



QSA Notes

people, places & projects

KATE BANDLER | QSA MONITOR



George and Ruth in their garden.



George with the new gumboots and wheelbarrow.



Matoke is a staple food crop in Uganda.



Patrick and his daughter Grace.



Patrick and Grace's home.

Working with small holder farmers living with disabilities in rural Uganda

The Kyadondo Support Initiative for People Living with Disabilities (KYASIPED) has piloted livelihood activities with small holder farmers living with disabilities and farmers with children with disabilities, since 2010. KYASIPED over this period has expanded its work to 35 farmers and their families across 5 sub-counties in Wakiso district and become an independent, membership driven non-government organisation registered as a farmers' association with the Ministry of Agriculture. Through their activities KYASIPED seeks to transform discriminatory attitudes and educate the community and families about disability. They support their members to develop year round food security through the practice of integrated organic farming in their gardens and sustainable livelihood projects such as the collective marketing of surplus vegetables and high income cash crops. Through these activities people living with disabilities are seen as contributing in new ways in their families and communities, which can in turn support a

growing self-esteem and the empowerment of members. People living with disabilities in Uganda can face a myriad of challenges some of which can include stigma, and discrimination, a belief that they have nothing to contribute and are a burden on their families and communities, and a lack of access to key services including health care, social support services, financial institutions and education. KYASIPED is discovering that each member is unique in terms of their strengths, experiences, disabilities, skills, supports and the challenges they face, requiring flexibility in time-frames, goal planning and KYASIPED support. For some members working to see themselves as capable and able is a core goal and achievement, and required if the integration of new skill and knowledge supporting livelihood strategies is to take hold. Strategies like communal work and saving schemes, and advocacy work with local leaders, organisations and communities assists the members and KYASIPED in their endeavours.

These photos and conversations were had between Kate Bandler (QSA monitor) and KYASIPED members and staff on her recent visit to Uganda in June 2015.

In their garden discussing the items and costs required to grow a range of vegetables of a quality and quantity that generates profit when sold at local markets, George explained to Kate, that before their membership of KYASIPED they only grew a few vegetables and fruit for food which was seasonally dependent. The dry season was particularly difficult for them, with their water source some distance away so they were required to carry large quantities of water for their crops. Since receiving training in organic agriculture from St Jude and KYASIPED 18 months ago they now grow for market and are able to produce vegetable and fruit year round. They have improved the quality of their soil and their crops, in particular the matoke (banana) plantation which is a staple food crop in Uganda. George and his daughter were keen to show Kate the gumboots and wheelbarrow they had received through QSA Living Gifts and demonstrated the positive addition these items had made to their daily tasks in the garden. George and Ruth have a number of children who are in school– they proudly discussed their ability to pay school fees, however their teenage daughter has a developmental



KYASIPED Masulita women's group working in their communal garden.



From right to left: Josephine Kizza, Director of St Jude, the KYASIPED team – Rachael, Simon and Bibiana Namusisi, and Josephine Nakakande from Eco-Agric (a new project partner with QSA).

disability and requires closely supervised support. With additional income the family have been able to invest in other income generating activities like Kuroiler chicken (a hybrid chicken which can eat scraps but grows faster, is more disease resistant and produces more eggs than the indigenous chickens). Their immediate challenges are water for their crops, which they plan to resolve by digging a water 'pit' for harvesting water during the dry season; and tracking their expenditures effectively, which is something KYASIPED plans to conduct further training in. George also described his recent visits to local markets and some of the issues a vendor can face – negotiating the rent of a stall, where to sit in the market for effective selling, and the lack of information and knowledge in the community about the value of buying organic produce.

This led to a more general discussion with the KYASIPED Coordinator and St Jude director about awareness raising in communities on the value of organic produce in terms of cost effective farming practices, environmental protection and health. QSA hub meetings bringing project partners together were identified as a forum where project partners can plan how to raise issues like this in advocacy forums and identify ways to tackle issues like this locally.

Patrick, Grace and their daughter showed Kate around their home gardens. They spoke of the change to their diets now

that they were growing a variety of fruit, vegetables and spices. Their food security as a family had improved. The new farming practices they were integrating onto their land included contouring, sack mounds and vertical gardens, complimentary planting, and use of suitable spacing and rows/circles depending on crop. They were also making liquid soap as taught at St Jude, however they had some marketing concerns and questions as they could only afford to sell it in used plastic bottles and felt it needed to be sold in containers specifically designed for this purpose. Patrick spoke of his daughter's developmental disability as a result of malaria as a young child. While a teenager in years she is a young child in nature and can do some work with him in the garden with regular supervision. Grace spoke of the positive change in the family with her husband and herself working together with goals they had agreed to as a family, for the first time. She felt they valued each other more and that there was a new harmony in the family.

Child protection is an ongoing issue KYASIPED is grappling with and discussing with its members. KYASIPED staff and members have explained that parents with children living with disability can face a range of challenges. Children living with disabilities, like adults, can be discriminated against and isolated in their families, communities and schools. Lack of knowledge and information about different types of disabilities can add to the

occurrence of deliberate or unintentional harm. They can be exposed to stigma, physical and sexual abuse, and neglect and/or not included in the usual opportunities and hopes a parent or community may have for a child without a disability. Parents may have hopes for their children with disabilities but not have access to the limited range of services and supports available including access to health care (from diagnosis to treatment for chronic conditions, appropriate nutrition, and the skilled educators their children may require). Caregivers of children who require constant support and care are usually women who are already tasked with a broad range of daily responsibilities. Even where there is strong family and community regard for a child with a disability, these complex challenges can be compounded by food, water and income security concerns. KYASIPED is seeking to tackle child protection directly through training days and regular discussions with families and communities on needs and strategies. This is complemented by working with families to improve their ability to provide for their families. In 2015 – 2016 the KYASIPED members will start up a savings group with the explicit goal of being able to access loans to support their ability to meet their children's food, health and educational needs.

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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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