A ROUND-UP OF
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
INVESTMENTS IN 2017
INVESTMENT SUMMARY
2014 - 2017

R78 MILLION INVESTED OVER 4 YEARS

177 ORGANISATIONS

193 PROJECTS

8 FOCUS AREAS

766 978 BENEFICIARIES IN TOTAL

9 PROVINCES
R7 MILLION FOR WATER

R4 MILLION FOR HEALTH

R5 MILLION FOR FOOD SECURITY

R3 MILLION TO HELP PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

R30 MILLION INVESTED IN EDUCATION

R15 MILLION FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

R4 MILLION INVESTED IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

R4 MILLION TO SUPPORT INFANTS, ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

R6 MILLION IN CHARITABLE DONATIONS AND EMERGENCY RELIEF

5 SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERISM CAMPAIGNS
The philosophy of sustainable development underpins all decision-making and governance in AECI’s SED programmes. This is aligned with King IV principles and drives the implementation of development programmes that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. A long-term commitment with a multi-stakeholder approach is demonstrated by a variety of partnerships offering a range of interventions.

The Witzenberg Partners in Agri Land Solutions (PALS) project started in 2014 and aims to address the challenges experienced with land reform initiatives and emerging Black farmers. PALS is a partnership between Witzenberg agri producers, their customers, the Witzenberg Municipality and the community. It was designed to expedite land reform in a unique manner and to stimulate economic growth, job creation and social harmony.

The unique PALS framework is a 30% shareholding in a Trust where farm workers own an entity that will gain access to the entire value chain in farming. The programme is designed to provide emerging farmers with holistic mentorship and training that includes relevant business management skills for a flourishing commercial Black-owned farm in the long term.

This project is aligned to the National Development Plan which aims to achieve an inclusive and integrated rural economy. It is achieved as a private-sector driven initiative in partnership with the AECI Group, financial institutions and supporting organisations.

AECI has been the founding investment partner since inception, with Nulandis being the most active Group company in this region. The investment from the AECI CSI Fund was instrumental in providing the first grant funding towards the training and development of emerging farmers in their new roles as shareholders, Directors and Trustees in PALS projects.

PALS has received many accolades and is endorsed by the Department of Agriculture as a best practice land reform model in the country. AECI will continue to support this worthwhile cause to promote an accepted development approach to land ownership.

Lennox Plaatjies (left), CEO of PALS with a community member.
Water is key to life and food security. Crops and livestock need water to survive. Agriculture requires large quantities of water for irrigation and, across the world, agriculture is one of the biggest users of this resource. Irrigation now claims close to 70% of all freshwater suitable for human use. The AECI CEDT, the Tiso AEL Development Trust and the AECI CSI Fund all have dedicated programmes focused on food security and access to water for communities. To date, R20 million has been invested.

A great example is the Wize Ways Water Care Project (WWWC) which involves a group of 130 inspirational volunteers, ranging from youth to gogos and mkhulus, who have committed to managing the water resources and ecological infrastructure in their catchment area.

The project started as the Emvelowise Women Volunteer Group and has been a beneficiary partner of the AECI CSI Fund, as the founding investor, since 2012. Over time it grew into the WWWC project, funded by the AECI Community Education and Development Trust (CEDT).

The project was established to support volunteers with skills development and career path opportunities in water resource stewardship and food security. It is based in KwaZulu-Natal along a 30km stretch of the lower Mbokodweni stream and the Ezimbokodweni River. The Folweni and Ezimbokodweni communities are considered among the poorest in the eThekwini Municipality. Communities work together and share the motto: “One river, one team, one mission”. The mission is to create a clean, healthy and sustainable environment not with standing challenges such as illegal solid waste dumping, alien vegetation infestations, poor aquatic health, effluent discharging directly into the river systems, fresh water leaks and illegal sand mining. The project is supported by multiple partners including AECI’s Acacia, Nulandis and ImproChem and other external partners such as Durban Solid Waste, the eThekwini Municipality, Mpact, the Water Research Commission, the WWF Green Trust and the Buhle Farmers’ Academy.

WWWC takes a novel, holistic approach to dealing with the challenges by following a bottom-up approach. Community members take ownership of restoring ecosystem health, while at the same time building broader environmental awareness and improving livelihoods through multi-disciplinary development.

