



Australian Government

★ Australia Awards

AUSTRALIAN SCHOLARSHIPS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAM (ASDiV) PROGRAM

2011 Vietnam Tracer Study of Australian Scholarships Alumni

2011 Vietnam Tracer Study of Australian Scholarships Alumni2 | March 2012

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Abbreviations

ACIAR	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADS	Australian Development Scholarships
ALAS	Australian Leadership Award Scholarships
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
ANU	Australian National University
ASDiV	Australian Scholarships for Development in Vietnam
ASS	Australian Scholarship Section
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CPA	Certified Practising Accountant
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students
FOS	Field of Study
FTP	Foreign Trade Policy
ICEE	International Centre for Eye Care Education
IT	Information Technology
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
NGO	Non Government Organisation
ODE	Office of Development Effectiveness
PDD	Project Design Document
PPI	Priority Public Institutions
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
STT	Short Term Training
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
UN	United Nations
UTS	University of Technology Sydney
WB	World Bank

Executive Summary

This document reports on the outcomes of a tracer study of Australian scholarship alumni in Vietnam. The study follows on from previous tracer studies conducted in 2002, 2005 and 2008, but utilises a revised instrument that incorporates AusAID's focus on key outcomes. In particular, the 2011 study gives increased attention to relevance and utilisation of skills and knowledge in the workplace, the impact of scholarships on alumni careers, and evidence of specific things that alumni have done since returning utilising the benefits of their study in Australia. It also considers the extent to which the scholarship program has encouraged person-to-person and organisation-to-organisation links with Australia.

The 2011 Tracer Study involved an online survey of alumni and seven focus groups of representative types of alumni (public sector, private sector and CSO/International Agency) to explore issues more qualitatively. In addition program data was cross matched against responses to explore issues in more depth and to avoid asking alumni questions for which the answer was already known. A small selection of case study 'snapshots' was collected to highlight examples of particular alumni experience which reflect some of the main themes emerging from the data.

The survey was sent to 2,062 alumni including 133 alumni listed as untraceable on the alumni database but for whom working email addresses were recorded. The overall response rate was 38.6% or 796 responses. After comparing respondent characteristics to the total alumni population it was concluded that the respondent population could be said to be representative of the Australian scholarship alumni population and the population surveyed with the exceptions that it over-represents women, private sector alumni and alumni in education positions and that it significantly under-represents alumni in senior positions.

Key findings of the 2011 Tracer Study:

Current Employment

- 83% of public sector alumni return to their original employers, this means that public sector alumni tend to have vastly longer length of service with their employers than do other alumni. Other alumni are more likely to change employers more frequently but they are also more likely to gain management positions more quickly.
- Of those alumni in Vietnam, 63% have returned to their original employers; this did not apply to most undergraduate level alumni because they were not generally employed before they studied in Australia.
- Being in a senior position (defined as director level positions and above) was found to be significantly related to length of service, but this was not true of alumni gaining management level positions. The median time for a non-government alumni in a management position, to be with their organisation was 3-4 years while for government alumni it was 10-20 years.
- Contrary to expectations, it is Vietnamese companies that have the highest percentage of senior alumni. This is often because they own the companies.
- Allowing a greater number of female respondents in the survey a number of gender differences were still noted. It was found that compared to men a much larger percentage of women (47%) are in management positions than in senior positions (32%) and a greater percentage of women (73%) in management positions are mid-career than men (64%). Conversely, a greater proportion of men alumni in management positions are older alumni. It may be that the data are reflecting a change in perspective towards women in leadership positions.

- 83 respondents were overseas (11.6% of the population) however just over half of these (51%) were found to be studying. Amongst those currently overseas for other reasons, most are expected to return to Vietnam in the medium term. Of those studying overseas, the majority are in Australia, and of those, the significant majority are on further AusAID scholarships, in particular on ALAS scholarships.
- A growing number of alumni are now at formal retirement age and in the next few years a significant number of alumni will be in this situation. Many will continue to work in other capacities but, nevertheless, this is an issue for the scholarship program to consider.

Contribution

- Respondents reported a high degree of relevance of their study to their previous experience. The study also identified examples of respondents who undertook fields of study that were vastly different to their previous experience precisely because the knowledge and skills were not available in Vietnam (e.g. Remote Sensing, Quality Assurance).
- The type of contribution that alumni make is highly related to their employment type. High levels of contribution in the area of teaching and learning was associated with university lecturers although other types of public sector alumni, in addition to lecturers, were found to have contributed in the area of research. Contributions to the promotion of gender equality, an identified outcome for ASDiV, were found to be more related to alumni in NGOs and international organisations compared to all other employment types.
- 33% of all respondents identified changes to systems that they had introduced and there were many interesting examples to support their case. However, this was not found to be associated with either seniority or whether alumni were in management positions. Public sector alumni were significantly more likely to report such changes.
- More respondents (374) reported application of skills and knowledge outside of work than inside of work (199). This was partly because respondents understood the question in two different ways; while some gave examples of how they had done things in other contexts, many referred to how they had developed personally through study and the consequences of this growth. Development of English language abilities, research skills, teaching skills and critical thinking were particularly frequently cited. The importance of these 'soft-skills' was repeatedly mentioned in focus groups as well.
- 62% of alumni think their study is relevant to their current positions and, with a few exceptions, there is a good match between fields of study and fields of current work. A similar percentage thinks that their study has helped them meet their current organisation's needs. It is public sector alumni who are most likely to say this.

Linkages and Perceptions

- Across both men and women, approximately 57% of alumni are in touch with other Vietnamese alumni but there are fairly low levels of continuing contact with other Australian students, lecturers and other international students.
- 51% of all respondents said their organisations had some ongoing relationship with organisations in Australia and about two thirds of alumni in these organisations were involved in these relationships. Such relationships were most common amongst university alumni with ACIAR being a particularly frequent catalyst for relationships to develop.
- Respondents remain overwhelmingly well disposed towards Australia and reflect positively on their study and living experiences in Australia. Despite the low levels of ongoing contact with people met during study, one fifth of all alumni have returned to Australia on at least one occasion.

- Most respondents professed an interest in participating in alumni events although only half had actually done so in the last 12 months.

In summary, the study found that the majority of alumni have returned to Vietnam and are in employment relevant to their original study. For public sector alumni, Australian scholarships do not markedly enhance promotion prospects, but other alumni who typically seek new employment on return are usually in higher level positions.

People-to-people links with Australians were infrequent although more prominent amongst men than women. It is hypothesised that men may have more opportunities to socialise while in Australia but this issue needs to be further researched. There was a reasonable level of organisation-to-organisation links, particularly in universities and some government departments. The presence of other forces such as ACIAR or ALAF funding was important in supporting these links.

1. Background

Australia's bilateral development cooperation program commenced with Vietnam in 1992. Since that time an estimated 3,200 Vietnamese students have been trained in Australia with the support of Australian Government scholarships. Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) were introduced in Vietnam in 1998 and currently represent approximately 15% of the Vietnam bilateral program budget. Scholarships are now offered for post-graduate study in Australia at Masters or PhD level but in the past have included undergraduate scholarships and before 1995, some short-course training in English language.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of AusAID scholarship activities is relatively new. A 1999 performance audit of the AusAID scholarships program conducted by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) prompted an increased focus on the monitoring and evaluation of scholarships; however, what followed tended to focus on targets for various aspects of the scholarship selection and the placement process.

Since that time, AusAID's own thinking on M&E has developed; notably with the introduction of the Office for Development Effectiveness (ODE), which has championed a focus on the evaluation of outcomes rather than process and the establishment of the Australian Scholarship Section (ASS) which has paid particular attention to the measurement of outcomes from scholarships and sought to develop some standard M&E approaches across scholarship programs in different countries¹.

Tracer studies of alumni from Vietnam were conducted in 2002 by the AusAID Post and in 2005 and 2008 by the contractor responsible for ADS. The studies produced good quantitative information about the general experience of alumni on return to Vietnam. These tracer studies considered the total pool of all alumni and have provided an important description of the post-award experience of ADS alumni. This document presents the latest in this tracer study sequence. It picks up on some of the learning from previous studies but utilises a revised instrument that incorporates AusAID's focus on key outcomes. In particular, the current study gives increased attention to relevance and utilisation of skills and knowledge in the workplace, the impact of scholarships on alumni careers, and evidence of specific things that alumni have done since returning utilising the benefits of their study in Australia. The extent to which the scholarship program has encouraged person-to-person and organisation-to-organisation links with Australia is also considered.

This report refers to three inter-related populations: the alumni population; the survey population (section 2.1) and the respondent population (section 2.3).

The *alumni population* specifically refers to all individuals listed on the ASDiV alumni database. As at December 2010, when this study was first planned the alumni database contained records of 3,097 individuals who were awarded scholarships dating from 1977 to the present (see *Table 1*).

¹ A further Audit by ANAO in 2011 was generally complimentary of evaluation approaches towards scholarships but has prompted further refinements and standardisation of tracer study approaches used across AusAID scholarship programs in different countries. AusAID Tracer Study Guidelines released in October 2011 were issued too late to be utilised for the current study but will be utilised in the next ASDiV tracer study in 2013.

Table 1. Breakdown of Alumni Database Records by Time, Scholarship Type and Gender

Period	Scholarship Type	Female	Male	Total	Percent
1977; 1986 - 1991	UNDP ²	89	105	194	6.3%
1980 - 2007	IMF	14	17	31	1.0%
1991 - 1994	Winrock	4	12	16	0.5%
1995 - 2006	ACIAR	6	22	28	0.9%
1992 to present	ADS	1,336	1,453	2,789	90.1%
2007 to present	ALAS	22	17	39	1.3%
	Total	1,471	1,626	3,097	100%

Efforts to update the database are on-going but the data remain of varying quality. In particular, there are 341 alumni who are listed as being overseas, referred to as *overseas alumni*, and 495 alumni whose whereabouts is so far unknown, referred to as *untraceable alumni*. While some of the overseas alumni are living and working overseas, most are on further study and are thus a more transitory population who can be expected to return to Vietnam over time. At the same time some of the alumni currently in Vietnam can be expected to pursue further education overseas at some point. Numbers in this category therefore fluctuate from time to time. Efforts to contact untraceable alumni have yielded some good results in the last 12 months with a reduction in the numbers of alumni in this category and an increase in the number of in-Vietnam alumni. The final category encompasses alumni known to be in Vietnam. This category is subdivided into *in-Vietnam* alumni referring to the group that are working in Vietnam and *retired alumni*³.

2. Method

The Tracer Study involved two principle methods, an online survey of alumni; and focus groups of representative types of alumni to explore issues more qualitatively. In addition, program data were cross matched against responses to explore issues in more depth and to avoid asking alumni questions for which the answer was already known. A small selection of case study 'snapshots' were chosen to highlight examples of particular alumni experience and these reflect some of the main themes emerging from the data.

Survey. The survey was administered online through SurveyMonkey™ professional survey software. The survey population included all alumni with working email addresses from various Australian funded scholarship schemes who returned between 1985 and early 2011. This is a broader population base than attempted in previous surveys and is made possible by email communications and extensive work on the alumni database by ASDiV.

The survey was first initiated on 15 May 2011 with the last response being received on 31 July 2011 providing an eleven week response period. Two alumni formally declined to participate in the survey.

² A significant number of former UNDP awardees subsequently went on to undertake degree programs under ADS and are counted in the ADS figure.

³ There are also 6 deceased alumni on the database.

The Survey Form is attached as *Annex A*. The form was originally drafted by the ASDiV Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser based on AusAID Scholarship Section Standard Questions, the 2005 Vietnam Tracer Study Survey Form and experience in other countries. The Survey Form was then modified in consultation with AusAID Post in Vietnam and included the following areas:

Category	Areas of interest
<i>Personal Details</i>	Name, Gender, Date of Birth for identification purposes and contact details for updating the alumni database.
<i>Current Employment</i>	Years since return, current employment status, match between experience and study, field of study, current organisation and relationship to prior employment, type of employment (full time/part time), years of employment, name of organisation, position title, section, field of work, nature of position, promotions since return. Also contained questions about problems encountered during study.
<i>If not currently employed</i>	Status, time since last employment, intention to return to work
<i>Contribution to Development</i>	Relationship of promotion to Australian study, relevance of study to current position, contribution to current organisation, contribution to development in various areas, innovations introduced, application of skills outside of normal work.
<i>Links to Australia</i>	Frequency of contact with various types of people met during study, numbers of contacts, organisational links to Australia, involvement in organisational links, promotion of professional links, subsequent visits to Australia, perceptions of study experience, general perceptions of Australia.
<i>Alumni Activity</i>	Interest in alumni activities, types of activities of most interest, number of activities participated in last 12 months, membership of other alumni organisations.
<i>Further Qualifications</i>	Have they completed further study, current highest degree, location of study, was further study supported with another scholarship?

Survey data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Additional data from the alumni database were added including information on in-Australia databases, alumni status at the time of survey, and where alumni had received further scholarships from the Australian Government the type of scholarship they had received.

Focus Groups. To supplement the survey, seven Focus Groups of survey respondents representative of types of respondents were conducted involving alumni in the Ministry of Planning and Investment, public sector alumni working on environmental issues, alumni working for NGOs in Hanoi, alumni working for NGOs in Hue and Danang, alumni working in the news and media, senior level alumni in the private sector, and alumni working at the Hanoi University of Agriculture. Focus group protocols were developed for each group and are attached as *Annex B*. While each protocol was tailored to the group in question, they generally covered: alumni interaction and collaboration; alumni contributions within their respective sectors; the impact of scholarships on alumni careers; organisational and person to person links with Australia; and contributions to development in Vietnam.

