



**Africa Center for Strategic Studies  
Centre d'études stratégiques de l'Afrique  
Centro de Estudos Estratégicos de África**

**Background/Concept Paper  
Africa Center for Strategic Studies**

**Community Chapter Topical Outreach Program (TOPS)**

**i. Background**

The Africa Center's Community Chapter Topical Outreach Program, begun in July 2007, is ACSS' flagship program for maintaining active, positive and substantive Africa Center relationships with ACSS alumni organizations (referred to as "Community Chapters" by ACSS), expanding on efforts to reach non-traditional audiences in Africa, and expanding Africa Center presence on the continent in countries not visited through other ACSS programs.

As of September 30, 2009, 47 TOPS symposiums have been conducted in 25 different African countries for a total participation of 4,030 African and international military, government and civil society leaders.

The programs in each country range in length from half- or full-day symposiums to multi-day programs based on the needs and interests of each community of interest and are consistent with ACSS standards of excellence and relevance. Programs focus on U.S. policy and contemporary African security issues and are based on the recommendations of the American Embassy, chapter leadership and host-nation leaders in each visited country.

**ii. Objective**

ACSS has been charged by USD(P) with maintaining long-term and active relationships with African civil, military and opinion leaders. The Africa Center Community Topical Outreach Program (TOPS) is a principal means for maintaining long-term, face-to-face relations with African leaders who participate in ACSS activities; and for building two-way communications networks of security-sector decision-makers that foster awareness of and dialogue on U.S. and African strategic priorities and security issues. Furthermore, the initiative enhances collaboration between the Africa Center and U.S. Embassies in Africa.

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### **iii. Expected Accomplishments**

This program:

- Strengthens the relationship between alumni and the Africa Center
- Enhances dialogue and understanding of issues of importance to African and U.S. leaders;
- Provides valuable training to improve ACSS community members' capacity to launch and sustain Community Chapters in their countries;
- Promotes stronger communication and increased collaboration among Community Chapters, the Africa Center, and U.S. Embassies in Africa, and with U.S. leaders and policy makers.

### **iv. Indicators of Achievement**

- Growth in number of community chapters by at least two per year
- Increased attendance at TOPS events (numbers and seniority)
- Increased capacity of chapters to support themselves and to conduct programs independently
- Increased collaboration with USG officials in TOPS activities
- Increased long-term communications and interactions with target audience (Kirkpatrick Levels 2-4 interactions)

### **v. Main activities**

Each country program consists of the following ACSS-COPA components:

- ACSS meetings with American Embassy leadership and, if appropriate, country team members
- ACSS meetings with African civil government, military and opinion leaders
- ACSS capacity-building meetings with community members and leaders
- Topical events that are open to community members and other invited guests (usually determined by the specific nature of each topical event)
- Topical events for other African or US activities as requested (such as African War Colleges, African media, African government agencies)
- Training on the Military Education and Research Library Network (MERLN) and [acsscommunity.org](http://acsscommunity.org) (formerly Regional International Outreach (RIO)) for community members

### **vi. Personnel**

The Africa Center deploys teams of two or three staff members – two representatives from the Community Outreach and Public Affairs (COPA) directorate

and, when possible, one or more ACSS faculty representatives. Programs are coordinated with the U.S. Embassy in each country and with the ACSS community chapters.

COPA seeks a wide range of subject-matter experts to expand the range of topics offered to African communities under this program. The primary intent of the topical programs is to promote a common understanding of U.S. Government policies and programs in Africa. Thus our initial emphasis is in reaching qualified U.S. government experts.

In order to increase USG access to ACSS communities of interest in Africa and to expand the pool of USG experts in TOPS symposiums, COPA is developing partnerships with other USG agencies to promote opportunities for US leaders to meet and engage in two-way communication with ACSS community members and, through the community members, other influential African leaders. Partnerships include:

- USAFRICOM
- Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS) Partnership
- USMC-R Partnerships
- US National Guard State Partnership Program
- USG Officials Traveling in Africa
- USEUCOM (Flintlock, African Endeavor)
- US Department of State (ACOTA, GPOI)
- USNAVEUR Africa Partnership Station (Gulf of Guinea)
- Increased Cooperation between Chapters and US Embassies
- US Treasury (TFFC, FinCEN)
- US Army Corps of Engineers (CMEP)
- Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program
- Other DOD Regional Centers (APCSS, NESACenter)

**Comment [MM1]:** We haven't done anything with these two "partners" since they met with ACSS leadership in 2007.

**Comment [MM2]:** Should this be linked to AFRICOM above?

A subsequent goal is to expand the pool of experts by inviting non-government experts (NGOs, Academia, Think Tanks, etc.).

