



S • M • O • A • T

REIGATE'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST

Newsletter - Summer 2026

Our next event:

Autumn Quiz – Saturday 10 October

Tickets will be on sale in September for this SMOAT favourite,
with Quizmaster extraordinaire, Helier Dreux

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

HELPING WHERE IT HURTS MOST: THE CHALLENGES FACING OVERSEAS AID

For decades, people like you have shared what they have to help others. Your support has saved many thousands of lives. Amongst many other things, it has helped to build schools, provide education, supply clean water and fight deadly diseases. Because of global kindness, global extreme poverty has dropped dramatically over the last thirty years.

But today, the world of overseas aid is facing a major shake-up. The ways we can help are changing. New challenges are making it harder to reach the places that need help the most. This is especially true in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where poverty is highest.

If you already support global aid, you care about making a real difference. Understanding these current issues helps us see how to protect the world's most vulnerable people. Here is a simple look at what is happening right now.

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

REGISTERED CHARITY No. 280091



- **The Shrinking Money Pot**

The biggest issue right now is simple: there is less money to go around.

Many wealthy nations are facing tough economic times at home. Prices are rising, and governments are worried about their own national budgets. Because of this, several major countries, including the UK, have recently made deep cuts to their overseas aid spending.

When rich nations cut budgets, the impact is felt thousands of miles away. For areas dealing with extreme poverty, these cuts are not just numbers on a page, they change daily survival rates.

- **Crisis vs. Long-Term Progress**

Due to climate change and wars, there are massive crises around the world. Ongoing conflicts and sudden natural disasters demand urgent attention. Because these emergencies are so severe, a lot of aid money is being redirected to immediate disaster relief.

While disaster relief is vital, it leaves less money for long-term projects; and it is these long-term projects that lift communities out of poverty permanently.

Right now, big charitable organisations are struggling to balance these two needs. They must save lives today without abandoning the work that builds a better tomorrow.

- **Moving from Charity to Partnership**

For a long time, overseas aid followed an old pattern. Wealthy nations decided what poor countries needed, sent the money, and ran the projects. Today, people living in areas of deep poverty are rightly saying: "Let us lead." This shift is called "localising aid."

Local communities understand their own problems best. A mother in a rural village knows exactly why the local clinic is failing. A local farmer knows which crops will survive a dry season.

Instead of traditional charity, the focus is moving towards true teamwork. Aid is becoming less about giving handouts and more about collaborating with local people. This teamwork creates true independence rather than a long-term reliance on outside help.

- **The Challenge of Climate Change**

The places with the highest rates of poverty did the least to cause global warming. Yet, they are facing the hardest impact. According to the World Bank Poverty and Inequality Portal, climate shocks threaten to push millions more people into poverty.

In the poorest regions, a single severe drought or flood can wipe out years of progress in an instant. A family that has finally saved enough money to buy livestock can lose everything in one bad season.

Because of this, overseas aid can no longer focus just on traditional development. It now has to focus on survival against a changing climate. To this end, money must be spent on such things as building stronger homes and creating drought- and flood-resistant seeds.

This adds a heavy new expense to an already stretched global aid budget.

Why your support matters more than ever

With all these challenges, it can be easy to feel overwhelmed and you might wonder whether overseas aid still works. The clear answer is yes, it does. Every day, aid keeps children healthy, keeps girls in school, and helps communities stand on their own two feet. The current issues do not mean that aid is failing. They mean that aid has to adapt to a changing world.

Whilst all of these issues are global challenges, SMOAT is helping to plug the gap. We leave the big organisations to help with the crises. All the projects we support are aimed at lifting people out of poverty permanently. The organisations we partner with are 'on the ground' with the people who are facing poverty. They speak to community leaders and listen to their needs and, as a result, SMOAT knows with certainty that the money we give to projects goes to exactly what is needed to give people a future. As an organisation, SMOAT cannot do very much about climate change, but the organisations we support aim to future proof as much as possible.

That gap we are helping to plug is essential to lifting people out of poverty on a permanent basis and we thank you once again for being a part of that journey with us.

