Australia Awards and Alumni

Engagement Program – Philippines

Final Program Evaluation

**Final Report**

February 2025



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List of acronyms and abbreviations

| **Acronym** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| AA | Australia Awards |
| AAAEP–P | Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program – Philippines |
| AAS | Australia Awards Scholarships |
| AMR | Annual Monitoring Report |
| AQR | Aid Quality Report |
| BARMM | Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao |
| CoP | Community of Practice |
| DFAT | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade |
| DPP | Development Partnership Plan |
| DRRM | Disaster Risk and Resilience Management |
| EOPO | End of Program Outcome |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussions |
| GaD | Gender and Development |
| GEDSI | Gender equality, disability, and social inclusion |
| GoA | Government of Australia |
| HRD | Human Resource Development |
| GPH | Philippine Government |
| ICSP | In-Country Scholarship Program |
| IDD | Investment Design Document |
| IMR | Investment Monitoring Report |
| IO | Intermediate Outcome |
| IP | Indigenous Person |
| KEQ | Key Evaluation Question |
| KIIs | Key Informant Interviews |
| LGBTQIA+ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and more |
| MEL | Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning |
| MES | Monitoring and Evaluation System |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| ONA | Organisational Needs Assessment |
| OTNA | Organisational Training and Needs Assessment |
| PCC | Program Coordination Committee |
| PAHRODF | Philippines-Australia Human Resource and Organisational Development Facility |
| PWD | Persons with Disabilities |
| REAP | Re-entry Action Plan |
| SAMR | Semi-Annual Monitoring Reports |
| SCA | Short Course Awards |
| SOGIE | Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression |
| STEM | Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics |
| TNE | Transnational Education |

Key Program Data

Table 1: AAAEP–P Data

| **Term** | **Meaning** |
| --- | --- |
| **Partner Country** | Republic of the Philippines |
| **Activity Name** | Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program-Philippines (AAAEP–P) |
| **Program Type** | Part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Global Australia Awards (AA) Program, implemented in partnership with the Country Program and Post |
| **Budget** | $31 million |
| **Term** | Eight years (2018-2026) |
| **Counterpart Agencies** | 11 key Philippine Government (GPH) agencies; private sector |
| **Implementing Agency** | DFAT |
| **Managing Contractor** | Tetra Tech (formerly Coffey International) |
| **Goal** | To support the Philippines to progress its development goals and have positive relationships with Australia that advance mutual interest |

**Phase 1 End of Program Outcomes (EOPOs), 2018–2022**

| **EOPO** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| **EOPO 1** | Alumni and where relevant, their organisations have and use skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development |
| **EOPO 2** | Australia has alumni in key sectors and positions |
| **EOPO 3** | Links and/or formal partnerships between institutions and businesses in Australia and Philippines are activated and matured |
| **EOPO 4** | Australia, Australians and Australian expertise is viewed positively in the Philippines |
| **EOPO 5** | Scholarships and alumni activities have improved gender equality and women’s empowerment |

**Phase 2 EOPOs, 2023–2026**

| **EOPO** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| **EOPO 1** | Diverse alumni, and where relevant, their organisations use skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development |
| **EOPO 2** | Diverse alumni have contributed to strengthening cooperation between the Philippines and Australia |

**Intermediate Outcomes (IOs)**

| **IO** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| **IO 1** | Diverse alumni and, through them, their organisations, have skills and knowledge to contribute to development that is aligned to our shared goals |
| **IO 2** | Australia, Australians, and Australian expertise are valued and viewed positively by alumni and Partner Organisations |
| **IO 3** | Diverse alumni actively participate in alumni engagement activities |

**Evaluation Team**

| **Role** | **Name** |
| --- | --- |
| **DFAT Evaluation Manager** | Rollie dela Cruz, Portfolio Manager, Scholarships and Innovation |
| **Evaluation Team** | James McGovern (Team Leader), Douglas Smith (Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Advisor), Bernadette Cariaga (Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Specialist), Jodie Kane (Evaluation Specialist) |

# Executive Summary

Background

The aim of the $31 million,eight–year (2018–2026) *Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program – Philippines* (AAAEP–P) program evaluation was to:

* assess how well AAAEP–P aligns with Australia’s and Philippines’ strategic objectives,
* assess the efficiency and effectiveness of AAAEP–P’s implementation, and
* provide recommendations for future activities and improvements[[1]](#footnote-2).

An independent evaluation team conducted the evaluation in late 2024, applying evaluation criteria—relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and GEDSI—while identifying lessons learned and providing recommendations. The evaluation team conducted a document review, interviewed 79 people in-country, and implemented an alumni survey with 250 responses. In total the evaluation reached 329 stakeholders.

Key Findings

**Relevance** – **Rating – 5.5/6**. The AAAEP–P program was well-aligned with the Global Australian Awards (AA) Framework, Australia’s International Development Policy, Southeast Asian Economic Strategy, and Philippine Development Plan (2023–2028), and the Development Partnership Plan (DPP) for the Philippines. Engagement with 11 Philippine Government (GPH) organisations[[2]](#footnote-3), Organisational Training and Needs Assessment (OTNA), and well-targeted Re-entry Action Plans (REAPs) demonstrated the implementation team's ability to align closely with GPH priorities and partner organisations' strategic goals, ensuring the relevance and applicability of training programs. Alumni engagement supported both governments' priorities, fostering networks and communities of practice to enhance collaboration and Embassy engagement. While the program effectively developed individual and organisational competencies aligned with the GPH's sustainable development priorities, some misalignment existed between the Embassy's expectations, particularly around public diplomacy objectives, and the current AAAEP–P contract. Governance arrangements suited GPH agency needs but were less responsive to DFAT’s *ad hoc* priorities.