The project identified five interventions to help mitigate socio-ecological and food security issues through the development of food gardens and small-scale commercial agricultural enterprises, waste management and recycling, river health assessments, community awareness and education campaigns and the removal of alien vegetation.
In terms of developing agricultural entrepreneurs to address food security in marginalised communities, the vision is to expand into other geographic areas. This will support sustainable livelihoods for the volunteers who will generate their own income. 17 of the volunteers attended agricultural training at Buhle Farmer’s Academy, a training partner of Nulandis. Of the 17, eight obtained Diplomas in Vegetable Production and nine received Diplomas in Poultry Production.

Volunteers of the WWWC Community Garden and Agriculture programme with vegetables produced in their community garden.

Although only 17 volunteers attended formal training, the team working in the gardens is a large and committed one.

Another inspiring project is Oliver’s Village, based in Putfontein, Benoni and managed by an ordinary South Africa citizen who was inspired by Oliver Twist - the story of growing up in extreme poverty. The Village occupies an 11 acre property that accommodates multiple sustainable development projects to empower over 400 beneficiaries from the Daveyton community. The projects include:

- Education from foundation to secondary level
- Skills development in baking and farming
- Food security initiatives
- Enterprise development
- Job creation

It started with a pre-school and education centre but the vision was to grow it into a self-sustainable village to benefit the greater community. Through investments by funding partners, including AECI, it was possible to realise this.

Thanks to carefully calculated and integrated environmentally-friendly processes, Oliver’s Village is now completely self-sufficient and does not rely on any municipal services. Water, electricity, waste removal and sanitation are all incorporated in a holistic system.

The AECI CSI Fund has been a partner for the last five years, it has been instrumental in the advancement of the programme and remains committed to ensuring the continued self-sustainable growth of this great initiative.
“Over the coming decades, feeding a growing global population and ensuring food and nutrition security for all will depend on increasing food production. This, in turn, means ensuring the sustainable use of our most critical finite resource - water.”
- Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General, 2007-2016.

Examples of partnerships include the Elgin Community College, Roundabout Water Solutions, Operation Hunger, Hippo Roller and the Witzenberg PALS Programme.

The Elgin Community College, based in the Grabouw, Western Cape is providing accredited training for 20 sponsored learners to qualify in Plant Production NQF Levels 4 and 5. This qualification is deemed a scarce skill in South Africa and will put the young participants at a great advantage in the agricultural industry.

Roundabout Water Solutions provides Playpumps to rural areas and communities with drinking water challenges. The pumps are powered by the play of children and enable access to quality drinking water for their schools. The AECI CEDT has contributed R1 14 000 towards 20 Playpumps across the country.

To date, 2 900 Hippo Rollers have been issued to communities. Priority has been given to beneficiaries with a disability or child-headed households and the elderly, enabling them to transport and store water more easily.

As a complementary initiative, Operation Hunger has assisted in developing self-sustainable vegetable gardens and training the small-scale farmers in the use of Hippo Spazas. Vendors selling their goods from informal stalls, either on empty boxes or old broken self-made stands or tables, are now able to use the Hippo Spaza to sell in a more sophisticated way.

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The AECI CEDT multi-disciplinary partnership with Operation Hunger and Hippo Roller includes providing water access and establishing vegetable gardens in a number of communities across South Africa. These include:

- Likazi, Emalahleni in Mpumalanga
- Mashamaite and Makgatho Villages, Blouberg in Limpopo
- Steynsrus, Kroonstad in the Free State
- Deben, Kathu in the Northern Cape
- Mokopane, Mogalakwena in Limpopo
Unjani Clinic empowers Black women who are Professional Nurses to own and operate their own primary healthcare clinics in their communities, thereby creating permanent jobs and building sustainable businesses.

Through a robust baseline study conducted to assess the needs of these communities, it was found that access to primary healthcare is a major challenge. The Tiso AEL Development Trust, therefore, committed to assist. It invested in four clinics in Emalahleni, Musina, Makopane, Gamagara and Klipfontein. There are 10.7 million people in South Africa who are employed and this is the population group that Unjani Clinics seek to serve.

Another beneficiary partner of the Tiso AEL Development Trust is the SAME Foundation, a national NGO specialising in the upliftment of communities through strategic projects in the health sector. Project aspects include needs analyses, upskilling and support, outcomes, resources and infrastructure. The Trust invested R1 million towards the procurement of much needed medical equipment for the new Wound Care Ward at Tembisa Hospital in Kempton Park.

