



ANCP ANNUAL REFLECTIONS 2018: OUTCOMES DOCUMENT

The fourth annual ANCP Reflections Workshop was held in August 2018, with excellent attendance and participation by ANCP NGOs, ACFID and DFAT in both Sydney and Melbourne. The purpose of the workshops was to reflect on the highlights of 2017-18; discuss and provide feedback on the Data Systems Validation Review draft report; discuss and plan for ANCP strategic communications; learn about Gender Action Platform projects and share lessons on gender programming in the ANCP; and provide an opportunity to provide feedback on ANCP and discuss emerging issues.

ANCP and DFAT highlights and updates

1. The ANCP extends the reach of the Australian Aid Program through supporting activities, building relationships and developing capacity in sectors and geographic areas beyond the foot print of DFAT's regional and bilateral aid programs. Former Foreign Minister Bishop recognised the ANCP as a successful, high value program and in this year's **Federal Budget**, ANCP was given an **additional \$2m** to take the **total to \$132.5 million in 2018-19**.
2. The extra ANCP funding will help us to implement some of the key themes from the [Foreign Policy White Paper](#) which recognises that **NGOs are vital partners** in our effort to encourage greater prosperity and stability in our region through the delivery of development assistance. The White Paper, the first in 14 years, included international development issues as an integral part of a Foreign Policy. It has a firm commitment to increasing humanitarian funding to \$500 million annually, an important commitment given the unprecedented humanitarian and displacement pressures facing the world.
3. In late August 2018, the then Foreign Minister, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, launched a [review of Australia's soft power](#) – another Foreign Policy White Paper commitment - which is the ability to influence the behaviour or thinking of others through the power and attraction of ideas. Minister Bishop noted it is the right time to start a national conversation about the character of Australia's influence, particularly in the Indo-Pacific and all, including NGOs, are encouraged to be involved in the Review.
4. The [Australian Aid: Friendship Grants](#), a \$10 million/ three year program, was announced as part of the **2018-19 Federal Budget**. The Program will provide grants of \$30,000 to \$60,000 through a competitive selection process, expected to be awarded from November 2018. ANCP NGOs already have strong linkages with the aid program so the Friendship Grants will **support a new** (currently not partnering with DFAT) and **diverse group of community organisations from across Australia** to contribute to the delivery of Australian aid in the Indo-Pacific region.



5. In March 2018 the then Ministers for Foreign Affairs, and Education and Training, released a [Smart Volunteering](#) campaign. The campaign discourages Australians from visiting orphanages while on holidays and promotes the benefits of conducting due diligence when engaging in volunteering. **Key campaign messages** are: be an **informed volunteer**: avoid short-term, unskilled volunteering in orphanages; be a **child safe volunteer**: avoid any activity where children are promoted as tourist attractions; and be a **prepared volunteer**: do your homework to ensure you are making a positive impact in the local community.

Review of DFAT accreditation

6. A [review of DFAT accreditation](#) was completed in **May 2018**. The review examined the accreditation process to ensure it meets DFAT's current and anticipated risk parameters and the requirements in DFAT's Due Diligence Framework. It also assessed if accreditation meets the needs of the Australian NGO community and streamlined the entire process to reduce administrative burden. Comprehensive consultations with a variety of stakeholders informed the Final Paper.
7. The main changes agreed were:
 - a. Development of a criterion dedicated to **enterprise risk management** to enable more explicit attention to be given to risk management across the organisation and to reduce repetition across the accreditation criteria
 - b. Inclusion of a specific indicator to test NGO's policy and practices to manage risks associated with **Sexual, Exploitation and Abuse**
 - c. Inclusion of a targeted indicator to test that NGO's can demonstrate the application of additional analysis, risk identification and **risk management measures for high risk contexts**.
 - d. Development of a **stand-alone criterion for Child safeguarding** to enable it to be considered at the organisational level, rather than just at a programming level. It will also become a **red-line (automatic fail) criterion**.
 - e. Allowing the review team to provide recommendations with a **"subject to" caveat** for consideration by the Committee for Development Cooperation (CDC), these will likely be small issues but will strengthen the accreditation process as it will allow follow-up by DFAT on areas of weaker practice.
8. The Accreditation Review and its implications for new and re-accrediting NGOs was discussed in depth at the Information sessions in Melbourne and Sydney on 20 and 23 August.

Prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment

9. The Australian Government does not tolerate **sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment**. It has taken firm actions in response to reports of abuse by international aid workers both within the Australian Aid Program and in international fora.



10. DFAT's **current systems** to manage risks of sexual exploitation and abuse, include:
 - a. a **Child Protection Policy**, which sets the standards expected of our funded partners;
 - b. **compulsory immediate reporting** of any suspected or alleged instances of child abuse, exploitation or harm by DFAT-funded personnel (in place since 2008); and
 - c. an **Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy** for the Aid Program, which seeks to protect vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.
11. DFAT gives **effect** to these requirements through its **contracts** and **agreements**, and a program of **spot checks and audits**.
12. Australia's experience in developing **robust social safeguards and child protection policies** has been **highly valued**. Australia is working with the UK and other like-minded donors to improve global standards and reporting. This work includes:
 - a. taking part in a **Safeguard Technical Working Group** (TWG), chaired by UK Department for International Development, to agree individual and collective donor actions to strengthen safeguarding for the prevention and management of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment risks across the development and humanitarian sectors; and
 - b. participating in the **October International Safeguarding Summit** as an opportunity to lock in global agreements on safeguarding for the prevention and management of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.
13. DFAT is **developing a new policy** to prevent sexual exploitation and a member of DFAT's child protection team held consultations as part of the information sessions in Melbourne and Sydney on 20 and 23 August.
14. DFAT is collaborating with the **ACFID** and its members on an **independent review** of Australian NGO policies, procedures and practices to improve safeguards against sexual exploitation and abuse. ACFID is also **reviewing its Code of Conduct** to strengthen mechanisms in relation to sexual exploitation and Abuse.
15. On 9 August, ACFID published the **Interim Report** of its independent review, providing a summary of the global context and identifying emerging themes and sector-wide factors, which may contribute to sexual misconduct. These themes and factors will be tested in the Australian context in phase two, which involves a field visit, interviews, focus groups and surveys of ACFID member organisations. The **Interim Report and its findings will be presented after ACFID's conference in October**.
16. **Review of External Conduct Standards**: Treasury was seeking submissions on the draft regulations for proposed external conduct standards for charities registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits commission (ACNC). Draft regulations are a principles-based set of minimum standards of conduct, governance and behaviour that ACNC-registered charities must comply with when operating outside Australia. The purpose is to ensure the public has confidence that charities have appropriate systems in place to reasonably address risks that arise in their overseas activities. The consultation period has since closed and Treasury is currently finalising the standards.



Programming in High Risk Locations

17. The world is becoming an even more dangerous place for many people in many of the conflict nations around the world, with sobering statistics on attacks and deaths of aid workers. The safety and security of all aid workers is a concern for all; but when Australians are involved, it concerns many colleagues throughout DFAT.
18. The DFAT ANCP team increased attention during **18-19 ADPlan assessments** on those projects operating in high risk locations, particularly where the Australian Government's Smartraveller has a 'Do Not Travel' warning. **ANCP NGOs are reminded to engage early with DFAT on programming in high risk locations.** We are interested in how ANCP NGOs deal with and document these risks; what training is in place for NGO staff; and what monitoring NGOs may have in place. DFAT held discussions on this during the Information Sessions in Melbourne and Sydney on 20 and 23 August.
19. DFAT will **develop a discussion paper** on programming in high risk locations over the next few months which will include colleagues from bilateral desks, DFAT's consular area and the kidnapping taskforce. We will provide an update on progress at the Information Sessions early next year.