**Effectiveness – Rating – 5.5/6**: The AAAEP–P’s effective delivery was largely attributed to the managing contractor’s deep knowledge, history and relationships. The program’s focus was on capacity development via higher education with notable impacts in both the government and private sectors as trained individuals improved institutional processes and outcomes. Alumni networks amplified the program's impact, fostering knowledge sharing, career support, and advancing both GPH and Embassy objectives, although some confusion around alumni branding exists. Selection processes for scholarships and short courses were transparent and well-structured, but occasional deviations in nomination processes within GPH agencies highlighted the need for better communication with the program Board to manage risks. Governance arrangements weakened in the program's later stages due to fewer Project Coordination Committee (PCC) and Board meetings (COVID-19 was a factor but not the only one), limiting Embassy engagement and oversight—although the managing contractor maintained high-quality delivery. Robust Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) tools, including competency scorecards and REAPs, provided valuable insights and supported continuous improvement, balancing qualitative feedback with strong quantitative data to track outcomes effectively.

**Efficiency – Rating – 5/6**: The AAAEP’s implementing team was smaller than comparable programs in Southeast Asia, (e.g., Vietnam), which contributed to cost efficiency, leveraging the implementation team’s extensive experience. This efficiency demonstrated a potential model for similar Australia Awards programs; however, the program’s resourcing and structure limited flexibility to address emerging priorities outside the approved annual work plan, creating cost and workload pressures for the team. Despite these challenges, the program was highly efficient, managing its workload effectively and delivering on its objectives. MEL processes were well-used to monitor performance and ensure operational efficiency.

**Sustainability – Rating – 5/6**: The AAAEP–P delivered high-quality educational outcomes to talented and motivated individuals, fostering sustainability through skills development, including leadership, within GPH and private sector in areas such as economic sustainability (capacity building for economic growth and institutional strengthening), social sustainability (leadership, equity and inclusion, and community development), environmental sustainability (climate change resilience, environmental education and awareness, and support for green policies) and partnership and governance sustainability (strengthened bilateral relations and driving policy reforms, particularly by AAAEP–P alumni). REAPs played a key role in achieving sustainability, with several participants citing these as pivotal to their leadership growth and professional development. Governance changes, including turnover in GPH representatives and varying levels of Embassy senior management engagement, alongside the COVID-19 pandemic, impacted the program’s strategic influence and sustainability. Nevertheless, the program consistently delivered results for participants and their organisations. Sustainability was further supported by a strong sense of belonging to the Australia Awards brand, reinforced by Embassy engagement through events and visits, which motivated participants, especially those with postgraduate or short-course experience in Australia. However, gaps in PhD opportunities were noted, with stakeholders emphasising the need for advanced research capabilities in fields such as soil science, forensics, and climate change, while also highlighting the limited career incentives for pursuing a PhD in the Philippines.

**GEDSI – Rating 5/6**: The AAAEP–P was highly effective in mainstreaming Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) into its processes and outcomes. GEDSI principles were embedded in activities such as GEDSI Summits, Alumni Grant Scheme-funded projects supporting Indigenous Peoples' rights, Alumni Knowledge Sharing Series and GEDSI Communities of Practice (CoP). Despite GPH emphasising Gender and Development (GAD)—not explicitly prioritising GEDSI—as an organisational development goal, AAAEP–P ensured integration of GEDSI into key documents, course content, and REAPs. Alumni activities fostered GEDSI advocates across government sectors, inspiring further initiatives aligned with GEDSI values. Positive practices, such as GEDSI briefings, reasonable accommodations for scholars with disabilities, and a gender scorecard, were positively recognised. While strong in promoting female empowerment, disability inclusion, and Indigenous Peoples’ rights, the program showed limited focus on LGBTQIA+ rights and broader social inclusion. The absence of dedicated GEDSI human resource in the implementation team, and reliance on mainstreamed budgets presented areas for improvement.

Lessons Learned

Key lessons from AAAEP–P’s implementation include:

**Relevance**

* The relevance of Official Development Assistance (ODA)-funded scholarships depends on their alignment with the partner country’s development objectives and the donor’s policies both of which are likely to change throughout a program’s term. It is therefore important to build into programs such as AAAEP–P sufficient capacity to adapt swiftly to emerging priorities while maintaining a core focus on delivering developmental outcomes.

**Effectiveness**

* Adhering to agreed candidate selection processes ensures integrity, strengthens the Australia Awards brand, and enhances its reputation; deviations to the process need to be declared and communicated to governance bodies.
* Investment in alumni engagement is maximised when activities are beneficial, inclusive, and linked to Embassy engagement, requiring dedicated resources for both the program and the Embassy.
* Alumni cohorts need better organisation and platforms for sharing publicly acceptable information to enable networking and collaboration, supported by DFAT to align with Embassy priorities.
* Building and maintaining alumni relationships requires investment, including regular secretariat support and consistent communication about Australia’s evolving priorities.

**Efficiency**

* A clear brand and strategic direction are essential, particularly if transitioning from development to public diplomacy; DFAT should articulate these priorities clearly to stakeholders.
* Harmonising development and public diplomacy efforts can create synergies, especially through GEDSI-related collaborations with other DFAT-funded projects to deepen analytics on shared themes.

**Sustainability**

* The remainder of the program offers an opportunity to deepen GEDSI understanding and practice, positioning the Government of Australia (GoA) for thought leadership among GPH agencies.

**GEDSI**

* GEDSI mainstreaming is a strength of Australia Awards, supported by tools like internal and partner organisation scorecards, which need consistent application to enhance capacity and impact.

