

At the back of the Kampong Thom demonstration centre where the fish farm pond will be located.



World Development Report 2012 – Gender Equality and Development

The recently published 2012 World Development report asserts that much progress has been made in closing the gender gaps between men and women in the developing world over the past decades. Across four major outcome areas, those of women's rights, education, health and labour force representation, achievements and liberties which took hundreds of years to be established in wealthy countries such as Australia have taken 40 years to embed themselves into the fabric of society in low to middle income countries. The paramount importance of gender equality has long resounded in QSA's project work as a development in and of itself and it is heartening to have acknowledged the work invested and the challenges sustained by the communities for whom such changes are new.

Despite much progress there remains much ground to cover and the report acknowledges that the status of women and gender imbalances in many countries and population groups remain serious, even crippling. As inspiration to continue to work towards true equality in gender relations and opportunity, light shines brightly from the end of the tunnel to

hear that more women are literate than ever before, labour force participation has for young women increased almost 2.5 times between 1995 – 2000, women have reversed the education gap and now have higher completion rates than men and the world's fastest recorded decline in fertility has taken place, from an average of 5 births per woman (1960) to 2.5 (2008), which has significantly lowered maternal mortality rates and increased female life expectancy. The full report is a fascinating read and can be accessed in full via the World Bank website <http://www.worldbank.org/>.

Pitchandikulam Forest

Grateful thanks are also extended from Joss Brooks and Anita Truchanas at Pitchandikulam Forest where Joss has been updating us of their clearing and reconstruction efforts, what follows is a heartfelt thank you and section of his latest update:

Dear Friends who have helped us in this time of need,

The copper, mauve, gold and greens of the new growth bursting out from the broken limbs of broken trees exhilarate us, covering up the ragged wounds in our,

since December, dramatically askew forest.

The forest remains all damaged angles, bent trunk leaning on the next bent trunk, though now leaves surge forth in a huge vertical aspiration towards the sun.

The chainsaw buzzing signals the arrival of the team to clear paths through the confusion and liberate younger plants from underneath the older acacia branches that have crushed and contorted them. Some of the trees are 150 ft. tall and 3ft diameter!! It takes one day for the crew to clear one tree with our small chainsaws; it is careful work to protect the plants underneath. We imagine it will take several years to clear the whole sixty acres of Pitchandikulam !

Our forest community is profoundly grateful for the help that has been given to us so far by friends and well wishers. Additional donations have enabled us to buy chainsaws and petrol and will support a team of an extra 5 people for another several months in order that we can make a larger, communal dent in the huge task ahead of us. Thank you. Joss and Anita

Jackie Perkins, New South Wales Regional Meeting

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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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QSA Notes

people, places & projects



The trainees practicing how to make natural pesticides.

Cambodia – Department of Women's Affairs

As ever, QSA continues to pursue a rigorous agenda when it comes to supporting project partners to best move forward in supporting the communities with which they work. This necessarily includes providing training to project staff members in order that their expertise can then, in turn enhance the opportunities and quality of life attainable for those community members whom the project supports. A recent example of this has been a training co-operative between QSA and APHEDA (Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad) or Union Aid Abroad as they are maybe more commonly known, running across Kampong Thom and Pursat provinces in Cambodia. The co-operative 'skills-swap' scheme was established in order that project capital, education and skills reach a broader section of the community than would otherwise be possible and a workshop pooling ideas and resources can only spread the know-how deeper and wider!

APHEDA staff trained 20 staff and farmers from QSA partner projects in

locations in both Kampong Thom and Pursat provinces facilitating workshops which ran 3 to 5 days, in raising fingerling fish. The training has been successful and despite the Kampong Thom project needing to construct a pond for the farming, the Pursat office had an established pond ready for use. Fish farming has become for the projects and communities, a very effective alternative source of additional nutrition, income generation and has also provided sustainable alternatives to the over-fishing of many fish from the natural environment where in Cambodia many edible fish stocks are significantly depleted.

QSA trainers offered their part of the exchange, over a course of 3 five day workshops, a thorough training in Permaculture practice for 16 participants from 4 provinces which included specialisations such as seasonal crop growing, water saving in the dry season, compost fertiliser making, seedling germination, integrated pesticide management and fruit tree crafting, cutting and pruning, among others. Particularly in light of the recent flooding

in Pursat province, the training has also included Permaculture training in how to grow vegetables during the wet season which will shortly become paramount as rice stocks become scarce after losing the rice harvest to flooding. This is of further import as the understanding of Permaculture practice as working with, rather than against the environment resounds at this time and the correlation between good food and good health is felt strongly in the communities and projects alike.

Trainees also had the opportunity to build their own demonstration garden where Chinese cabbage, tomatoes, mint and other vegetables were established. Indeed, after the second workshop 14 trainees travelled to the Mong Russey district of Battambang province to establish a model vegetable garden for their Community Training Centre also. The pathways towards sustainable land care and agriculture, income generation and health have coalesced very productively throughout this joint skill-swap scheme. May our project partners find much success in achieving their goals.