Data Systems Validation Review

20. The [ANCP Data Systems Validation Review](#) was undertaken this year in response to a recommendation from the 2015 evaluation of ANCP by the Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE). Key findings of this review are:
21. The review found that there is **relatively robust level of rigour in the output data** provided by accredited Australian NGOs (ANGOs) to DFAT through the online portal, ANCP Online. Whilst ANGOs demonstrate variation in their monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, they **have all passed accreditation and therefore all have quality assurance systems** in place to **meet the Australian Government's minimum expectations**. Larger NGOs and those with country offices and field teams tend to have greater resources for M&E allocated to sampling, triangulating, in-country missions, and external evaluations.
22. A **number of lessons arise** from the review, leading to the recommendations outlined below. The lessons and recommendations are about the ANCP as a program, and implementation will vary between ANGOs.



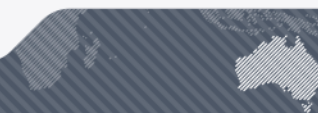
23. Key **recommendations** of this review are:

- I. DFAT, in consultation with ANGOs, to **review the ANCP Program Logic and Monitoring, Evaluation And Learning Framework (MELF)**, specifically to:
 - a. increase the emphasis on qualitative outcome indicators that demonstrate instances of significant change,
 - b. reduce the total number of indicators,
 - c. improve reporting against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and
 - d. provide more detailed guidance on indicators, where appropriate, whilst maintaining ANCP's focus on flexibility and working within partner systems.
- II. DFAT to further **facilitate the ANCP Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Reference Group**, ensuring that it is convened on a regular basis.
- III. DFAT, in collaboration with the ANCP MEL Reference group, to **revise the disaggregation of data**. This could include **clearer definitions for disability**, and reviewing the need for disaggregation of urban/rural.
- IV. ANGOs to allocate, as appropriate to their situation, **more ANCP funding (up to 10%) to M&E** to improve the quality of data coming from local partners. DFAT may consider encouraging ANGOs to allocate, at a minimum, 4% of ANCP funding to M&E, to ensure that partners are sufficiently investing in these areas, including management information systems (MIS).
- V. **ANGOs to increase the quality assurance of data** provided by their project partners. This could include building capacity of local partners; having increased resources available at country, regional or HQ level; and including data quality assurance/capacity assessments as part of the in-country monitoring missions.

Discussion

24. The discussion raised a number of issues which influenced the final report and its recommendations. Key themes included:

- a. Comments that **reinforced the review's findings**: recognising the **diversity of partners**, recognising the **robustness of the systems already in place**, agreement on the **disability focus**, agreement on **removing urban/rural** disaggregation, the level of **quality varies at the ground level** depending on the partners and who is collecting the data.
- b. **Outcome Reporting**: need to be more explicit with what type of outcome reporting is recommended, such as the use of narrative indicators including 'instance of policy or institutional change'. This indicator would be more about the 'depth' rather than 'breadth', and could be used to describe context, project activities, contribution to change, impact of change.
 - i. Some concern around outcome indicators and whether this would lead to less rigour when aggregated given some of the issues highlighted in the report about some indicators;
 - ii. Project level reporting: There was agreement on the project level reporting being the main focus, though it was also noted that when using government systems or partner systems, very difficult to align.



- c. **MEL Reference Group:** Agreement that it was a good thing for the MEL Reference group to be reconvened, noting that it should not just be a ‘talk fest’ but should include a direct work plan; this should be driven by DFAT (with resourcing) and ANGOs should be aware of the ToRs for the group to get CEO support to participate;
 - d. **Resourcing of MEL** (Recommendation 4): generated some discussion including 4% minimum, noting for small partners this may help with getting internal agreement on spending money. Some NGOs raised the issue of removing a 10% limit but it was noted that as stated in the ANCP Manual, it is a 10% limit at the grant, not project, level
 - i. Some base NGOs said they would appreciate more capacity building from DFAT on M&E and specifically data collection;
 - e. Agreement that more **guidance** would be useful, especially around **advocacy** and **disability disaggregation**. However there was a suggestion that the report should note how far ANCP NGOs have come in disability disaggregated data and while there is still room for improvement, the fact that NGOs and their partners are collecting this data is a positive step and raises awareness of disability in development settings;
 - f. Specific concerns around **recommendation 5** being too vague. Suggestion that it could focus more on **data quality** rather than data validation and discussion around how ANCP will demonstrate achievement against this down the track.
25. These comments and a number of written comments were taken on board in finalising the report. **The Final ANCP Data Systems Validation Report and DFAT’s management response** were circulated in early October and **are available on the DFAT website**.

