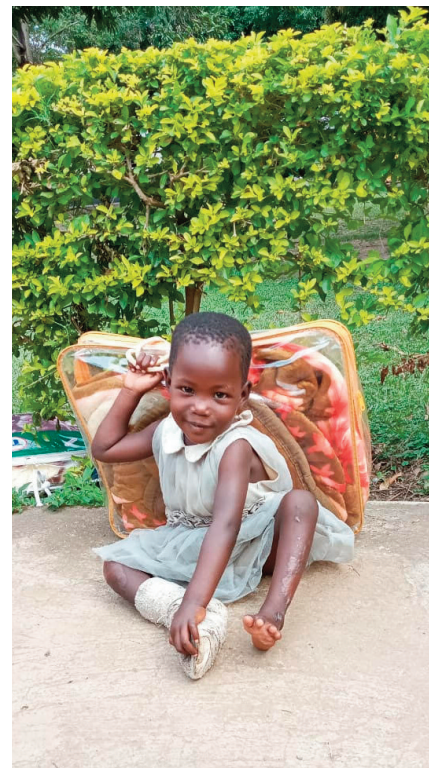
Our project in a nutshell: For decades, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) terrorised communities in northern Uganda including in and around the city of Lira. Today FOAG supports the YOUFRA Centre in Lira, run by the Franciscan Little Sisters. The centre supports and educates young mothers who were teenage rape victims of the LRA, and their children. Today the centre supports around 70 children.

Impact on the ground: In addition to helping the centre grow its own food (see our agriculture projects above) your donations have also helped to:

- Renovate the dilapidated day centre buildings and establish new buildings to accommodate a kitchen and lavatories.
- Distribute food to families with disabled children during the Covid lockdown.
- Provide 18 medical procedures for young children with club feet, as well as further treatment for children with mobility problems.

There are currently eight children from the centre being operated on at Kumi hospital (which FOAG also supports).

Sister Margaret Awar, who runs the centre, has also established a textile workshop to fabricate school uniforms for local schools. When the workshop, which employs 15 young people, lost its orders due to Covid, Sister Margaret turned their efforts to fabricate washable face masks, some of which have been distributed free of charge to the most vulnerable in the community. So efficient was the production of masks that in recent weeks she was awarded a contract with the Ministry of Health to supply 15,000 masks. What a great way to give abandoned youths the opportunity to earn an income and contribute to society.



Three YOUFRA children, post operation, now heading back for rehabilitation

Providing primary education

Our project in a nutshell: FOAG supports Kigulya Primary School in Western Uganda where 12 dedicated staff educate around 600 children. Apart from providing basic educational resources such as exercise books, pens, chalk and sports equipment, FOAG has also supported the school to grow its own food and store its grain safely in metal silos, and to upgrade its run-down buildings.



Impact on the ground: James Mugema, Kigulya head teacher, says the food project has been a great success. “Since FOAG came in we've had a successful feeding program for all children in school. Everyone of us (teachers and staff) have enjoyed the meals we prepare and the silos that keep our corn.” He says the current need is to get more equipment – such as hand sanitizer and temperature guns – to help prevent the spread of Covid.

Focusing on children in need

Our project in a nutshell: We support Kamurasi Primary School. Located near Masindi in Western Uganda, it has around 1280 pupils with 181 of these children suffering from developmental disorders and physical impairments. The school offers specialist education such as Braille and sign language, vocational training to provide life enhancing skills and a standard curriculum-based education. Kamurasi also advocates integrated teaching with all children mixing together.

Impact on the ground: FOAG donations have helped provide support for the special needs children, provided agricultural assistance to provide food security for all children and staff and helped with building improvements. Head teacher Lillian Byakagaba says: “The school cannot run without external help from organisations and people like you.”



