



QSA Notes

people, places & projects

Money well spent in Cambodia

How can we be sure that the funds sent to a project partner actually get there and are put to good use? A visit to the project itself is one very good way to monitor financial accounting and to see the outcomes of the project first hand. Jackie Perkins took a trip to Cambodia earlier this year to see how the funds sent for Permaculture training were being spent.

When Jackie visited farmers in Kampong Thom Province, she met Ing Sok, a graduate of the Permaculture training program run by the Department of Women's Affairs

and supported by QSA. Ing Sok, like 78% of Cambodians, lives in the countryside and relies upon the land for her livelihood. As a result of decades of war and political oppression, much of Cambodia's traditional agricultural knowledge has disappeared. Hunger is widespread, particularly towards the end of the dry season and rural families find it difficult to make ends meet. As part of its mandate to improve the living conditions of women and children, the Department of Women's Affairs arranged for Rowe Morrow from Australia to train female educators in Permaculture

techniques and now these trainers run workshops throughout the rural areas of the country. Permaculture is an agricultural design technique that works with, rather than against nature, and provides food, energy, shelter and other material needs in a sustainable way. With most trainees living below the poverty line, the emphasis in Cambodia has been on creating home gardens that would grow a variety of foods to make a nutritious meal and provide the family with their nutrient requirements as well as providing a small income for the family from the sale of excess produce.



Ing Sok proudly shows us the vegies she has produced. Photo: QSA

QSA is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), and is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct. The purpose of QSA is to express in a practical way the concern of Australian Quakers for the building of a more peaceful, equitable, just and compassionate world. To this end QSA works with communities in need to improve their quality of life with projects which are economically and environmentally appropriate and sustainable.

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All those taking the Permaculture course are urged to establish their own home gardens using the techniques they have learnt. To get them started, trainees are provided with suitable tools, seedlings, plants and trees. Ing Sok, together with her husband and young son, now grows a range of fruit and vegetables to give them a nutritious and varied diet with enough surplus produce to sell in the local markets. They grow papaya, bananas, coconuts and cassava, rice, chillies, eggplant, a range of gourds and pumpkins, long beans, amaranth, and a wide range of herbs for added nutrition. All of these are grown organically, and are watered using water from their own well, which QSA has also funded.

Once each new garden is designed and properly fenced in, chickens and other livestock are provided for the farmers. Livestock form an important part of the overall approach, producing both food and manure. Composting and mulching are integral to the system, given that chemical sprays are not used. Ing Sok and her family have also raised enough money to buy a pig, which recently had piglets, and they have a number of ducks and chickens. Ing Sok is just one of the more than 1,000 women farmers who have benefitted from this program since it commenced in 1993. 'When I look at the results these women are able to achieve in such a small space of time, I can really see that this is money well spent', says Jackie.

Living Gifts

The Living Gifts catalogue for 2009—2010 has been distributed to meeting houses and individual Friends. We

hope you have found this year's collection of gifts inspiring. If you still need to purchase your gifts, please do so as soon as possible if you would like them available for Christmas, as that is our busiest time. For those who would like to purchase Living Gift No. 1: carbon credits, but are not sure how to calculate their carbon usage, we suggest that you visit <https://climatefriendly.com> Using their travel calculator, you can calculate the carbon cost of flights, long car trips, running your car for the past year, your household emissions and even the carbon cost of your wedding!

Friends in deed

QSA's 50 year history has been recorded by Heather Saville in the new book *Friends in deed*. The book, which was launched in March this year, has now sold 480 copies and is available in bookshops around Australia and the world. Author Heather Saville has been kept busy giving author talks at libraries, universities and community groups throughout the country. If you haven't purchased your copy yet, the book will be available at Yearly Meeting 2010 in Adelaide, or alternatively it can be ordered through the QSA website or through Friends Book Sales in Adelaide. Let's celebrate 50 years with 50 events! Calling all hosts! QSA is inviting its supporters around the country to hold a 1950's party in their own home to celebrate QSA's 50th Birthday. Perhaps you will host an afternoon tea party in your garden, or show a 1950s movie on your television, host a slides night, or simply have some friends around for dinner. When you invite your F/friends to this



event, ask them to make a contribution to QSA and consider inviting a QSA representative to give a short talk about QSA's work.

For ideas on 1950s themes, party games and activities, contact QSA on 02 9698 9103 or visit our website www.qsa.org.au

Heather Saville at launch of *Friends in Deed*.
Photo: Ponch Hawkes