ANCP Strategic Communications

- 26. DFAT provided **feedback** on **ANCP communications over the last 12 months**, noting there has been **great progress**. DFAT thanked ANCP NGOs for the enhanced social media content, improved branding and messaging, and overall increased engagement with ANCP communications activities (including the 2018 ANCP NGO Communications Survey and the 2018-19 ANCP Social Media Schedule).
- 27. DFAT highlighted **current priorities**, including the White Paper’s focus on soft power and its recognition that NGOs are vital partners for prosperity and security. Current research showing the general public does not understand the importance of aid, and the recent introduction of the Australia Aid Friendship Grants – with its domestic engagement focus – were also mentioned.
- 28. DFAT noted that the ANCP is a significant aid program – one of DFAT’s largest. In this context, DFAT raised the **need to demonstrate ANCP’s collective value**, through what is currently being delivered and what could be focussed on in the future.



Discussion

29. Participants took part in an **audience segmentation activity**. Together they segmented the groups of people the ANCP needs to reach into meaningful categories. Across both days, the groups came up with politicians, DFAT posts, Australian aid sector, institutional donors and the Australian public (further segmented into pro, anti and ambivalent-aid sets).
30. Smaller working groups then discussed what aspects of the ANCP these different audiences like, don't like and would like to see (one working group per audience). Based on this, participants then discussed what key messages would resonate with each group. The **key messages** were:
 - a. **Politicians**: Frame around national interest and stories of change. Focus on gender (and consider other cross-cutting issues). Clearer alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Australian community participation in ANCP – clearly show the support that exists for ANCP. ANCP success – show success through accreditation (trust). Greater links to global agendas.
 - b. **DFAT: ANCP's strategic opportunities** – how NGOs contribute to Aid Investment Plans and beyond. Lack of control – provide the counter argument. Coordinated in-country ANCP aid mapping – who is working with who and where, including the impact. Overlaps and alignments with Aid Investment Plans and the Foreign Policy White Paper. Demonstration of effectiveness of ANCP per country. Value for money. Quality assured programs and partners that you don't have to invest a lot of resources to manage.
 - c. **Australian aid sector**: Wider impact on the quality of work, in that it lifts sector practice. ANCP as a collective to share lessons within and external to ANCP. ANCP connects commonalities; at a sector level, it provides a sense of working towards a common goal. ANCP add value by bringing research and development together. Credibility of ANCP accreditation – trustworthiness, transparency, integrity, quality, rigor, accountability. Confusion between ANCP and Australian Aid – ANCP involves co-contribution and allows freedom to determine programming, ANCP supports the work of NGOs (largest NGO program), ANCP is one of many Australian Aid programs. Friendship Grants – non-ANCP NGOs can partner with ANCP NGOs.
 - d. **Institutional donors**: History, stability, rigor, focus on marginalised, bang for buck (aid effectiveness), capacity building partnerships, strong learning agenda, sustainable agenda. Partnership with Government = credibility. SDG and Grand Bargain alignment. High standards around child protection. ANCP promotes real collaboration – case studies and testimonials. Daring to change – ANCP supports innovation.
 - e. **Pro-aid**: Matched funding – increases reach & impact and provides value for money: Success stories – it works (on both a macro and micro level). Australian values – define around these values and how we are furthering them.
 - f. **Anti-aid**: Small amount of dollars spent very efficiently. Actual stats and comparisons. Effectiveness for our beneficiaries. Aid creates peace, stability and trade. Demonstrate “what's in it for me” and the Australian Government's role and responsibilities in this space. Impact stories with “real face” of ANCP.
 - g. **Ambivalent-aid**: People helping people – Australian people are creating a better world. We are helping people help themselves. Visible cooperation – NGOs are stronger together. Accreditation = trust. Real stories with a human face.