Program Data. In addition to the above, the study drew on existing alumni data held by the ASDiV office including the alumni database, the December 2010 Monitoring and Evaluation Report and individual longitudinal case histories being developed as part of the ASDiV Evaluation Strategy. Some specific results were cross-checked across the full alumni database.

2.1 Survey Population

The Survey Population is represented in *Table 2* below. The survey was initially sent to 2,259 alumni for whom email addresses were held on the alumni database. This included a small number of retired alumni and almost 200 alumni classified as untraceable on the database⁴. Where alumni had more than one email address the invitation was sent to all addresses. Non-respondents in the in-Vietnam group were followed up on two subsequent occasions, which also included contacting alumni whose emails had bounced to seek alternate email addresses. It was not possible to pursue untraceable alumni, whose emails bounced. Adjusting for alumni who could not be contacted by email, the final survey population was 2,062 alumni.

Table 2. Population Surveyed and Respondents by Alumni Status on the ASDiV Database

Alumni Status on Database	Original Survey	Bounced	Resent to new address	Total Sent	Responses ⁵	Response Rate (%)
In Vietnam	1790	240	123	1673	696	41.7
Overseas	255	15	0	240	55	22.9
Retired	17	1	0	16	8	50.0
Untraceable/No Information	197	64	0	133	36	26.5
	2259			2062	796	38.6

Note: Previous tracer studies have involved smaller populations and required larger response rates to permit results to be generalised to the entire alumni population.

2.2 Respondent Population

The third population is the Respondent Population. As can be seen in *Table 1* the response rate for the in Vietnam group was 42% and 23% for the overseas group. In addition, 44 responses were received from retired and previously untraceable alumni⁶. The overall response rate was 38.6% or 796 responses. If the population had been randomly sampled, a minimum of 725 responses was required for the survey to provide a 95% confidence level, so the respondent population can be broadly considered to be representative of the alumni population. For the in-Vietnam group, a minimum response of 652 was required and again this was exceeded in the respondent population. However, with only 55 responses the overseas group of respondents is well short of the number required for statistical significance for this small sub-group. Other characteristics of the respondent population are discussed in the results section below.

⁴ Although email addresses were held for the untraceable alumni they had, to date, not replied to any attempt to contact them by the ASDiV office. It was decided to include these alumni as part of the program's continuous efforts to reduce the number of untraceable alumni and improve the quality of the ASDiV database.

⁵ The alumni status at the time of responding to the survey was in some cases different from that recorded on the database. For example some alumni previously recorded as overseas were found to now be in Vietnam. For the purpose of this table responses are shown according to the category that the alumnus was in on the ASDiV database at the time the survey invitation was issued.

⁶ The response rate % for these two groups shown in Table 1 is a little misleading since it cannot be certain how many of the untraceable alumni actually received the survey and may therefore be understated by the table.

Sex. Although men and women were equally represented in the survey population, there was a significantly greater percentage of women respondents (56.4%) to the survey than men (43.6%), which needs to be weighed in the interpretation of any gender specific results.

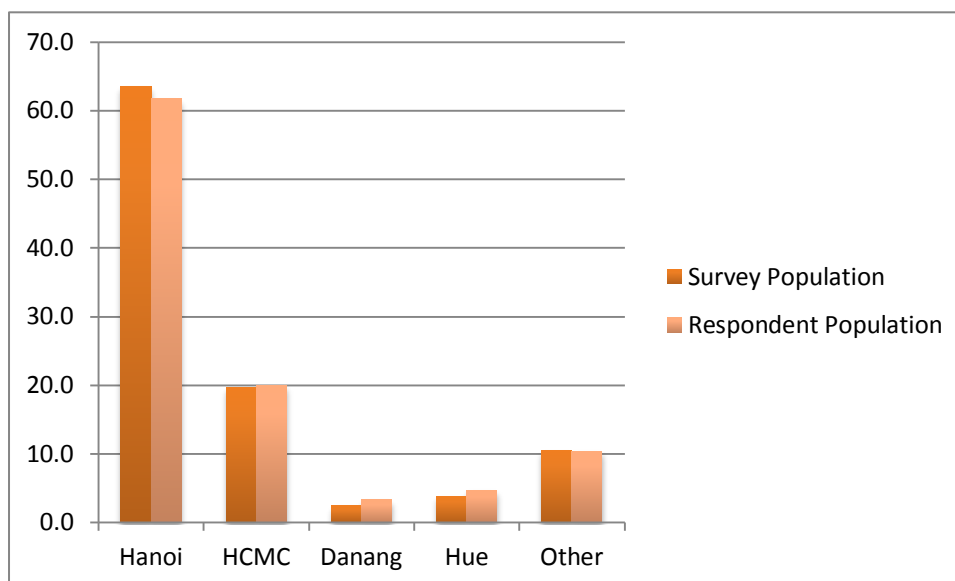
Profiles. ASDiV characterises awards according to five alumni profiles, however, this situation did not pertain in previous years and in fact none of the current alumni were classified in this way. Nevertheless, alumni on the alumni database have been mapped against existing ASDiV profiles. *Table 3* gives a comparison of the respondent population and the alumni population by profile. As can be seen the largest groups are in *Profile 4* who are for the most part university lecturers and researchers and in the other category which are predominantly private sector alumni. The response rates within profiles closely matches the profile composition in the total alumni population but are slightly more respondents in *Profile 4* and slightly less in the other categories.

Table 3. Profiles of Respondents Relative to Percentage of Alumni Population.

Profile	% of alumni population	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	1.5	12	1.7
2	8.5	59	8.3
3	16.0	110	15.5
4	26.4	218	30.7
5	8.1	48	6.8
Other	39.7	264	37.1
Total	100	711	100

Provincial Distribution. As is evident in *Figure 1*, there is a close match in provincial representation between the survey population and the respondent population. There were 2.5% fewer respondents from Hanoi with a proportional increase in respondents in Danang, Hue and other provinces but the difference is not material to results. It is likely that this is a consequence of recent program activity to reactivate alumni in central Vietnam.

Figure 1. Percentage of Survey and Respondent Populations by Province



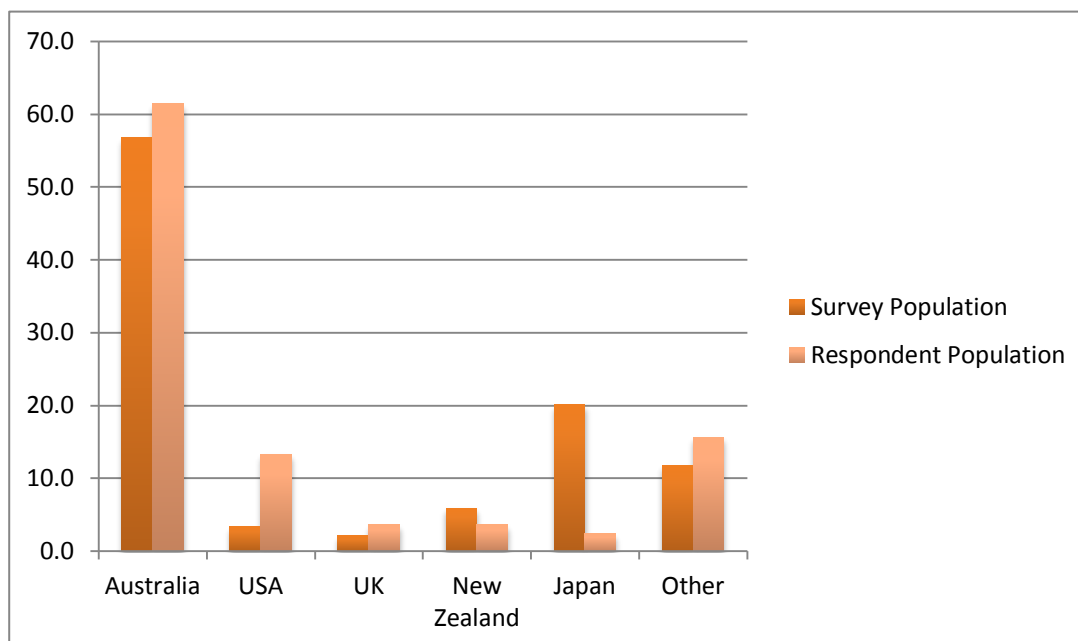
Current Status of Alumni. Table 4 compares the current status of respondents with their original status recorded on the ASDiV database. The variance to a small extent can be attributed to inaccuracies in the database but to a much larger extent represents changes in alumni status. Most notable are the larger number of respondents overseas and, as a result of locating some people during this study, a reduction in the number of untraceable alumni.

Table 4. Current Status of Respondents Compared with Original Status on ASDiV Database

	Overseas	In Vietnam	Retired	Untraceable
Original Status	55	697	8	36
Current Status	83	688	7	18
Variance	28	-9	-1	-18

Overseas Alumni. Given the initially small number of overseas alumni in some countries minor changes in numbers have lead to some big variations in percentage terms for some countries; however, by far the majority of overseas alumni are in Australia. This is true for both the survey population and the respondent population (see Figure 2). Compared to the survey population the respondent population has a much greater representation of alumni in the USA and a lower percentage in Japan. This is considered unlikely to materially influence results although it is worth bearing in mind on questions pertaining to reasons for being overseas.

Figure 2. Percentage of Overseas Alumni in Survey and Respondent Populations by Country



Eighty-three [83] respondents are currently overseas. Of the original 55 alumni overseas, 44 are still overseas and ten have returned to Vietnam and one is unknown. However, an additional 36 alumni who were originally in Vietnam are now overseas and one of the untraceable alumni was also found to be overseas. Fifty-six percent (56%) of the people studying overseas are women, which is in direct proportion to their representation in the respondent population and suggests that there are few barriers to women undertaking further study.

While the majority of overseas alumni are in Australia there is also a sizable percentage in the USA. Thirty-six percent [36%] are in other countries including 7% in Europe and 10% in Asia (see Table 5)

Table 5. Overseas Alumni by Country

Country	No.	%
Australia	51	61.4
Belgium	1	1.2
Canada	2	2.4
Fiji	1	1.2
Germany	1	1.2
Hong Kong	1	1.2
Indonesia	1	1.2
Japan	2	2.4
New Zealand	3	3.6
Norway	1	1.2
Panama	1	1.2
Singapore	3	3.6
Thailand	1	1.2
UK	3	3.6
USA	11	13.3
Total	83	100

51% of all overseas alumni are studying but 61% of the alumni in Australia are studying. Interestingly, 17 alumni in Australia were on ALA scholarships and the availability of ALA scholarships is probably the main reason explaining the difference between alumni studying in Australia and in other countries. Only one respondent who was studying in Australia had another ADS scholarship, one had an endeavour scholarship, three had university scholarships and the funding for the remainder was unknown.

30% of all overseas alumni were working including 25% of alumni in Australia. Three alumni were living in Australia for other reasons. One was accompanying his wife who was studying but the other two were living permanently in Australia. It could not be established why 16% of alumni were overseas including 10% of the alumni who were in Australia. It is likely that most of these are also permanently overseas. Two alumni, who were working overseas, were working for the Vietnamese government; one who was Ambassador to Panama and the other worked for the Ministry of Trade. Five of the alumni in the USA were working, including one who was working for Google and one who was working for Indiana University.

During a focus group of alumni from the private sector the view was strongly expressed that one of the reasons that people had not returned to Vietnam in earlier years was that this was as a consequence of offering scholarships to undergraduates. They each knew at least one person who was overseas and in each case the individual had been an undergraduate awardee. By their nature these awardees shared the common features that they were younger at the time of the award, they spent longer in Australia during their study programs (usually four years) and they did not have jobs to return to on completion. This is an interesting observation worthy of further investigation

Characteristics. When compared with other general alumni population characteristics, the respondent population was also generally found to be representative of the general population, but there are some small differences within individual characteristics as follows:

Employment type: The percentage of government employees in the respondent population is less (-7%) and the percentage of private sector respondents is higher (+5%) with insignificant differences in the percentage of civil society, and international organisation respondents.

Field of employment: Alumni in education are six percent (+6%) over-represented compared to the general population. Twenty percent (20%) of the survey population are university lecturers, professors and assistant professors. Most other fields of employment are broadly similar although it is noted that there were no respondents who classified their fields of employment as economics, international relations or human resource development. Given the greater proportion of private sector respondents it is interesting to note that alumni in the field of business and commerce are slightly but not significantly (-2.8%) under-represented in the respondent population.

Field of Study: On this dimension, the respondent population is broadly in line with the general alumni population. The most significant differences are that a five percent under-representation of alumni who studied education (-5%) and a (+4%) over-representation of people who studied business and commerce.

Alumni in Senior Positions: 45% of all respondents are in management positions, which is similar to the general alumni population. However, senior level alumni (defined as director level positions and above) are significantly under-represented with only 17% of respondents in this category. In the December 2010 M&E Report, the analysis of alumni database it was estimated that up to 40% of public sector alumni were in senior positions but amongst respondents only 13% are in this category (16% in the private sector). While it is understandable that senior alumni would be less likely to reply because of other work pressures, this is an important dimension of program impact and needs to be considered in assessing responses.

