



Australia helps to transform lives in Rwanda

Media Release

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An Australian-funded scheme is saving and transforming lives in Rwanda's Gicumbi district.

The recently released Annual Report for the Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme shows how Australian Government support to NGOs in Africa has increased in recent years with a focus on helping improve peoples' lives and delivering more opportunities to the most vulnerable and poor - especially women, children, people with disability and people vulnerable to disaster.

Supported by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), World Vision is working to deliver better mother and child health outcomes in Rwanda. In the first year of the AACES program, World Vision improved health services for nearly 15,000 women and children by helping them access health services including post-natal care. They have also facilitated training of over 600 Community Health Workers and nurses from 21 government health institutions in the Gicumbi district.

There is also improved community understanding of maternal and child health issues through the training of local leaders from 28 villages and the formation of 19 Village Based Child Nutrition Centres.

Geoff Tooth, Australia's High Commissioner to Rwanda, was delighted to hear of the findings of the Report.

"I am particularly proud that Australia has been able to assist the most marginalised groups in Rwanda including women, children, people with disability, and those vulnerable to disaster" he said today. "By supporting strong community and government engagement we also hope to contribute to greater accountability in the delivery of services to poor and marginalised people."

The impact of the program is illustrated by the increased number of women in Gicumbi villages who are starting to help each other in maternal and child care related issues. After the first year for example, the program has seen a significant increase in the number of women seeking professional birth assistance.

As the largest AusAID funded NGO program in Africa, AACES supports development in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and

Zimbabwe. The Annual Report provides an overview of the program's contribution to food security, maternal and child health and water, sanitation and hygiene.

AusAID provides most of its aid in Africa through partners that are trusted to deliver results. AACES NGOs are encouraged to network and collaborate to achieve greater impact through shared learning and synergies. Delivering funding in this way has helped to improve value for money and improve effectiveness.

The AACES Annual Report is available at www.ausaid.gov.au

Notes to Editors

About AusAID

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) is the Australian Government agency responsible for managing Australia's overseas aid program. AusAID is an Executive Agency within the Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio and reports to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The fundamental purpose of Australian aid is to help people overcome poverty. AusAID is strongly committed to evaluating and improving Australia's aid program and to collecting, analysing and publishing development data and other information. For more information please visit: www.ausaid.gov.au

About AACES

AACES is a partnership of AusAID, ten Australian Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and their Africa-based partners. It contributes to the AusAID strategy for Africa through community-based interventions across the sectors of food security, maternal and child health and water, sanitation and hygiene. The program focuses on marginalised communities, with particular attention to women, children, people with disability and people vulnerable to disaster.

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