

# AACES

## AUSTRALIA AFRICA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SCHEME

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear reader, welcome to the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme (AACES) newsletter – a quarterly publication for partners in Australian and the 11 AACES African countries. We at the resource facility hope that this publication will be useful in sharing information, program highlights and approaches, and lessons learnt.

We thank partners who shared with us stories, photos and highlights published in this edition. We also welcome comments and suggestions regarding issues dealt with in this edition. If you have stories, information, photos or ideas you would like published, feel free to contact the editor, Douglas Waudo on: [d.waudo@acbf-pact.org](mailto:d.waudo@acbf-pact.org)

## Launch of AACES 2012-13 Annual Report

Intercontinental Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya on 4 March 2014. The guest of honour was H.E. Mr Geoff Tooth, Australia's High Commissioner to Kenya.

The launch, attended by over 40 participants, brought together representatives from the Kenyan Government, AACES Kenyan partners, disabled peoples organisations in Kenya as well as program beneficiaries. National, regional and international media were also present.

Speaking during the launch Mr Tooth said the annual report shows how Australian Government support to NGOs is improving peoples' lives and delivering more opportunities to the most marginalised and poor, including people with disability.

Acknowledging the great job that AACES partners are doing, the High Commissioner said that 'the annual report illustrates how the AACES program has transformed previously marginalised communities by improving access to safe water, appropriate sanitation and safe hygiene practices, provided vital health services and improved food security to people living in remote areas.'

Mr Tooth added that he was delighted to hear of the findings of the Report. 'I have visited many terrific AACES projects in my time as High Commissioner and it is inspiring to see how this report reflect our efforts to reach the poorest and most marginalised people in these communities.'

Mr Kinyua Kamaru, the Assistant Director of Agriculture at the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, speaking on behalf of the Kenyan government, recognised the partnership between AACES and the Government of Kenya in improving service delivery and influencing policies. 'As a government we look forward to reading the great work that AACES has been doing in the last one year in this annual report, and identifying more areas for collaboration and partnership,' says Mr Kamaru.

The AACES Annual Report is available at <http://aid.dfat.gov.au/Publications/Pages/aaces-annual-report.aspx>



**"This report is an impressive publication telling impressive stories of ordinary people living extraordinary lives."**

*H.E. Mr Geoff Tooth, Australia's High Commissioner to Kenya.*



For the last three years, Lisa Staruszkiewicz has worked on the AACES program as DFAT's First Secretary, Development Cooperation based at the Australian High Commission in Nairobi, Kenya. Lisa returned to Australia in February 2014 after her posting came to an end. She has been replaced by Leisa Gibson, whose profile is shared in this newsletter.

The resource facility had a chat with Lisa before she left Kenya on her experience working on the AACES program.

***As someone who has been involved in AACES since its inception till now, what are your greatest memorable moments in AACES?***

I really enjoyed participating in the Annual Reflection meetings. Seeing everyone together, openly discussing their projects and ideas, for me encapsulated the partnership approach at the program level and it's been a pleasure to be a part of those meetings. I've also loved all the field visits I've done – thanks to everyone that hosted me! Having the opportunity to really understand the projects and meet with the beneficiaries was awesome.

I'm really proud of how far we've come on the approach to Value for Money. I think as an area of analysis, it has huge potential to help us make more informed decisions and provides a new way to influence decision makers in our own organisations and beyond. I hope people are finding the VfM assessment as part of the MTR a positive and useful process.

***Generally speaking, in your view what are the key achievements of the AACES program in the last two years?***

You can read all about the achievements in the latest annual report! But aside from ALL those achievements, I'm really impressed that the partnership approach is really working. Partnership (as we all know) is a term that is bandied about a lot in development and it takes



Lisa Staruszkiewicz

***'I would encourage Australian and African NGOs to think about the issues that are important to them and to ask for meetings with DFAT staff to discuss them in person, over the phone, via short written briefs and through more targeted communications if that is appropriate to the issue. Some ideas might be taken up; others may not – but the dialogue between NGOs and between NGOs and DFAT is important and necessary for collective learning.'***

commitment from all sides to make it work. The collaboration that is occurring in certain countries, at the sector level and between particular NGOs has come further than I expected and I hope that the AACES model will inform donor - NGO relationships and NGO – NGO relationships more broadly.

