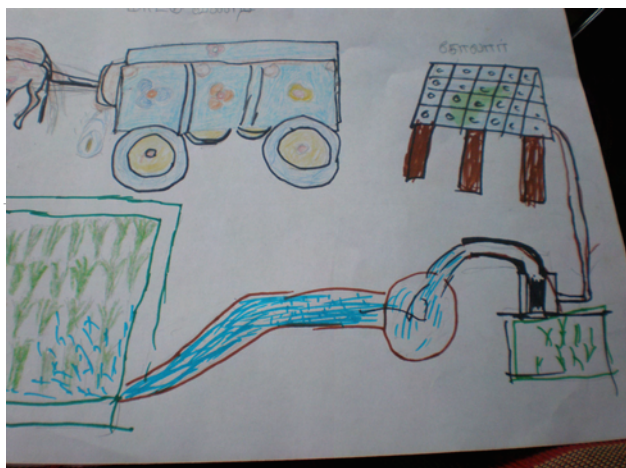




# QSA Notes

## people, places & projects



**Use of solar power** to operate pump for irrigation of rice, by K. Divya, 13 years.



**Solar power** hooked to a bullock cart so that people can see at night, by G. Kamesh, 10 years.

### QSA projects and climate change

With so much in the news about climate change, it is interesting to know how it is affecting the work of QSA and its project partners. A series of discussions and surveys among project participants in Cambodia, India and Uganda has revealed comments such as needing to dig deeper wells to reach good water supplies, changes to when the rains come, some seeds don't germinate as well or crops are not as plentiful, new areas are suffering from malaria.

Our partners in Tamil Nadu, South India have been discussing climate change issues with school children as part of a 'Young Scientist' program.

These students from Kottikuppam Primary School in Tamil Nadu gave a presentation to younger school students and some adult guests on chemical elements and the periodic table, vitamins and mineral content of everyday food, herbal plants, solar technology, and significant scientists and their inventions. All of this was done via small plays,

puppetry, verbal presentations and song, with some scientific experiments to demonstrate various points.

A drawing competition was held after a series of lessons about solar energy, asking the students to draw their ideas of how it could best be used. (See drawings above.)

A year-long program funded by the Australian Government's Agency for International Development (AusAID) in Tamil Nadu with support from QSA has been looking into alternative power and water sources in a rural community. The program, located in Devikulam Village, close to Nadukuppam, included the development of a rural design centre, with demonstrated environmentally sustainable methods of addressing water and power supply, and new building designs and materials, all suited to a village setting.

A range of educational meetings and workshops have been held for widespread dissemination of these ideas. Also provided for the community have been a range of solar panels, torches and street lights; repair to the whole water

system with every tap and pipe tested and repaired when necessary; and provision of a number of toilets and bathrooms to improve sanitation and hygiene standards.

For some families this has meant they have water coming out of a tap close to their home for the first time in six years, even though the plumbing had been there all of the time, but water leaks and blockages to some pipes meant that the water never reached their home — something we take for granted here.

### QSA study tour to Cambodia

Fourteen intrepid Friends joined Margaret Bywater of Tasmania Regional Meeting, who works in Cambodia, and QSA's Jackie Perkins on a study tour to visit the QSA and AusAID funded programs in Cambodia. It was a great opportunity to see for themselves what work is being carried out with your funding. Their comments speak for themselves –

*'talking to real people, seeing aid in action'; 'I know and understand more about the way that QSA operates'; 'It was*



**Students from Kottikuppam Primary School** in Tamil Nadu giving their a presentation to younger school students and some adult guests. **Photo:** Jackie Perkins

*an amazing journey'; 'Wonderful to see what a difference it can make in people's lives'; 'I've always been a supporter of development aid but have never seen it in action before'; 'Good to see the practical reality....[of] what a difference it makes where people are so poor to be able to generate even a small income'.*

The tour visited all of QSA's partners as well as tourist areas of Phnom Penh and Siem Rep to visit Angkor Wat. We saw our lunch of fresh fish being caught, weaving of silk and cotton into scarves and garments, cane and special grass woven into mats, listened to traditional music and watched traditional dancing though for many of us this was difficult to emulate.

We saw very productive food gardens, stone carvings, wood turning and furniture making, art and photography, amazing architecture and learned more about the troubled past of this country. There will

be more details coming soon to QSA's website ([www.qsa.org.au](http://www.qsa.org.au)) and via displays and presentations during Yearly Meeting 2012.

### **Uganda**

Under the watchful eye of Josephine Kizza, the trainers at St Jude Organic Farming Centre in Uganda continue to help rural communities to achieve greater food and water security.

For Monica Ssenkindu, a 42-year-old widow with a large family of nine to support, this training has made a huge difference to her situation. In just two seasons Monica has been able to raise enough money to move out of a grass thatched, mud and wattle house to a simple but permanent house. She has started a poultry farm and now has over 500 laying birds, and from a half-acre plot of land, she raised nearly \$450 in January and February from excess passion fruit. Before accessing this support, she grew

traditional crops of bananas, cassava and sweet potatoes yet despite all her efforts, the yields were not even enough to provide two meals per day for her family or earn enough for the basics such as paraffin and salt.

Would you like to meet some of the amazing people in Uganda such as Josephine and Monica? Then think about joining QSA's next study tour to Uganda, leaving in late April 2012 (just a few days after the FWCC World Conference in nearby Kenya).

If you would like to be kept informed of the plans for the study tour as they unfold, please let Jackie Perkins know ([administration@qsa.org.au](mailto:administration@qsa.org.au) or 119 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010).

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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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