Key Recommendations: High-priority actions recommended by the evaluators

**Relevance**

1. Flag emerging priority activities early to minimise adverse impacts on the work plan and consider additional resourcing if necessary. (Operational)
2. Regularly convene key governance meetings, both operational and strategic, to maximise engagement and build strong constituencies. (Operational)

**Effectiveness**

1. Recruit a senior advisor to the Embassy in the future program to:
   * analyse how a future program’s processes can be applied to different contexts (sectors and stakeholders), such as fellowships, study visits, targeted sectoral scholarships (e.g., PhDs in forensics or soil science), and Transnational Education (TNE) initiatives linked to Austrade’s efforts, and
   * proactively link REAPs to policy dialogue. This could be achieved by working with GPH agencies to closely link scholarships (and hence REAPs) to specific reform efforts beyond Human Resource Development (HRD). This would heighten Embassy engagement and visibility on GPH reform issues. (Strategic)

**Efficiency**

1. For the program’s increased responsiveness to emerging priorities, develop a second, parallel workstream alongside the core AA workstream, with tailored objectives, selection criteria, and appropriate resourcing, to engage and offer scholarships to targeted stakeholders in specific sectors for strategic purposes while leveraging the quality of AAAEP–P brand and operational platform. It is important that this second workstream is specifically and appropriately resourced to emphasise its strategic contribution to both governments’ priorities. This ‘twin-track’ approach would allow the flexibility for responsiveness to changing priorities and emerging leaders (and key stakeholders) while maintaining the core AAAEP–P program’s integrity and reputation. (Strategic)

**Sustainability**

1. Enhance alumni engagement by establishing targeted groups (e.g., defence alumni, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) alumni) linked to the Embassy’s development and public diplomacy objectives/sectors, ensuring alumni and their organisations see value in participation. This approach would need to be informed by political economy analysis and would need to be appropriately resourced. Inclusion in a future program of financial and human resources to support Embassy-wide alumni would add to the strategic coherence (e.g., support for managing defence alumni, including establishing an accessible database of alumni). (Strategic)

**GEDSI[[3]](#footnote-4)**

1. Strengthen program implementation to align with Australian values and policies (e.g., GEDSI) by ensuring meaningful engagement with scholars from vulnerable or marginalised groups. (Operational)
2. Allocate specific GEDSI resourcing in the future program to complement mainstreaming with targeted activities, leveraging the alumni talent pool and supporting GPH’s understanding and application of GEDSI principles. (Operational)

# Key Findings

The key findings are discussed below in relation to each key evaluation question. The discussion also includes responses to some sub-questions. A description of the program and background to the evaluation is set out in Appendix A. Key Evaluation Questions are set out in Appendix D, and the Data Collection Guide is set out in Appendix E.

## Relevance

Key Evaluation Question 1: To what extent does AAAEP–P align with the strategic priorities and needs of the GoA and the GPH?

##### 1.1 To what extent does AAAEP–P align with GPH’s development policies?

AAAEP–P has been essential in supporting the achievement GPH’s development goals. The program adapted to emergent needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating its flexibility and ongoing relevance.

The process of engagement with 11 GPH organisations, OTNA and the highly regarded (and well targeted/implemented) REAPs indicate that the implementation team is well versed at ensuring that AAAEP–P is closely aligned with GPH priorities and strategic directions. Training programs were closely aligned with the strategic goals of partner organisations. This ensured that the skills developed were directly applicable to the participants' work environments, leading to more effective implementation of re-entry action plans.

At a macro level, the program was aligned with objectives of key GPH development strategies including:

* **The Philippines Development Plan 2017-2022** (PDP 2017-2022) which sought to enhance social fabric (Malasakit), reduce inequality (Pagbabago), and increase growth potential (Patuloy na Pag-unlad). The PDP 2017-2022 references the importance of capacity building in each pillar[[4]](#footnote-5).
* **AmBisyon 2040**. AAAEP–P aligned with the people-centred development vision of AmBisyon 2040 which was that ‘*by 2040,**the Philippines is a prosperous middle class society where no one is poor. People live long and healthy lives and are smart and innovative. The country is a high-trust society where families thrive in vibrant, culturally diverse, and resilient communities*’[[5]](#footnote-6).
* **Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028**[[6]](#footnote-7) (PDP 2023-2028), which sets out a plan to achieve economic and social transformation towards a prosperous, inclusive and resilient society. Human capital development is one of the PDP 2023-2028’s eight objectives[[7]](#footnote-8).

‘We were able to utilize the training and knowledge provided to improve policy drafting processes within our agency…The programs were always tailored to meet our organizational and sectoral needs, ensuring they were aligned with government priorities, especially in infrastructure and policy development.’, Respondent 1 (R1)[[8]](#footnote-9).

The program offered scholarships in two categories—a **targeted category** and an **open category**. Consultations with GPH agencies, stakeholders, and the managing contractor ensured strategic alignment.

The **open category** provided broader opportunities for individuals to apply for scholarships and learning events, fostering participation across various sectors. Open to all eligible applicants, a competitive selection process is followed that evaluates candidates based on their qualifications, potential, and inclusivity considerations. By encouraging a diverse pool of applicants, including those from the private and non-government sectors, the open category supports initiatives like scholarships for professionals and academics, as well as short courses and study tours that promote collaboration and cross-sectoral engagement.

The **targeted category** focused on addressing specific development priorities and capacity-building needs identified by the GPH via OTNAs, and by Australia’s bilateral program. GPH agencies nominated candidates based on their roles and alignment with priority sectors such as governance, economic growth, or peacebuilding and a competitive selection process was again followed for participant selection.

