

Funding development in Africa

The Australian Government continues to catalyse development in Africa through a number of mechanisms, including provision of financial resources to support local initiatives by Australia Awards Alumni. Over AUD 40,000 from the Small Grants scheme were provided to fund seven projects in the second round of grant Awards in 2013.

This competitive and transparent process of funding for development saw a 34% increase in applications from the first and second round, with 55 proposals received within a period of two months in the latter. More important, the quality of the projects was high suggesting that Alumni are not only willing to use their award-acquired skills and knowledge to spur development in their home countries, but that they are doing so in relevant and innovative ways.

Among the seven approved proposals was seed funding to establish an Alumni Association in Zambia, where Alumni convened in an exciting initiative to further build links between the two countries through a formalized association. Zambia has now joined the ranks of other Australian Alumni Associations recently established in Mozambique, Uganda and Kenya.

The other six projects fall in key sectors in Africa's development efforts, including Agriculture, Education, Natural Resources Management and Health and will be implemented in Cameroon, Malawi, Mauritius, Uganda and Togo. Two of these projects will be co-funded by the Alumni's employing organisations; these are the Ministry of Mining in Malawi and the Ministry of Agriculture in Mauritius. Below is a summary of the awarded projects.

Table 1: Snapshot of 2013 Second Round Grants

Grants to Organizations

The Department of Mines at the Ministry of Mining in Malawi received a grant of AUD 7,174.29 to start a project that will raise awareness among key stakeholders of the potential benefits of mining to development and overall economic growth. The project will seek to increase positive perceptions about mining in Malawi through a series of activities, including awareness raising and training workshops, video conferences, and outreach to the media through newspaper, radio and TV adverts. The implementation of the project will be coordinated by Australia Awards Alumni Cassius Chiwambo and Burnett Msika who received a Short Course Award to study mining-related courses in 2011 and 2012.

The Agricultural Research and Extension Unit at the Ministry of Agriculture in Mauritius was awarded a grant of AUD 10,000 to initiate a project to decrease mortality and enhance productivity of goats in Mauritius for higher income earning. The activity is expected to boost the goat sector through improvement in herd size and animal performance. Investigations have revealed that the goat sector is faced with a major constraint, which is high mortality rate among goats, in particular at a young age. Devika Saddul, a 2012 Short Course Awards Alumna, will join other Alumni who also work at the Ministry to implement this research project.

Grants to Individual Alumni

2012 Fellowship Alumna **Viamé D'Almeida** received a grant in the amount of AUD 4,482 to support infrastructure rehabilitation improvements in Lilicope Junior College, a community-based secondary school initiative located 50km north of Lome, capital of Togo. The college is built on straw and wood, the rooms expose pupils and teachers to rain and heat. During the rainy season, it is very difficult to conduct lessons and many times pupils cannot attend classes. The project will provide better educational infrastructure to improve access to education to students in the community with approximately 200 students and 10 teachers expected to benefit.

Ugandan Alumnus, Kyokwijuka Besigiroha Gad, received a grant in the amount of AUD 5,000 to implement a project that will train TVET instructors on modern techniques of welding gas. The project will introduce modern techniques of welding using gas technology by training 20 Instructors from 5 Technical Colleges to implement teaching of gas welding in 56 Technical Institutes. By building capacity in this field, the project will support access to employment opportunities to Ugandan youth benefiting from TVET. Kyokwijuka received a Short Course Award in 2012 to study TVET Teachers Skills Upgrade at Chisholm Institute.

Cameroonian Alumnus, Abongha Maurice Chiabi, received a grant of AUD 2,614 to support the implementation of a project on Micronutrients for Better Health. The project aims to alleviate micronutrient deficiency among children 6-59 months and pregnant/lactating women, which is one of the leading causes of mortality among children of this age in Cameroon. Activities will include sensitisation and distribution of the micronutrients to target schools, health units and households of target children in three subdivisions and four districts in Cameroon. Abongha completed a Short Course in Organisational and Employee Development in 2012 at the University of Queensland.

Ugandan Alumna, Pamela Bakkabulindi, was awarded a grant of AUD 5,000 to start up a project on e-health. The project will deliver e-health services to Ugandans through “Ask the Dr” initiative using short message services (SMS), Facebook and email. A team of three well-trained medical doctors will promptly respond to medical queries, thus reaching people who for various reasons are not able to access medical information. This innovative project is the first of the kind in Uganda and aims to help reduce the incidence and prevalence of common diseases in the country. Pamela completed a Master’s in International Public Health in 2012 at the University of Sydney.

Grant to Alumni Association

The Zambia-Australia Alumni Association (ZAAA) received a grant of AUD 6,657 to support the establishment of the association in the country. The grant will support a publicity campaign, which will include adverts in the media, radio and TV, to boost membership; the development and launch of ZAAA’s website; the design and production of publicity materials; and the official launch of the association expected to take place in October 2013. The association objectives include cementing Australia-Zambia Alumni links and supporting Awardees.