BARBARA PERKINS, *Chair*

Bingo!

Back in January we filled St Mark's Church hall with eager participants for our family Bingo Fundraiser. It was a joyous afternoon, with players across all generations enjoying the anticipation of Graham's unique bingo calling "talents", and the prospect of tantalising prizes. Of course the break for afternoon tea & homemade cakes was a highlight; and the tombola proved an ever popular source of entertainment.

In an age of tech and AI it is reassuring to know there is definitely still a huge appetite for old fashioned interactive games, where friends and families gather under one roof, compete, gossip and giggle. Nothing can ever replace true human interaction and the kindness and empathy it generates.



This year's event was raising funds to support the provision of a much needed satellite mobile health care clinic in a remote part of Kenya inside the Mau Forest.

The roads are very difficult to travel on within the forest area, which prevents the community from being able to access healthcare. The nearest facility would require patients to walk 15 miles or, if possible, get a Boda Boda (motorbike taxi) that would be expensive and dangerous.

The clinic will provide primary healthcare, HIV testing, cancer screenings, immunisations, antenatal care and a range of contraceptive options. Following on from the mobile outreach clinic, Community Health Promoters (CHPs) will continue to monitor community health needs, provide follow-up, and deploy Backpack Nurses as required to deliver family planning and immunisation services.



We raised over £700 during the afternoon, and have topped this up with funds from our amazing regular giving supporters. This enabled us to provide our project provider, Chase Africa, with £1,000 - which we know will be used prudently and for the best possible effect to support the community in Kenya.

CLAIRE BOWERS

Project Review – SMOAT in 2025

2025 was another great year for giving at SMOAT. In total we donated £16,480 to 9 projects in 9 different countries. £4,000 of this total was match funded via the Big Give Christmas Challenge meaning that our donation unlocked a further £4,000 from other trusts and foundations.

In March we had a very successful **quiz night** and raised £1,440 for **The Joliba Trust** in Mali. This was double our expected donation.

Increased wind and sandstorms mean that sand dunes are covering farmland and making villages uninhabitable. Joliba is working to stabilise 193 acres of sand dunes in 11 villages to sustain farming security. Our donation supported the stabilisation of 4 acres of sand dunes by successive planting of hedgerow windbreaks, deep rooting grasses, shrubs and then trees. The work was carried out by volunteer teams who received training in the techniques of dune stabilisation.



Mamadou Komakan said: *"The appearance of dunes was a new phenomenon for us and we had no idea how to slow the movement of sand. The sand filled our animal drinking ponds and covered our fields and our footpaths and roads. I was forced to abandon my 4-hectare plot. I sincerely thank Joliba who helped us to conquer the dunes."*

Our **Christmas Appeal** enabled us to make 2 payments in April of £4,000 each to **Team Kenya** and **Doctors for Nepal**.

The aim of the **Team Kenya** Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP) project was to train the women from 180 of the poorest households to grow sweet potato crops to enable them to safely feed their families. Sweet potatoes are rich in beta carotene which helps combat Vitamin A deficiency commonly found in vulnerable populations. The participants have also been trained in agro-processing, enabling them to produce flour, chips, soups, drinks and preserved goods, which they can sell locally, thus providing them with an income. Team Kenya have reported that all 180 participants have established sweet potatoes on their farms and, encouragingly, many are connecting with local markets. And, importantly, 180 women have gained confidence, not only as farmers but as care givers and as small-scale entrepreneurs.



Faith Omondi cares for **five young children** and supports her family through small-scale farming. Through the OFSP project, Faith received training and high-quality vines which she planted in her small farm. Today, green OFSP leaves are already part of her family's meals - simple, nutritious food grown in her own compound. Her recent harvest of vines was sold for ksh.1500 an amount that once felt out of reach for her. Faith said "I now see hope in my farm. This crop has changed how I look at the future."

The **Doctors for Nepal** donation was to be used to part-fund a health camp in a remote rural area.

