

AACES

AUSTRALIA AFRICA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SCHEME

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the first edition of the Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme (AACES) newsletter – a quarterly e-publication on the activities by partners in the 11 African countries. We at the Resource Facility are excited to launch this publication and hope that it will help improve internal communication and sharing of information between AACES partners. In future we intend to profile case studies and human interest stories from AACES NGOs. We welcome your ideas and suggestions for future publications. We wish you all a rewarding and enjoyable reading.

If you have any ideas or topics for future issues of the AACES Newsletter, contact the editor Christine Christine Atieno on:

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THE RESOURCE FACILITY WELCOMES NEW STAFF MEMBER



The African Capacity Building Foundation is pleased to welcome Ms Christine Atieno, who joined the staff of the Resource Facility as a Program Assistant in March 2013.

Before joining the Resource Facility,

Christine worked with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) where she supported the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional offices in implementing the Young Child Survival and Development program. She also served as the Communications Assistant in the UNICEF Kenya Country office. She has also previously worked for the United Nation's World Food Program (WFP) in the Emergency Drought Operations (EMOP) program that covered various districts in Kenya.

Christine holds a Bachelor of Communications degree from Daystar University in Kenya. She will be based in the ACBF office in Nairobi. Christine's interests include keeping abreast on development issues in the social media and current affairs. She is looking forward to getting to know and work with all AACES partners.

The 2011-12 Annual Report

The recently released inaugural AACES Annual Report 2011-12 shows innovation and sustainability that the program has had in its first year of operation.

The report shows that AACES had a positive impact on food security by assisting 13 000 households to adopt new agricultural technologies and sustainable farming practices; supporting 3300 households to access farm inputs; and helping 12 500 households to access new and improved agricultural services. AACES supported women farmers by distributing livestock and promoting off-farm income generating activities.

During 2011-12, AACES successfully reached marginalised communities in rural and remote areas with vital health services. As a result, more than 30 000 people accessed a modern family planning method and over 20 000 children received life-saving vaccines. Support was also directed towards strengthening health systems for improved maternal and child care through training of community health workers. This resulted in more than 1700 baby deliveries through clean and safe practices.

The water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) component of the program also delivered strong results. The construction and rehabilitation of water supply and sanitation facilities in communities and schools increased access to safe drinking water for 42 000 people, with 18 500 others having started using improved sanitation facilities. As a result, there was a reduction in the numbers of diarrhoea cases and conveniently situated water points reduced the time spent fetching water from distant sources.

Strong partnerships remained critical to the success of the program. Drawing on the partnerships established so far, program partners have been able to leverage resources, share best practices and successfully work with governments, community groups and various other stakeholders.

The work undertaken in 2011-12 has thus demonstrated commitment, innovation and sustainability for this five year program in order to save lives for the poor and marginalised communities.

For the full version of the report please visit: <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/Publications/web/aaces-annualreport/Pages/home.aspx>

Year 1 Review

Interview with Phillip Walker, the current AACES Program Steering Committee (PSC) Chairperson

The Resource Facility had an interview with the current Chairperson of the Program Steering Committee – Phillip Walker before the end of his tenure in June 2013 to get his views of the program during the foundational year.

Question: How do you view your first year as the AACES PSC Chair?

The focus during 2011-12 has been on getting to grips with the Chairperson's role, understanding what is expected and undertaking those activities. On the one hand obviously, fulfilling the task has increased my workload. On the other, it has not been as onerous as I had anticipated. This is because of the strong support that I have received from the AusAID team in Nairobi, the AACES partners and the Resource Facility. Certainly as I approach the end of my term, the duties that the PSC Chairperson is expected to fill are now much clearer than when I started. I am looking forward to a smooth transition to the incoming Chairperson, who will be elected at our next meeting in June. While 2011-12 has been all about consolidation I think the next PSC Chair will be in a position to provide stronger leadership for the program.

Question: What have been the key achievements of the AACES program during 2011-12?

Perhaps the most important achievement during the year has been the completion of essential tasks required to get programs established and functioning by the various AACES partners – which is more challenging than it sounds on paper. And we are already seeing some impressive accomplishments with regards to improvements in the communities that the AACES partnership works with. These achievements are captured in the first AACES Annual Report which was recently published.



Phillip Walker

“We are clearer on where we want to go and how to get there. An environment has been created for open debate, and, equally important, being prepared to take decisions and then apply them.”

A major emphasis of AACES is application of a partnership model, considering that collective wisdom and strength has greater impact than acting as individual entities. In my opinion the PSC has solidified this year. We are clearer on where we want to go and how to get there. An environment has been created for open debate, and, equally important, being prepared to take decisions and then apply them. PSC members have voluntarily come forward to participate on the various sub-committees that we have established. There is positive team spirit and genuine mutual support. We all recognize that a weakness within one is a negative reflection upon all of us, and really we all want AACES and African development to be a success.

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Photo: John Estey - CARE

PARTNERSHIP SURVEY 2013

The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) on behalf of AACES partners has launched the second AACES Partnership Survey. The survey is being conducted from 28 March – 19 April 2013. The major aim of the survey is to capture the independent views and perceptions of AACES partners on how the partnership is operating in practice.

