

**AUSTRALIA AFRICA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
SCHEME (AACES)**

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Between

ActionAid Australia, AFAP, Anglicord, AusAID, CARE Australia,
Caritas Australia, Marie Stopes International Australia,
Oxfam Australia, Plan International Australia, Water Aid Australia and
World Vision Australia
(AACES Partners)

14 October 2011

Introduction

The Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme (AACES) is the largest non government organisation (NGO) program funded within AusAID's Africa program. The overarching intention of AACES is to *"enable Australian NGOs and their partners to contribute to the AusAID strategy for Africa, through a partnership program focused on community-based interventions across the sectors of water and sanitation, food security, and maternal and child health¹".*

The April 2011 Government's Aid Policy statement "An Effective Aid Program for Australia" identified NGOs as bringing particular strengths to the Australian aid program including geographic reach, expertise and flexibility in responding to development needs and important community-based perspective on aid policy. The AACES Design Document identified Australian NGOs and their Africa based partners as having similar strengths. During the AACES design phase three objectives were developed to draw on these strengths in order to promote sustainable access to services and utilise the NGOs' experience to inform AusAID programs. The three objectives are:

Objective 1: marginalised people have sustainable access to the services they require

Objective 2: AusAID policies and programs in Africa are strengthened particularly in their ability to target and serve the needs of marginalised people

Objective 3: The Australian public is more informed about development issues in Africa.

AACES has been designed to undertake a partnership approach to achieve greater efficiencies and impact of development outcomes. These results are expected to be achieved by capitalising on individual NGO strengths and expertise through creating relationships built on trust, open and regular sharing of information and active collaboration between AACES partners.

AACES Partners

The AACES partnership consists of many relationships including between AusAID and the ten Australian AACES NGOs, between the Australian AACES NGOs and their partner NGOs based in Africa and between individual AACES NGOs.

Australian NGO representatives will sign this document on behalf of their NGO partners in Africa.

- a. The Australian AACES NGO partners are: ActionAid Australia, AFAP, Anglicord, CARE Australia, Caritas Australia, Marie Stopes International

¹ Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme Program Design Document June 2011

Australia, Oxfam Australia, Plan International Australia, Water Aid Australia, and World Vision Australia.

Individual Africa-based NGOs are invited to also demonstrate their commitment to the principles of this agreement by signing the supplementary signature page, depending upon the internal arrangements and decisions with their Australian NGO partners.

Other partnerships involved in implementing AACES, including those with communities, partner government and community-based organisations are not covered by this Partnership Agreement.

Purpose

This Partnership Agreement commits AACES partners to a set of principles for communication and interaction in order to fulfil the objectives of AACES by:

- building strong relationships between AACES partners;
- strengthening mutual accountability and transparency;
- demonstrating results and sharing information and knowledge; and
- providing mutual learning for the improvement of development work.

AACES partners agree that this Partnership Agreement is not legally binding and that it does not give rise to any legal rights or obligations between partners. Rather, this Partnership Agreement is a commitment to a set of principles for communication and interactions within the limits of individual organisational accountabilities and legal requirements.

AACES partners acknowledge and agree that 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.

AACES partnership principles and associated behaviours

The AACES partnership seeks to ensure collaborative working arrangements, but it also understands that there are limits to the ways in which each of the partners is able to co-operate with each other. All AACES partners have agreed that the following principles and associated behaviours will guide how the partnership operates.

AACES partners will seek to:

1. Trust

- practice open and regular communication; and
- address and seek to clarify assumptions and communications.

2. Flexibility

- be sensitive to the complexities involved in each of the AACES projects and in each of the partners non-AACES programs in Africa; and
- recognise that unforeseen events may impact on AACES program delivery and that individual AACES projects and the broader AACES program may need to adjust to accommodate such events.

3. Accountability

- Accountability is mutual between all AACES partners.

4. Mutual Respect

- practice humility and courtesy when communicating and interacting with each other;
- recognise and respect the philosophical, operational and programmatic differences among AACES partners, and use this to inform the AACES program;
- look for common ground between organisations and build consensus where possible;
- respect the unique mandate of each organisation. Recognise that some operating principles and systems are inflexible and that individual AACES partners may have limits to their possible engagement in the partnership; and
- respect the right of individual AACES partners to opt out of particular publications or communications where deemed necessary by that partner (acting reasonably) in accordance with its policies or principles and those of this Agreement.

5. Collaboration

- jointly develop and define AACES program roles, processes and systems;
- abide by roles and responsibilities agreed collectively;
- leverage the strengths of AACES partners and develop collaborative arrangements with each other where learning can take place to improve development outcomes;
- agree to communication processes and messages, in particular for any public communication about the AACES program; and
- engage in joint planning and communication to provide reasonable forward timeframes.