2025 saw a lot of political instability in Nepal and it was not possible to hold a camp. However, a camp was held at the end of May 2026 in Mahawai Rural Municipality, which sits within Kalikot District in Nepal's Karnali Province. Its approximately 8,100 residents live in remote mountain terrain at altitude, where the combination of rugged topography and scarce infrastructure creates severe barriers to accessing even basic healthcare. In the Karnali Province as a whole only 23.6% of families across the province can reach a health facility within 30 minutes and for communities in Mahawai, specialist medical services are entirely out of reach without multi-day travel.

The camp was a huge success, with over 600 beneficiaries. There were 251 orthopaedic and nerve consultations, 145 ultrasound scans 92 obs and gyny consultations and 107 lab tests. 68.9% of the people who attended were women. The high participation rate and the breadth of services provided demonstrate the vital role that outreach camps play. They are not a substitute for permanent local specialists, but they are a meaningful intervention that reaches people who would otherwise go without.

In July as a result of our **SMOAT@Home Cream Tea** event we donated £1,000 to **Deki** in **Togo** for a **Safe water programme** and **MAMA Clubs wash programme**.

This donation enabled Deki to deliver 22 WASH training sessions to 445 women. This included training on hand hygiene, keeping boreholes clean and safe, and safe hygiene practices when cooking, cleaning, and using sanitation products.



The women were also trained in soap making and have used these skills not only to produce soap for their own families, but also to create additional soap to sell at local markets, giving them a much-needed source of income.

In November we made a donation of £2,040 to **Zambia Orphans Aid** to purchase a solar powered water pump at Twaywane school.

This will provide a water pump for a second borehole at the school and will enhance the school's water security, whilst also ensuring that the pump works during power outages. The second borehole was due to be drilled in June and Zambia Orphans Aid have promised us further updates and photographs when it is up and running.

In December we again made a series of donations via the **Big Give Christmas Challenge**. This method of donating enables us to make donations that leverage

match funding from other trusts and organisations doubling our donations, and also to make partnerships with other organisations.

As part of The Big Give Christmas Appeal 2025, SMOAT pledged £1,000 to **Workaid** for a Women Empowerment project in **Northern Uganda**. This pledge enabled them to access £1,000 of Big Give Champion match funding, which in turn enabled Workaid to leverage another £2,000 from the public appeal phase. This means that SMOAT's £1,000 donation produced a total of £4,000 of funding!

In the first quarter of this year, 40 women were enrolled in tailoring training, two instructors were recruited and 24 sewing machines were provided. SMOAT has directly funded the costs associated with these 40 trainees.

The beneficiaries of the programme are women who urgently need a means of working their way out of financial hardship.

One such individual is Awio Lona, a young mother who lives with and supports her own mother, who is living with HIV / AIDS. Before starting her training, she admired tailoring from a distance, inspired by a friend who practised it as a trade. Now, it is no longer a dream for her. In her own words: *"I used to admire my friend who is a tailor, but not anymore. I can now make dresses for myself and even do repairs. This has helped me earn some money to support my child."*



We gave £1,000 to **Reseed** for their 'Access to Finance' programme in **Sierra Leone** that was again doubled to £2,000 through matched funding. The project helps women, disabled persons and single parent care givers start, grow or diversify their own small business. Loans range from between £55 to £175. They aim to support predominantly women who cannot access finance anywhere else – these are women who don't have bank accounts, who walk from villages to the market, who have very little financial security or resilience. Ms. K shown here is in her second loan cycle. Initially she was selling imported apples. Her business officer Eliza saw how serious she was and recommended a larger loan of 5000nle (~£175), Ms K is now selling

multiple fresh items and has a steady stream of customers. Ms K's expanded business includes bananas, avocados, cucumbers and more!

We gave £1,000 to **SeeBeyondBorders** in **Cambodia** which, when doubled to £2,000 through matched funding, enabled 41 teachers in 15 primary schools to receive monthly in-class mentoring to strengthen their literacy and mathematical teaching skills.

