**Australia advancing disability-inclusive development in Uganda**

**Media Release**

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An Australian-funded scheme is saving and transforming lives in the Central, Eastern and Northern Regions of Uganda.

With funding from the Australian Government, NGOs have improved the health of more than 5,000 women and children through providing modern family planning methods, child vaccinations and safe and clean baby delivery services. Over 1,000 farmers have also been assisted with fertiliser, seeds and improved access to agricultural extension services and advice.

H.E. Mr Geoff Tooth, Australia’s High Commissioner to Uganda, was delighted to hear of the findings of the Report. ‘I have visited AACES projects in my time as High Commissioner and it is inspiring to see how this report reflects our efforts to reach the poorest and most marginalised people in these communities.’

The Annual Report for the Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme (AACES) shows how Australian Government support to NGOs is improving peoples’ lives and delivering more opportunities to the most vulnerable and poor, including people with a disability.

The program has been transformational for marginalised communities, particularly in helping people with disability to participate in food production. This has been achieved by promoting the traditional practice of *dava* (community hep), where community members offer labour to help people in need. Annah Chauke, who has a disability and who benefitted from *dava* to weed her farm, says ‘this made me feel loved and belonging to the rest of the community. It made me feel that I can do a lot of things with my community helping me.’

Supported by the Australian Government, NGOs continued their partnership with health authorities to strengthen government health systems as an essential step to making health services accessible and affordable for marginalised groups. This has been achieved thorugh training community health workers who are delivering maternal and child health and nutrition messages and counselling to marginalised communities.

The AACES program is being implemented in Uganda by ActionAid International Uganda, Plan International Uganda and World Vision Uganda.

The AACES Annual Report is available at [www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au)

**Notes to Editors**

**About AACES**

AACES is a partnership of the Australian Government, ten Australian Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and their Africa-based partners. The $90 million program is funded by the Australian Government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

The program focuses on marginalised communities, with particular attention to women, children, people with disability and people vulnerable to disaster. It is being implemented in 11 African countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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