



QSA NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 6 – October 2015

***Welcome** to the latest QSA Newsletter where you will meet new people, learn about our projects and join us in helping to change lives. In this edition we visit the people and projects working to address climate change.*

People

Meet Josephine Kizza, Director of St Jude Organic Farming Training Centre, Uganda

QSA's project partner at St Jude, an organic farming training centre in Uganda, has recently been commended for its work in agriculture. In August 2015 Josephine, one of 12 finalists in the Great Lakes Regional Awards for the most influential female CEOs in the business and government sector, received the award for agriculture. She said afterwards 'This is recognition of the work we do together as a team because you cannot achieve this kind of success alone'.

Photo credit – CEO Global, a publishing firm based in South Africa



Projects addressing Climate Change



Photo credit Dabane Water Workshops

QSA has recently supported its project partner **Dabane Water Workshops** in **Zimbabwe**, to modify their existing hand-pumps to utilise renewable solar energy rather than human labour. Twenty years ago Dabane introduced hand pumps to communities in Gwanda District, Matabeleland Region, Zimbabwe to source water from dry river beds and dams, to pump it to reservoirs close to their

community gardens from which the food garden beds could easily be irrigated. With the ageing of garden group members, the labour required to hand-pump was becoming prohibitive for those frail or chronically ill members, resulting in the gardens slowly becoming inoperative. QSA supported the development of the solar-powered pumps in the first year of the project, and the piloting of these pumps in six gardens, coupled with training to strengthen and revitalise these groups. Activities were designed to build-up the skills and confidence of the predominantly women members – the primary users of water – to increase their active representation on water committees, improve maintenance and repair skills to manage the infrastructure and technology, and enhance group and project management skills to develop their own initiatives into the future. The main advantage is that the use of the solar powered pumps dramatically reduced the amount of time women were required to labour to fill the reservoirs, from five hours to two hours of solar pumping, enabling women to spend more time with their families, in their gardens and undertaking other livelihood and community activities.

The development of locally replicable and repairable technologies based on renewable energies like these pumps is essential for smallholder farmers and communities, inclusive of the most vulnerable, to sustain themselves year round and to withstand a myriad of possible environmental, political, economic and social risks/shocks. Climate change is a recurrent and growing issue in an already semi-arid region, with extended dry seasons and changing rainfall patterns requiring farmers to have to adopt new approaches to ensure they have a secure future. Dabane incorporates training on the use of drought resistant seeds, farming practices that focus on water conservation and improved soil quality, and activities which build up the resilience and knowledge of groups and communities to work together, innovate and find sustainable ways forward.

Below are three key members of the Dabane project team who led the development of the solar powered pumps work in the Gwanda communities. They are holding the gold medal award Dabane Water Workshops won for best display at the water Sanitation Hygiene and Energy (WASHen) conference, 'Innovation for Sustainable Development' in Harare, September 2015. On display was the QSA supported portable solar powered pumps, the Sand River Water Harvesting System and Rowa hand-pumps, all technologies used by Dabane to promote access to clean potable water for domestic purposes, livestock drinking and small-scale irrigation systems.



Photo credit – Dabane Water Workshop

In the Sustainable Development Goals, number 13 tells us to 'Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts'. This is something which development agencies such as QSA and its project partners have been evaluating and assessing as the impacts have been noticed. Such examples

include, making it necessary to dig deeper well shafts to reach water sources in the dry season. In **Cambodia** this has meant an additional three or four metres of concrete collars is necessary for each well shaft that is created, adding to the cost for rural families. In **Tamil Nadu at Nadukuppam Forest, South India** the wind generated bore well needs to be extended about 30 metres to reach water in the dry season. You are invited to support this work through the Living Gifts catalogue. Storms are another impact, coming with greater intensity and less predictability than before. As a result of a cyclone, inland Kampong Thom in Cambodia was flooded a few years ago, causing loss of crops, properties and animals. **Pitchandikulam Forest** in coastal Tamil Nadu was severely affected by a cyclone in December 2011 and the forest area is still being replanted with hundreds of indigenous trees grown from locally sourced seeds.



Flooding in Cambodia a few years ago, and below, the impact of the cyclone in 2011 at Pitchandikulam Forest, bringing down large trees, destroying homes and making it difficult to get aid and resources to those most in need.



Seed saving takes on a whole new significance; recent varieties of seedlings which used to flourish are now not as productive whereas the older varieties give better results, grown using seeds saved previously. Patches of higher ground, natural or created, are being sought as temporary shelter for cattle in times of floods in **Cambodia**, and to ensure rice and other food crops can be stored safely to be shared in times of hardship such as in the rice bank in **Prek Chrey Village** near to the border with Vietnam, especially as this border is the Bassac River which frequently does spill over its bank during heavy rain.

QSA's project partners are helping the communities they work with to become more resilient and able to move more quickly to seek solutions to these problems rather than waiting for government assistance or a hand-out. They have trained people and competent committees, and stored resources. For the staff themselves, there are regional and national networks and committees to share knowledge and resources. Mobile phones are a good tool in times of crisis to quickly spread the news via 'telephone trees'. And within countries, training is being received. For one of QSA's project partners, **St Jude in Uganda**, its director Josephine Kizza has been one of eight people in the country to be trained as a '*climate change champion*' which will facilitate greater skills and knowledge through the training centre there.

What this is showing us is that all communities are being impacted by climate changes, and that without assistance and mitigation measures, climate change will rapidly exacerbate poverty and inequality. There is considerable evidence that global warming could undo decades of development achievements and seriously threaten future development options, causing millions more people to live in poverty. And we have a part to play in all of this, by examining our own use of fossil fuels, how we access and utilise resources, how far our food travels before it gets to our table, and what lifestyle choices we are making that impact on the options of others.

Useful links and resources

There are many websites which share some solutions and ideas about these issues.

The Climate Institute <http://www.climateinstitute.org.au/our-work-landing-page.html>

Australian Government's Department of the Environment -

<https://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change>

350 Australia – part of a global movement taking action to halt the climate crisis

<http://350.org.au/about/>

Greenpeace <http://www.greenpeace.org/australia/en/what-we-do/climate/>

The Climate Council, providing independent, authoritative climate change information to the Australian public - <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/>

These websites listed above represent such a small number of the wealth of information which is currently available to us, so apologies if your favourite website is not listed there.

Living Gifts support the work of QSA. By giving a **Living Gift** to a friend or colleague you are helping our partners in India, Cambodia, Uganda, Timor-Leste, Zimbabwe or Indigenous Australia to improve access to services and increase knowledge, skills and community expertise. See QSA's website on <http://gsa.org.au/Home/tabid/36/Default.aspx> for more details.



Local measures by Ugandan farmers – underground water storage pit and fuel efficient stove

Permission has been given for the photos, credit QSA unless otherwise stated.

Would you like to learn more about QSA and its project partners? If you would, please contact us at administration@gsa.org.au or by mail at 119 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010, or by phone on 029698 9103. We would love to hear from you.



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