Through regular classroom visits, mentors observed lessons, provided constructive feedback, and supported teachers to develop and review tailored improvement plans. This ongoing cycle of mentoring and reflection strengthened teachers' confidence, classroom practice, and ability to deliver more engaging, student-centred learning. By consistently supporting teachers to apply and refine new approaches in the classroom, the programme is helping to create more active and effective learning environments for 1,819 students in Grades 1-3. Early signs from participating schools show improved student engagement, participation, and progress in foundational literacy and maths skills, laying stronger foundations for improved long-term learning outcomes.



Our final donation was for £1,000 to **Gambia Schools Support** for the purchase of playground equipment for Aisha Memorial School in Tujereng. This nursery school was at risk of failing as its UK sponsors were unable to carry on their good work. As a result of Gambia Schools Support's intervention the school has expanded and enrolment is expected to rise from 78 to 140 at the start of the new academic year in October.



Josh Dale-Harris of Gambia Schools Support said *"GSS was thrilled to receive SMOAT's support in the 2025 Christmas BigGive and we invested the £2,000 raised in providing playground equipment"*. The equipment was made and is maintained by local craftsmen to GSS's specification providing much needed work. The equipment includes a see-saw, slide, merry-go-round, climbing

bars and two soccer goals that double up as climbing frames.

The children love them and it's not just fun, it helps their physical development, exercise, attention in class and social skills. Whilst playground equipment might not seem like an educational aid, any teacher will tell you that primary school children learn through play. It also hones their social skills and releases energy so that their concentration is better in the classroom.

Thank you to all our supporters for enabling us to make such life changing donations.

JEAN WALLER

Hitting all the right notes

The SMOATathon, SMOAT's biennial musical fundraising marathon, is an unpredictable beast. Like any event based around live performance, it develops its own pace and character, and all the better for that: every SMOATathon has been unique, with different performers, a variety of musical instruments played, and each event recalled for specific reasons.

So it proved with SMOATathon number six, staged in St Mark's Church on Sunday, March 22nd. While it was distinguished by the large number of highly talented younger performers, the entire cast of those singing or playing - totalling about 40 - covered an age range of about 85 years.

Launched by the estimable St Mark's Singers under Martin Hall's direction, the event got underway at about 11.30. Four hours later, it concluded with six-year-old Jennifer leading the audience in a stirring rendition of *"Keep the home fires burning"* (a prescient choice, as it turned out: we didn't know it at the time, but much of 2026's coldest weather to date still lay ahead of us).

During the four-hour musical journey, the programme slipped alarmingly behind schedule before somehow getting back on track, but we barely noticed, being richly entertained by impressive performances from participants of all ages, and especially the younger ones: Orla and Matilda in song, Rosalind on flute, Amélie in song and also on flute, Harvey on piano, Herne on organ, Ellie on harp and George on piano. We heard compositions ranging from Stainer's *"Crucifixion"* via Edward Elgar and Scott Joplin to Billy Taylor's *"I wish I knew how it would feel to be free"* and many more. All in all, a joyous afternoon full of remarkable music.

As with previous SMOATathons, the whole event was compèred by Graham Humphries, who knitted the programme together with humour, ingenuity and considerable stamina. Tea, coffee and cakes, available in abundance, kept those performing and listening refreshed, and, while audience numbers fluctuated, they remained at a healthy level right through to the close.

As always, the SMOATathon's prime purpose was to raise funds for a project to support people living in poverty in the developing world. Thanks to the generosity of those in the audience and other donors, just under £1,500 was raised (including Gift Aid). To this sum SMOAT added a further £300 from its funds, enabling it to send £1,800 to IMPACT, a charity with which SMOAT has worked a great deal over the years.

IMPACT is using this money to help support a child health programme in Cambodia, where the Lake Clinic provides health services to people living in floating villages on the Tonle Sap Lake. Inevitably, living in poverty in such conditions results in many of the population suffering from ill-health and disabilities which the clinic is attempting to address.



It is humbling to think that funds raised through a musical event in Reigate can result in improvements to the health of children living in such a very different environment thousands of miles away. The SMOAT Committee is extremely grateful to everyone who supported the SMOATathon in any way. Thank you all.