Table 2: Key differences between open and targeted scholarship categories

| **Aspect** | **Targeted Category** | **Open Category** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Focus | Specific development and capacity gaps (determined via OTNAs) | Broader opportunities for diverse sectors |
| Participant Source | Pre-identified sectors/agencies | Open to all eligible applicants |
| Selection Process | Directed and consultative | Competitive, merit-based |
| Flexibility | Limited to identified priorities | More flexible and inclusive |

These categories enable AAAEP–P to strategically address both targeted capacity-building priorities while providing inclusive opportunities for broader development impact.

##### 1.2 To what extent is AAAEP–P consistent with the GoA’s strategic priorities?

Some misalignments were noted between the current AAAEP–P contract/obligations and the Embassy’s expectations of the program. AAAEP–P sat with the Embassy’s Political Team, with heightened expectations about the potential for the AAAEP–P to contribute more flexibly to public diplomacy and influence objectives. In particular, there are expectations at the Embassy that the program could be more effective by targeting influential reform minded individuals to assist in both pushing through key reforms and also to increase Australia’s profile and its status as a key partner for the GPH.

The program facilitated identification (and the Board’s agreement) of focus areas and identified Partner Organisations (PHG Agencies) who had responsibility for delivering the focus areas. In March 2019, the program proposed the following focus areas, which were highly relevant to both countries’ development and strategic priorities.

Table 3: Focus Areas and Partner Organisations (GPH Agencies) – 2019

| **Targeted Partner Organisations** | **Focus Areas** |
| --- | --- |
| Civil Service Commission and other Partner Organisations | PRIME HRM |
| Public Private Partnership Centre | LGU Private Partnership |
| Philippine Competition Commission | Competition Law Enforcement, Advocacy, Agency Effectiveness |
| Department of the Interior and Local Government | DRRM, Peace and Conflict |
| Department of Public Works and Highways | Infrastructure Planning & Implementation; and Procurement |
| Department of Trade and Industry | Trade & Investments: regulatory reforms, and improving the business environment |
| National Economic and Development Authority | Infrastructure Planning and Management |
| Department of Social Welfare and Development | Disaster Risk and Resiliency Management (DRRM); Social Policy and Protection, including Child Protection |
| Department of Budget and Management | Public Financial Management |
| Department of Transport | Railway Management, Financial Management, ICT and HR |
| Department of Foreign Affairs | Foreign Policy, Regional Security and the Indo-Pacific, International Law, particularly Law of the Sea, Strategy and Foreign Policy Making, and Diplomatic Tradecraft |

The program also delivered Embassy-led, ad hoc assistance to non-partner agencies, e.g. on the Law of the Sea short course for agencies with responsibility in the area, and the Davao City Government Benchmarking Study on Effective Transportation and Traffic Management Systems in Australia[[9]](#footnote-10) (see more on ad hoc activities later).

AAAEP–P implemented a comprehensive *Communications and Public Diplomacy Strategy*, with tailored strategies, tactics and outputs targeting audiences and leveraging strengths. For example, the program drew on its existing strong relationships developed under the previous program ‘*Philippines-Australia Human Resource and Organisational Development Facility*’ (PAHRODF) and the high website traffic of the Embassy’s website to target GPH stakeholders, prospective applicants, and AA alumni by regularly producing stories on AA, by promoting AA as an influential network, including by using case studies, video documentaries, and through AA Philippines Facebook[[10]](#footnote-11)..

Governance arrangements were designed to be highly relevant for partner GPH agencies for the competency-focused elements, but less relevant for DFAT-sponsored ad hoc/emerging priorities. Although the program ran an active alumni engagement component, the program was less relevant for privately funded alumni. The lack of information about privately funded alumni frustrates the program’s efforts to engage them effectively, leading to their inclusion on an *ad hoc* basis. Similarly, there is currently no clear link between AAAEP–P and Australian Transnational Education (TNE) service providers. Opportunities may exist to work in collaboration with Australian TNE providers to deliver scholarship offerings delivered in a hybrid mode. This would require fostering partnerships between Australian and Philippine universities who can develop and market these offerings. Given that the Philippines’ National Economic and Development Authority expects the Philippines to reach upper middle-income status by 2025[[11]](#footnote-12), there may be viable commercial models which could serve both privately funded scholars, as well as realise cost efficiencies for AAAEP–P scholarships.

##### 1.3 To what extend is AAAEP–P consistent with Australian development policies, including but not limited to GEDSI?

AAAEP–P was a higher education scholarships program, focused on developing competencies (individual and organisational) and supporting alumni engagement activities to contribute to the GPH’s sustainable development priorities. The program was highly aligned with Global AA Framework, Australian International Development policy, the Southeast Asian Economic Strategy, and with the DPP for the Philippines[[12]](#footnote-13). The investment was highly relevant to both Australia’s and the GPH’s development objectives and the strategic partnership, focusing on key areas such as sustainable development, education, governance, and gender equality.

‘If I were to give a percentage, I would say 100% relevance, because the facility ensures that the re-entry action plans and the degree align to the agenda, such as education and human resource development.’ R2.

Alumni engagement was highly relevant to both governments’ priorities. Active alumni engagement on a range of subject matters and CoPs supported networking and engagement opportunities for the Embassy.

“‘The program gave us a good networking activity among civil servants, which allowed us to share concrete examples from our experiences, leading to fruitful discussions and friendships beyond the program.’R3.

##### Stakeholders’ perceptions

**What do the alumni think about AAAEP–P’s relevance?**

The key themes that interviewees spoke about regarding the relevance of the program highlighted its strong alignment with both institutional and national priorities, and its effective support to the strategic goals of partner organisations and GPH. Many participants discussed how the program provided targeted training, scholarships, and short courses specifically designed to address their professional roles, enabling them to tackle critical gaps in areas such as governance, climate change, health, and education. Interviewees emphasised the program’s practical application of learnings, particularly through REAPs that have led to systemic improvements. Alumni also noted the program’s alignment with Australia's and Philippines' broader development strategies, underscoring its dual role in advancing development and diplomacy while equipping participants with the skills needed to address diverse sectoral and community needs. Detailed quotes from KIIs on relevance are set out in Appendix G.