Ethnic Minorities. Although the survey asked about ethnic minorities that field was particularly poorly filled in and little useful analysis can be drawn from it. Responses included, for example, being Vietnamese, Asian, Catholic and Buddhist. However, two respondents described themselves as Nung (F=1, M=1) and three described themselves as Tay (F=1, M=2). It is understood that very few of the existing alumni population are ethnic minorities so the inclusion of these five, probably means ethnic minorities are at least adequately represented and possibly over-represented in the respondent population.

In summary, the respondent population can be said to be representative of the Australian scholarship alumni population and the population surveyed with the exceptions that it over-represents women, private sector alumni and alumni employed in education positions and that it significantly under-represents alumni in senior positions.

3. Results

An important caveat to the following discussion is that not every alumnus answered every question on the survey. In particular, open response questions were less well completed than other types of questions although the response to these types of questions was quite good compared to other surveys in other country scholarship programs. Alumni who did not answer a particular question are excluded from the response set for those questions; consequently respondent totals vary according to the issue under consideration.

3.1 Types of Awards

The vast majority (76%) of respondents are masters level awardees, however, 12% of respondents were undergraduate level awardees, 6% were PhD level awardees and another 6% were awardees who completed a Graduate Diploma (see Table 6). Eight respondents had only undertaken informal training, usually an ELICOS program, and one had done a post-doctoral program. It is not known for sure if the Graduate Diploma level respondents originally intended to study Graduate Diplomas or were downgraded from Masters level programs but the latter explanation is considered likely in most cases.

It is worth noting that while women are generally over-represented in the respondent population they make up a much smaller proportion of the overseas alumni group.

Table 6. Level of Study by Alumni Status (as recorded on alumni database at time of survey)

Level of Study	Vietnam			Overseas			Retired			Untraceable			Grand Total	%
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T		
Undergraduate	32	43	75	2	3	5	0	0	0	0	1	1	81	11.5
Graduate Diploma	22	17	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39	5.6
Masters	206	295	501	6	2	8	0	5	5	5	12	17	531	75.6
PhD	16	13	29	7	6	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	42	6.0
Post doctoral	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Informal Study (ELICOS, STT)	4	2	6	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	8	1.1
Sub-Total	281	370	651	15	11	26	2	5	7	5	13	18	702	100.0

The respondent population covers the entire history of the scholarship program and includes a good representation of older alumni and more recently returned alumni (see Table 7). While some of the older alumni have retired, most are still working.

Table 7. Years Since Return

Period of Return	Older Alumni (pre 1998)			Mid Career Alumni (1999-2009)			Recently returned alumni (2010-2011)			Grand Total	%
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T		
Undergraduate	2	6	8	29	40	69	3	1	4	81	11.5
Graduate Diploma	9	15	24	13	2	15	0	0	0	39	5.6
Masters	46	40	86	119	160	279	52	114	166	531	75.6
PhD	6	2	8	14	12	26	3	5	8	42	6.0
Post doctoral	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Informal Study (ELICOS, STT)	6	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	1.1
Sub-total	70	65	135	175	214	389	58	120	178	702	100.0

There is very little difference in the percentage of older (11%) and mid-career alumni (12%) overseas but as would be expected a much smaller percentage (6%) of recently returned

alumni are overseas. All of the informal study respondents are older alumni from the pre-1998 period, however, most of the undergraduate respondents are mid-career alumni. Only four (4) respondents are undergraduate level alumni who have returned in the last two years.

The typical respondent is female, a masters level awardee who is in mid-career and is currently living in Vietnam.

3.2 Study Experience

Study Background. *Table 8* shows the fields of study of respondents. Although there is a broad spread of fields, respondents in *business services and commerce*, predominate with a third of all respondents and 38% of all women respondents, having studied in this field. The percentage of women in business services and commerce is not fully explained by their over-representation in the population. Women make up 56% of respondents but 65% of the respondents in this field of study. Women also make up the majority of respondents in the fields of education and social services but not, as might be expected, in health.

Table 8. Fields of Study

Field	Male	Female	Total	Percent
Agriculture and Rural Development	49	21	70	9.1
Business or Commerce	88	167	255	33.1
Communication and Journalism	7	9	16	2.1
Economics	17	31	48	6.2
Education	32	76	108	14.0
Engineering and Science	76	38	114	14.8
Environment	23	28	51	6.6
Law	11	17	28	3.6
Medicine/Health	23	21	44	5.7
Public Policy	2	13	15	1.9
Social Services	2	20	22	2.9
Total	330	441	771	100

The next two most common fields of study, *engineering and science*, and *education*, are only half as popular. Interestingly, the least frequently represented field is *Public Policy* which would seem to limit the amount of impact possible on public policy. It is also notable that most of these respondents were also women.

Respondents were asked to comment on the relevance of their field of study to their previous experience. The question was framed in this way recognising that some undergraduate awardees had no prior work experience. Overwhelmingly, as shown in *Table 9*, respondents indicated that their field of study was strongly related to their previous work or background.

Table 9. Study Match to Previous Experience

To what extent, did the course you studied in Australia match your previous experience?		
	No.	Percent
To a great extent	529	68.3
To a medium extent	211	27.2
To a small extent	22	2.8
Not at all	13	1.7
Total	775	100

In focus groups the author met two alumni, who had undertaken study in substantially different areas to what they were working in. In both cases, one in remote sensing and the other in environmental impact assessment, the rationale for choosing the study program was precisely because this was new knowledge for Vietnam and therefore by definition different from what the alumnus had been doing previously. Similarly, in a cluster study undertaken separately from this Tracer Study a group of eight alumni were identified who had been sent specifically to study Education Testing and Assessment despite coming from such diverse backgrounds as English Teaching and Mining Engineering. When the survey respondent's field of work is compared to their field of study, as discussed later, the picture largely confirms a strong match although it is noted that significantly more people studied in Business or Commerce compared to those working that field. Science and Technology was also somewhat more highly represented in study programs than work fields would indicate.

Further Study. Three respondents reported having done more than one degree on successive ADS scholarships. Another 41 alumni are currently engaged in further overseas study and most of these are on further scholarships, although a number of alumni did not indicate the source of their funding for further study. Four alumni indicated they had received funding from the New Zealand government, the Japanese government, the US government or the German government. Five individuals were engaged in further study in Vietnam.

Problems encountered during study. As *Table 10* shows very few problems during study were reported by respondents. This is a somewhat difficult set of questions for alumni who have been back in Vietnam for some time and is probably more appropriate to include in surveys of alumni as they return to Vietnam. It may well be that respondents are reluctant to answer questions of this nature or that they simply forget about problems experienced as memories of study recede. Nevertheless, there is no indication from answers provided that there are any particular issues requiring attention.

Table 10. Problems Experienced During Study

Problems	No.	% of total respondents
Medical Issues	72	0.09
Depression	79	0.10
Marital/Family Conflict	29	0.04
Separation/Divorce	11	0.01
Other Problems	22	0.03

In the *other* category problems cited included language, racism, finding accommodation, pregnancy, homesickness, parental illness, food, and study pressures. None of these affected a large number of respondents but the most significant was homesickness which was reported by 10 people.

3.3 Employment

Employment Status. *Table 11* gives the employment status of respondents. Twenty-one (21) respondents are not currently employed. Of these seven are retired, five are looking for work, five are studying domestically, two are engaged in family duties and one is dealing with illness. One person did not give a reason. Not including retired alumni almost half of the remaining alumni had been out of work for more than a year. However, 18 out of the 21 respondents, including five of the retired alumni⁷, said that they were likely to return to work in the future.

Table 11. Current Employment Status of Respondents

Current Activity	Female	Male	No.	Percent
Studying	23	18	41	5.2
Working	402	312	714	89.7
Not Working	15	6	21	2.6
Not Known	8	9	17	2.1
Other	1	2	3	0.4
Total	449	347	796	100

If only in-Vietnam alumni are considered 97% of respondents are working. Nineteen (19) out of 21 of those currently not working are in Vietnam. All of those listed above as studying, are overseas, however, five respondents indicated they while they had full time jobs in Vietnam they were also studying in Vietnam.

Of those who are working, 94% are working full-time, two percent (2%) are working part-time and another 4% describe themselves as consultants or free-lancers.

Return to Original Employer. Of in-Vietnam alumni, 63% of respondents returned to their original employer. Amongst those who did not, the main reasons, as shown in *Table 12* were that they did not have a job before study (primarily the undergraduate level alumni) and that they looked for a better opportunity (which was primarily related to pay and conditions rather than being more relevant to their field of study), however, another 13% said they did relocate

⁷ In fact two of the retired alumni are still working as freelance consultants. In Vietnam women retire from government service at 50 years of age and men retire at 55 years of age.

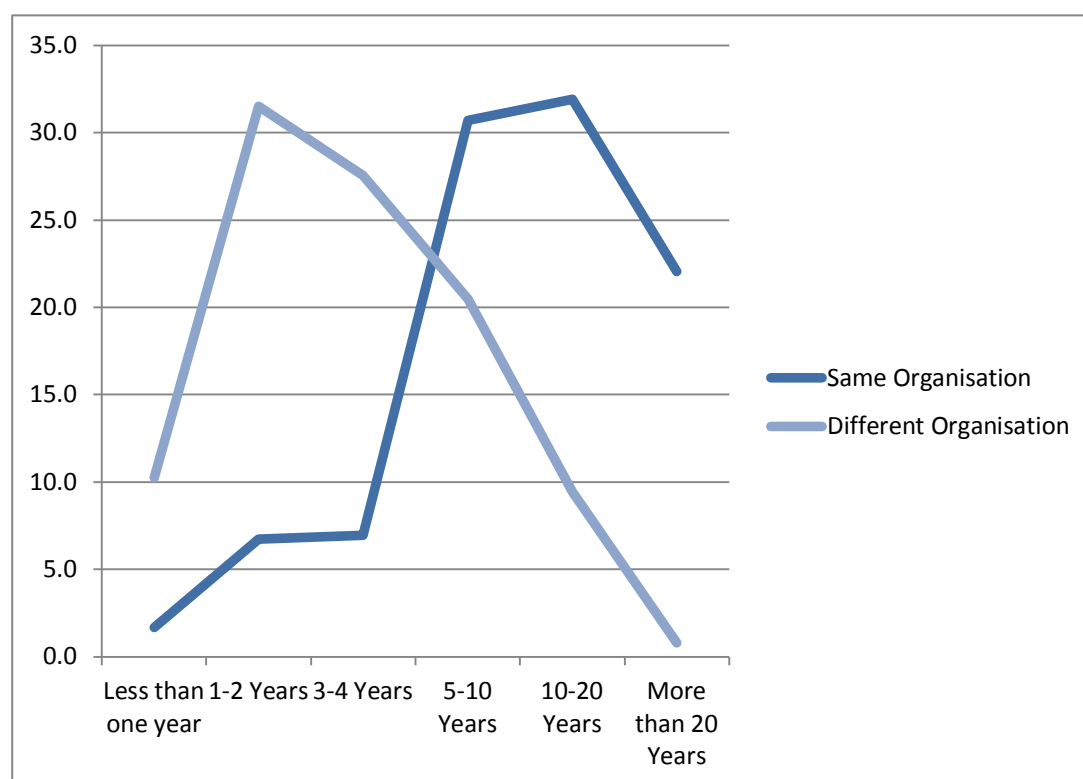
in order to utilise their skills and knowledge better. Nine percent (9%) of respondents resigned in order to take up their scholarship and these were primarily from the private sector or NGOs. In focus groups, private sector alumni indicated that it was not difficult to find work on return, however, amongst NGO alumni it was noted that there was some movement between the NGO community and the private sector.

Table 12 Reasons Given for Not Returning to Original Employer

Reason	No.	%
Did not have a job before study	76	33.0
Looked for better opportunity	74	32.2
Could not apply what I learned	29	12.6
Organisation or role no longer there	21	9.1
Resigned from previous job to take scholarship	20	8.7
Conflict at the old organisation	3	1.3
Started my own company	3	1.3
Family Reasons	2	0.9
Moved Location	2	0.9
Total	230	100

It is to be expected that those who returned to their original employer had a greater number of years of service with their employers but as *Figure 3* shows the picture is starkly different between the two groups.

Figure 3. Percentage of Alumni by Years of Service by Return to Original Employer.



For those who did not return to their original employer the median length of service is between 1-2 years compared with 10-20 years for those who did return to their original employer. There is no relationship between either *intake year* or *year of return* with the likelihood of a person returning to their organisation. Scholarship holders from earlier periods were just as likely, or unlikely, to return to their organisation as more recent graduates. However, government employees were considerably more likely to return to their original employers than were private sector employees and consequently government employees have higher median lengths of service than private sector alumni. More than 20% of public sector respondents have more than 20 years of service with their current employers.

This highlights a potentially important issue. Over the next few years we can expect to see a large transition of alumni move from work to retirement. Currently 8% of male and 10% of female respondents are already at retirement age (see *Figure 4*) although most continue to work. In the next five years, the situation will change to 23% of males and 16% of female respondents will be of retirement age (see *Figure 5*)⁸. Although older alumni are distributed across public, private and the NGO/CSO sectors the loss of corporate knowledge and experience will most acutely be felt in the public sector.

