

AACES

AUSTRALIA AFRICA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SCHEME

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Cover Photo: Beneficiaries of the AACES program in Malawi. **Photo by** Caritas Malawi.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear reader, welcome to the 5th edition of the Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme (AACES) newsletter – a quarterly publication for AACES partners. 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

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Annual Partners Reflection Meeting

AACES held its 3rd annual reflection meeting on 21-23 May 2014 at the Speke Resort in Kampala, Uganda. The two and half day meeting brought together staff with responsibility for AACES in Australia and the 11 African countries where the program is being implemented. The purpose of the annual reflection meeting is to enable AACES partners to take stock of progress in implementation and to discuss, learn and brainstorm on various program themes and issues.

It provides AACES partners with a strong platform to network, strengthen relationships and collaborate to achieve greater impact through shared learning and synergies. This reflection meeting focused on the AACES Mid Term Review, and in particular on the findings and recommendations. AACES partners also had the opportunity to share their experiences and lessons about sustainable service delivery, promoting rights and accountabilities, value for money, disability and gender inclusiveness. Over 70 participants attended the meeting.

Presentations made during the meeting have been posted on the AACES Yammer platform under the topic: **Annual Reflection Meetings**.



AACES partners during the reflection meeting in Kampala, Uganda.
Photo By Douglas Waudo / AACES Resource Facility

New PSC Chair and Deputy Chair

Andrew Hartwich (Oxfam Australia) is the new Program Steering Committee (PSC) Chair, while Martin Mazinga (Caritas Malawi) is the new Deputy Chair. The two were elected during the PSC meeting that was held in Kampala, Uganda in May 2014. The PSC expressed their gratitude and thanks to the outgoing Chair and Deputy Chair, Elly Barrett (WaterAid Australia) and Margy Dowling (World Vision Australia), respectively.

The election of Martin Mazinga is part of the process for increasing the involvement of the African partners in the PSC. The PSC tasked Andrew and Martin to review the role of the PSC Chair and Deputy Chair, especially in the context of engaging with African partners and report back during the next PSC meeting.

In a bid to realise the rights of children and the community in accessing justice and promoting accountability in Uganda, Plan International is implementing a five-year program that promotes the rights of the marginalised people to enable them access appropriate services.

The program dubbed Promoting Rights and Accountabilities in African Communities (PRAAC) is implemented in the districts of Kamuli, Lira and Kampala (Kawempe division). PRAAC uses various implementation strategies including rights education, community awareness raising on rights and national laws, community dialogues, mobile legal aid clinics and mediation or alternative dispute resolution approaches in promoting, protecting and fulfilling human rights.

For sustainability of the program, Plan International trains government officials particularly Local Council leaders, clan and religious leaders, people with disability and community volunteers in the field of human rights and basic laws, and alternative dispute resolution. This is an effective way of increasing the capacity of duty bearers¹ to carry out their responsibilities, complementing the rights education strategies, which empower people to engage with duty bearers to promote access to justice and protection of legal, social and economic rights.

Empowered community

An example of the work of PRAAC is found in Kamuli district in Eastern Uganda. For the past three years, Plan International has been working in 52 villages in Kamuli, through rights awareness, developing the capacity of duty bearers and community volunteers and facilitating community dialogues to build on communities existing strengths and assets. This is done with the aim of supporting marginalised women and young people to be able to claim their rights and access appropriate services.

During the community dialogue forums, duty bearers provide information on the services of government offices. The forums also provide an opportunity for community members to engage duty bearers on particular issues as well as hold them accountable to provision of appropriate services.

‘Generally, the community appreciates community dialogue. They never had a chance before to openly discuss pertinent issues affecting them as well as hold duty bearers accountable, particularly the police. Now through these forums, the community has been empowered with knowledge and information and they are witnessing a significant change that is protecting their basic rights through access to appropriate services,’ says Ronald Mutalya, PRAAC Project Facilitator in Kamuli.



A resident of Kamuli during the interactive community dialogue. Photo by Douglas Waudo / AACES Resource Facility

¹ Duty bearers include probation and welfare officers, police officers in charge of children and family protection, criminal investigations, land and gender based violence units, health officers and the local council officers.