ADDRESSING HEALTHCARE CHALLENGES
HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

The AECI CSI Fund aims to address health and lifestyle issues through complementary programmes at school level. The partnerships that receive support work on prevention campaigns seeking a more proactive approach to resolving these issues.

The Fund has long-standing partnerships with organisations such as the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Support Group for South Africa to provide assistance to learners, parents and teachers affected by ADHD. The project aims to raise awareness and provide information and understanding through holistic, practical support for those who need it.

The South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA), Western Cape, provides intervention campaigns to address substance abuse. The project equips youth in secondary schools with knowledge and information about substance abuse as well as basic counselling and referral skills. This assists awareness and prevention programmes in schools and communities.

Through the Tiso AEL Development Trust, an investment of R1,2 million was made for the education of high school learners in the areas of sexual and reproductive health. CONNECT-ED is one such programme. The primary aim is the prevention of teenage pregnancy, sexual abuse, rape and HIV and Aids.

The programme seeks to empower learners to make better decisions related to their sexual health, and also empowers educators to provide better support to them. CONNECT-ED meets the Life Orientation syllabus outcomes and indicators, it is aligned with the syllabus for Grades 8-12 and is revised regularly to ensure that it is up-to-date. The four key messages conveyed throughout the programme are: Abstain, Plan Ahead, Take Responsibility and Ask For Support.

CONNECT-ED has been running for six years, it has been presented at over 2,000 schools country-wide and it has reached over 3,6 million learners to date.

SANCA in the Western Cape provides guidance to secondary school learners.
ENVIROMENTAL AWARENESS

The international Eco-Schools programme supports environmental learning in the classroom.

The AECI Group acknowledges its role in terms of conserving the environment. To this end, an investment of R4 million has been made since 2014 towards programmes that promote environmental awareness, education and focused community upliftment. Two key partnerships are the WESSA Eco-Schools and the Umbogavango Nature Reserve schools programmes.

WESSA ECO-SCHOOLS

- The programme is aimed at creating awareness and action in terms of environmental sustainability in schools and their surrounding communities, as well as supporting education for sustainable development in the national curriculum.

- Since 2003 more than 10 229 schools across all nine provinces have participated in the programme, benefiting 400 000 learners and 16 000 teachers.

UMBOGAVANGO NATURE RESERVE

- The Educational Resource Centre is based in the Umbogavango Nature Reserve at the Umbogintwini Industrial Complex. This 36 hectare Nature Reserve boasts over 200 bird species and 100 indigenous tree species. It is also home to a variety of small mammals and snakes.

- The Environmental Conservation schools programme transports pupils from various rural schools to the Reserve and aims to introduce them to the importance of caring for our environment and being responsible for conservation in their own environments.
According to a 2016 report by UNICEF, there are an estimated 3.7 million orphans in South Africa. Close to half of them have lost their parents due to HIV/AIDS-related diseases. Some of these children are living with sick and bedridden caregivers and about 150,000 are believed to be living in child-headed households. UNICEF is a global organisation that focuses on children’s rights.

The AECI CSI Fund has formed multi-year partnerships with NGOs that provide physiological, emotional, safety and medical support to infants, orphans and vulnerable children. These NGOs are also dedicated to ensuring that abused children are protected and rehabilitated. Partners include Joint Aid Management (JAM), Cotlands and the Teddy Bear Clinic.

**JAM South Africa**
- Through a partnership with JAM, the Group has invested R3.7 million in Musina, Makopane, Emalahleni and Ga-Segonyane. A great need for early childhood development centres was identified in these areas. The focus is on the provision of:
  - Nutritious breakfast for 3,600 pre-school children daily.
  - Access to water, hygiene and sanitation, and education.

**Cotlands**
- The programme is active in six provinces in South Africa and beneficiaries include orphaned and vulnerable children who, in many instances, have been impacted by HIV/AIDS.
- The AECI CSI Fund has invested R300,000 for a three-year period to ensure a solid early learning foundation that will enable children to succeed in formal schooling.

**The Teddy Bear Clinic**
- AECI has been a long-standing partner of the Shaken and Abused Programme initiated by the Teddy Bear Clinic. This is a specialised intervention that cares for children who have been affected by abuse or negligence.
- In this initiative, a team of experts provide efficient and professional services that effectively promote healing and stop any further abuse.
- This translates into a mission to minimise any secondary harm to children and their families once they enter the child protection system.
South Africa has a well-documented skills shortage, particularly in mathematics, technology and science. These skills are highly sought after by various sectors such as Engineering and IT.