Figure 4. Current Age of Alumni

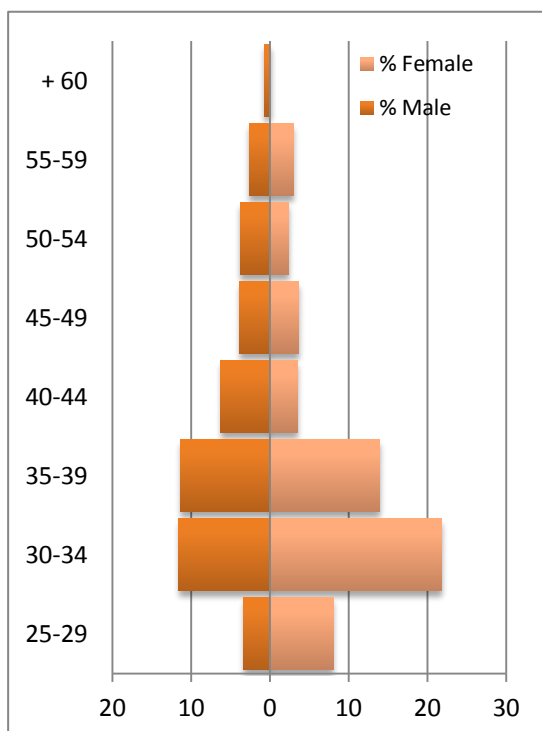
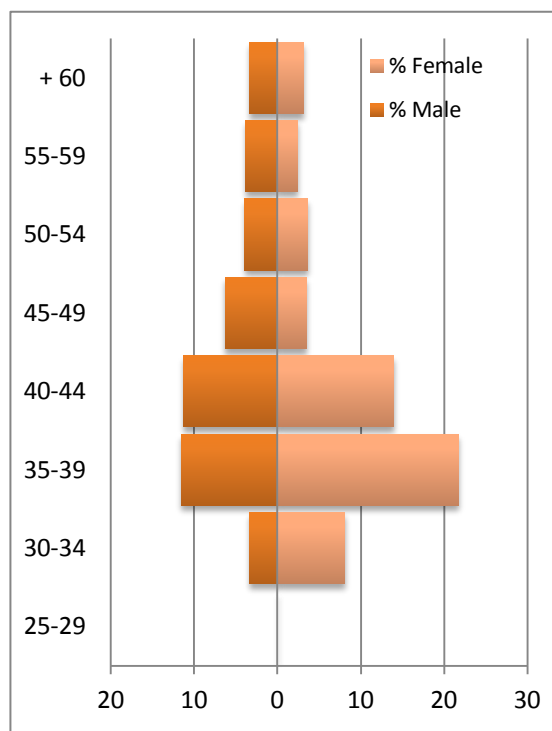


Figure 5. Age Group in Five years Time



From a more positive perspective this represents a large potential resource of alumni, with more time on their hands, and lots of experience that could be activated and supported within the ASDiV alumni strategy. A number of individuals were encountered in focus groups that were examples of alumni transitioning into retirement. Most remained active and were keen to continue to exercise their skills and knowledge in productive ways.

⁸ This refers to percentages of current respondents. Of course other alumni will have returned during that time so the percentage of total alumni who are of retirement age will not be as great as this suggests but it will still be around 600 people.

Type and level of work. In theory the employment categories civil servant and public servant are clearly delineated in Vietnamese government service. In practice, some respondents appeared to have difficulty identifying as one or the other and the two categories are probably best considered together as public sector employees. Fifty-nine percent [59%] of respondents work for the public sector, 30% are in the private sector and the remaining 10% work for NGOs and international agencies (see *Table 13*). It is worth noting that 68% of all respondents who studied at an undergraduate level now work in the private sector and of these two-thirds work for foreign companies. Men and women are evenly distributed across the different types of organisations.

Table 13. Type of Work of Respondents⁹

Type of Employment	Male	Female	Total	Percent
Civil Servant	54	66	120	18.1
Public Servant/State Owned Company	119	153	272	41.0
Private Sector Employee - Vietnamese Company	51	59	110	16.6
Private Sector Employee - Foreign Company	42	52	94	14.2
Civil Society Employee (i.e. NGO)	10	28	38	5.7
International Agency Employee (i.e. Embassy, UN Agency, etc.)	13	16	29	4.4
Total	289	374	663	100

Eighteen percent (18%) of all respondents are in senior positions¹⁰. However, 39% of those who work for a Vietnamese company actually own the company and are in the most senior position (Director or above)¹¹. Forty-five percent (45%) of alumni in Vietnamese companies are in senior positions compared to just 16% in foreign owned companies. Amongst public sector alumni 13% of respondents are in senior positions and for civil society the figure is 15%. Only one respondent from an international agency was in a senior position.

From *Table 14* it can be seen that only one third of respondents in senior positions were women and this was generally true across the types of organisation with the exception of foreign companies where 44% of people in senior positions were women.

Table 14. Respondents in Senior Positions

Type of Employment	Male	Female	Total	Female Percent
Civil Servant	13	7	20	35.0
Public Servant/State Owned Company	19	8	27	29.6
Private Sector Employee - Vietnamese Company	32	16	48	33.3

⁹ In-Vietnam respondents only. If overseas respondents are included the percentages do not change markedly.

¹⁰ In the 2010 M&E Report it was reported from an analysis of the database that approximately 24% of the alumni were in senior positions.

¹¹ A senior position was defined as Department Director or equivalent and is the same definition as used in the December 2010 Monitoring and Evaluation Report.

Private Sector Employee - Foreign Company	9	7	16	43.8
Civil Society Employee (i.e. NGO)	3	2	5	40.0
International Agency Employee (i.e. Embassy, UN Agency, etc.)	1	0	1	0.0
Total	77	40	117	34.2

47% of respondents (n=307) report being in management positions constituted as shown in *Table 15*. As with senior positions, women are less well represented, relative to their proportion of the population, except in foreign companies (55%) and civil society organisations (67%). However, a much larger percentage of women are in management positions than in senior positions. While this may be indicative of a 'glass ceiling' in operation across employment types it is interesting to note that a greater percentage of women (73%) in management positions are mid-career than men (64%). Conversely, a greater proportion of male alumni in management positions are older alumni. It is possible, although not certain, that a change in perspective towards women in leadership positions is taking place and this may, in time, be reflected in them moving into more senior positions as well.

Table 15. Respondents in Management Positions

Type of Employment	Male	Female	Total	Female Percent
Civil Servant	31	22	53	41.5
Public Servant/State Owned Company	57	44	101	43.6
Private Sector Employee - Vietnamese Company	43	37	80	46.3
Private Sector Employee - Foreign Company	23	28	51	54.9
Civil Society Employee (ie NGO)	4	8	12	66.7
International Agency Employee (ie Embassy, UN Agency, etc.)	6	4	10	40.0
Total	164	143	307	46.6

While the above figures are for designated management positions a much greater percentage of respondents (58%) report actually managing staff. 398 alumni manage a total of 15,180 staff. This is 38 staff on average; however, there is wide variation. About half manage between less than 10 staff and 71% manage less than 20 but 7% manage more than 100 and three [3] respondents manage more than 1000 staff each.

Promotion and Career Enhancement. It is clear from *Table 16* and not unexpected, that time with the organisation is a significant factor in the alumni rising to senior positions, however, it is interesting to note that the same thing does not hold true for alumni in management level positions. For this category, time with the organisation appears to have no bearing. However, this is strongly related to the respondent's type of employment and is therefore also dependent on whether they returned to their original organisation after study or not. Government alumni were equally likely to be in managerial positions as non-government alumni but the length of time for government alumni to reach those positions was considerably longer while, conversely, non-government alumni have tended to find management positions significantly more quickly.

In focus groups with public sector employees, participants said that promotion was generally based on seniority rather than qualifications, experience or capability. The median time for a non-government alumni in a management position, to be with their organisation was 3-4 years while for government alumni it was 10-20 years. If, the level of contribution an alumnus can make is enhanced by being in a management position (where they may have a greater sphere of influence), there appears to be a much earlier payback on AusAID's investment from non-government alumni.

Table 16. Percentage of Respondents in Senior and Management Positions by Years in Organisation

Years with organisation	Senior position				Managerial position			
	F	M	Total	% of cohort	F	M	Total	% of cohort
Less than one year	2	2	4	12.1	10	4	14	42.4
1-2 Years	7	9	16	14.7	28	22	50	45.9
3-4 Years	8	17	25	26	24	26	50	52.1
5-10 Years	5	20	25	13.4	28	40	68	36.6
10-20 Years	9	16	25	14.9	38	38	76	45.2
More than 20 Years	9	14	23	24.5	19	37	56	59.6
Total	40	78	118	17.2	147	167	314	45.8

Asked about their current position, most respondents report being in a higher level position than before they went on study (see *Table 15*). Despite this, there is once again a clear distinction between public sector and private sector respondents. While 62% of civil servants and 55% of public servants report being at a higher level, 87% of respondents working for Vietnamese companies, 77% of respondents working for foreign companies, 72% of those working for civil society organisation and 85% of those working for international organisations also report working at a higher level. When length of service is factored in as a consideration it is clear that public sector alumni have considerably reduced opportunities for promotion relative to other types of alumni. Women across the population were also less likely (62%) to have been promoted than Men (74%).

Table 17. Percentage of Respondents by Level of Current Position

	Female	Female Percent	Male	Male Percent	Total	Percent of position
higher level	236	61.8	225	73.8	461	67.1
similar level	130	34.0	65	21.3	195	28.4
lower level	16	4.2	15	4.9	31	4.5
Total	382	100	305	100	687	100

Sixty percent (60%) of respondents who were promoted achieved their promotions within two years of return from study (see *Table 18*). However, as would be expected from the above discussion, this varies by respondent employment type. Fifty-four percent (54%) of public sector respondents were promoted within two years of return compared with 70% of all other respondents in the same period.

Table 18. Time from Return to Promotion

Time to Promotion	Female	Female Percent	Male	Male Percent	Total.	Percent of Time
On return	66	25.0	48	19.4	114	22.3
2 years of return	98	37.1	95	38.5	193	37.8
3-5 years after return	63	23.9	62	25.1	125	24.5
more than 5 years after return	37	14.0	42	17.0	79	15.5
Total	264	100	247		511	100

Asked to what extent they thought their promotion was due to their Australian study, 87% thought that it was an important or contributing factor. Only 5% thought that their promotion had no relation to their study (see *Table 19*).

Table 19. Extent to which Promotion was Due to Australian Study

Extent	No.	Percent
To a great extent	278	44.1
To a medium extent	272	43.2
To a small extent	51	8.1
Not at all	29	4.6
Total	630	100

3.4 Contribution

As can be seen from *Table 20*, the majority of respondents are working in fields closely related to their area of study. Three fields stand out where there is significant variation. More people studied *economics* and *science and technology* than work in these fields but since these are study programs with general applicability this is not really surprising. The largest variation is with more people working in the field of *education* than who studied education in Australia. This is again understandable given that many university lecturers and researchers study in their technical disciplines rather than studying educational techniques or educational leadership.

Table 20. Comparison of Field of Study with Current Field of Work

	Current Work	Percent	Field of Study	Percent	Variance
Agriculture and Rural Development	68	9.6	70	9.1	0.5
Business or Commerce	200	28.3	255	33.1	-4.8
Communication and Media	17	2.4	16	2.1	0.3
Economics	5	0.7	48	6.2	-5.5
Education	167	23.6	108	14.0	9.6
Environment	34	4.8	51	6.6	-1.8
Health	36	5.1	44	5.7	-0.6
Information Management	22	3.1	0	0.0	3.1
Infrastructure	6	0.8	0	0.0	0.8
International Relations	5	0.7	0	0.0	0.7
Law	25	3.5	28	3.6	-0.1
Public Policy and Administration	50	7.1	15	1.9	5.1
Science and Technology	48	6.8	114	14.8	-8.0
Social Services	24	3.4	22	2.9	0.5
Total	707	100	771	100	0.0

Sixty-two percent (62%) of respondents think that their study is relevant to their current positions ‘to a great extent’ and 64% of respondents think that their enhanced skills and knowledge has helped them meet their current organisations needs. There was no difference between women and men on either of these items. Nor was level of study (i.e. Masters or PhD study) a factor but interestingly, public sector respondents were 10% more likely to say their skills and knowledge helped them meet their current organisations needs.

Table 21 provides a more detailed perspective. Respondents were asked to identify the areas they thought they had made a contribution to development in their organisations or more generally. The largest single group were those who thought they had made a medium contribution to management and administration, however, if only areas where respondents have made a major contribution are considered *Teaching and Learning* and *Research* are the most significant areas. If the combined percentages of ‘great’ and ‘medium’ contributions across the various types of contribution are considered these same two types of contribution are again the most significant. Nevertheless, 49% of respondents felt that they had made a medium or great contribution to the *promotion of gender equality*.

Fifty-nine percent (59%) of respondents said that they had made a great or medium contribution to *policy development*; that this included only half of those who had studied public policy and administration. An interesting point was made in this regard in the focus group with alumni in the Ministry of Planning and Investment. They argued that while they were not decision makers who could determine policy, they nonetheless had important inputs into policy. As one put it, “the first draft is very important”.