Some of the key issues discussed during the community dialogue forums include domestic violence, land rights, health and education rights for women and children, economic rights for women and people with disability, women's rights to land inheritance and making a will. Other issues include payment of services at government offices where service delivery is supposed to be free; mandatory stay in police custody; right to police bond; land disputes and land grabbing and what the law says.

'We have witnessed tremendous change since Plan International began working in our community,' says Richard Kagoda, Officer in charge of Family and Children Protection Unit at Kamuli Police Station. 'Cases involving gender based violence, child abuse, rape, and violation of human rights have drastically reduced,' Officer Kagoda says. He attributes the reduction to the efforts of Plan International in facilitating community dialogue forums, where community members engaged with duty bearers on a range of development, governance and human rights issues.



Richard Kagoda, Officer in charge of Family and Children Protection Unit at Kamuli Police Station interacts with women about gender-based violence during the community dialogue. **Photo By Douglas Waudo / AACES Resource Facility**

Through community dialogues, the information and knowledge available for community members in Kamuli, particularly women about their rights and how to access services has contributed to their overall wellbeing and development. For instance, Jessica, a resident of Kamuli says 'as a woman I can attest to the fact that these community dialogues have changed our lives. In particular they have changed the community, and more significantly men's attitudes towards women's roles and involvement in community matters.'

Women have also identified significant improvements in their well-being as a result of the knowledge and legal services safeguarding inheritance entitlements, including retention of land, housing and property. This has also contributed to the increase in confidence and active participation of women, girls and children in socio-economic activities in the community.

Residents of Kamuli together with AACES partners who paid them a visit during the community dialogue. Through community dialogues women can now speak freely during public meetings, and are being given equal opportunity as men to contribute their views during the meetings, something considered a taboo prior to the start of the PRAAC project. **Photo by Douglas Waudo / AACES Resource Facility**



Photography training for Marie Stopes Staff

Written by Leonie Burkett-Muller, AACES Project Manager, Marie Stopes International

Prior to the AACES Annual Reflection meeting in Kampala in May this year, Marie Stopes partners from Kenya, Tanzania and Australia had their annual planning workshop in Malindi, Kenya. During the final session of the workshop, we invited the AACES Resource Facility to conduct a photography training session for our staff.

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The training included how to identify a good photo, qualities of a good photo and also techniques of taking a good photo. The practical approach to the training was tailored using examples and pictures from within the AACES partnership, which was very much appreciated by participants and was highly engaging. Learning was conveyed using multiple examples of 'good versus bad' photos of the same type of photo to highlight points made. Overall, the training received high ratings in the workshop feedback evaluation.

The big lesson our staff got from the training was this: In the current environment, it is important to document impact and a good photo can be worth 'a thousand words'. Quality photos can hugely improve all forms of reporting and communication materials such as case studies and success stories.

Timing of the training could not have been better as a field trip was planned the next day: the newly acquired photography learning could directly be put into practice! The trip included visiting the Amani clinic, a social franchise of the Marie Stopes Kenya (MSK) accredited private provider network. We also visited the Mmangani dispensary-outreach site supported by an AACES outreach team where a large group of women were engaged in group family planning counseling as we arrived.

The photography training was timely for MSK, who will be running PhotoVoice² activities throughout AACES Year 4. The skills learned by MSK staff at the workshop will be rolled out to more field staff over coming months and in turn, this should benefit the youth participating in PhotoVoice activities. Participants from Marie Stopes Tanzania also found the training useful to build on and improve their PhotoVoice activities launched in previous years.



Photos taken by trainees during a practical photography field trip at Mmangani dispensary in Malindi County. **Left:** Medical workers training a group of women on the use of contraceptives. **Right:** A woman receiving a contraceptive implant.

² PhotoVoice is a technique used to build skills within marginalised communities using innovative participatory photography and digital storytelling methods so that they have the opportunity to represent themselves and create tools for advocacy and communications to achieve positive social change.

Written By Alfred Gumbwa, ACBF Librarian – Knowledge and Learning

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With the aim of promoting learning and sharing knowledge for effective program implementation, the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) who are managing the AACES Resource Facility have opened up its Virtual Library to all AACES partners.

