



QSA Notes

people, places & projects



Pong Onn and her daughter collecting a bag of rice, and feeding their chickens.
Photos supplied by CHEC, Cambodia.

Cambodia

One question QSA staff and Management Committee members are often asked is: 'How do you know the projects work?' The answer to that is not only in the reports and statistics supplied by the project partner, though they do give an interesting perspective on what is happening.

The real impact is understood from the project participants themselves, when they tell you their stories, which is such a privilege.

Here are two from women in Cambodia who have taken part in the program being run by **Cambodia HIV/AIDS Education and Care (CHEC)**, an independent NGO being run by Kolnary, its energetic director. This project has been providing training in skills which will enable the family members to earn an income. Their stories explain the impact this training has had for them all.

In addition to her four sons, Mrs Phat Cheu now has around 40 chickens to raise. The 44-year-old from Kandal became aware of her HIV status last year after both she and her husband became

ill. She qualified for the CHEC chicken-raising project based on her existing farming skills.

'When I first found out that I was HIV positive I wanted to die. But then people from CHEC came and explained to me that HIV wasn't a death sentence.'

CHEC's home-based care team visits her family once a month to offer health and business advice. Now with the knowledge and means to access proper care and livelihood support Mrs Phat Cheu says the CHEC project has greatly improved the quality of her life and that of her family members.

'I just want a healthy and happy life for me and my family and I am very grateful to CHEC that they help us to have these things' she says.

Nob Sambath, a member of CHEC's Home Based Care Team recalls when the team first approached 34-year-old Pong Onn, of Trapaing Tong village, Prey Veng province, five years ago. With skinny body and hollow eyes, the sick woman was unable to walk and was extremely thin. She lay on a mat with her two-year-old daughter nearby.

Pong Onn was infected with HIV by her soldier husband, who died in 2006 leaving her with a one-year-old child. Holding a bowl of rice to feed the chickens, Pong Onn recalled 'the hardest ever time in my life'. After having her baby and the death of her husband, her health became 'very terrible' and she was unable to work. Luckily, her daughter was not infected by HIV.

Her living conditions became worse and she had no money for health treatment. She sold her land to get money to cure her disease but discovered that the money she made could not cure her disease. She was in debt as a result of the cost of treatment, she no longer had any land of her own, and now lives on her relative's land.

Pong Onn's health and standard of living improved after she received support and home visiting from CHEC Home Based Care team. Her family receives 30 kg of rice, one litre of vegetable oil, and a half kilo of salt from World Food Program through CHEC every month. As well, the team encouraged her to become a local CHEC Home Based Care member.



The Elders painted up the young girls and shared dance and songs that their ancestors have passed on to them. **Photos** supplied by Kapululangu Ahoriginal Women's Association.

Pong Onn said that in order to get extra income she attended the technical training course on chicken raising and obtained a small loan to set up her chicken farm. The money that she gets from chicken raising has improved her living conditions and her daughter can now go to school like other children.

Kapululangu Aboriginal Women's Association, in Balgo, West Australia

In the Kapululangu Aboriginal Women's Association's recent report to QSA, there was a great spirit of energy and excitement. In April, the Kapululangu Women celebrated Easter by holding a ceremonial Women's Corroboree at which eleven women elders shared stories about their families travelling through their

country and meeting the missionaries who came to Balgo over 70 years ago. Seventeen middle generation and ten young women also attended.

Famine in many African countries is cause for great concern, with many agencies providing relief and humanitarian aid as best they can under some very difficult conditions.

QSA has been receiving emails from our partners in Uganda and in Zimbabwe indicating that food prices have risen sharply and supplies are getting short there too. If Friends would like to donate funds to support the efforts of our partners in Uganda and Zimbabwe, we would be happy to pass on these funds. Donations for famine relief in other countries can be sent directly to organisations such as Red Cross and UNHCR.

Living Gifts catalogue will be available on our website (www.qsa.org.au) by September and from your Meeting's clerk or correspondent, or from the QSA office, so please do consider using this to support our projects in Australia, Cambodia, India, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Thank you Friends.

[Permission has been given for the use of all of the photographs used.]

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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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