

A GUIDE TO OVERSEAS WORK AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Introduction

WaterAid in Australia has been established as an Australian international aid and development agency, which is exclusively dedicated to the provision of safe domestic water, sanitation and hygiene education to the worlds' poorest people. In this endeavor it is supported by a unique partnership between the Australian water industry and the Australian aid sector. In addition to receiving generous donations from the water industry, WaterAid also receives a significant number of enquiries from individuals interested in making a personal contribution by offering their skills in our overseas development programs.

The WaterAid Model

WaterAid works by helping local organisations set up low cost, sustainable projects using appropriate technology that can be managed by the community itself. The key differences between WaterAid projects and many other water and sanitation projects are:

- i) Low cost appropriate technology - water supplies are generally either gravity feed, boreholes or dug wells with handpumps or rainwater collection. Motorised pumping and water treatment is avoided where possible. Sanitation typically involves dry pit or pour flush latrines
- ii) Remotely located- most project areas are in remote rural villages, without mains power supplies and access to many government and commercial services
- iii) Community Management – communities are usually responsible for long term operation and maintenance rather than services being provided by water utilities

The WaterAid model has proven to be very successful. A “Looking back” study, in 2000, found 90% of WaterAid projects are still operational or have been expanded. WaterAid Australia is also a long-term development agency, and as such doesn't plan to become actively involved in emergency /disaster relief projects.

Who is involved in the field?

Over the years WaterAid has found that water and sanitation programs in developing countries whilst requiring some engineering skills, also require personnel with significant cross-cultural and community development experience and skills. Additionally rather than becoming involved in direct implementation WaterAid focuses on capacity building of local NGO's or community groups who will remain in the country long-term. In this way knowledge is transferred directly into the hands of the people who can use it long term to the benefit of the country. Those NGO's or community groups take the project from inception to completion.

As a consequence WaterAid only uses a very limited number of Watsan experts and usually only those with prior developing country experience.

How then can you help WaterAid Australia?

Overseas based positions are advertised on our International and Australia website for

interested applicants. Should you wish to volunteer at any of our events or in our office based in Melbourne please email watercharity@wateraid.org.au

Still want to be involved in the field?

Apart from WaterAid Australia there are a number of other avenues you may use to become involved in the overseas development work.

A few places to start are:

AusAid - www.ausaid.gov.au/partner/volunteer.cfm

Australian volunteers play a vital role in the fight against poverty. Volunteering overseas is one way that Australians can make a positive contribution to poverty reduction, sustainable development and cross cultural understanding.

RedR - www.redr.org/australia/

RedR relieves suffering in disaster affected areas by selecting, training and providing competent and effective relief personnel to humanitarian relief agencies worldwide.

Oxfam Australia – www.oxfam.org.au

Maintains a register of suitably qualified and experienced Watsan personnel for emergency relief work.

Red Cross – www.redcross.org.au

Maintains a register of suitably qualified and experienced Watsan personnel for emergency relief and development work.

World Vision Australia – www.worldvision.com.au

Maintains a register of suitably qualified and experienced Watsan personnel for emergency relief work.

Engineers without Borders - www.ewb-aus.org.au

Aims to link engineering and engineering related students with project opportunities, primarily in the development world. The objective of all these activities is not only to contribute to new and ongoing development projects in an effective way, but also to expand the dimensions of experience for emerging and practicing engineers.

Australian Volunteers International – www.australianvolunteers.com

Places volunteers in developing countries in a range of professional areas including Watsan.

Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development - www.ayad.com.au

Places young volunteers in developing countries in a range of professional areas including Watsan.

Austraining International – www.austraining.com.au

Australian Council for International Development – www.acfid.asn.au

The umbrella organization for Australian non-government aid and development Agencies.

Additional References for further possible employment and learning Opportunities

Australian Aid and Resources Training Guide -
www.developmentgateway.com.au/jahia/Jahia/pid/171

Australian Development Gateway - www.developmentgateway.com.au

RedR: Engineering in Emergencies – A Practical Guide for Relief Workers -
www.redr.org/redr/support/resources/EinE/EinE.htm

WEDC: Running Water and The Worth of Water (simple Technical Briefs) -
<http://wedc.lboro.ac.uk/publications/>

Australian Water Associations: Water and Sanitation in Developing Communities
Special Interest Group – AWA 1300 361 426