Table 21. Percent of Respondents by Type of Contribution

	Policy develop't	Research	Tech'l Skills	Teaching and Learning	Management and Administ'n	Business/ Commercial	Promotion of Gender Equality
To a great extent	21.3	43.1	32.0	47.9	24.6	18.3	15.7
To a medium extent	37.5	40.5	48.2	35.5	53.0	37.0	33.3
To a small extent	25.8	12.8	15.3	11.7	17.6	25.1	28.5
Not at all	15.4	3.6	4.5	4.9	4.8	19.6	22.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Clearly the contribution of respondents is determined by their employment type. Public sector alumni are less likely to make a *business or commercial* contribution while researchers and university lecturers are most likely to make a contribution to *teaching and learning*. Table 22 considers those respondents claiming to have made a contribution 'to a great extent' by employment type. This makes these relationships more explicit. It is notable, for example, that it is the Civil Society and International Agency respondents who have made the most numerous contributions to the *promotion of gender equality*, while it is the private sector employees who have made the most frequent contributions to *management and administration*. The most frequent areas of contribution are to *research and teaching and learning* from public servants¹².

Table 22. Respondents by Employment Type and Type of Contribution ("to a great extent")

	Policy develop't	Research	Tech'l Skills	Teaching and Learning	Management and Administ'n	Business/ Commercial	Promotion of Gender Equality
Civil Servant	31.4	19.4	19.4	43.8	4.5	20.2	15.4
Public Servant/ State Owned Company	24.5	55.4	39.4	64.2	10.8	25.0	13.3
Private Sector Employee - Vietnamese Company	16.5	10.3	28.4	39.5	37.5	30.0	17.3
Private Sector Employee - Foreign Company	7.9	9.1	33.3	21.1	39.3	25.6	16.0
Civil Society Employee	9.4	3.3	28.6	30.3	1.2	18.2	24.1
International Agency Employee	25.9	2.5	26.9	29.6	3.7	28.6	21.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

12 Specifically university and research agency staff.

It is worth noting that there is no difference between men and women respondents on the *promotion of gender equality*, however, men are significantly more likely to report contributions to *policy development* and *technical skills*. The former may be related to the gender differences previously noted in seniority and the latter may be the result of gender differences in areas of work where technical skills are more important (i.e. architecture, surveying, engineering etc).

Table 23 provides a breakdown of the contribution types just for respondents from Priority Public Institutions (PPI). These respondents are exclusively civil and public servants but not all civil and public servants are PPI alumni. Interestingly, while this removes university staff from consideration contributions to *research* are still particularly high. So too are contributions to *policy development*, *technical skills* and *management and administration*. On the other hand these respondents made the least contributions in the areas of *business and commerce* and in the *promotion of gender equality*. While the former is understandable in terms of job type, the latter may require program attention given that this is one of the intended ASDiV outcomes.

Table 23. PPI respondents by Type and Level of Contribution

	Policy develop't	Research	Tech'l Skills	Teaching and Learning	Management and Administ'n	Business/ Commercial	Promoti on of Gender Equality
To a great extent	45	33.0	23.2	22.6	25.3	11.8	11.5
To a medium extent	35	53.6	57.3	53.6	56.3	40.8	41.0
To a small extent	16	7.2	17.1	16.7	13.8	30.3	28.2
Not at all	4	6.2	2.4	7.1	4.6	17.1	19.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

System Change. Respondents were asked if they had implemented any systems or work changes related to what they had learnt in Australia. The question was not well answered with 40% of respondents leaving this item blank. It can probably assumed that for most of these respondents the answer was therefore no. Of the 414 respondents who did answer the question 48% said yes and 52% said no although a few indicated plans to do so in the future, however, as a percentage of the total respondents, 33% indicated that they had introduced some system or breakthrough related to their study. During focus groups a number of alumni indicated that while they had not implemented major changes this did not mean that no change had occurred. As one person put it, their department was not doing anything different than before but it was being done in a better, more systematic way.

Surprisingly, people in senior positions or managerial positions were no more likely to have reported introducing innovations than other alumni. However, there were other important differences between employment types. Public and civil servants were more likely to say yes to this question than were private sector alumni relative to their proportion of the population. Lecturers were significantly more likely to say that they had done so, but researchers were

not. Yet controlling for the presence of lecturers amongst public servants, government employees are still more likely to have introduced innovation than other types of alumni.

Of the **lecturers**, most responses were typified by the following:

- As a teacher I encourage my students think critically and independently, be honest in exams, widen their knowledge from wide reading and so on.
- I applied the advanced teaching methodology that I learned in Australia in preparing and giving the lectures to my students.
- Yes, I have built lecture notes and curricula for some new subjects, which were previously unavailable.
- Other interesting results from this group were:
- I have published some academic papers related to the field of human resource management which I learnt in Australia.
- I learned how to work and study in a multi-cultural environment. And I can use these experiences to widen and strengthen the research/study collaborations with foreign partners.
- In 2008, I implemented a reengineering process for a private local company for which I acted as a consultant. This new system helped the company achieve their goals in reducing costs and increasing margins.
- The knowledge and skills in environmental health that I learnt from Australia helped me to develop training programs, training course in Environmental Health for undergraduate and post graduate students at my school.
- Yes. My major is Information Communication Technology (ICT) which is really valuable to my teaching career. I have applied it and made my lectures more interesting than before. I have written many articles about the application of ICT in education and caught my colleagues' full attention.
- Yes. One group of students of mine gained the Prime Minister's Certificate of Merit for Excellent Research and I have also been given the Prime Minister's Certificate of Merit for being an Excellent Research Supervisor.
- Of the **non-lecturers**, the following interesting examples were noted:
- New methods in doing research: quantitative research, applying international knowledge in studying and researching.
- I carried out a ministerial-level project research.
- I've made some incremental changes to the management of my team to make it more effective.
- I expanded my business to global presence and working with clients all over the world.
- I have contributed significantly to the standardization of financial modelling work for investment proposals at Indochina Capital, my previous employer, and also throughout my work up to the present
- I have implemented system of "tax help" to apply in my organisation. This program is very beneficial for taxpayers and tax officers, and it is appreciated by my directors and my colleagues.
- I have set up a company with around 100 employees within 5 years. A company itself is a system with some functional departments such as Human Resources Management, Accounting, Technical and Design, Retail development.

- I was setup my own company to produce herbs product to control diseases in aquatic animals.
- I manage staff based on outputs/outcomes rather than on time.
- One of my research findings is the role of extension workers at village level. It was added to the lecture for students in the major of Rural Development at Can Tho University.
- I have applied active teaching and working methods at work; Results- Based Management applied to the management of my department.
- I have been a major contributor to FTP project and Profitability analysis project related to my course in Australia.
- Mainly in project management area where I coordinated fragmented departmental resources to deliver project on time and within budget for internal and external customers.
- Recruitment policy. Performance evaluation policy. Training and development policy.
- I contributed greatly to the making of the bank's first 100% home-made marketing plan and annual business plan.
- I reviewed the M&E framework for Vietnam Blended Learning Program, which is funded by Australian Trust Fund and executed by World Bank Vietnam, and made recommendations to improve this system for the coming phase of implementation.
- When I first worked and an assistant engineer to the construction project manager in the year 2000, I have made a major change in the way construction project was managed through modern project management approach and tools learnt in Australia.

Application outside of work. 374 respondents gave examples and comments of how they had applied things outside of their normal employment. Only 24 said they hadn't done anything but 394 left the question blank. The question was understood in two distinctly different ways. Some people gave specific examples of things they had done outside of work. Others gave examples of things they had gained through overseas study that made a difference to their everyday lives. In the first category prominent examples of specific things alumni have done are:

- I've been involved in conducting some mini-research for the Buddhist Youth Association of Vietnam of which I am a member.
- I actively join in and propose ideas to publicise the Danang tourism image to all domestic and foreign tourists. For example, cooperating with the city's tourism management units for publicity activities and so on.
- I am currently helping establishing a small company in the model of "small, efficient and fun company" which employs a great deal of materials that I acquire in Australia.
- I established my own farm where I can transfer what I gained from overseas to farmers and students.
- My networking skills to keep in touch with friends to form our charity group from [based on ed.] management experience with the student association (MOVSA). Currently, the charity group is working well on a yearly basis (www.friends4charity.net)
- Using legal concepts of Australian IP law and precedents in dealing cases in Vietnam
- Writing papers, up to now I have written 50 papers, one book since 2000; giving lectures, chairing conferences, and supervising postgraduate students.
- I have used some of the evaluation approach that I studied in University of Queensland for some evaluations of projects and program of both government and NGO's organizations such as Plan International, Oxfam Hong Kong, ChildFund Australia.

Interestingly five people noted that they had learnt how to invest in the financial markets. Of the people who talked in terms of personal development a significant area of focus was the benefits of having stronger **English language** skills as in the following examples:

- I regularly use English in communication and entertainment. I have been able to introduce Australian nature and culture to people in social communication.
- I also work as a translator of reports for some NGO projects by using English skills I mastered in Australia.
- My English has been improved much in both academic language and spoken language that helps me much in working with international partners. The study and research skills learnt in Australia are motivating me in doing research and pursue a research career.
- I have helped a lot of students to continue their educational pursuits by helping them improve their English competence as well as by building up their confidence in themselves.
- My English practical skills have improved a lot, so I can work as an interpreter and translator for many projects as well as conferences.

Others talked of **Research Skills** in a similar vein:

- I have adopted the research skills acquired in my Australian university on doing research and supervising other researchers in Vietnam.
- Skills and knowledge trained in the ANU help me to access socio-economic projects in the research market in Vietnam.
- The research skills and other academic skills and knowledge which I am also using for my PhD study.

Some respondents focused on **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills**:

- A critical way of my thinking about social and economic issues and solutions which has equipped me with an essential orientation to debate these topics in public.
- Besides knowledge and technical skills in the field of development, I appreciate the critical thinking, analysis and problem solving skills that can be applied in every aspect of life.
- Critical thinking; using research skills to substantiate arguments in policy debate; Using negotiation skills and communication skills.
- I have learnt many things related to my work. Besides, I have learnt the way of thinking logically (critical thinking) of any things. That is the greatest thing that I have learnt from Australia.
- I know how to manage time and work; how to work independently and control the difficulties; how to contribute to society, have more sense of community; I also have more research and analysis skills to deal with obstacles.
- It's not only the knowledge obtained but also the analytical and critical thinking. These have helped me a lot in identifying, analysing and making decision on an issue/approach.
- Some focused on **Teaching Skills** and the opportunity to share ideas and knowledge with others:
- Currently, my students are writing their thesis and one of my requirements is that their writing must have references. This is what I had learned in Australia when we conduct academic work.
- I am using some assessment methods (presentation, essay) to evaluate students. I think these will help my students develop writing, presenting and group-working skills.

- With my study experience in Australia I have helped a number of students (those who study in Vietnam or overseas) to develop a study strategy that best suits the individuals to achieve their learning objectives.

Another group of respondents focused on **lifestyle approaches and influences** from their overseas study:

- Living in a multicultural environment taught me how to treat other people, especially with other religions
- I became more pro-active than ever since I returned. To save the environment, I managed to classify litters.
- Apart from work experience, I have many life experiences learned in Australia including life styles, behaviours towards the community and the environment, loving animals, dealing with disabled people, and so on.
- Balance between work and life, see things in a bigger picture, open-minded.
- I can use a lot of knowledge and skills gained during my stay in Australia for my personal life and education of my children, e.g. balance between work and relaxation, time management, reading habits, etc.

Other comments of note that don't fit neatly within the other categories include:

- I have a network of Australia Awards Alumni, so I can participate in social activities organized by ASDiV Alumni, such as charity activities, seminars and workshops.
- Networking with colleagues from inside and outside Vietnam in education fields presenting and co-presenting with colleagues at national and international conferences researching and consulting in research.
- The way people treat people well in workplace, the way to care for your and others' safety at workplace, the way to think in a strategic approach, the way to work well in teamwork.
- Counselling in course choice and school choice for students to go to Australia and other countries to study.

The emphasis on the importance of 'soft-skills', such as those above, was repeatedly borne out in focus groups. Many examples were given to demonstrate that these were viewed as more important by alumni than technical knowledge gained. As with the survey respondents focus group participants emphasised English Language ability, cross-cultural fluency, critical thinking and research skills.

3.5 Links and Perceptions

Personal Links. Table 24 shows the degree of contact and links with people met while studying in Australia. As is clearly evident, alumni have most contact with Vietnamese friends they met through their studies. Just over 20% of respondents said they were in contact with Australian friends frequently or very frequently. Interestingly, there was relatively little contact with other international students. Respondents who were themselves lecturers were the most likely to still be in touch with lecturers in Australia but this was not always the case. It is worth noting that it is men rather than women who are most likely to remain in touch in all categories except other international students where there was no difference between male and female respondents. It may be that men have more opportunities to socialise while in Australia.

Unsurprisingly, it is more recent returnees who have the most contact with people met during study suggesting that these links are unlikely to be sustained to the same level in future years. However, 19% of older alumni still maintain links with Australian friends, which is broadly similar with respondents as a whole. While links with Australians may be of a low level they appear to be relatively durable.

Table 24. Percentage of Alumni in Contact with People Met While Studying in Australia

	Australian Friends	Vietnamese Friends	Other International Students	Lecturers or Professors
Very Frequently	4.4	11.1	2.0	4.3
Frequently	16.0	45.9	9.8	10.9
Sometimes	56.7	42.9	64.2	53.9
Never	22.9	0.1	24.0	30.9
Total	100	100	100	100

The mean number of people they are still in touch with (including on-line contact) is 8.26 but this is influenced by a three alumni who claim to have at least 100 Australian friends that they are in frequent contact. The median average is five, which seems a more reliable measure in this case.