##### 1.4 To what extent do AAAEP–P's GEDSI priorities align with and support GPH priorities?

The program strongly supported not only GPH’s GAD objectives but also the greater capacity enhancement and knowledge building of persons with disabilities as well as talents from indigenous groups and communities.

The consistent integration of a GEDSI module either as part of a pre-departure briefing or core course content (e.g., for short courses) facilitated the scholars’ reflection on GEDSI when designing their REAPs. The program also complemented the REAP design by ensuring the availability of a coach to support the scholars in the development and implementation of their REAPs. This approach has also inspired most of the Alumni interviewed to incorporate GEDSI into their reintegration, particularly within the civil service. This approach also supported the gender mainstreaming objectives of GPH in the priority sectors or themes shared with GoA such as trade, education, environment, among others.

‘Australia Awards integrates gender and social inclusion throughout its courses, allowing for real-life application in various sectors of government.’ R2.

The AAAEP–P, however, could improve its efforts by deepening the understanding and discourse surrounding LGBTQIA+ rights, indigenous peoples’ rights, child rights and rights of older adults or seniors.

‘Australia Awards complements other development programs by filling gaps in technical capacity building that other donors may overlook.’ R3.

##### 1.5 To what extent does AAAEP–P substitute or complement other interventions in the Philippines, regardless of funder? (coherence)

AAAEP–P demonstrated a high degree of complementarity with other interventions in the Philippines, while avoiding significant duplication or substitution. The strategic focus of the program on capacity development, alumni engagement, and skills enhancement aligned with several national development priorities and complements other GPH, development partner and civil society initiatives.

**Complementarity with National and Donor Programs**

AAAEP–P’s capacity building support and leadership development in alignment with the PDP and other government initiatives aimed at upskilling civil servants and advancing governance reforms. The program’s tailored scholarships and short courses targeting the specific needs of priority sectors’ specific needs, (health, education, and infrastructure), filled gaps in capacity development and training not met by others. For example, AAAEP–P’s emphasis on GEDSI strengthened its alignment with ongoing GPH’s and multilateral organisations’ efforts to foster inclusivity.

Alumni engagement activities created networks that facilitated collaboration and peer learning, enhancing the collective impact of leadership development efforts in the country. Several scholarships offerings are available in the Philippines including[[13]](#footnote-14):

* [The Fulbright Scholarship Program](https://vuxano.com/international-scholarships-for-philippine-students/?utm#1_The_Fulbright_Scholarship_Program),
* [Chevening Scholarships Programme](https://vuxano.com/international-scholarships-for-philippine-students/?utm#2_Chevening_Scholarships_Programme),
* [Australia Awards Scholarships](https://vuxano.com/international-scholarships-for-philippine-students/?utm#3_Australian_Awards_Scholarships),
* [Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters (students) – Erasmus+](https://vuxano.com/international-scholarships-for-philippine-students/?utm#4_Erasmus_Mundus_Joint_Masters_students_%E2%80%93_Erasmus),
* [The Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund](https://vuxano.com/international-scholarships-for-philippine-students/?utm#5_The_Japan-ASEAN_Integration_Fund),
* [The Schwarzman Scholars Initiative](https://vuxano.com/international-scholarships-for-philippine-students/?utm#6_The_Schwarzman_Scholars_Initiative),
* [ADB-Japan Scholarship Program](https://vuxano.com/international-scholarships-for-philippine-students/?utm#7_ADB-Japan_Scholarship_Program),
* [DAAD Scholarships](https://vuxano.com/international-scholarships-for-philippine-students/?utm#8_DAAD_Scholarships),
* [Commonwealth Scholarships](https://vuxano.com/international-scholarships-for-philippine-students/?utm#9_Commonwealth_Scholarships), and
* [UN Scholarships](https://vuxano.com/international-scholarships-for-philippine-students/?utm#10_UN_Scholarships).

**Avoidance of Duplication**

AAAEP–P’s distinct focus on Australian expertise and partnerships avoided substituting or duplicating offerings such as those above. The program expertly prioritised leveraging Australia’s comparative higher education strengths and its existing networks with Philippine institutions. The program’s rigorous stakeholder consultations and needs assessments ensured that its offerings remained demand-driven and relevant, avoiding overlap with other scholarship offerings.

**Value Addition**

A key value add of the program was its focus on post-scholarship alumni engagement. This complemented but did not substitute other program’s efforts – few scholarship offerings in the Philippines provide the same level of sustained post-award alumni support to drive systemic change. The program also facilitated partnerships between alumni and Australian institutions, enhancing cross-border collaboration and knowledge exchange.

**Gaps and Opportunities**

While AAAEP–P complemented other initiatives well, opportunities exist to strengthen coherence through additional collaboration with other donors and Philippine stakeholders. For example, aligning its offerings with regional or sectoral strategies by multilateral organisations could amplify its impact, although it would be important to remain mindful that Australia’s strategic priorities are not lost. There may also be scope for greater integration of the program’s GEDSI activities with domestic efforts to institutionalise GEDSI principles across GPH.

## Effectiveness

Key Evaluation Question 2: To what extent has AAAEP–P achieved its IOs and EOPOs?

##### 2.1 To what extent have targets for the IOs and EOPOs been attained?

Phase 1 Outcomes—2018–2022

Phase 1 comprised the following five EOPOs.

