



QSA Notes

people, places & projects

Sowing seeds of wealth, health and harmony

As training in small-scale sustainable organic agriculture and the provision of livestock for women farmers in Uganda begin to reap benefits, such as increases in family income and improved nutrition, there has also been an unexpected result – improved decision-making power and support for women within the home.

In the Rakai district of Uganda, Josephine Kizza, who co-founded the St Jude Family Projects, works to enhance the food and water security and health and nutrition of local villagers. During group training seminars, the focus is on social and economic empowerment, organic farming techniques for a greater range of crops, and increased knowledge of nutrition. Five groups of 30 women and their families have been trained and followed up intensively over a three-year period, and two from each group are given additional training to become community-based trainers.

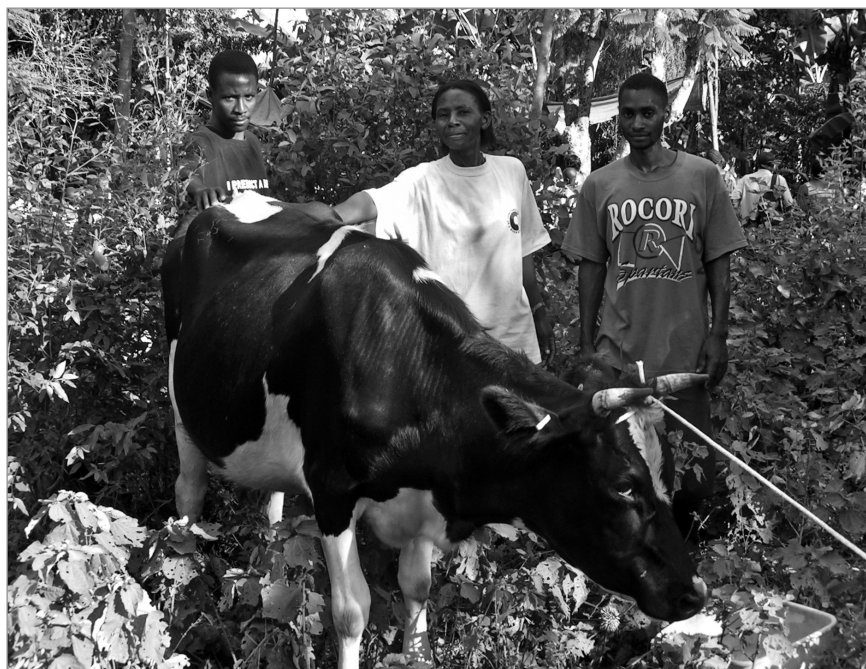
The average land size for a family living near St Jude is 2 acres, and on this land most households are now growing high-yielding, fast-growing, pest- and disease-resistant varieties of crops such as cassava, potatoes, yams, maize, beans and bananas. Farmers have learnt local and affordable ways of storing their grain harvests so that they are available for use during famine or for sale when prices go up, and this has contributed to their income and financial security.

A few exemplary farmers were given cows as part of a livestock management program and are now enjoying, on average, 18 litres of milk per day, which is enough for the family with extra for sale. Madrine, who cares for six orphaned children in addition to tending her garden, is one of the exemplary farmers who received a cow. In just 18 months of agricultural training as part of the Makyaki group, Madrine has made such dramatic improvements that she is now a community-based trainer herself.

Another farmer who received a cow is Dorothy. 'My life has greatly changed since I got "Zinunula" (meaning *saviour*), my cow,' observed Mrs Dorothy Nalukwago. 'I have milk for my family, my children are healthy. I sell 16 litres of milk per day at 600 shillings per litre, making a total of 280 000 shillings (\$186) per month!' She added, 'In addition, I have urine and cow-dung which is greatly enriching my farm and increasing crop yields.'

Other farmers are pleased with the addition of a male and female piglet to their farms, while Muslim farmers receive a pair of goats. More than 70% of the 86 families that received pigs have been able to pass on piglets to other farmers as part of the payback arrangement of the project. Senjima Jane had no livestock in her home previously, but now has 10 healthy pigs. She has already sold six piglets, and says she is able to buy a kilogram of meat every weekend from her farm earnings.

However, the unexpected outcome of this project was that, with an improved ability to earn an income and provide more food for the family, women have reported an increased role in economic decision-making within the home. Husbands are now much more supportive of their wives implementing project activities. It's wonderful to see that carefully integrated programs have improved so many facets of people's lives.



Madrine (centre) with her cow. Photo Barbara Wilde

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.

119 Devonshire St Surry Hills, NSW 2010 Australia • administration@qsa.org.au
PHONE +61 2 9698 9103 • FAX: +61 2 9225 9241 • ABN 35 989 797 918



Book launch participants who appear in the book L – R: Barbara Wilde, Vanessa Read, Audrey Cornish, Topsy Evans, Margaret Bywater, Pat Mavromatis, Heather Saville, Sienek Martin, Jackie Perkins and Tessa Spratt. **Photo** Ponch Hawkes

QSA celebrates 50 years in Friends in deed

On 20 March, Quaker Service Australia launched *Friends in deed*, written by Heather Saville, to mark its 50th anniversary. More than 90 people attended the launch in Melbourne and a wider audience heard about the book through ABC radio interviews on Life Matters and Connect Asia, as well as Heather's visits to universities, development agencies and community groups in the week following the launch.

Many people commented on what a lovely event it was. A number of those who had been involved in the work of QSA over the past 50 years and whose stories appear in the book travelled from as far as Cambodia, Tasmania, Perth and Sydney to attend the launch.

The book is available for \$24.95 from Quaker Service Australia. To purchase a copy, please use the order form in this edition of the Australian Friend, contact the QSA office on 02 9698 9103, or visit

our website www.qsa.org.au. Postage is more cost effective if you have three books sent to the same address.

We ask those of you who have enjoyed reading the book to share the joy. Why not buy a second copy and donate it to your local community library or university?

Balgo women's law camp

A small group of non-Indigenous Quakers, including Aletia Dundas from Quaker Service Australia, plan to attend the women's law camp in Balgo, four hours south of Halls Creek. The law camp, held from 27 May to 2 June, offers elders, middle generation and young women the opportunity to participate in ceremony, cultural sharing and talking story. Quaker Service Australia has supported the Kapalulangu Aboriginal Women's Association, who organised the camp, for the past year.

Visitor from India

QSA partner, Lourde Epinal, from the Pitchandikulam Bio Resource Centre

in Tamil Nadu, India, visited Australia in April and May. Lourde, who is an environmental education coordinator, was able to visit the Friends School in Hobart as well as other schools with environmental education programs. He also addressed public gatherings in Sydney, Blue Mountains, Hobart, Canberra and Melbourne, and took time out to enjoy the Australian flora and fauna. His presentations included many photographs and annotated maps from Google Earth, enabling people to better appreciate the situation affecting project participants in Tamil Nadu.

Lourde found the nights colder than he anticipated, the QSA office far smaller than he expected, and he was surprised to learn that the Mercedes parked in front of the QSA Office did not belong to the Management Committee! Lourde hopes to establish email and perhaps even Skype connections between Nadukuppam School in India where he has worked so hard to improve the lives of village children, and schools in Australia that also have environmental education programs.

Annual appeal

You should have all now received your copy of the QSA brochure and annual



appeal letter. We are very grateful to those who have already responded generously. If you have not received a copy of this brochure, please contact our office on 02 9698 9103 or visit your local Quaker meeting.