In a quest to address these issues, the AECI Group has invested over R30 million since 2014 towards improving educational outcomes through learner and educator development. Furthermore, the AECI CEDT has provided funds for students to pursue tertiary education through access programmes at various universities in South Africa.

The AECI CSI Fund also partners with the My Future My Career programme to provide career guidance to learners so as to equip them with the necessary information and knowledge to make informed career decisions.

Key partnerships have been established with organisations such as the Maths Centre, the SETH Academy, the Midlands Community College and universities across the country. These partnerships focus on the development of learners and teachers, as well as enabling access to tertiary education.

Artisan skills are highly sought after in South Africa. In some cases this has forced the country to “import” thousands of technical skills that are simply not available locally. In response to the high demand for artisans the AECI CEDT has invested R15 million since 2015 in partnerships with various Technical and Vocational Education Training Colleges as well as other institutions. This, naturally, feeds into the main objective of preparing learners for joining the workplace and contributing to the growth of our economy. Some key partners include, Jirah, Vukani and Sparrow FET College.

**The Science, Engineering and Health [SETH] Academy**
This is a public/private partnership between government, industry and the North-West University that provides applied learning in scarce-skills subjects. The AECI CSI Fund has been a partner since 2013.

**The Maths Centre**
The programme promotes excellence in mathematics, science, technology and entrepreneurship. An investment of R2.5 million over three years has been made in Burgersdorp, Eastern Cape supporting two high schools in terms of learner and teacher development in mathematics and physical science.

**Belgium Campus**
This campus based in Pretoria and Kempton Park is the first South African institution to offer a special programme for people with disabilities studying towards a Diploma in IT. The AECI Group supports 13 students with disabilities in a bridging programme for this qualification.

**Jirah Project**
Jirah functions as a “no fees” trade school of excellence. It offers engineering studies and it provides basic hand skills training.

AECI has invested over R2 million in this project to offer bridging engineering studies to 20 learners.

**Vukani Ubuntu Community Projects**
These projects upskill the unemployed community in Emalahleni, Mpumalanga by providing essential services directly to work-seekers, namely training and job placement in the artisanal sector. R1.2 million has been invested in this project.

**Sparrow FET College**
The AECI CEDT has been in partnership with Sparrow since 2015 in technical training such as motor mechanics, fluid power hose assembling skills and electrician programmes.
A SPIRIT
OF GIVING

Over and above the Group’s formal SED programmes, employees have made their own significant contributions through volunteerism campaigns.

The campaigns are aligned to the overall strategy and priorities and are complementary in terms of making a meaningful impact. Since 2015, five campaigns have been implemented successfully under various development themes including literacy, career guidance, inclusion, orphans and vulnerable children, and education.

The campaigns have enabled employees to voluntarily make a collective, positive impact on the lives of vulnerable communities in the Group’s areas of operation.

2015: Enhancing Literacy
• 1 800 books collected and donated to various schools and literacy programmes across the country.

2016: Giving for Good
• The year-end volunteerism campaign raised R489 774 which was donated towards gifts for orphans and vulnerable children.

2016: Building a brighter future
• 1 890 solar lamps were donated to students to enable them to study at night.
• R8 500 was donated towards assistive devices for sight-impaired learners.

2017: Enabling our youth to succeed
• 5 290 career guidance booklets were donated to learners in Grades 10 to 12 in various schools close to operating sites.

2017: Barefoot No More
• Employees and Operating companies contributed towards school shoes, stationery and underwear for learners in need. Over 2 800 pairs of shoes will be donated across the country.

EMERGENCY
RELIEF

The AECI CEDT partnered with Gift of the Givers to provide emergency relief to communities in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape. These relief campaigns were addressed to victims affected by floods and drought.

Over 200 families living near the Umbogintwini Industrial Complex affected were by the severe floods in October and received food parcels, blankets and mattresses.

Further relief was provided to farms in the Western Cape affected by the severe ongoing drought. The animal feed provided helped sustain farming that benefited over 100 families (or 1 000 beneficiaries) in Klawer.

Lucerne provided by Gift of the Givers Foundation.