Organisational Links. 51% of respondents said that their organisations had professional links with Australia. The question was well answered with 717 responses so is persuasive of a considerable amount of professional linkage activity. More importantly, in organisations where there is an Australian link, 62% of respondents said that they were personally involved in those links. Many examples of university-to-university links were given. There were also some examples of links between NGOs and many respondents mentioned involvement in Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) projects and a smattering of commercial projects. **University** examples included:

- My university and the University of Sydney are collaborating in training for the Bachelor of Agricultural Economics and Finance and I am a secretary of this project.
- Before I was the Head of Information Services Section of Thai Nguyen Learning Resource Centre, I worked with Australian consultants who help us in training and procurement for our Learning resource Centre.
- I participated in an Advanced Vet program, which is a collaboration between Nong Lam University and School of Veterinary Sciences, Queensland University.
- I participated in a partnership between Haiphong City and the University of Queensland in applying systems sciences in management of the Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve. I am also working closely with an AusAID VIDA Volunteer to my organisation.
- MOU signed between Monash University and our Securities Research and Training Centre (under the State Securities Commission) on education and information sharing.
- Organised a study tour to ANU last year for number of our senior professors to keep in touch with staff of Government and economic development school in ANU.
- Promoted a close link between Queensland University of Technology and Hanoi Medical University in research, internship and exchange programs.
- We cooperate with Sydney University to run the advanced program for undergraduate training in agricultural economics and finance.
- We have been collaborating with University of Queensland experts to implement a survey program about Kien Giang coastal condition, carbon, coastal rehabilitation, Melaleuca and acid sulphate soil management, and a study tour for provincial leaders to Australia.

- We have cooperation in research with the Assessment Research Centre - Melbourne University- to construct teachers standards.
- With our colleagues we try to invite Australian lecturers to come to my school to give lectures for a short time (just for one or two weeks).
- Teaching for the International Training Program (Cooperate with La Trobe University).

Other interesting examples included:

- I have supported World Vision Vietnam to develop a project proposal on Early Childhood Care and Development that won the funding from World Vision Australia (under the grant of AusAID).
- During 2001-2007 we are the outsourcing partner for Computer and Voice Technology Global in Sydney. Currently, we are partner with Pario Solution in Canberra to perform IT strategic consulting works in Vietnam.
- Eye Care Foundation has been cooperating with ICEE - an Australian non-profit organisation - on blindness prevention activities in Vietnam. We together sponsor for some Vietnamese staff to study abroad on eye care professionals.
- Promoted relationship between CPA Australia and Vietnam Association of Certified Public Accountants. My firm is also a member of an international organization with regional director based in Melbourne.
- VN Customs has a close relationship with the Centre for Customs and Excise Studies in University of Canberra, the Project I worked with had a package done by a Professor of this Centre.
- I worked for the World Bank and Hanoi is one of the biggest offices in Asia Pacific. I work closely with the colleagues in Sydney and go on training with them as the Sydney hub is responsible for Pacific islands.
- I coordinate the professional networks to support the Pacific countries on TB and leprosy.
- I have worked with a key person from a training institution for local government within the UTS. The work was on training need assessment and curriculum development for Vietnamese MPs.

Further visits to Aust. 164 people (21%) said that they had visited Australia at least once since completing their studies. The majority of these had visited only once but three alumni said they visited regularly with one estimating that he had been about 20 times. Thirty-one (31) respondents had been more than twice after their studies.

General Perceptions of Australia. Respondent perceptions of their study experience are predominantly positive (see *Table 25*). No respondents reported negative perceptions of the living experience although two people were a little negative about the culture and people and three people were a little negative about the study environment.

Table 25. Percentage of Respondents Rating Aspects of their Study Experience

Study Experience	Very Positive	A little Positive	A little Negative	Very Negative	Total
Living Experience	90.2	9.8	0.0	0	100
Study Environment	93.2	6.1	0.7	0	100

Similarly respondents were overwhelmingly positive about their experience of Australia as shown in *Table 26*.

Table 26. Percentage of Respondents Rating their Experience of Australia in General

Australia in General	Very Positive	A little Positive	A little Negative	Very Negative	Total
Living Experience	91.9	7.9	0.2	0	100
Culture and People	87.7	11.9	0.4	0	100

3.6 Alumni Activities

Interest in Alumni Associations. 224 respondents (28%) identified themselves as Australian Awards Alumni. 88.3% said they were interested in participating in Australian scholarship alumni events. But only 53.9% (of alumni in Vietnam) had been to an alumni event in the last 12 months. There was no difference in male and female respondents as a proportion of total respondents and there was generally good representation across provinces although Hanoi was by far the greatest proportion.

Asked what alumni organisations they were already a member of, there was, in addition to Australian Awards, a vast variety including local alumni organisations from Vietnamese Education institutions (3), Australian university alumni chapters (102), other country alumni organisations and other country university alumni chapters (including Russia, the Netherlands, Germany, Japan, Thailand) (14) and the Vietnamese Graduates from Australia Club (38). There were 382 responses to this question although many of them were variations on the above themes.

When asked what type of alumni activity they were most interested in almost 80% were interested in professional development activities, 60% were interested in social activities, as shown in *Table 27*, and at least one third of all respondents were interested in other sorts of activities. Beyond the categories mentioned two alumni said that they would be interested in activities that helped establish research collaboration.

Table 27. Type of Alumni Activity of Interest by Percentage of Respondents

Type of Alumni Activity of Interest	No.	Percent
Social Gatherings	473	59.4
Professional development (workshops, conferences etc.)	627	78.8
Presentations from other alumni about their work	275	34.5
Mentoring other scholarship awardees	258	32.4
Assisting in promoting ADS and ALAS Scholarships	316	39.7
Volunteering activities	265	33.3

3.7 Further Study

Seventeen percent (17%) have done another degree since completing their ADS degree. Almost 30% did their further study in Vietnam with the balance overseas. Sixty-three percent (63%) did their further study in Australia. This is consistent with the picture of alumni currently overseas on study and shows that Australia remains the favoured study destination. Interestingly only 15% of those who studied overseas a second time had an Australian scholarship. 62% had no scholarship at all meaning that they funded their subsequent overseas study themselves.

4. Sector Profiles

Vietnam alumni can be viewed broadly as belonging to one of three broad categories: 1) Public Sector Alumni including university and research institute alumni; 2) private sector alumni working for Vietnamese and foreign companies; and 3) Civil Society, NGO and International/Multilateral Agency alumni. In the section that follows the outcomes for these three types of alumni are considered separately with particular reference to the affect of scholarships on employment and promotion, the contribution of alumni to development in their sector and links between alumni through their organisations and on a person to person basis. Data is drawn from survey responses, ASDiV program data, focus groups and individual interviews.

4.1 Public Sector Alumni

Overview. The study involved two different groups of public sector alumni. The first were public and civil servants in government departments and employees in state owned enterprises. However, as noted above, it became clear that many government employees had difficulty identifying themselves clearly as either civil servant or public servant so the two categories are here treated together as public sector employees. The second were university lecturers and researchers. Public sector respondents make up 59% of all tracer study respondents comprised of 271 government department staff and 122 public university staff¹³. In addition to survey data and selected individual snapshots, focus groups were held with the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), a selection of public sector alumni working on environmental issues and staff of the Hanoi University of Agriculture (HUA)¹⁴.

¹³ While private universities exist in Vietnam all but five of the respondents in the university sector belong to public institutions.. Four work for private Vietnamese institutions and one works for RMIT's Vietnam campus and they have been excluded for consideration in this section.

¹⁴ MPI and HUA were selected on the basis of a having a high number of survey respondents while the environmental group was an attempt to draw a cross section of public sector alumni to ensure broad representation of different types of public sector alumni.

Employment and Promotion. As *Table 28* shows around half of all survey respondents from government departments are women while the percentage amongst university lecturers is much higher at 70%.

Table 28. Type of Public Sector Alumni by Sex

Type	Female	Female Percent	Male	Male Percent	Total
Government Department Staff	130	49.1	135	50.9	265
University Staff	85	69.7	37	30.3	122
Total	215		172		387

Approximately, half of all university staff were employed in Hanoi, one quarter in Ho Chi Minh and the balance in nine other provinces including Hue and Danang. Government department staff were much more heavily concentrated in Hanoi (73%) reflecting the predominance of alumni in central government agencies but the remainder are more widely spread across the country in 19 provinces including Ho Chi Minh.

It is usual for public sector alumni to return to their original organisations with university staff being slightly more likely to do so (86%) than staff from government departments (83%). The difference is primarily due to a number of alumni who had not previously worked, and who joined government departments, after completing undergraduate degrees. Not only do alumni tend to return to their original organisations but they also tend to return to the same departments and sections. In government departments it is possible to move based on the individuals own initiative and their networks within the department but it uncommon for alumni to do so. For university staff, most of whom are lecturers, they tend to return to their previous positions although they generally have changed teaching commitments. At HUA it was typical for young lecturers to have heavy teaching loads with big class sizes. One alumnus met was teaching 600 hours per year. This left little time for research or other types of activity.

Around 25% of alumni in government departments are older alumni from the pre-1998 period of the program compared to only 11% of university. This is also reflected in the level of staff with about 8% of government department staff being in top level leadership positions including two Director-Generals. None of the university staff who responded to the survey were in equivalently high positions. Similarly, 66% of government department alumni are in higher positions than when they but 19% of these are older alumni (see *Table 29*). On the other hand, amongst alumni who have returned in the last two years more university staff have been promoted than government department staff.

Table 29 Alumni in a higher position since returning

Type	Older Alumni (pre 1998)	Mid Career Alumni (1999-2009)	Recently returned alumni (2010-2011)	Total
Government Department	19.2	38.3	8.8	66.3
University	5.8	19.2	12.5	37.5

In the survey, one 41% of both groups said that their promotions were, '*to a great extent*', due to their enhanced skills and knowledge from their Australian study but in focus groups alumni were even more circumspect about this. Government department staff indicated that they would be promoted based on seniority unless they actually changed work areas, in which case it was possible to move into higher level positions. For university staff, being an overseas graduate does not in itself improve promotion prospects but because few staff have PhDs those who have doctorates tend to be promoted into management roles. One alumnus at HUA noted that of the five department heads in his Faculty, four had overseas doctoral degrees and one had a Vietnamese doctorate. Interestingly, there was no difference in the proportion of PhD alumni amongst the two types of public sector alumni (7%) and none of the university staff with PhDs in the survey were in senior or management level positions. On the other hand, in the government departments one third of the PhD qualified alumni were in senior positions and almost all were in management positions.

Contribution and Benefits of Study.

Both types of public sector respondents reported high levels of relevance of their study to their current positions but university staff were much more positive (81%) that their new skills and knowledge had assisted in meeting their organisations needs. For government departments the figure was 62%. In focus groups government department staff talked in specifics technical skills useful in their particular jobs while university staff talked not only of technical knowledge which was relayed as content to students in their lecturing commitments but also in terms of improved teaching and research skills. Examples of teaching changes: included being more flexible with students, using different types of exercises, using group work, administering small tests in class rather than waiting for mid-term exams, implementing email discussion groups, issuing course outlines at the beginning of a program. Research benefits included a greater focus on publishing and the ability to access a greater range of materials because of enhanced English language skills.

Both types of alumni emphasised the benefits of developing soft skills with confidence, critical thinking, self-discipline and the ability to communicate in English particularly noted.

Ms A

Ms A works for the Ministry of Planning and Investment but since 2007 has been working on World Bank funded community development projects. She is currently Capacity Building Consultant, 2nd Northern Mountain Poverty Reduction Project.


She undertook her Bachelor's degree in Mathematics in the Czech Republic in the early 1970s before completing a Graduate Diploma in Economics in the National University of Economics, Hanoi. She obtained an ADS Scholarship in 1993 and completed a Graduate Diploma in Financial Management at La Trobe University in 1994. This provided valuable insights into a market based economy which was something she had little experience with up to that point.

From 2004 to 2005 she was Head of Macro-Economic Information Section, National Center for Socio-Economic information at MPI before becoming Head of Macro-Economic Analysis and Forecast Department, National Center for Socio-Economic Information and Forecasting. During this period she coordinated a SIDA funded project called "Capacity Building for NCEIF's Macro-Economic Analysis and Forecast".

Because of her language skills, she has frequently been called upon to work as an interpreter and as a translator which has included accompanying international delegations overseas and translating World Bank, ADB and other donor documentation.

There was general agreement in both groups that there were opportunities to influence policy development but making major contributions to policy required a certain level of seniority. MPI focus group participants identified two alumni who they felt had made major policy contributions to national economic and labour policies and these were very senior alumni. In universities, the opportunity to influence policy came mainly from work as consultants, however, the ability to influence was dependent on being recognised as an expert. Once recognised, this opened opportunities to join committees and even to influence through public media, for example, through appearing on television.

