

AECOM's Kevina Kakembo lends a hand in Uganda WeDev water-sanitation project

A recent recipient of a travel grant from AECOM's Blueprint for a Better World CSR platform, candidate quantity surveyor Kevina Kakembo from AECOM's operations in South Africa joined employees from six countries and multiple professional disciplines to contribute to a water-sanitation project at Mityana and Zinga Islands in Uganda.



Led by project director Michael Ottensmann in September 2019, the project for German NGO WeDev involved the installation of gutters, water tanks, pumps, solar panels (including battery connection), and water testing.

The Blueprint travel-grant programme process begins with a proposal plan and budget that is then submitted for assessment. Thereafter AECOM employees vote for projects they deem to be of the highest significance. Once voting concludes, the corporate responsibility team selects the final projects that will receive financial support. "This means AECOM employees have a voice in what impactful projects resonate with them the most," Kakembo stresses.

South African by birth, and Ugandan by descent, Kakembo opted for the water-sanitation project in Uganda, which aimed at securing potable water for local communities. Project responsibilities ranged from connecting spring water to a tank using gradient, making chlorine from salt using a solar-powered battery to clean water from tanks and water sources, to connecting a pump to an 11m-deep borehole to ease the process of collecting water.



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"Assisting in providing such a basic necessity to an underprivileged community reminds us how privileged we are. The fact that, even after it is collected, water requires filtration to be potable revealed the deep level of need in such a community,"

Kakembo explains. In the past, the lack of a clean water supply has resulted in cases of cholera and typhoid at an orphanage on Zinga Island.

“Working for a company that makes provision for such meaningful projects means we are empowered. The response from the community in the form of appreciation and keenness to learn and participate gave all a feeling of being at home,” Kakembo comments.

“In a world full of political unrest, social injustice, and environmental depletion, this project gave hope not just to the people Uganda, but to us as well in the realisation that we can make a difference and leave a legacy, no matter how big or small, the lives of others,” Kakembo concludes.

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