S • M • O • A • T

REIGATE'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST

Newsletter - Winter 2026

Our next events:

Launch of the SMOAT Christmas Appeal
Sunday 22 November

at the 8am and 10am services at St. Mark's Church, Reigate

Please come along to hear about how we plan to fund the introduction of The Virtual Doctors' telemedicine service in five new rural health centres in Zambia.

Bingo – Sunday afternoon: 31 January 2027

Tickets will be on sale in the New Year

Check our web site, Facebook, or contact us on tickets@smoat.org.uk

Save the date: Quiz – Saturday 9 October

MOVING BEYOND 'CRISIS HOPPING'

When a huge natural disaster strikes, the world's generosity is staggering. Millions of pounds are raised in days, and emergency teams flood the zone. This vital response saves lives in the immediate aftermath of a catastrophe.

However, real, lasting human development cannot thrive on emergency adrenaline alone. If a charity only receives money when a country is in the news, its work becomes a game of feast or famine. It can dig a well during a drought, but without ongoing funds, it cannot maintain the pipes or train local technicians to fix them when they break two years later. It can set up a temporary school following devastating floods, but it cannot build a permanent school or fund a child's education.

If you want to keep in touch with what we're doing on a more regular basis, check our web site where you can see updates on fundraising and other events, and book tickets online. Details and news are also regularly posted on our Facebook account, which you can access via

facebook.com/SMOAT.Charity

Like us on facebook

REGISTERED CHARITY No. 280091

Regular giving solves this fundamental problem. It allows non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to plan for the long term. It provides the financial predictability required to build resilient water systems, invest in agricultural training that protects farmers against future climate shocks, and fund multi-year education initiatives. It moves aid away from reactionary firefighting and toward sustainable, preventative growth.

Regular Giving - Why your smallest monthly habit matters most

We live in an era of monthly subscriptions. From the music streaming in our headphones and the channels on our televisions to the crates of wine delivered to our doorsteps, our bank statements are a rolling ledger of curated lifestyle choices. We value these small, automated outlays because they are frictionless. They require one initial decision, and then they quietly enrich our daily lives in the background. And to a large extent, they are forgotten amongst our normal monthly outgoings.

But what if one of those small monthly commitments could do something radically different? What if, instead of buying access to yet another streaming service, it bought stability for a family on the other side of the planet?

This is the quiet power of overseas aid regular giving. It is the act of turning international charity from a sporadic, guilt-driven reaction to a sudden headline into a deliberate, automated habit of global solidarity. And right now, as major international crises overlap and government aid budgets fluctuate, these predictable individual commitments are the absolute backbone of global development.

Two Lives, One Connection

To understand the true impact of a monthly direct debit, it helps to look at two different mornings.

Here in the UK, Sarah's phone pings with a notification: her monthly £12 donation to an international development charity has been processed. She barely notices the deduction. It's the price of three high-street coffees, slipping out of her account while she gets ready for work.

Meanwhile, in a rural district of Malawi, a community health worker is loading a cooler box of vaccines onto a motorbike. The fuel and maintenance for that bike, the maintenance of the cold-chain storage, and training for the health worker aren't funded by a sudden burst of emergency relief. They are funded by thousands of people like Sarah. Because Sarah's donation is reliable, the clinic knows it can pay the health worker's salary next month, and the month after that.

For Sarah, the donation is a small, manageable line item. For the community being covered by the clinic, it is the difference between an erratic, crumbling healthcare system and a dependable lifeline.

There is also a profound shift that happens within us when we choose to give regularly. One-off giving is often transactional and reactive; we see a heart-breaking image on television, we make a donation to alleviate the immediate distress, and we move on.

Regular giving, however, changes our relationship with the wider world. It is an acknowledgment that human suffering and human potential do not disappear when the news cameras pack up and leave. It connects us to the rest of the world in the best way possible – we are helping people who are striving for a better life, every single day.