6. Transparency

- Subject to confidentiality restrictions, AACES partners will seek to make all AACES program information available to AACES partners, and all agreements and decision processes for the program clearly understood by AACES partners.

7. Learning

- recognise that any successes or challenges that arise during the life of the program are an opportunity to learn and therefore should be transparently and openly communicated within the program; and
- design business processes that focus on learning from work undertaken in addition to monitoring expenditure and milestones.

Responsibilities

Each AACES partner commits to fulfilling the following responsibilities to support effective AACES partnerships:

- abide by the partnership principles and associated behaviours outlined above;
- seek to resolve any difficulties or misunderstandings through discussions based on the principles of cooperation, good faith and mutual trust and respect;
- contribute to the management and governance arrangements to oversee the operation of the Partnership Agreement and the AACES program;
- actively participate in processes to share experience, knowledge and to build development capacity among partners;
- recognise and jointly manage potential reputational risks created by participation in a shared program and partnership;
- develop and use protocols for representation of the program and sharing of information beyond AACES partners;
- provide timely and well-considered responses to requests for information from any other AACES partner; and
- engage on issues of performance, accountability and risk (including from the perspective of beneficiaries) by drawing each other's attention to matters likely to impact on the delivery of programs relevant to the partnership.
- AACES NGO partners agree to:
- be proactive and honest in informing AusAID of any relevant issues or problems in their programs;
- be responsive to communication and specific requests for information;

- participate in and facilitate (where appropriate) effective consultation and contributions to Australian Government policy and program development in Africa in areas of each agencies' expertise, including identifying opportunities to link AACES activities to other development networks and opportunities; and
- look for synergies and opportunities to work with other AACES partners.
- AusAID agrees to:
 - advise AACES partners on resource allocation and disbursements in a timely way;
 - manage program governance and decision making with AACES partners through joint mechanisms;
 - provide timely advice of briefing/information requirements and rationale for these requests; and
 - look for opportunities to facilitate the engagement of AACES NGOs with other AusAID programs, including providing perspectives from the wider AusAID program to inform AACES program development and implementation.

Partnership Review

As outlined in the AACES design, AACES partners will develop joint mechanisms to oversee the operation of the Partnership Agreement. Any changes made to this Partnership Agreement, will be made following consultation and agreement by all partners. The Partnership Agreement may be amended and supplemented at any time in writing in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the Partners.

Duration

This Partnership Agreement will take effect from the date of its signature and will remain in effect until 30 June 2016 or until the end of the AACES program.

Partnership cessation

If a partner leaves the AACES program, at the date at which their legal obligations cease (through the termination by either party of the NGOs' AACES Grant Order with AusAID), they will similarly cease to be a party to this Partnership Agreement.

Signed on behalf of the AACES Partner Organisations:



Peter Baxter
Director General
AusAID



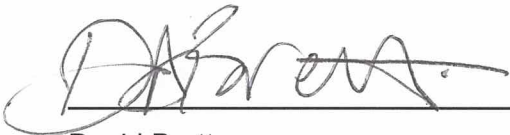
Jack De Groot
Chief Executive Officer
Caritas Australia



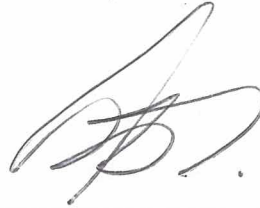
Archie Law
Chief Executive Officer
ActionAid Australia



Elizabeth Sime
Regional Director
Marie Stopes International Australia



David Brett
Board Director
AFAP



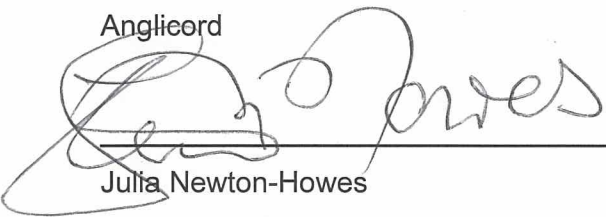
Andrew Hewett
Executive Director
Oxfam Australia



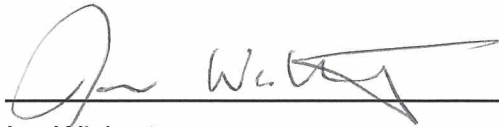
Misha Coleman
Chief Executive Officer
Anglicord



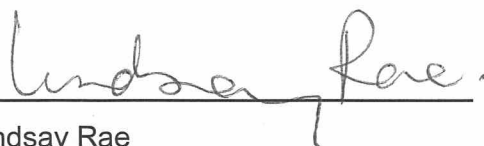
Peter Dwan
Acting Chief Executive Officer
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Julia Newton-Howes
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CARE Australia



Ian Wishart
Chief Executive Officer
Plan International Australia



Lindsay Rae
Senior Strategic Advisor
World Vision Australia