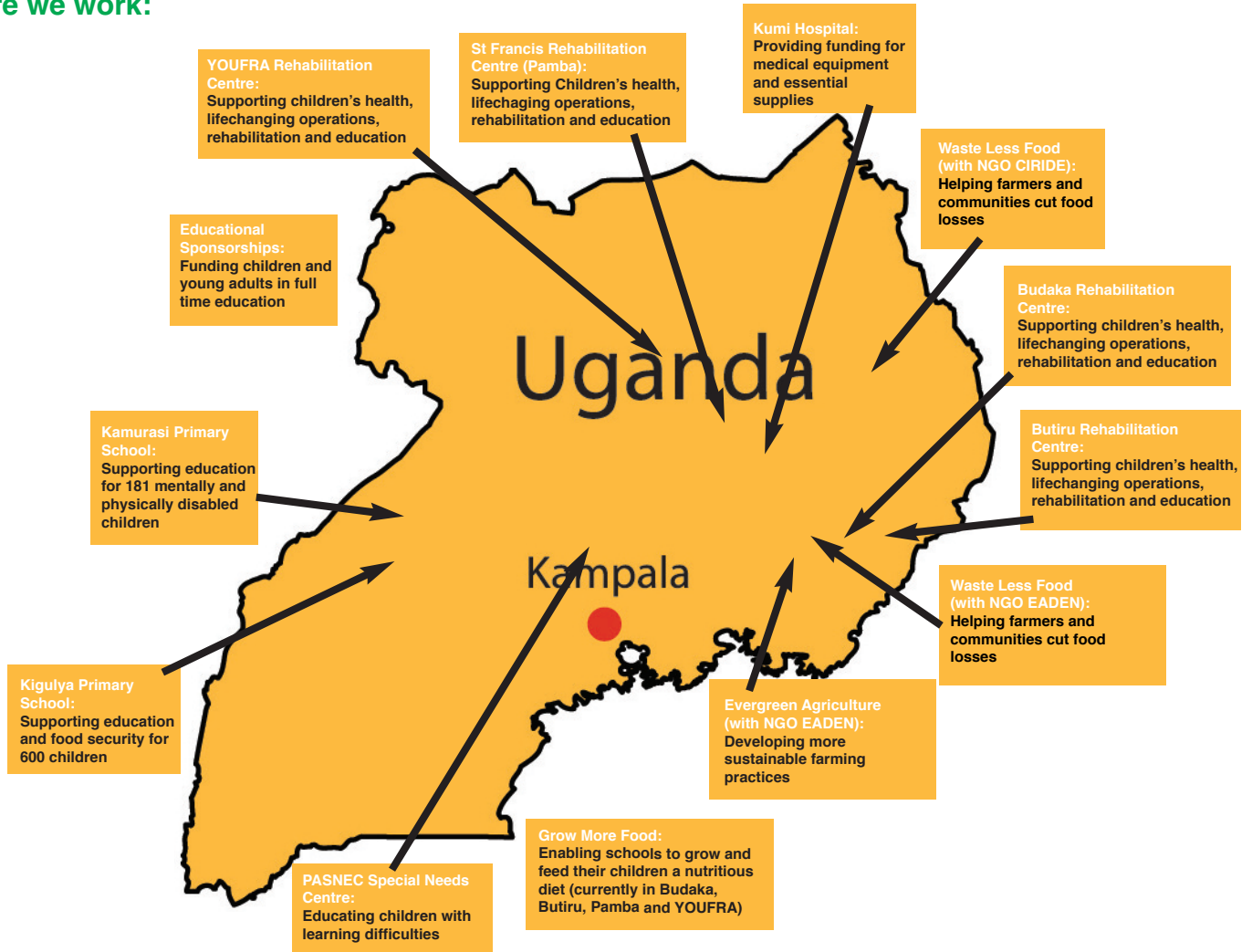
Children learning at Kamurasi

PLEASE SUPPORT US

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

Please help us to continue the good work in 2021 and beyond.

Where we work:



Supporting our projects couldn't be simpler

Buy from Amazon and improve lives!

We are now a recognised charity with Smile Amazon – this has exactly the same prices as Amazon, except 0.5% of any purchase can be donated to FOAG at no extra cost to you!

Just go to smile.amazon.co.uk, click on the Get Started button and type in Farmers Overseas Action Group when asked which charity you wish to support.

Another easy way to donate online

It couldn't be easier to give a one-off, or regular payment direct to FOAG with Give.Net.

You can find FOAG's donation page at www.give.net/20023984.

Then simply choose the amount you would like to donate.

Please tick the box to share your contact details so we can acknowledge your support personally.

Thank you!

Farmers Overseas Action Group charity number 1164747
Address: The Old Rectory, Stanford Bridge, Worcester, WR6 6SH