It also democratises philanthropy. You do not need to be a millionaire, writing massive cheques, to alter the trajectory of a community. A collective movement of everyday citizens contributing the price of a streaming service or a few cups of coffee each month creates a massive, resilient pool of flexible capital that local aid workers can deploy exactly where and when it is needed most.

The Ultimate Return on Investment

Next time you review your monthly outgoings, take a moment to look at your subscriptions. Amid the entertainment, convenience, and retail perks, consider leaving room for one more: a subscription to hope, health, and human dignity.

Your small monthly habit has the extraordinary power to steady a shaky world. It tells a mother halfway across the globe that her child's future is worth investing in—not just today because of a headline, but tomorrow, next month, and for the years to come.

BARBARA PERKINS, *Chair*

A Quiz Night to Remember!

In October, we hosted our annual quiz night, with the ever-popular compere and quizmaster Helier Dreux at the helm, delivering one of his famous and hugely entertaining quizzes. A room full of enthusiastic participants formed ten teams, all battling their wits against one another for the prizes and, perhaps more importantly, the glory of being crowned champions! Meanwhile, the team with the lowest score was consoled with the traditional wooden spoons and boxes of Smarties!



Our committee provided colourful cheese and charcuterie platters for everyone to enjoy throughout the evening. There was also a wonderfully amusing twist to our bottle raffle, where lucky ticket holders found themselves winning an eclectic mix of prizes, ranging from fine wines to bottles of Matey bubble bath!

The evening raised an incredible £1,700, and we have topped this

up from other funds to £2,000, which has already been received by our chosen beneficiary, **STAND – We Walk Together**.



Operating across sub-Saharan Africa, STAND supports amputees by providing and fitting prosthetic limbs donated and recycled in the UK. Working alongside rehabilitation clinics, the charity does truly remarkable work, helping to remove barriers to mobility, employment and everyday life for countless amputees who might otherwise have no access to these vital services.



Our donation will support a specific project in Ghana, and we very much look forward to hearing from the project partners in due course and discovering the difference our fundraising has helped to make.

A huge thank you to Helier, our committee, everyone who donated prizes, and all those who came along to take part. Your generosity, enthusiasm and good humour helped make the evening such a success - and raised a fantastic sum for a very worthwhile cause!

CLAIRE BOWERS

CHILD HEALTH PROGRAMME, CAMBODIA

The money raised through the SMOATathon earlier this year went to Impact Foundation and we have just had the following update from them, which makes for a heart-warming read.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of everyone who supported the St Mark's Overseas Aid Trust's SMOATATHON event, vital work is taking place to improve the health and wellbeing of children living in the floating communities of Cambodia's Tonlé Sap Lake.



We are absolutely thrilled to share this update with you and to say a heartfelt thank you. Thanks to the wonderful generosity of the members of St Mark's Overseas Aid Trust, a grant of £1,800 is helping vulnerable children and their families access essential healthcare and the support they need to live healthier lives.



More than a million people live in floating villages on Tonlé Sap Lake, where many communities are isolated from healthcare facilities. Poor sanitation, limited access to medical services and food insecurity leave children particularly vulnerable to malnutrition and preventable illnesses.

Since 2007, The Lake Clinic has been bringing essential healthcare to these remote communities. Through its Child Health Programme, children receive regular health checks, treatment for common illnesses, dental care, vitamins and deworming support. Health education helps children learn about nutritious food, personal hygiene and handwashing, while school and home vegetable gardens encourage families to grow fresh food of their own.

Your generosity is helping to support school health monitoring, child health checks and the development of vegetable gardens, giving children better access to healthcare and helping families improve their nutrition. By combining medical care with practical advice and support, The Lake Clinic is helping children grow and thrive.

Thank you for being part of this work. Every contribution to the St Marks Overseas Trusts' SMOATATHON event has helped make this support possible. Together, we are helping bring healthcare, nourishment and hope to children growing up in some of Cambodia's most isolated communities. We are so grateful for your kindness and for making this important work possible.