* **EOPO 1**: Alumni and where relevant, their organisations have and use skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development (Use of skills and knowledge).
* **EOPO 2**: Australia has alumni in key sectors and positions (Key Sectors and Key Positions).
* **EOPO 3**: Links and/or formal partnerships between institutions and businesses in Australia and Philippines are activated and matured (Links and Partnerships).
* **EOPO 4**: Australia, Australians and Australian expertise is viewed positively in the Philippines (Perception).
* **EOPO 5**: Scholarships and alumni activities have improved gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEDSI).

Phase 2 Outcomes—2023–2024

In late 2021, AAAEP–P's outcomes were streamlined following a design refresh, recognising the need for a sharper focus on achieving the primary goal of the program. As a result, the previous five EOPOs were reduced to two, with the other EOPOs captured as IOs. Despite these changes, two EOPOs have been consistent over the two phases of AAAEP–P.

The Phase 2 EOPOs are shown below.

* **EOPO 1**: Diverse alumni, and where relevant, their organisations use skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development.
* **EOPO 2**: Diverse alumni have contributed to strengthening cooperation between the Philippines and Australia.

These EOPOs are delivered through IOs which in turn result from outputs and related throughputs. The program’s theory of change clearly identifies the causal relationships between these outputs and outcomes, ensuring that the program is focused on achieving its intended results. Monitoring and measurement of the achievement of these outputs and outcomes is guided by a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy which collects and reports program results to assure achievement of the program’s outcomes.

Key results

Using the program’s MEL strategy, AAAEP–P has clearly demonstrated the achievement of its outcomes, as indicated in the key results represented below for the period 2018 to 2022.

Table 4: AAAEP–P Performance Highlights

| **EOPO** | **Highlights** |
| --- | --- |
| **1: Use of Skills and Knowledge** | * **100% (1,427)** of alumni with a Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP) are implementing their REAPs. * **100% (11)** of partner organisations (POs) are using the REAP outputs. * A total of **44 alumni** have completed (27) or are currently implementing (17) their AGS projects. |
| **2: Key Sectors and Key Positions** | * **100% (2,366)** of alumni are in key sectors. * **97% (1,375 of 1,420)** of alumni are in key positions. * **161 alumni** in Climate Change Adaptation, Environment, Disaster Risk Reduction. |
| **3: Links and Partnerships** | * **5 partnerships** that were previously established through short courses are still active. * **62%** of alumni have contributed to promoting business linkages and private sector engagements (2021 Tracer Study). |
| **4: Perception** | * **100% (1,299)** of beneficiaries that were surveyed have positive views of Australia, Australians, and Australian expertise. * **99.5%** of 2023 Tracer Study respondents have positive views of Australia, Australians, and Australian expertise. |
| **5: GEDSI** | * **1,410 women** and **1,034 men** directly benefitted from the program. * **9 PWDs** and **49 IPs** directly benefitted from the program. * **150 REAPs** contributing to gender equality issues. * **16 REAPs** contributing to PWD issues. |

The figure above shows the program’s significant progress across all EOPOs.

**EOPO1 (Use of Skills and Knowledge)** 100% of alumni and partner organisations utilising REAP outputs highlights the program’s importance in institutionalising these outcomes for long-term impact.

**EOPO2 (Key Sectors and Key Positions)** Strong alumni representation in key sectors and leadership positions, including areas such as Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction. This presents an opportunity to further leverage alumni influence to address critical development challenges.

**EOPO3 (Links and Partnerships)** 62% of alumni contributing to private sector engagements shows the program’s contribution to fostering active partnerships and business links, and deepening collaborations for greater economic and developmental benefits.

**EOPO4 (Perception)** 100% of beneficiaries and 99.46% of Tracer Study Respondents having a positive view of Australia, Australians and Australian expertise highlights the overwhelmingly positive perception of Australia and its expertise. This can be further leveraged to strengthen public diplomacy and policy engagement with Philippine stakeholders.

Finally, for **EOPO5 (GEDSI)** notable achievements were made promoting GEDSI, and supporting Indigenous Peoples through participation of people with disability and Indigenous persons, and through 150 REAPs contributing to gender equality and 15 REAPs contributing to disability inclusion. This demonstrates the program’s strong focus on inclusivity and addressing remaining systemic barriers.

#### Australia Awards Scholarships

The results achieved for the delivery of scholarships for the period 2018–2024 are shown in the table below.

Table 5: Australia Awards – In Australia Scholarships Data (by Intake, Gender, IP, and PWD)

| **Intake Year** | **Male** | **Female** | **PWD** | **IP** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2018 Intake** | 39 | 51 | 2 | 5 | 97 |
| **2019 Intake** | 34 | 29 | 1 | - | 64 |
| **2020 Intake** | 25 | 37 | - | - | 62 |
| **2022 Intake** | 33 | 29 | - | - | 62 |
| **2023 Intake** | 14 | 12 | - | - | 26 |

Table 6: Australia Awards Scholars – Level of Study and Intake year

**Number of Australia Awards Scholars by Level of Study**

| **Year** | **PhD** | **Non-PhD (Masters, Graduate Diploma)** | **Graduate Certificate** | **Withdrawn** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2018** | 2 | 83 | 3 | 1 | **89** |
| **2019** | 2 | 58 | 0 | 3 | **63** |
| **2020** | 0 | 64 | 0 | 0 | **64** |
| **2022** | 0 | 37 | 1 | 0 | **38** |
| **2023** | 0 | 26 | 0 | 0 | **26** |
| **2024** | 0 | 59 | 0 | 0 | **59** |
| **Total** | **4** | **327** | **4** | **4** | **339** |

**Number of Australia Awards Scholars Application by Intake**

| **Intake Year** | **Male** | **Female** | **Other** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2018** | 181 | 280 | - | **461** |
| **2019** | 177 | 274 | - | **451** |
| **2020** | 147 | 229 | 4 | **380** |
| **2021** | 231 | 307 | 16 | **554** |
| **2022** | 227 | 316 | 15 | **558** |
| **2023** | 215 | 327 | 9 | **551** |
| **2024** | 157 | 205 | 4 | **366** |
| **Total** | **1,335** | **1,938** | **48** | **3,321** |

Source: Program Board Brief, supplied by Tetra Tech International

It is noted that there was a ‘dip’ in the number of scholars during the pandemic with the 2020 intake having only 380 scholar applications. Across the period from 2018 to 2024 there were more females than male scholar applications (Female 1,938: Male 1,335), with some 48 others, reaching a total of 3,321.