**What do you think are some of the areas AACES needs to improve on as far as achieving its objectives is concerned?**

It's no secret that Objective 2 has been a bit harder than Objectives 1 and 3 for all of us to get our heads around. It has perhaps been difficult to see how learning that is being generated in the projects could inform (or influence) the Australian government's policies and programs in Africa. While it might be a challenge to influence the Australian Government's agenda, it doesn't mean one shouldn't try!

**If you have to tell the AACES partners three things, what will they be?**

I don't think I need to tell the AACES partners anything! Just keep doing a great job. Although, I'm sure Alice would want me to ask you to think carefully about what you put in your reports. We rely on your reports to know about the great things being achieved and to promote the program to a broader internal and external audience. Which is not to say that you shouldn't be open about challenges in your projects, because that is just as important for our understanding.

**What do you wish to see AACES achieve in the coming year?**

I'm confident individual projects will go from strength to strength in the coming year. Beyond that, in the 2013-14 ACES Annual Report, I'd like to read more about how engagement with government and other duty-bearers is positively impacting service delivery. In Year 2 there were a number of cases where we could see that giving citizens a platform to interact with service providers was making a difference to the quality and quantity of services delivered. I hope that there will be many positive stories emerging this year, and that these can be maintained, replicated and expanded.

## Leisa Gibson, incoming first secretary, development cooperation, DFAT, in her own words

My name is Leisa Gibson and I have just started work at the Australian High Commission in Nairobi on the AACES program. I have come to Kenya with my two kids, Jack and Sofia, and my husband, Jeremy. Jeremy and I actually met in Nairobi about 15 years ago, and we have wanted to come back here to work ever since.

I have been with DFAT (formally AusAID) for about 7 years. I have worked in their humanitarian and gender sections in Canberra and at our post in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Before joining the Australian government, I worked in the non-government sector, mainly on gender based violence with peak bodies, refugees and NGOs. I have lived and worked in France, Thailand, the Netherlands, Chile and India, and hope to keep up the gypsy life as long as I can (and my kids let me!).

I am very much looking forward to working with the AACES partners. I attended the recent launch of the AACES Annual Report and met some of you. I was impressed by the strength-based approach to the work of AACES NGOs, as well as the collaboration of the group. I hope to meet the rest of the AACES group in May in Uganda.

It is an exciting time for AACES, with the ongoing mid-term review. It will be interesting to see how we incorporate our learning through the review into the program for the next few years. I am also looking forward to greater involvement of our Australian Embassies in the program, with more communication and collaboration between AACES partners with each of the relevant Embassies for their countries.



Leisa Gibson with her family, Jeremy, Sofia and Jack

# The School WASH project transforming lives in Tanzania's communities

WaterAid in collaboration with local partners MAMADO, SEMA and HAPA are implementing School Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) project in five districts of Bahi, Chamwino, Singida Urban, Iramba and Nzega since April 2011. To date the project has benefited 27,716 pupils. The project has seen a change in hygiene behavior among the children, improvement in the school environment and improved attendance of menstruating girls.

## **Teacher's pride**

At Ugembe Primary School located in Nzega district, health education teacher Fatma Kipanta admits that her work has become easier and less stressful. *'The children are cleaner and more responsible about personal hygiene than in previous years,'* she says.

When Fatma arrived at the school three years ago, the first thing that struck her was the poor condition of the school environment. *"With only four drop holes for girls and boys (1300 pupils in total), the situation was bad. The toilets were filthy with a lot of open defecation going on around the school compound,"* she says.

However, three years later observing children using the newly WaterAid constructed toilets, it is encouraging to see them washing their hands with soap even among the youngest. There is a pair of flip-flops outside the toilets for those children who do not have shoes. *'The children now understand that diseases are spread from the toilet so they are careful to avoid contamination,'* said Fatma.

## **No Open Defecation in farms & bushes**

Ayubu habaan aged 39 lives on a farm next to Mangua Mitogho Primary School (a school located in the outskirts of Singida Township). He says the community around the school is the biggest beneficiary of the School WASH project. He says he is now happy to be living close to the school. *'The school children had turned my farm into a toilet, farming was very difficult and I filed many complaints at the school,'* Ayubu says as he reminisces.