We wanted to share the story of one little girl whose life has been changed by the care provided by The Lake Clinic, with thanks to your support.

When her mother brought her to The Lake Clinic Floating clinic for a health check, she was worried that her daughter was not gaining weight. The little girl struggled to breathe while breastfeeding, was not sleeping well and had little appetite. She was also showing signs of malnutrition.

During the check-up, The Lake Clinic team discovered that she had congenital heart disease. They quickly arranged for her to be referred to hospital, where she underwent heart surgery.

After her treatment, the little girl returned to The Lake Clinic with her mother to thank the team who had helped her. It was wonderful to see her looking so well, and she appears to have gained some healthy weight, too.

Stories like hers show just how important your support is. By helping The Lake Clinic reach families living in Cambodia's floating communities, you are helping children access the health checks and medical care they need. For this little girl, identifying her condition early meant she could receive life changing treatment and have a better chance to grow up healthy and strong.

Thank you for helping make this care possible.

IMPACT

Update from recent donations to the Tea Leaf Trust and East Africa Children's Project

Earlier this year SMOAT were delighted to be able to make donations to various NGOs including a project in Sri Lanka and education materials for schools in East Africa. We would like to share some of the outcomes from those donations with our supporters.

In Sri Lanka we provided a donation of £1800 to the **Tea Leaf Trust** to fund the expansion of the English curriculum. One of the previous students provided the following testimony regarding the impact of this education on her.



TEA LEAF TRUST

Meet Shilani

2022 Graduate

Current Position: Tea Estate Child Development

When Shilani first heard about Tea Leaf Trust during her A-Levels, she had little English and no voice within her own family.

"When I joined the Main Diploma, I didn't know how to talk with society people and I didn't have the courage to solve the problems in my life. Even my family members didn't listen to me."

The greatest transformation came through leading Tea Leaf's Community English Programme (CEP). As one of the first students at the new Nanu Oya centre, Shilani helped establish Saturday English classes for local children.

"This was a big challenge for me because I had to get permission from a preschool to use their building and from the estate management to run the classes. I had to talk confidently and professionally with these people and practise the skills Tea Leaf had taught me."

Teaching alone was daunting. *"I was teaching 35 students on my own... My first class, it was so noisy... I couldn't handle them... But when pupils started asking me, 'Miss, when is it Saturday?!' I knew I was making a difference."*

"I improved a lot through this time and I feel that it was the first time I could see myself as a teacher. Now I teach English to the students in my job and I run an English class for students in my area."

Today, Shilani works for an NGO serving children in Sri Lanka's tea estates. *"My English is strong now. I teach lessons and provide reports in English... They are surprised when I can help them.My time at Tea Leaf inspired me to keep growing... I am hungry to learn and develop."*

We also provided a donation of £3112 to the **East Africa Children's Project**. This was used to make 3 very important equipment purchases.

£1,683 of this was used to purchase 414 mosquito nets for Bukamba Primary School in Uganda. The school has 414 orphan and vulnerable children living in dormitories

and these nets will protect them from malaria. The school reported that the provision of the nets reduced the incidence of malaria, improved school attendance and promoted better sleep for the pupils.



We also gave EACP £953 to purchase curriculum approved textbooks for Jackhill School in Kenya. Jackhill School provides education to vulnerable children from low-income families. Previously children had to share textbooks. By funding this purchase we are improving children's access to learning materials.



And finally we gave EACP £476 to purchase 2 industrial sewing machines for the Nehema Tailoring Centre in Kenya. The centre provides skilled training in tailoring and dressmaking to vulnerable women and unemployed youths. The purchase enables training to be provided to more people and increase production capacity of the workshop.



JEAN WALLER

We are now making tickets for SMOAT events available online through TicketSource.

For event details, see Facebook, or **http://www.SMOAT.org.uk**

Barbara Perkins (Chairman) e-mail: chair@smoat.org.uk
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Claire Bowers
Naomi Flood
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