



QSA Notes

people, places & projects



A teacher and student from Kikungwe Kiwani Primary School water the cabbages together
Photo: QSA

Below L.
A student from Kikungwe Kiwani Primary School garden tries on his gumboots. **Photo:** QSA



Gumboots and cabbages

A boy poses for a photograph in his new blue gumboots, a picture of both pride and shyness. These gumboots have been given to students from some of Uganda's poorest schools as part of a new program to establish school food gardens. As so few of the pupils possess even one pair of shoes, some of them were uncertain as to how to walk in the gum boots.

The boy attends Kikungwe Kiwani Primary School in rural Uganda, which is a collection of very run down buildings in a poor rural area. The pupils have few pairs of shoes between them, and their uniforms have been well worn over the years. This school has no animals at the school or nearby to provide manure to add to the compost, and has only one small water tank which is insufficient for their current needs.

The good news is that this school is one of ten that have been selected to participate in a school gardens project. Five primary, three secondary and two vocational schools will participate. Quaker Service Australia partner St Jude Organic Farming Training Centre is introducing the concepts of organic gardening to local school students through the establishment of food gardens in the school grounds. In addition to weekly gardening classes, each group of thirty students and two teachers have been provided with wheelbarrows, gum boots, hoes, watering cans, spades and seedlings to begin work on their gardens.

The selection of the pupils has been up to the school to organise, and for the primary and junior schools, those individuals who were most vulnerable and needed a nutrition boost were

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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selected. When Jackie Perkins visited Uganda in October 2009, she was delighted to discover that the project was well and truly underway. The schools had been selected, teachers trained and motivated, and pupils working away with great enthusiasm in their new garden beds. Cabbages were a favourite crop at that time of year.

One very positive outcome from this program is the links that have been forged among the teachers, who came together for training at St Jude and regular follow-up training session, and they spoke of the good opportunities it has given them to share ideas.

Another positive change this project has brought about is in regards to how agriculture is viewed by the pupils, teachers and parents. Josephine Kizza from St Jude Organic Training Centre, who is running this innovative programme, explained that until recently 'when children come to school late, or are misbehaving, the usual punishment has been to give them area of land to dig, creating much sadness. Now with this program, digging and working in the garden is viewed as a blessing'.

The plan now is to work with the current ten schools for two years and then assess the impact of this before making further plans. The current program budget does not include the provision of animals, or of water tanks, but it is expected that they will appear in next year's budget. It is also hoped that the school gardens will soon provide nutritious meals for the students at lunchtime.

Goat project leaps ahead

Mary Nakirigya Tisekola has fifteen children, with only three currently living at home. In her compound she has a tethered goat (ear tag QSA0046, pictured), four pigs in an improved pen and one boar in an older style pen.

Mary is one of the beneficiaries of the Uganda Rural Community Support Foundation, supported by QSA since 2007. The partnership began with a Goat Rearing program and this year included an Agricultural training project, where participants visited St Jude Training Centre to enhance their agricultural knowledge.

Mary has a number of chickens and regularly gets eighteen eggs per day which she is able to sell locally. In addition she has a number of banana trees, some close to the home and some about thirty minutes walk away. Initially she was able to grow about seven bunches of bananas near the home, but with the new training and improvements to the soil, she has now been able to grow thirty bunches which she will be able to sell locally.



Mary with her goat. Photo: QSA

QSA Annual Report now available

Those people who missed the QSA Annual General Meeting in Adelaide will be pleased to learn that they can still read the QSA Annual Audited Statement and Annual Report for 2008 - 2009. Please go to www.qsa.org.au to view the report online or call us on 02 9698 9103 and we will be happy to mail you a printed copy.

QSA Education Kit

This year QSA will be trialling a new education and promotions kit. These kits will include information about development issues and QSA projects around the world, lots of fundraising ideas for groups of enthusiastic supporters as well as educational activities for children's meetings, local meeting groups and non-Quakers. These kits will be ready by April and will be sent to each local meeting or worshipping group. Additional copies will be available from the QSA office if required.