#### Short courses

The results achieved for the delivery of scholarships for the period 2018–2023 are shown in the table below.

Table 7: Short Course Participants per GPH Agency

**Total Course Participants by Gender**

| **Gender** | **Number of Participants** |
| --- | --- |
| **Male** | 804 |
| **Female** | 1,051 |
| **Total** | **1,855** |

**Percentage of Short Course Participants per Partner Agency**

| **Agency** | **Percentage** |
| --- | --- |
| Civil Service Commission | 11 |
| Department of Social Work and Development | 1 |
| Department of Public Works and Highways | 11 |
| Department of Trade and Industry | 21 |
| Department of Budget and Management | 7 |
| Department of Interior and Local Government | 9 |
| Department of Foreign Affairs | 16 |
| Public–Private Partnership Center | 4 |
| Philippine Competition Commission | 2 |
| Department of Transportation | 2 |
| National Economic and Development Authority | 16 |

‘The Policy Research and Development course was incredibly effective, as it guided us to create actionable and realistic re-entry plans that addressed specific organizational challenges.’ R1.

During the period 2018 to 2023, the program successfully delivered 45 training activities to 11 partner agencies and various organisations, reaching a total of 1,855 participants from 61 organisations. Of the total participants, 57% (1,051) were female and 43% (804) were male, demonstrating the program’s focus on gender by enabling skills upgrading of women.

Among the 1,450 participants from the 11 GPH partner government agencies, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) had the highest representation with 21%, followed by the Department of Foreign Affairs (16%) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) (16%). Other significant contributors include the Civil Service Commission (11%), the Department of Public Works and Highways (11%), and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (9%). Smaller proportions were represented by agencies such as the Department of Budget and Management (7%), Public-Private Partnership Centre (4%), and the Philippine Competition Commission (2%). This distribution highlights the program’s targeted engagement with key GPH agencies while maintaining inclusivity across sectors. The three largest recipient GPH agencies for short courses – the DTI, the DFA, and NEDA – are key counterparts for Australia’s support to the Philippines on trade, the bilateral relationship, and on the Philippine’s economic and social development.

#### In-country scholarships program

The In-Country Scholarship Program (ICSP) supports Filipinos who are unable to study in Australia due to either work or family constraints, prioritising recipients from conflict and post-conflict areas in Mindanao.

In 2020, AAAEP–P evaluated the ICSP (Tracer Study), highlighting ICSP’s relevance in building competencies for Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) personnel, its effectiveness in addressing key concerns, and its efficiency in delivering scholarship benefits. However, challenges like limited support for scholars’ REAPs and evolving political priorities in BARMM were noted. The study emphasised the need for BARMM to invest in resources for sustainability and proposed a design for ICSP Phase 3, which aligned with BARMM’s development goals and complemented other GPH and international initiatives.

In 2020, AAAEP–P also conducted a TNA of ICSP alumni in the context of the pandemic, to identify what help ICSP graduates need to live their best lives and to make a difference to the BARMM community during the global crisis. The TNA proposed a two-pronged leadership development strategy and framework, with a capability enhancement plan for the ICSP alumni proposing topics such as project management, authentic influence, innovation, conflict management and digital competencies. These approaches evidence the program’s responsiveness to the pandemic.

The results achieved for the delivery of the ICSP are shown in the table below.

Table 8: ICSP Results

**ICSP 2020 Tracer Study and Program Review Results**

* Contributed to improving the local government capacity to deliver services in Bangsamoro.
* Enhanced the foundation for sustaining economic growth.
* ICSP scholars to be assigned to key positions in Bangsamoro.
* Respective programs of study are aligned with the awardees’ current work, improving their technical and leadership skills.
* Awardees are able to use the competencies gained in their workplace.

**Number of Scholars from 2012 to 2023**

| **Year** | **Scope / Target Scholars** | **Fields of Study** | **Number of Scholars Mobilised** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2023 (ICSP3)** | Professionals working in Bangsamoro agencies | Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM), human rights, peace and development, urban and regional planning, social work, chemistry, engineering | 10 |
| **2016 (ICSP2)** | Professionals from Mindanao committed to work for the development of Bangsamoro | Education, peace and development, urban and regional planning, public administration, community development, social work, business administration, engineering | 64 |
| **2012 (ICSP1)** | Professionals based in Mindanao, especially in conflict and post-conflict affected areas | Education, social protection, community development, public administration and governance, peace and development, human resource, DRRM | 94 |
| **Total** |  |  | 168 |

**Gender Distribution and Number of Indigenous People[[14]](#footnote-15)**

| **Gender** | **Number of Participants** |
| --- | --- |
| **Male** | 92 |
| **Female** | 76 |
| **Indigenous People** | 29 |

The results of the ICSP Tracer Study and Program Review highlight significant contributions of the scholarship program to improving governance, economic growth, and local service delivery in Bangsamoro. By aligning fields of study with the professional needs of the region, such as DRRM, human rights, public administration, and engineering, the program has equipped scholars with competencies directly relevant to their workplace, enhancing both technical expertise and leadership capabilities. Importantly, the results show the program’s role in enabling scholars to take on key positions in Bangsamoro, contributing to sustained development outcomes.