However, after the new toilets were constructed, Ayubu says, he has noted a change not only in the school environment but also among the children as well. *'They no longer use my farm as a toilet, there is no litter that used to be all over the place and the children are cleaner than previously,'* he says, adding that as a member in the school committee, he is proud of the school. *'The school is amongst the cleanest around and my friend tells me they want to bring their children to study here,'* he adds.

## **The gospel of hand washing**

Jackson Mahumi owns a café in Dominick village, Mkalama district. He is also the father of 2 girls; Levina 12 and Nuru 9 who go to Dominick Primary School. Jackson says since the School WASH project began, hand washing with soap has become an integral practice in his home and café. *'The girls came home and told me about hand washing. In fact they made tippy taps<sup>1</sup> outside the café and toilet,'* he says. Jackson has since upgraded and bought a better hand washing facility for the café but the tippy tap remains in use outside his toilet. It is interesting as a result of Levina and Nuru's hand washing gospel that there are tippy taps outside all the cafes around the village.

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<sup>1</sup>The Tippy Tap is a simple device for hand washing with running water. A container with a small hole near the cap is filled with water and tipped with a stick and rope tied through a hole in the cap. As only the soap is touched with the hands, the device is very hygienic.



Students washing their hands with soap after using the toilet at Mangua Mitogho Primary School in Singida Township, Tanzania.  
Photo by Christina Chacha / WaterAid Tanzania



## Groups on Yammer

Yammer offers an exciting feature of joining a group as a way of communicating specific issues and topics within subsets of a network. Groups are a great way to reach a more targeted audience within the Yammer network. For instance, the AACES Yammer network notably has the following groups devoted to priority sectors and cross cutting issues: MCH, Food Security, WASH, Gender Equality among others. These groups can be joined by any Yammer member, and we will demonstrate later on how to join any of these groups.

The AACES Yammer network also has private groups that focus conversation on a particular topic. Some of these key groups include: the PSC and Objective 3 Communicators Forum groups. To join any of these private groups an invite has to be sent by the Administrator to join.

### Advantages of Groups on Yammer:

- Groups create a shared communication space. This helps to keep communication clear as it's easy to clarify misunderstandings.
- Groups make it easier to spot synergies (and save time and money).
- Groups help in learning through sharing of ideas, experience and knowledge on priority sectors and cross-cutting topics.
- Groups give AACES partners a dynamic platform to network and collaborate. Focusing on sharing learning and synergies in this way results in improvements to program results, efficiency and effectiveness.

### How to join a group

To join a group, follow these steps:

1. In the left column, click **GROUPS**. The Groups directory is displayed and shows you a list of all the groups that are in the network. This list includes private groups for which the creator of the group didn't clear the **List in Group Directory** box on the **Group Settings** page.
2. Rest the mouse on the group that you want to join, and then click + **Join**.
  - If you join a public group, you immediately become a member.
  - If you try to join a private group, an approval request is sent to that group's administrator or administrators. You become a member of the group when the group's administrator approves your request.

### How do I post a message to a group?

Once you are a member of the group, simply click the group's name in the left-hand column and then using the update field above the group feed. As a member, you can freely post information, initiate a discussion or contribute to the subject matter relating to your group. You can post and share information such as attachments, videos, and website links among others.

For more information about groups on Yammer, visit <http://kb.its.psu.edu/node/2516>

## Snapshots on Group on Yammer

- Follow topics and projects that interest you and stay on top of the latest activity in your sector priority by joining AACES Yammer Groups.
- Add coworkers and partners to the groups you are in and start collaborating right away.

About three hours north of Nairobi around a high, rocky hill is a collection of small huts. They are part of the more than 2,000 pastoral Maasai community of Naibor, in Kenya's Laikipia region. As one gets closer women can be seen trudging through the red dust daily with water containers on their backs. The lack of water in the community becomes increasingly apparent.

'We were in difficulties with water,' explains James Supa as he sits on a rock near the roadside. 'In the dry season, mothers have to walk to the river for water. It can take a whole day to fill their buckets with water.'