The results of the survey will help improve how partners work together and ultimately improve the impact and effectiveness of the AACES program. The partnership survey will be conducted annually during the life of the AACES program. Last year's survey conducted in August was completed by 33 AACES partners, representing a response rate of 73.3 per cent.

The key principles of the AACES partnership are trust, flexibility, accountability, mutual respect, collaboration, transparency, learning and a commitment to the cause of poor and marginalised people.

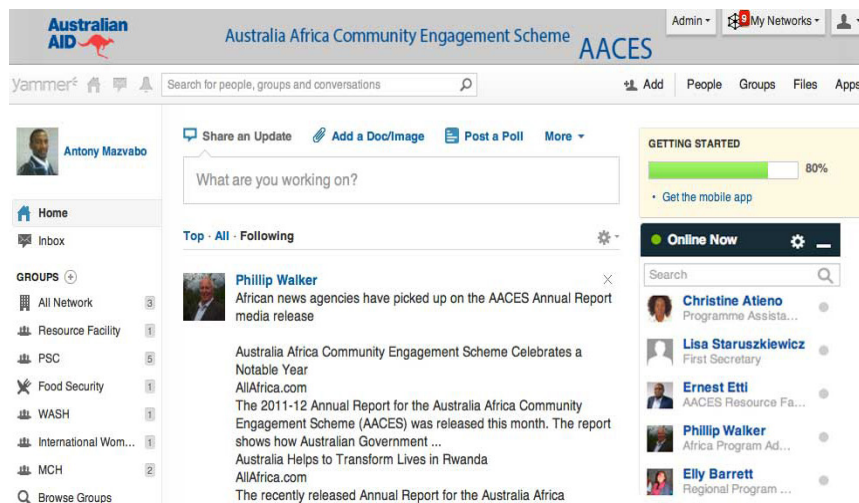
The AACES Resource Facility Coordinator, Ernest Etti, said "It is important that all AACES partners participate in the survey. The findings will be discussed in the June 2013 AACES Reflection Meeting and will allow for continuous improvement in partnership relationships within AACES".

Question: What do you wish to see the program achieving in the coming year?

The coming year (2013-14) represents the mid-way point for AACES and we are planning a mid-term review. The review has a special focus on lessons learned to date to help us into the final stages. The primary objective of AACES is to improve the well-being of targeted communities across selected sites in eleven African countries. As we have now completed the establishment functions I anticipate that we will put stronger emphasis on delivery and rollout. This means that the real impact of the program will start to kick in. While delivery will increase there will be some adjustments as lessons from the mid-term review are taken on board. I think we will also start to see a bit more of a focus on the other two AACES objectives; not too great as the significance will probably really only come to fore in the last two years of program implementation. Yet there will be a start to feedback and influence on policies from lessons learned and research undertaken. And the discussion with the Australian community on African development will step up some more, as organisations have more tangible results to report. Ultimately, along with having a meaningful impact on the target communities, I believe that the AACES model can constructively influence the donor community and governments on ways to interact and work with civil society organizations. And that has to be to the benefit of all.



Photo: Christof Krackhardt - Foto Organico



The launch of the AACES network on Yammer on 15 January has seen increased activity from signed-up members. Feedback from partners thus far has focused on how Yammer is familiar and easy-to-navigate – due to its design which is closely similar to that of popular social collaboration portals such as Facebook.



Compared to the previous communication portal on GroupSites, signed-up members seem to be much comfortable with Yammer as statistics show that there are more private messages than public posts on the platform; thanks to real-time chat and email notification features. Yammer makes it easy to engage in common tasks that allow multiple people to edit the same online document, as well as organizing events.

Several groups have already been formed on the platform to share information and lessons. These include groups for Food Security, WASH and MCH sectors.

AACES partners who would like to join the AACES network on Yammer should contact the Resource Facility.

PROVERBS FROM ZIMBABWE

Matakadya kare haanyaradze mwana

|| matakājga kare haānyārādze' muanā

English: Telling a hungry baby about food it ate yesterday won't stop it from crying.



EVENTS

28 March – 19 April

Partnership Survey - The major aim of the survey is to capture the independent views and perceptions of AACES partners on how the partnership is operating in practice.

30 April

Launch of the AACES 2011-12 Annual Report by AACES partners in Tanzania.

22-23 June

Field Visit (Kilindi) – The field visit will see the Maternal and Child Health project being implanted by World Vision in Kilindi, Kenya. More information on this field visit will be posted on Yammer.

24 June

Value for Money Workshop - The AACES M&E Framework includes a Value for Money assessment process to assess the merit or worth of the program, and also to help guide improvements during implementation.

Venue: Double Tree by Hilton Hotel, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

25-26 June

Reflection Workshop - The workshop aims to provide an opportunity for AACES partners to reflect and learn from the first 2 years of the program, network, discuss good practice and propose ways to improve program outcomes.

Venue: Double Tree by Hilton Hotel, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

27-28 June

Program Steering Committee Meeting - The meeting will discuss progress in implementation of the AACES program. A new Chair of the PSC will also be elected.

Venue: Double Tree by Hilton Hotel, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

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