31. Ideas raised in both sessions will feed in to the revision of the ANCP Communications Strategy and the ANCP Program Logic, and will help in the development of a refreshed narrative for the ANCP.

Gender Action Platform and applying lessons on gender programming in the ANCP

32. The objective of the Australian NGO Gender Action Platform (GAP) is to strengthen NGO projects to enhance gender equality outcomes in developing countries, through:
 1. the delivery of **innovative or transformative NGO projects** that reduce violence against women, increase women's economic opportunities and improve leadership for and by women through collective action,
 2. **shared learning on good gender equality practice** and lessons from trialling new approaches with GAP NGOs and the broader ANCP, and
 3. increased **collaboration on gender equality development challenges**, including between NGOs and DFAT bilateral and regional programs.
33. GAP funding has enabled 5 (of 6) NGOs to scale up previous gender programming, leveraging the success of previous ANCP projects in their countries and areas of expertise with project implementation beginning on 1 July 2017. **GAP projects are being implemented in 9 countries:** Cambodia, India, Kenya, Myanmar, PNG, Timor-Leste, Thai-Myanmar border, Sri Lanka, and Vanuatu.
34. Each of the six Gender Action Platform (GAP) NGOs presented on their projects in either Melbourne or Sydney and presented on GAP project implementation.
35. Staff from World Vision Australia, Marie Stopes International Australia (in consortium with WaterAid Australia), and CARE Australia presented at the Melbourne workshop, and staff from ActionAid Australia, Act for Peace, and ChildFund Australia presented at the Sydney workshop.
36. Following presentations, participants were invited to split into three groups to discuss the implementation of projects, specifically lessons and challenges and learn from one another. This was followed by a brief plenary discussion. Additional information on GAP projects including case studies can be found [here](#).

Discussion

37. Successes and lessons that can be applied to ANCP NGOs included:
 - a. The need to **start with a clear gender analysis to understand the context** and help to shape the project as required;
 - b. the need for **strong partnerships with aligned values**, especially with key stakeholders such as local women and key organisations, which will often lead to other areas of work as additional needs tend to emerge as work continues;
 - c. the importance of **creating space for women's voices** and empowering women and girls to use their voice; and working with coalitions to advocate with influence.



- d. **engage with men and boys** (and leaders as champions) to ensure they are involved, their perspectives are understood and factored into programming and they can drive change;
 - e. **partnering with research institutions**/partners for additional rigour to evidence and evaluation and strengthening relationships and understanding about gender equality and women's empowerment;
 - f. **build the skills of staff** to conduct research and evaluation to build an evidence base for the project and better understand and use data as you go.
38. **Challenges** included:
- a. **using an inclusive approach** and ensuring people with disabilities are also able to access project activities;
 - b. **build** on successes in other areas **without funding**;
 - c. **short time frames** for implementation, given the funding was for a maximum of three years;
 - d. **Finding the right partner** from the outset to deliver on objectives 2 and 3 of the GAP;
 - e. Meeting both supply and demand as an NGO **working with private sector partners**;
 - f. The **current political and media context** drawing attention to sensitive issues (e.g. #metoo) can in some cases make partners (government and private sector) more cautious.
39. **Unexpected findings** and more specific discussions centred around project specific examples from both GAP NGOs and other ANCP NGOs implementing projects that focus on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Next Steps

40. DFAT will:
- a. Engage with ANCP NGOs in the development of a new Policy on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse;
 - b. Update ANCP NGOs on a Discussion Paper on Programming in High Risk Locations;
 - c. Work with ANCP NGOs to implement the recommendation of the Data Systems Validation Review Report as detailed in the Management Response;
 - d. Work with ANCP NGOs to refine a revised narrative for ANCP and develop a Strategic Communications Strategy for the Program;
 - e. Work with GAP NGOs and ACFID to consider ways to share lessons more broadly on GAP programming.