Links. Both university and government sector alumni were able to identify a limited range of organisational links to Australia and many alumni were active in these links. At MPI, there was various forms of international cooperation including working on public-private partnerships, negotiating with Australian trade officials in APEC and participating in the State Enterprise Reform Project which was partly funded by AusAID. At HUA cooperation was principally research based and involved ACIAR funded projects. Other universities have joint teaching programs such as the one at the National Economics University which involves joint teaching programs and one referred to cooperation supported through ALA Fellowships with the International Centre for Excellence in Water Resource Management. Amongst university staff there was some evidence of ongoing contact with university lecturers in Australia but in most cases this was not of a particularly high level.



Dr B

Dr B is the Head of Department of Quantitative Analysis at Hanoi Agriculture University (HAU). He holds a Master of Science from the University of the Philippines (Los Baños) and a PhD from the University of Sydney where he studied on an ADS scholarship from 2001 to 2005.

At HAU he teaches courses in research methods, econometrics, agricultural economics and applied computer science in agricultural economics for under- and post-graduate students; as well as supervising students' and master' theses. He also conducts research in the fields of rural and agricultural policy analysis, land use, natural resource management, quantitative modelling, the development of small and medium sized and agro enterprises, and agricultural extension.

He has worked in a leadership role on several ACIAR projects including a project on overcoming technical and market constraints to the emergence of profitable beef enterprises in the north-western highlands another on modelling land transactions and farm household economics in Northern Vietnam. He is a primary author of a number of internationally peer reviewed articles on agricultural economics and has worked as a consultant on aid projects for DANIDA, Catholic Relief Services, Swiss Development Cooperation and the Ha Giang People's Committee.

Dr C

Dr C was recently confirmed as the Rector of Thai Nguyen University of Technology (TNUT). Between 1993 and 1997 he studied a master of Engineering at Swinburne University of Technology before completing a PhD at Ha Noi University of Technology. He has a dream of turning TNUT into an internationally ranked university and he is already introducing new curriculum, renovating the university, and promoting the use of English in the classroom. He is encouraging many of his staff to continue their professional education overseas.

He said the opportunity to live and study in Australia for four and a half years provided him with an opportunity to improve his English, establish networks with others in engineering education around the world and change his way of thinking. Dr C said that he had "learnt the way of logical thinking in doing research of western style that helps me not only be active and creative in technical areas of my interest but also helps me to propose ideas and sort out a lot of problems".

Dr C maintains his connections to Australia and, for example, has invited his former supervisor to teach some programs at his university each year. His commitment to overseas education extends to his own home. One of his daughters is studying mechanical engineering in the USA while a second has just completed a technical internship in Switzerland and will be studying in the USA in the near future.

4.2 Private Sector Alumni

Overview. Private sector alumni by their nature tend to be located individually rather than in clusters of organisations and their experiences therefore tend to be more specific to their own contexts. There are also two categories of private sector alumni: those who work for Vietnamese companies and those who work for foreign companies and these two groups have some different characteristics. In addition to survey data and one individual snapshot, a focus group of senior private sector alumni was undertaken to explore issues pertinent to this type of alumni. Private sector alumni, in Vietnam, make up 27% of survey respondents and a similar percentage of the general alumni population. In the survey, this percentage is virtually evenly divided between Vietnamese and foreign companies.

Employment and Promotion. As *Table 30* shows more than half of all private sector respondents are women but since the survey has a greater percentage of female respondents this is a little misleading with the men and women being more evenly balanced than it first appears. However, it is notable that the distribution is evident in both Vietnamese and foreign companies amongst survey respondents.

Table 30 Type of Private Sector Alumni by Sex

Type	Female	Female percent	Male	Male Percent	Total
Vietnamese Company	59	53.6	51	46.4	110
Foreign Company	62	57.4	46	42.6	108
Total	121	55.5	97	44.5	218

Private sector alumni are overwhelmingly located in Hanoi (52%) and Ho Chi Minh (40%) and this is true of both Vietnamese and foreign companies, however, a half of all foreign company alumni are located in Ho Chi Minh compared to only 30% of Vietnamese company alumni.

In contrast to public sector alumni, only 30% of private sector alumni returned to their original organisations after study and those working for Vietnamese companies were twice as likely to do so. Around 25% of the private sector alumni were undergraduate alumni and had no previous employment but the majority of the remainder resigned their jobs when they took up their ADS scholarships.

There are no significant differences in period of return between Vietnamese and foreign company alumni. Older alumni (pre 1998) make up 13%, mid-career alumni (1999-2009) make up 76% and alumni who have returned in the last two years comprise the final 11%. While the same distribution is evident among the 70% of private sector alumni who studied masters degrees, no alumni who studied for other degree levels are amongst the recently returned group. This reflects program priority changes away from undergraduate degrees and away from awarding PhDs for private sector alumni in more recent years. In the focus group of senior private sector alumni, most of whom owned their own company, it was interesting to note that all but one had studied for undergraduate degrees.

39% of those who work for a Vietnamese Company actually own the company and are in the most senior position. 45% of alumni in Vietnamese companies are in senior positions compared to just 16% in Foreign owned companies. 65% of private sector alumni are in a management position which is much higher than for the survey population as a whole (47%). However, when broken down by type of company the difference is even starker with 75% of all Vietnamese company alumni and 54% of all foreign company alumni being in management

positions respectively. One private sector alumnus in a focus group made a relevant comment in this regard noting that working for a Vietnamese company presented more opportunity for advancement compared to a foreign company. She said, "If you work for a foreign company, you will stay at that level because all the bosses are from overseas".

Not surprisingly based on the above discussion 82% of private sector alumni were in higher level positions compared to when they went on study. 67% of them had gained a higher level position within two years of returning to Vietnam. 90% of those in higher positions attributed this 'to a great extent' (47%) or 'to a medium extent' (43%) to their overseas study'. There was no difference between Vietnamese and foreign company alumni in this regard. They were therefore more positive than public sector alumni about the impact of study on their career advancement.

Contribution and Benefits of Study. Both Vietnamese (53%) and foreign company alumni (59%) regard their Australian study as highly relevant to their current positions but these are lower rates than in the alumni population as a whole (62%). Private sector alumni were marginally lower (-2%) in thinking that their skills and knowledge have helped them meet their organisation's needs.

As with the public sector alumni, the private sector focus group tended to focus on soft-skills as the primary benefits of overseas study. One who was running a company with other partners who had studied overseas said that there was a clear difference in the overseas and Vietnamese educated staff, particularly in things like reading and presentation skills. He has encouraged his staff, who are all accountants, to study the Certified Practicing Accountant program, but all five of them failed the entrance exams. He says, 'they don't know how to study by themselves'. As a result, he is now running his own tutorial programs to try to help them pass the next time.

Others stressed communication skills, time-management, self-discipline, motivation, adaptability and cross-cultural skills. All of the focus group participants were working with foreigners (but notably not Australians) as clients, as partners, or as co-workers and they all agreed that having studied overseas helped them a lot in these interactions.

Only around half as many private sector alumni indicated that they had introduced any major or systemic changes compared to the population as a whole and even amongst those who had, there were relatively fewer impressive examples. The most common responses related to passing on skills to staff and colleagues, establishing their own companies and improved marketing.

Amongst the focus group participants it was notable that three were looking to transition from their current senior roles and were making succession arrangements with other employees in their companies. Each was concerned with achieving a better work/life balance with more time for family and travel.

Links. Slightly more private sector alumni (25%) said they were in contact with Australians they met through study than in the general alumni population (20%) although this was not the case amongst the focus group participants. Private sector alumni were also more frequently in contact with Australians, however, contact with others met during study was broadly in line with the general alumni population.

35% said their companies had some kind of professional link to Australia and in these companies 56% of alumni were involved in those links. When compared to the overall alumni population there are few links to Australia and a lower level of personal involvement from Alumni. Amongst the focus group participants only one had Australian clients and none had

any other form of link. Finally, private sector alumni were less likely than other alumni to have returned to Australia (-4.5%) but where they had done so most had gone twice or more.

Ms D

Ms D is Managing Director of Étude Vietnam Cosmetics Co. Ltd. As such she has a foot in both camps of foreign and Vietnamese private sector. Her company has the sole distributorship for Etude cosmetics in Vietnam. She has established a network of chain stores with 5 in Hanoi and 10 in the southern provinces including Ho Chi Minh.

Ms D completed a Bachelor of Business at La Trobe University in 2001. She had no prior work experience but on return she found work at the Vietnam Korea Technology Centre before becoming an Assistant Brand Manager at Unilever Vietnam where she was responsible for Dove and Lux Brands. Although it appears these experiences are directly relevant to the company she now runs, she also worked marketing positions in a brewery, a securities company and a bank before finally submitting the business plan to Etude that convinced them to offer her the franchise for Vietnam.

She had never done a business plan before and taught herself how to do it so she was particularly pleased when Etude said it was one of the best plans they had seen. Ms D says this is a product of studying overseas, “studying affects the way of working as well”. She points out that she had never studied marketing but was accepted into Unilever into a marketing position and then picked up the skills on the job.

4.3 Civil Society Organisation and International/ Multilateral Agency Alumni

Overview. 6% of survey respondents worked of Civil Society Organisations and a further 4% worked for International and Multilateral Agencies such as embassies, the World Bank and the United Nations. This is broadly in line with the alumni population as a whole. Amongst CSOs most (77%) are international NGOs/CSOs and the balance (23%), are local organisations. Of the International/Multilateral organisations, two thirds are multilaterals (IFC, WB, WHO, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNDP), with the remainder comprised of bilateral aid organisations, (AusAID, JICA, GIS) and three embassies, (Netherlands, Japan and Belgium). Two focus groups of NGO alumni were conducted, one in Hanoi and one involving alumni in Hue and Danang.

Employment and Promotion.

As is readily evident in *Table 31* the largest percentage of CSO employees are women while International Agency employees are more evenly balanced. This may be partly explained by the fact that largest portion of the CSOs are working in Social Services (21%), Health (13%), and Education (10%) which traditionally have tended to have higher numbers of women workers but this does not completely explain the gender difference.

Table 31 Type of Public Sector Alumni by Sex

Type	Female	Percent Female	Male	Percent Male	Total
Civil Society Employee (ie NGO)	31	66.0	11	45.8	42
International Agency Employee (ie Embassy, UN Agency, etc.)	16	34.0	13	54.2	29
Total	47	100	24	100	71

Overwhelmingly, alumni in this category are based in Hanoi. 66% of CSO alumni and 64% of international agency alumni are based there with only small numbers of alumni spread in other provinces.

Only 34% of alumni in CSOs were working for the same organisations before undertaking their Australian study. By contrast half of the International organisation alumni were working for the same organisation that they are now working for. The most common reason in both groups for not returning to their original employer was because they wanted to find a better position. From the focus groups it was apparent that some people had stumbled into working for NGOs and that they had not had a clear intention of doing so before returning. Supporting this observation it was noted that 22% of alumni in this category had studied business services and 7% studied engineering, fields that for most of them are of little relevance to their current work.

Only 9% of alumni in this category are in senior positions, which is much lower for both public and private sector employees. Only one person working for an international organisation was in a senior position while amongst CSOs five people (13%) were in senior positions. Only one of the focus group participants was in a senior position.

One third of alumni in both CSOs and international organisations are in management level positions. Again this is much lower than for other types of alumni. A search of program positions revealed that many are in project officer or assistant level positions while others are technical experts including such roles as: librarian, forest protection officer, financial management specialist, monitoring and evaluation specialist, health policy adviser, post harvest coordinator and private sector specialist.

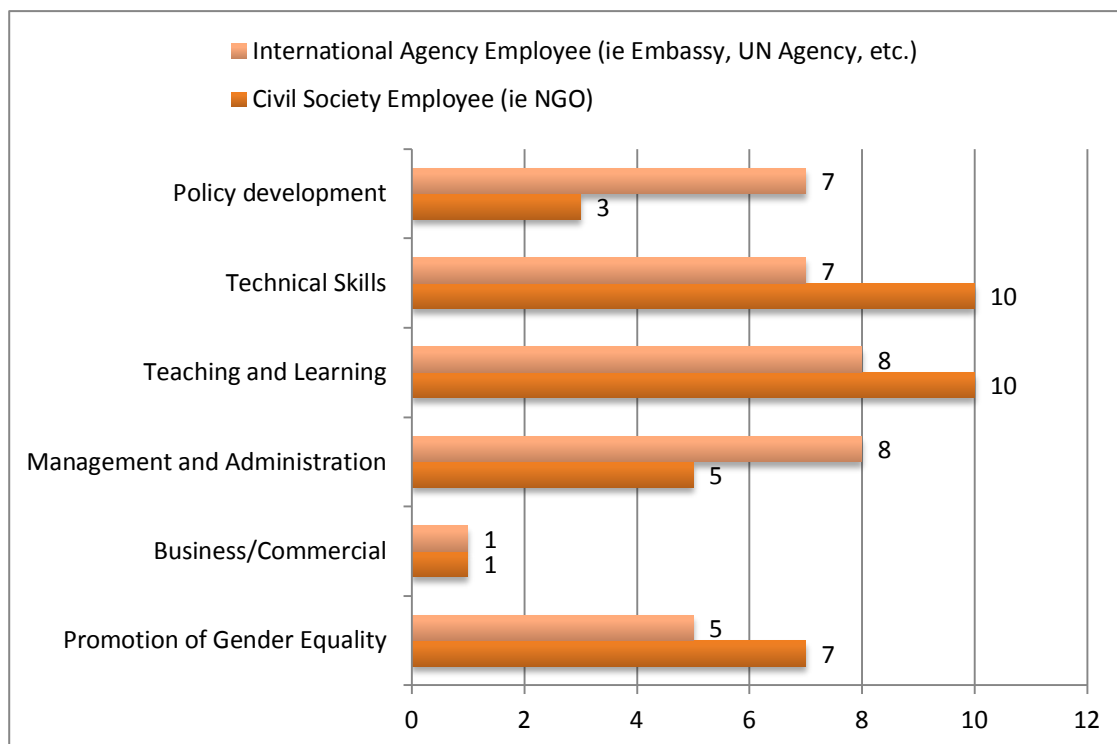
4.5 Contribution and Benefits

While it was noted above that many alumni in this category drifted into this type of work without a clear plan it was noted that 13% studied development related topics in Australia and that a number studied agriculture, education, health and environmental science and are now involved in these fields. 46% of CSO alumni thought their study in Australia was greatly relevant to their current position (similar to public sector alumni) but international agency alumni were much more positive at 66%. On the other hand, only half of both types of alumni thought they had been able to use their skills and knowledge to enhance their organisation.