The little water they do find is often contaminated by animals or can only be reached by digging in the mud where the river used to flow, five kilometres from Naibor. Supa acts as a link person between The Road Less Travelled project (TRLT) and the Maasai, to ensure any development activities are locally-appropriate and meet the needs of the community. TRLT is a project of Anglican Overseas Aid, which works in partnership with a local organisation, the Mothers' Union of the Anglican Church in Kenya (MUACK).

The past few years have seen increasingly long dry spells in the Laikipia region, and the water shortages have worsened. When TRLT started and a community development committee was formed, the people of Naibor identified the chronic water shortage as a key challenge, and appealed for support from the project to alleviate the problem.

After community discussions, the suggestion was made to use the local environment and build a rock water catchment to store water during the rainy season. TRLT supported the initiative, which made use of local labour and resources to build two low walls along the hill's bare rock face, as well as a storage tank. The walls channel the rainwater down the rock face and into the tank for use during the long dry season, when water is scarce. The catchment was finished in April 2013. Now, says Community Chairman Letipipi Sena, less time will be spent collecting water. 'The women can now do many things in the day. They can do family work like washing or maybe some business or they can go and look for food for their children.'

Frederick Kimathi, a local resident who lives close to the water catchment, adds, 'So many people are benefitting from the project already.' The community also benefits greatly from a sense of ownership of the project. The phrase the Naibor Water Committee uses to talk about the catchment is 'kazi ya community' – Swahili for 'the work of the community'. They do not see it as something that has been given to them, but as something they have built themselves. 'We had the plan before as a community,' says Supa. "And we shared the idea with MUACK."

Everyone in the community contributed to the project, especially the women who now have four places on the Naibor Water Committee, which oversees the initiative. The Maasai in Naibor are turning their attention to other projects. 'We have developed other plans since there is water,' says Sena. 'We have decided to put up a vegetable plot here to teach the community about organic farming and to improve diets and nutrition.' This in turn will improve the general health of the community.

*This story was written by Chris McKeon, Writer and Production Assistant at Arete Stories.*



The completed water tank in Naibor community, Laikipia, Kenya. The local community now understands how to build more tanks that could serve other parts of Naibor. They are also more confident that they can solve their own problems, fuelled by the outcome of this project.

**Photo by Chris McKeon / AOA**

## AACES partners named in the Top 25 Maternal Health Tweeters

In early February 2014, The Road Less Travelled project (@ARLTAfrica) implemented by the Anglican Overseas Aid as well as CARE (@CARE), were honoured to be featured on the *Huffington Post* blog, in a list of 25 Leading Tweeters on Maternal Health.

The author, Jennifer James, is the Founder of Mom Bloggers for Social Good, a global coalition of over 2000 mothers who care about the world's most pressing issues.

The organisations and individuals that made Jennifer's top 25 are united by their efforts in 'sharing information that is focused on keeping more mothers alive during and after childbirth'.

The AACES partners are privileged to be included alongside the likes of Edna Adan, Women Deliver, the Wellbeing Foundation, Maternity Worldwide, the Maternal Health Task Force, and Every Mother Counts, among others – who are doing some truly outstanding work around the world to improve the health and wellbeing of women and children. Check more details on Yammer.



## AACES Annual Reflection & Program Steering Committee Meetings

The May 2014 Reflection and Program Steering Committee (PSC) meetings will both take place at the Speke Resort and Conference Center which is located in Munyonyo, Kampala, Uganda on 21-24 May 2014. The hotel is on the shores of Lake Victoria and about 12 kilometers from the Kampala City center.

To reserve a room, simply **submit by Friday 25 April, 2014 a completed confirmation form to Flavia Nzaaro at: [spekeresort@spekeresort.com](mailto:spekeresort@spekeresort.com)**. The form and other information on accommodation have been posted on Yammer.



H.E Mr Geoff Tooth, The Australian High Commissioner to Kenya (front row in red tie) posing for a photo with Kenyan AACES partners and project beneficiaries during the launch of AACES 2012-13 Annual Report in Nairobi on 4 March 2014. **Photo by DFAT.**

## AFRICAN PROVERB

**If you want to go quickly, go alone.  
If you want to go far, go together.**

FOR COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS CONTACT THE RESOURCE FACILITY: Ernest Etti: [e.etti@acbf-pact.org](mailto:e.etti@acbf-pact.org)

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