DAVID LEAR

Harry Ingram - 1933-2026

Very sadly, earlier this year we lost Harry. He had been a stalwart of SMOAT for decades, acting as a Trustee, Treasurer and Chairman at different points.

His training and experience as a tax inspector brought a rigour to project appraisal and SMOAT's business in general which stood us in good stead. As a committee we never had cause to question his judgement. But he never took our agreement for granted, his proposals were always soundly argued, and clearly explained.

On one occasion many years ago he flew out to India to investigate problems being experienced by one of the projects we supported at that time, of which he was also independently a Trustee. His report to us was thorough, and clear in its conclusions. No one was able to pull the wool over his eyes!



Even after his retirement from the committee in 2018 we would expect a thorough grilling from him at the AGM, but in equal measure praise for the commitment of the committee and supporters, and all done with a smile and twinkle in his eye, which is also evident in the photo seen here, on the occasion when, following his final committee meeting we held a farewell celebration to thank him for all he'd done for us.

Our sincere condolences go to Chris, who had not only supported him during his time on the committee, but also joined the committee in her own right for a period. It was no surprise that, even having died at the age of 92, the church was packed for his remembrance service, Harry's many activities having left their mark on everyone he knew, including representatives from other Surrey OATs.

RICHARD SALMON

Treasurer's Report – 2026

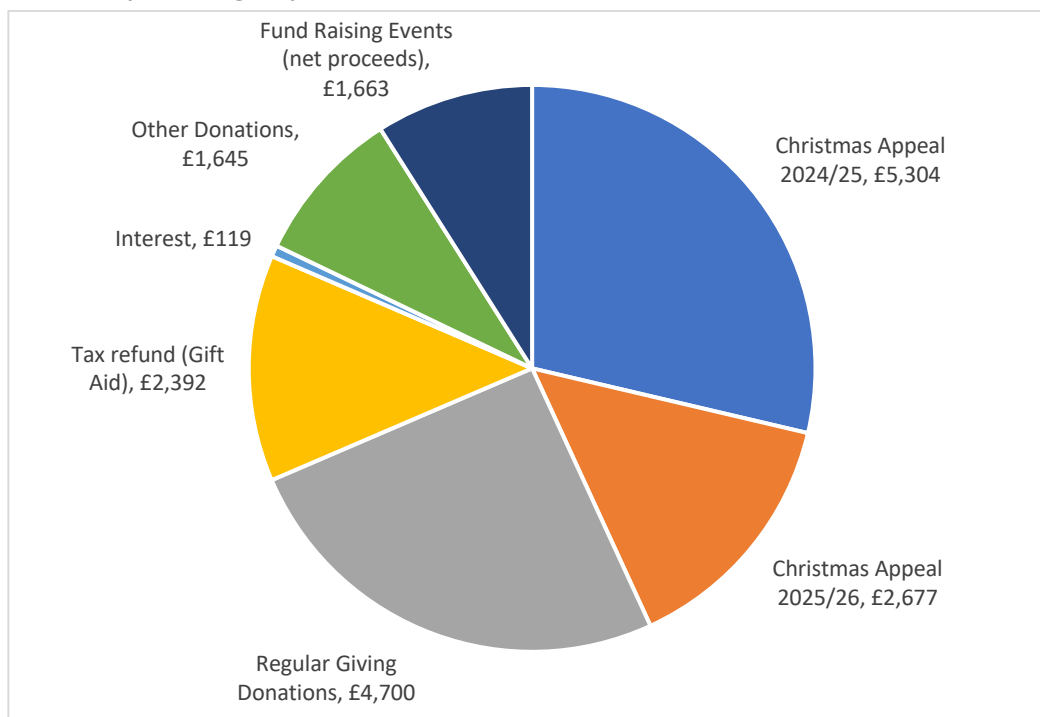
This report covers the year end accounts for 2025 and the activities to date for 2026.