AACES partners can access online knowledge resources on capacity development with a focus on Africa free of charge from the ACBF Virtual Library, which can be accessed on this link: <http://elibrary.acbfpact.org>. The virtual library is a digital library that offers fast access to full-text research and other publications by ACBF, its networks and partners.

The virtual library's collection comprises books, occasional papers, working papers, reports, development memoirs, lesson notes, conference papers etc. Several related databases, gateways, portals, e-journals, e-books and e-news and other online reference sources can also be accessed via the e-library.

The virtual library is designed to meet the needs of the research community based in Africa and beyond. Several publications related to the following AACES priority and thematic areas can be found in the library: food security, gender, climate change, and capacity development. The publications are downloadable and printable. A user is able to retrieve publications by browsing subjects, titles, authors or publishers. Users can save time by using the search facility.

The e-resources are copyright protected and users are encouraged to attribute the work in the manner specified by the copyright holder. Access URL to the virtual library is <http://elibrary.acbfpact.org>. For further information on the virtual library please feel free to contact me on Yammer or by email to a.gumbwa@acbf-pact.org.



Alfred Gumbwa/ACBF Librarian

Tips for using Yammer as a learning tool

1. **Share links to interesting topics** or resources
2. **Upload a shared page** to encourage others to review and give feedback
3. **Create an online poll** or survey
4. **Thank people** for their contributions
5. **Post an event or meeting** – let others know what is going on in your organisation
6. **Tag posts and documents with topics** so people can find them later.
7. **Make use of the sector groups** for smaller more focused conversations
8. **Upload photos and videos relating to your project** that will be resourceful to others
9. **'Like' a post** and comment on post to acknowledge you've read it and agree.

AACES Partners Field Visit in Uganda

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ActionAid and Plan International in Uganda conducted field visits aimed at learning and sharing of experiences within AACES. The field visits were organised to coincide with the annual reflection meeting in Kampala, Uganda. This allowed partners who participated in the visits to share with others their experiences and impressions.

The ActionAid trip provided AACES partners with a unique experience of the project contribution to the peace, recovery and development efforts of Kumi and Katakwi districts in Northern Uganda. Additionally, the trip offered partners an opportunity to interact directly with marginalised smallholder farmers and appreciate their experience on how the AACES program is supporting them to rebuild and strengthen their livelihoods.

Two groups of AACES partners who participated in the Plan International field trip visited activities in Kamuli district and in Kawempe division in Kampala district, respectively. Participants had opportunities to observe project-facilitated activities and interactions with duty bearers, community volunteers, project beneficiaries and the general community. The visit enabled AACES partners to observe and participate in community dialogues, interact with community members as well as duty bearers who shared their experiences and outcomes of the PRAAC project.



Community members in Katakwi district erupting into song and dance during AACES partners visit to the Usuk Community Seed Store that was constructed by ActionAid Uganda with support from the Australian Government. **Photo by Edwin Kimani / World Vision Kenya**



AACES partners during a courtesy call to Kamuli Police Station. The Kamuli Police work very closely with Plan International in promoting the rights of the marginalised people to enable them access appropriate services such as access to justice and protection of legal, social and economic rights. **Photo by Douglas Waudo / AACES Resource Facility**

‘This field trip has been very informative and educative to everyone. We have learned so much interacting with community members, duty bearers as well as among ourselves as AACES partners from different countries and different projects. It has also enabled us to share information, and learn from each other’s challenges, experiences and opportunities in the implementation of the AACES program.’

Marshal Mpokonya, AACES National Coordinator, Caritas Tanzania, participated in the Plan International’s Kamuli field trip.

EVENTS

- 26 September 2014 World Contraception Day
- 16 October 2014 World Food Day
- 24-25 November 2014 Field visit of AACES partners in Durban, South Africa
- 26-28 November 2014 Program Steering Committee meeting in Pretoria, South Africa
- 26 November – 10 December 16 2014 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence.
- 3 December 2014 - International Day of People Living with Disability



A group of AACES partners in one of the informal interaction and networking evenings during Annual Reflection meeting in Kampala, Uganda. Photo by Douglas Waudo / AACES Resource Facility

AFRICAN PROVERB on Partnership

Cross the river in a crowd and the crocodile won't eat you.

FOR INQUIRIES OR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT US AT: THE RESOURCE FACILITY,
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