



QSA Notes

people, places & projects

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Partnerships: QSA and St Jude Family projects.
Photo credit - QSA



Some of QSA Management Committee at the launch of the annual brochure. L-R Glyn Naunton, Michael Morrissey, Chloe Mason, Tom Dundas, John Dundas, Garry Duncan. **Photo credit - QSA**

Pleased but saddened

We are pleased to report that the latest round of cuts to the Australian Aid budget have not had an impact on QSA's funds for the 2015 – 2016 project year. We are saddened however by the Australian government's continued reduction in prioritisation and funds for the most vulnerable. QSA supports statements on these cuts made by the peak body for international development NGOs, the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).

Quality, Effectiveness, Impact, and Accreditation

What are QSA's quality assurance processes? Are our development programs effective? Is risk managed well? Are our



partnerships genuine? Are our processes and activities evidence based? Does QSA's work truly reflect QSA's values and principles? These and many more questions come to mind when thinking about how to measure and assess the effectiveness, quality and the impact of QSA's work. Internally, QSA is guided by its Theory of Change which depicts how Quaker values, QSA's ways of working (our systems and approaches and ways we operationalise our development work) and our development principles create the context which informs and underpins the outcomes and impact of our work. We see our work as a dynamic, living, breathing process shaped by a continuous loop of reflection and learning, with opportunities for growth by everyone involved. Some aspects QSA has some control over, while others are influenced by a greater range of external forces and contexts, such as political instability or policy shifts in Australia or in the countries where our project partners are located. Alongside internal regulatory processes there are two key external ones which assess QSA's governance, programs,

partnerships and financial management through a range of lenses including – quality assurance, effectiveness/impact, risk and value for money. For QSA this is a chance to benchmark ourselves against other organisations in the sector, as well as an important opportunity for review and reflection, and for growth and learning that challenges, improves and strengthens the work of QSA.

The first regulatory process assesses QSA's compliance with the ACFID Code of Conduct – 'a voluntary self-regulatory sector code of good practice which aims to improve international development outcomes and increase stakeholder trust by enhancing transparency and accountability for signatory organisations' (<http://www.acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct/code-of-conduct>). The code of conduct was developed by ACFID members in 1997 and comprehensively revised in 2010. QSA has complied with the Code as a member of ACFID since its inception, and has been actively involved over the years on the Code's continual development, providing input from the perspective of smaller



Right: Risk: Beautiful garden contouring to conserve water however seeds planted were of poor quality and did not sprout. Poor quality seed is an issue in many developing countries. Photo credit - QSA



international NGOs. QSA most recently completed the annual self-assessment in February 2015.

Every five years QSA is also assessed by the Australian Government Aid agency, currently a section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), through a rigorous accreditation process. With DFAT accreditation QSA is then able to access funding from the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). From a DFAT perspective accreditation is a risk management tool that both (i) assesses Australian NGO's governance, program management capacity and partnership management, as well as community links and community financial support for NGO international development activities, and (ii) assures DFAT that the NGO is a 'professional well-managed, community-based organisation capable of delivering good development outcomes' (ANCP, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework, 2012) qualifying them to receive ANCP funds.

The process itself involves the NGO submitting a detailed agency profile – a thorough written presentation of all

aspects of the organisation and its work. This is reviewed and followed-up on with a 2-3 day agency visit by three external consultants who meet with staff and board members and review our documents and hard copy files and folders to compare our theory with our practice. QSA recently completed the DFAT accreditation process and has received a summary report recommending it retain its full accreditation for the next 5 years.

One example from the accreditation is a request to see how QSA demonstrates to a wider audience including project participants and the communities where the projects are being run, that the funding in part comes from the people of Australia, through the Australian Aid Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. To comply with this request for recognition, QSA asks its project partners to identify resources purchased as part of QSA – DFAT funded projects. On a recent monitoring visit to Cambodia Jackie found examples in Kampong Thom Province, shown above and on the previous page

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Below: Program effectiveness: St Jude Family Projects climbing frame designed for people with physical frailty or disability as a support to access climbing vegetables. Photo credit - QSA



QSA is a member of the Australian Council for International Development, 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 culturally sensitive, as well as being economically and environmentally appropriate and sustainable.

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