



# QSA Notes

## people, places & projects

### Work place health and safety comes to Cambodia with gloves for cane cutters

Friends may remember that one of the Living Gifts in the catalogue was for long sleeved gloves to protect the cutters of rattan cane in Cambodia. The bushes of cane grow long stems which are cut for later splitting, drying, sometimes using natural dyes to add variety to the woven products. However rattan cane plants also produce long sharp thorns, which need to be removed to enable a smooth product at the end. The gloves purchased have been given to cutters in Saravorn and Bateay Krang Villages in Krakor District. Although these gloves take a bit of getting used to, the cane cutters are happy to wear them as they no longer have tears to long sleeved clothing or deep cuts to their hands and arms. And so, on their behalf: thank you Friends.

### Good Aid Works

'Australian overseas aid money is your money, and it is helping lift people out of poverty' says a new website launched at the end of January. 'You are contributing to clean water, food, education, health, agriculture, jobs training, infrastructure, improved policing and public servants – all vital to helping developing countries look after their own people'. The website gives some statistics on the impact of Australian aid, for example that in East Timor they have been able to improve primary education enrolment rates from 64% in 2005 to 86% in 2010, and in Vanuatu the incidence of malaria has been reduced by 80% all achieved with support from Australia. Some people might ask if it is expensive, but the answer is quite surprising. Many people think that about 16% of the Australian aid budget is spent on aid, but the reality is 1.4% of

the Australian budget is spent on aid. Would you like to know more about this? Well you could check out the website link at

<http://goodaidworks.com.au/success-the-big-picture-statistics/>

QSA is preparing some educational packages to share with Meetings and community groups and we would be happy to put you in touch with your local organiser so that you can attend and learn more. Please contact Jackie in the QSA office, [administration@qsa.org.au](mailto:administration@qsa.org.au) or phone weekdays 02 6989103.

### Climate change in Uganda and adaptations by St Jude College of Organic Agriculture

As noted in the UK Department for International development's 2008 report on climate change in Uganda, 'its climate is naturally variable and susceptible to flood and drought events which have had negative socio-economic impacts in the past. Human induced climate change is likely to increase average temperatures in Uganda by 1.5 degrees C in the next 20 years and by 4.3 degrees C by the 2080s. Such rates of increase are unprecedented. The climate in Uganda may become wetter on average and the increase in rainfall may be unevenly distributed and occur as more extreme or more frequent periods of intense



**Cane cutters at work in Krakor District, Cambodia.**  
**Photo: Em Ponna, Cambodia**



**Learning organic farming**  
methods at St Jude in Uganda.  
**Photo: QSA**

rainfall.' Uganda is highly vulnerable to climate change and variability as its economy and the wellbeing of its people are tightly bound to climate. In particular, climate change is likely to mean increased food insecurity, shifts in the spread of diseases like malaria; soil erosion and land degradation; flood damage to infrastructure and settlements and shifts in the productivity of agricultural and natural resources. These impacts can be moderated with early adaptation strategies.

QSA has most recently supported St Jude in its work with rural women farmers and school children in Lwengo and Rakai districts in Uganda. Four women's groups (140 women farmers) have been recipients of a program that has focussed on increasing water and food security through the provision of training in integrated organic farming practices specifically designed for uneducated rural women, and the training and provision of underground water storage pits. The outcome is that

these women farmers are now able to provide food for their families from a diverse selection of crops, resulting in better nutrition and a change in thinking beyond a few dietary staples. The project is making remarkable progress in improving food security and income for the participants. In the last quarterly report no family reported any food deficit. Josephine Kizza, Director at St Jude cited the use of organic inputs, conservation of soil and integration of livestock into crop production as key to the boosting of food crop yields and consumption of nutritious meals.

A challenge identified in this report however is sustainability and avoidance of family food shortages during different periods of the year, in particular when the weather is not so favourable. St Jude has planned ongoing work with farmers to look at the comparative advantages of food security over growing crops to generate an income and how to strike a balance between the two. Another issue identified is the inability of farmers to

put aside seeds at harvest for planting in the following season. The intention by Josephine and her staff is to develop a safe way for farmers to store seeds through experimentation with a range of approaches and techniques to reduce destruction by rodents and fungi.

These are clear examples of how a local organisation with specialist knowledge about the local environment, agricultural systems and communities, is working with these communities to improve food and water security and livelihood conditions, reducing vulnerability and enabling vulnerable people and communities to be able to better plan for, adapt and respond to the uncertainties that climate change will bring.

Kate Bandler and 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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