SMOAT Financial Review of 2025

Our total income for 2025 was £18,460. Our expenditure during the year was £457, covering our liability insurance, newsletter printing costs and the purchase of a SumUp machine, giving a net income of £18,003. The results compared to 2024 are shown in the table below:

	2025	2024
Total Income	£18,460	£15,759
Total Expenditure	£457	£172
Net Receipts	£18,003	£15,588
Gifts Made	£16,480	£18,750
Excess of Income over Gifts	£1,523	-£3,162

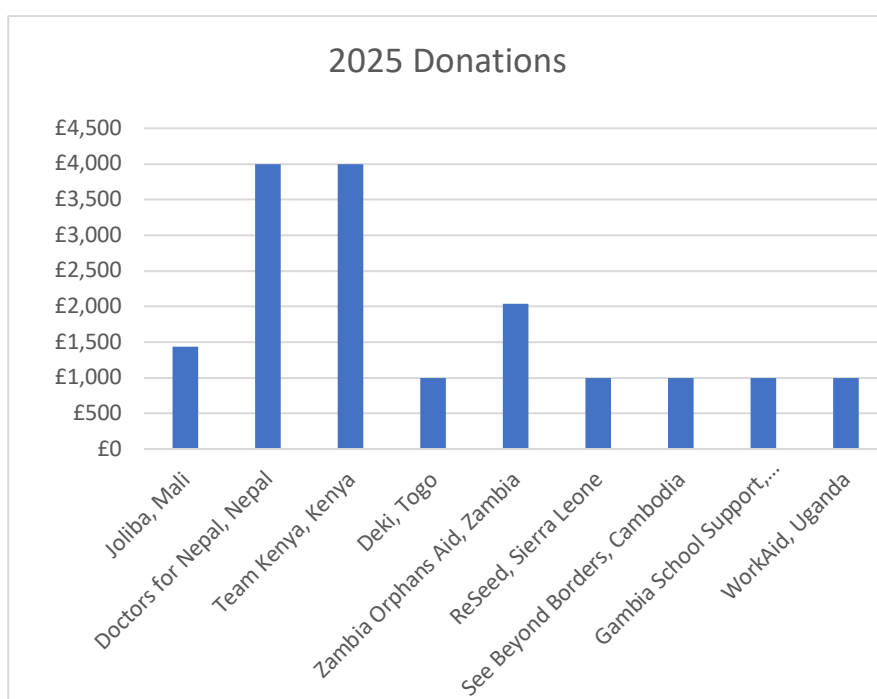
The breakdown by category is shown below:



In spring 2025 we held our quiz event that had been deferred from the previous year and raised £1,417 for the Joliba Trust for a dune reseedling project; this was topped up to £1,440 from regular gifts. In July we made scones and delivered cream teas to supporters' homes. This raised £246 for Deki and we topped this up to £1,000.

Our Christmas Appeal raised £6,344 in donations – this includes donations received prior to 2024 year end. With gift aid we raised £7,657. This enabled us to give significant donations to Doctors for Nepal and Team Kenya.

Again regular giving has been critical to helping us support vital development projects. Please do consider if you are able to make a small regular donation.



We also received a significant amount in ad-hoc donations. We were fortunate that Richard Salmon asked his friends to donate to SMOAT for his birthday resulting in £500 in donations.

We received £2,392 in gift aid from HMRC. If you are a tax payer and are not currently registered for gift aid please consider completing the gift aid form so we can claim the tax back on it – this will increase the value of your donation by 25%.

In total we made gifts of £16,480. The donations made during the year are summarised in the chart on the previous page.

2026 Activities to Date

2026 got off to a good start with our bingo afternoon in January. This raised £650 for Chase Africa. This was topped up to £1,000.

We also held our SMOATathon in March. This raised £1,185 in donations with a further £296 in gift aid for the Impact Foundation. This was topped up to £1,800.

From our 2025 Christmas Appeal we have made donations totalling £7,000 to Action in Africa.

A huge Thank You again to you all for continuing to support us through your donations and by attending our events.

JEAN WALLER, *Treasurer*

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

For event details, see <http://www.SMOAT.org.uk>

(Please note that the web site has to be accesses as “http://”, not “https”, which some browsers assume and default to.)

For more information please contact any of the committee, listed below.

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Naomi Flood	Sophia Oliver
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