As with public and private sector alumni above, alumni in focus groups tended to emphasise non-technical skills when talking about the benefits of study in focus groups. As one person expressed it, “sometimes I think the skills are much more important than the knowledge”. One skill specifically mentioned was English language because it facilitated communication with international partners and in at least two cases translation and interpretation were substantial parts of their daily work. Other benefits included, management skills, research skills, confidence and flexibility. One said, “If I can't do what I am doing now, I will do other things. There is always something to do”. Another focus group participant who was a medical doctor said that actually he had enough technical skill already but that what he got from study was “I learned the way to look at things and problem solving skills”. Another spoke of how she had worked with an NGO in Australia while studying and that she learnt about fund raising. She said, “The most significant change is myself. I am so confident raising funds”.

Nevertheless, when it comes to application of skills, technical skills are ranked highly by both groups of alumni (see *Figure 6*). International Agency alumni feel they have made the most contribution to Policy Development and to Management and Administration while CSO alumni have emphasised technical skills, teaching skills and promotion of gender equity.

Figure 6. Areas of Contribution for CSO/International Agency



There were relatively few examples of major or systemic changes from either group of alumni in this category and those who did mention something, generally did not give specifics but some of the areas mentioned were participative planning, application of project management techniques, monitoring and evaluation techniques, and communication strategies for social marketing.

In focus groups, there was some discussion of the changing nature of NGOs as Vietnam moves to more developed nation status. Participants were surprisingly sanguine about this with most expecting that the Vietnamese government and local NGOs will take over the responsibilities now handled by international NGOs and agencies. Two focus group participants were in the process of transferring responsibilities to the Vietnamese government and one had already done so before moving to another health development area.

4.6 Links

Only 14% had any regular ongoing contact with Australian's met during study and there was no difference between CSO alumni or international agency alumni. About half maintained contact with Vietnamese friends from study and it was notable in the Hanoi NGO group, in contrast to all other alumni groups met, that several of them knew each other. However like other types of alumni there was little contact with other international students or with lecturers back in Australia.

Half of both CSO and international agency alumni said that their organisations had links to Australia and more than half of the alumni were involved in these links. Sometimes this took the form of funding from Australia or having Australian affiliate organisations but often it was in the use of Australian consultants.

Only two CSO alumni had returned to Australia after completing study there but nine international agency alumni had done so. One of these alumni had been five times but all of the others had only returned once.

Mr E

Mr E has 14 years experience of work in the development sector as a practitioner and manager in programs with Swiss Development Cooperation Agency (SDC), United Nations Development Program (UNDP)/ United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) and Plan International, and strong experience in fundraising and working with other donors including AusAID, CIDA, and Irish Aid.

He has worked for Plan International since 2001 but in 2005 undertook a Master of University of Development Studies at the University of Sydney. These days he is Program Unit Manager in Quang Tri Province where he manages 27 staff and an annual program budget of around USD 1 million. The program's activities are diverse including water and sanitation, health care, education, livelihood development and promotion of gender equality. Gender is a big problem he says. In their program they have 2500 women participants who they are supporting to develop their own incomes through a village saving and loan program. "Introducing that methodology was a challenge," he admits but they now have 150 men also participating in the program and Mr E regards it as a significant success.

Mr E credits his Australian study as significantly changing his thinking style and giving him new perspectives on development. It has helped him to be more supportive of partners in the field and importantly he says, to be "more generous and humble professionally". By this he is referring to working with people with limited literacy and in recognising that it is a process that takes time. These days in approaching development he focuses on building friendships with local people so that they will share their worries and aspirations. He says that this approach was particularly influenced by the way his lecturers taught him during his Australian study. Mr E believes this "soft skill" development is the major change he got from his course.

Mr E, whose wife is also an ADS alumna, has been active in promoting ADS to his staff. There are already two other ADS alumni in his staff, another two are on award and at the time he was interviewed a further staff member had been short-listed. He is also active as a local representative of ADS alumni in central Vietnam and has assisted with coordinating activities in recent times. He maintains contact with his Professor in Australia and frequently works with Australian consultants. Last year they received a grant from AusAID for disaster risk management and building resilience in 24 communities across four districts.

Ms F

Ms F completed a Master of Educational Administration, The University of Queensland in 1998. Actually, she already had a Master of Education from the National Research Institute for Higher and Vocational Education in Hanoi and an undergraduate degree in Education and Science from Russia. She had also completed a three month course on Training Management in Belgium prior to her Australian study.

At the time that she took up her ADS scholarship she was working National Institute for Education Development as researcher and assistant to the General Director in International Collaboration. She returned there on completion of her studies but a year later was appointed to the World Bank funded Higher Education Project, as a technical assistant for the Project Management Coordinator.

This led to work in the NGO sector, with the Medical Committee Netherlands Vietnam, where she worked as program officer for the next 10 years. In this role she was responsible for inclusive education and income generation activities for people with disabilities under the Community Based Rehabilitation and Inclusive Education program in Dak Lak and Cao Bang provinces. Under this project she set up a resource centre for Special Schools for Disabilities. She worked closely with the government and they have now taken over responsibility for the centre. Ms F regards advocacy with government as one of her main roles and challenges.

Recently Ms F has taken on a new role as a Project Officer for the KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation in the TB CARE I Project. She is enjoying the new challenge immensely and does not regret the change saying that she left her old job because, “everything is done”.

Of her Australian study Ms F says the main impact is that “it makes us so confident to face challenges”. The key she says is to keep learning and be flexible.

5. Summary

Respondents reported a high degree of relevance of their study to their previous experience. Nevertheless, the study identified that there were examples of respondents who undertook fields of study (such as remote sensing) that were vastly different to their previous experience precisely because the knowledge and skills were not available in Vietnam. This would seem to be a relevant consideration from a development perspective and it suggests that selection criteria should allow for some applicants to make case-by-case arguments that expertise in new areas is required.

While many alumni from earlier years have not returned to Vietnam this ‘brain-drain’ appears to have slowed significantly and is no longer the problem it once was. Some focus group participants suggested that the problem was a result of offering undergraduate level awards in the past because these awardees were younger, spent longer in Australia and did not have jobs to return to on completion of their studies. Most respondents in the study who were overseas were found to be studying. Even amongst those currently overseas for other reasons, most are expected to return to Vietnam in the medium term. Of those studying overseas, 61% are in Australia, and of those, most are on further AusAID scholarships. ALAS scholarships are particularly important in this regard.

Of those alumni in Vietnam, the majority (63%) have returned to their original employers although this of course does not apply to alumni who were not employed before they studied in Australia. There is however a clear divide between public sector and non-public sector alumni with almost all public sector alumni returning to their original employers. This leads to some interesting differences between the two groups. Public sector alumni have vastly longer lengths of service with their employers than do other alumni. Other alumni are more likely to change employers more frequently but they are also more likely to gain management level positions more quickly.

Being in a senior position was found to be significantly related to length of service but the same was not true of alumni gaining management level positions. The median time for a non-government alumnus in a management position to be with their organisation was 3-4 years, while for government alumni it was 10-20 years. If it is assumed that level of contribution an alumnus can make is enhanced by being in a management position there appears to be a much earlier payback on AusAID’s investment from non-government alumni.

Because of its relationship to length of service, the level of alumni in senior positions would be expected to be highest in public sector alumni but this is not the case. In fact, it is Vietnamese companies that have the highest percentage of senior alumni, often because they own the companies. Since ASDiV does not target private sector alumni this can be expected to change over time and the proportion of alumni in senior positions may even fall.

It was noted that a growing number of alumni are now at formal retirement age and that in the next few years a significantly proportion of alumni will meet this criteria. Many will continue to work in other capacities but nevertheless, this is an issue that the scholarship program needs to begin considering. What services, if any will it provide for these alumni? Is it important to maintain contact with alumni no longer in the workforce? Do these individuals constitute an important resource that can be mobilised to support program needs and other AusAID activities? While considering these issues it is worth noting that because of the length of service this aging of the alumni population means that the loss of corporate knowledge will be most acutely felt in public sector.

62% of alumni think their study is highly relevant to their current positions and, with a few exceptions, there is a good match between fields of study and fields of current work. A similar percentage thinks that their study has helped them meet their current organisations needs and interestingly it is public sector alumni who are most likely to say this.

The type of contribution that alumni make is highly related to their employment type. High levels of contribution in the area of teaching and learning was associated with university lecturers although other types of public sector alumni, in addition to lecturers, were found to have contributed in the area of research. Contributions to the promotion of gender equality, an identified outcome for ASDiV, were found to be more frequently related to alumni in NGOs and international organisations compared to all other employment types. Interestingly, men and women were equally likely to cite this area of contribution.

Around one third of all respondents identified changes to systems that they had introduced and there were many interesting examples to support their case. However, this was not found to be associated with either seniority or whether alumni were in management positions. On the other hand, public sector alumni were significantly more likely to report such changes even when controlling for the presence of lecturers, who were the most likely to report such changes.

More respondents reported application of skills and knowledge outside of work than inside of work. While some gave examples of how they had done things in other contexts many referred to how study how they had developed personally and the consequences of this growth. Development of English language abilities, research skills, teaching skills and critical thinking were particularly frequently cited.

Substantially more women than men participated in the study although why this is the case is not clear. Allowing for this a number of gender differences were noted. Of particular importance, a much larger percentage of women are in management positions than in senior positions. While this may be indicative of a 'glass ceiling' in operation across employment types, it was noted that a greater percentage of women in management positions are mid-career than men. Conversely a greater proportion of male alumni in management positions are older alumni. It may be that the data is reflecting a change in perspective towards women in leadership positions. If so, it would be expected that more women will move into senior positions in the next few years and this will be important to track in subsequent studies.

One area of gender difference that was particularly noted, was that it is men rather than women who are most likely to remain in touch with people met during study. It is hypothesised

that men may have more opportunities to socialise while in Australia but this issue needs to be further researched. Across both men and women about 57% of alumni are in touch with other Vietnamese students but there are fairly low levels of continuing contact with other Australian students, lecturers and other international students. On the other hand, about half of all respondents said their organisations had some ongoing relationship with organisations in Australia and about two thirds of alumni in these organisations were involved in these relationships. It was noted that such relationships were most common amongst university alumni with ACIAR being a particularly frequent catalyst for such relationships to develop.

Respondents remain overwhelmingly well disposed towards Australia and reflect positively on their study and living experiences in Australia. Despite the low levels of ongoing contact with people met during study, one fifth of all alumni have returned to Australia on at least one occasion. Most respondents professed an interest in participating in alumni events although only half had actually done so in the last 12 months suggesting that there is considerable scope to continue to build on ASDiV's recent alumni events in the future.

6. Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1.** While selection processes properly give attention to candidates' area of previous study and experience, selection panels need to be alert to newly emerging fields where, by their very nature, candidates will lack prior experience.
- **Recommendation 2.** The aging of the alumni population within the Australian Awards alumni program necessitates that the scholarship program consider the investment it makes in post-award activities in terms of this changing profile. If continuing investment in older alumni is considered worthwhile, then different alumni strategies that address the needs of these older alumni and capitalise on the strengths of this growing resource need to be developed.
- **Recommendation 3.** Gender differences in employment levels, particularly within the public sector, should be monitored to see whether opportunities for more women to move from management roles into senior positions are being realised.
- **Recommendation 4.** Promotion of gender equity as an identified outcome of the current program is primarily associated with NGOs and international agencies. If AusAID wishes to increase promotion of gender equity, a dual strategy of targeting awardees in NGOs and international agencies involved in this type of work and, in the longer term developing other strategies which support alumni in other sectors to also participate in the promotion of gender equity, should be considered.
- **Recommendation 5.** Soft-skill development is highly valued by alumni and has been a generally underappreciated outcome of Australian scholarships. Soft skills include such things as language and communication, cultural awareness, motivation and attitudinal change, and learning skills. Formal recognition of soft-skill development as a desirable educational outcome for scholarships should be considered since this is likely to directly influence future work performance of alumni.
- **Recommendation 6.** Organisational links with Australia, while at a moderate level overall, are dependent on other facilitating factors, such as continuing funding and the existence of relevant Australian programs. These are not natural consequences of scholarships in themselves and require additional support, such as the Small Grants scheme, ACIAR research programs or other AusAID projects, if scholarship alumni are to play a role in continuing bilateral links.