## vii. Where

TOPS is conducted in countries where the Africa Center has active community chapters. As of September 2009, there are 22 such communities: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Mauritius, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, and Uganda.

TOPS is also conducted in countries in which significant efforts are underway to start a community chapter.

The initiative could apply to other countries based upon the ACSS goals and priorities with those countries' communities of interest.

**viii. When**

Proposed schedule of regional travel for FY10:

- First Quarter FY10:
  - 22-29 October: Mali and Benin
  - 17-25 November: West Africa
- Second Quarter FY10:
  - 15 January – 11 February: Eastern Africa and Comoros
- Third Quarter FY10:
  - April: Western Africa
- Fourth Quarter FY10:
  - July: Chad, Ethiopia, and Southern Africa
  - TBD: North Africa

**ix. Relationship to Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Goals**

This program supports the Secretary of Defense for Policy Goals of focusing “on building and sustaining a networked and empowered community of current and future security leaders who share common values and perspectives...” and promoting “greater cooperation in the international arena.” The program is a networking tool that facilitates communication and collaboration, and provides a vehicle for strategic communications.

**x. Budget**

APPROVED BY:		DATE:	
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## Appendix

### TOPS-Related Activities

- Meetings with AMEMB POCs and Leadership

Ensure Ambassador (Chief of Mission) understands and concurs with ACSS programs and activities in country. Coordination of activities with Embassy POCs.

- Meetings with Host Nation Leaders (MoD, MFA, others as recommended by AMEMB and Chapter leaders)

Explain ACSS mission, programs, and goals; purpose of current trip; and garner support for Chapter missions and activities.

- **[New Element]** Sponsor Community Chapter general membership meeting

This is a capacity-building activity to help chapters become self-funding, sustainable and to conduct programs independent of ACSS that promote stability, cooperation and an active forum for dialogue and insight on US-Africa policy. Possible topics include, but are not limited to, strategic planning, fundraising strategies, developing project proposals, etc. This activity is in direct support of the ACSS vision to build partner capabilities and capacities to address security challenges throughout African states, regional organizations, and among international allies.

#### Funding implications:

- a. Venue
- b. Food/non-alcoholic drinks (breaks + possible lunch)
- c. Interpretation and interpretation equipment for non-Anglophone countries
- d. Expert speakers (travel, per diem, possible honorarium)

- TOPS Symposiums

No significant changes to program. However, a FY10 objective is to increase the number of government and non-government experts who present topics.

#### Funding implications:

- a. Possible increase in travel, per diem, and honorarium costs

- Additional symposium events such as War College visits, media training, etc. (as requested by AMEMBS, chapter leaders, and often by host nation leaders)

These events, usually ½ day, present an opportunity for ACSS to reach important, non-traditional audiences. Normally, most expenses related to these events are borne by the requesting activity. An important caveat relates to interpretation. Due to the relatively high cost of professional interpreters and equipment, the role of interpreter is often filled by “someone who speaks both English and the host country language.” The result is mostly

unsatisfactory. At best, the interpretation is consecutive as opposed to simultaneous. Although this would be acceptable IF the quality of the interpretation was good, too often the “interpreters” have a rudimentary knowledge of conversational English and do not have the vocabulary to interpret technical topics. The result is normally unsatisfactory for the speaker, the audience and the interpreter. If we accept the benefits of these types of events for ACSS and the DOD, we need to be prepared to hire professional interpreters when needed.

Funding implications:

a. Additional interpretation and interpretation equipment costs

- Alumni Reception, co-hosted with US Embassy

Provide an opportunity for alumni to interact socially with each other, ACSS representatives, and US Embassy representatives. In the past, US Embassy staff (Ambassadors, DCMs, and DATTs) have graciously provided the venue and alcoholic beverages; ACSS generally provides the cost of food and non-alcoholic beverages.