The program mobilised 168 scholars between 2012 and 2023, with notable progress over three phases. In 2012 (ICSP1), 94 scholars were engaged, primarily targeting professionals from conflict-affected areas in Mindanao, followed by 64 scholars in 2016 (ICSP2), who committed to Bangsamoro’s development[[15]](#footnote-16). The latest cohort in 2023 (ICSP3) included 10 scholars working in Bangsamoro agencies, continuing the program’s investment in capacity-building tailored to regional needs.

Additionally, the gender distribution indicates strong participation from women, with 76 females and 92 males, showcasing efforts toward inclusivity and gender equality. Furthermore, the inclusion of 29 Indigenous People highlights the program’s responsiveness to historically underrepresented groups. The implications underscore the program’s success in fostering a skilled and diverse workforce committed to regional stability, governance, and development, while also identifying the need for ongoing investments to ensure sustained growth, particularly in sectors critical to Bangsamoro's future.

#### Alumni Engagement

The results achieved for the delivery of alumni engagement activities are shown in the table below.

Table 9: Alumni Engagement Results

**Number of Alumni by Level of Study**

| **Level of Study** | **Number of Alumni** |
| --- | --- |
| PhD | 85 |
| Master’s Degree | 1,555 |
| Graduate Diploma | 198 |
| Graduate Certificate | 12 |
| Bachelor’s Degree | 7 |
| Short Course/Fellowship | 2,028 |
| Not specified | 22 |
| **Total** | **3,907** |

**Number of Alumni by Geographic Location**

| **Geographic Location** | **Number of Alumni** |
| --- | --- |
| Luzon, Philippines | 2,199 |
| Visayas, Philippines | 207 |
| Mindanao, Philippines | 773 |
| Australia | 6 |
| No data before AAAEP–P | 772 |
| **Total** | **3,957** |

**Strengthening Relationships through Collaborative Partnerships**

* Alumni Network Summit
* Public Diplomacy Activities
* Support for Alumni Groups PA3i and AACPh

**Enabling Alumni Response to Current Needs and Priorities**

* Quarterly Alumni Knowledge Sharing Series
* Year-Long Alumni Grants Scheme
* Regional GEDSI Leadership Summit

**Geographic spread – selection**

As a nationwide program, AAAEP–P is designed to be open to qualified individuals from all regions, including the Visayas and Mindanao. The concentration of national government agencies, universities, and private sector organisations in Metro Manila resulted in higher numbers in Luzon. Many Luzon scholars also work on national programs that benefit the entire country, including Visayas and Mindanao regional development.

AAAEP–P applied a GEDSI lens to ensure equitable access to scholarships, short courses, and alumni engagement opportunities. The selection strategy sought to remove barriers and promote participation among women, people with disabilities, and underrepresented groups. The Program actively encouraged participation from underserved areas, targeting outreach to local government units, key sectors and regional universities outside Luzon. The application process incorporated GEDSI-sensitive selection criteria, and considered economic and social disadvantage, and including consideration of applicants from conflict affected or disaster-prone areas. The program provided reasonable adjustments for applicants and scholars with disabilities, including assistive technologies, flexible learning options, and accessible facilities. Financial support was provided to cover dependent care, travel for persons with disabilities, and additional allowances for those requiring assistance. The program also sought to ensure representation across diverse sectors (economic development, education, governance, and health), and encouraged applicants from regions, such as Mindanao and Visayas.

Table 10: Australia’s Alumni Engagement Strategy and Reach

The Program’s Alumni Engagement Strategy recognises that alumni contribute in many ways to Australia’s influence and standing in the region and globally. Engaging alumni is a public diplomacy priority. Through the alumni, Australia can:

* strengthen diplomatic access and influence;
* grow trade, investment and business linkages;
* promote Australian capabilities and credentials in education, science, research and innovation;
* showcase Australia as a contemporary, innovative, open society.

**Total number of alumni (as of August 2023): 3,907**

Table 11: Number of Alumni (August 2023)

**Composition of alumni[[16]](#footnote-17)**

| **Category** | **Number of Alumni** |
| --- | --- |
| **Male** | 1,609 |
| **Female** | 2,290 |
| **PWD** | 31 |
| **IP** | 118 |

**Number of Alumni by Area of Expertise**

| **Priority Area** | **Total** |
| --- | --- |
| Agriculture and Rural Systems | 58 |
| Development Studies | 47 |
| Education | 496 |
| Engineering (engineering management, civil, transport) | 14 |
| Environment (DRR, CCA, Environmental Management) | 131 |
| Foreign relations and public diplomacy | 178 |
| Governance and Public Policy, including Civil Society, Media and Foreign Relations | 1,919 |
| Health (Public Health and Social Protection) | 52 |
| HR and OD | 251 |
| Information System or Technology | 96 |
| Law | 98 |
| Natural Resource Management including mining and energy | 30 |
| Peace Studies, Peace and Development | 147 |
| Social Work | 17 |
| Trade and Economics, Business, and Finance | 300 |
| Urban and Regional Planning | 14 |
| Others | 61 |

The Alumni Engagement Strategy underscores the significant contributions alumni make to Australia’s public diplomacy objectives, strengthening diplomatic access, promoting trade and business links, advancing education and research, and showcasing Australia as a modern, innovative society. With an impressive 3,907 alumni in the database as of August 2023[[17]](#footnote-18), the program continues to build a diverse and inclusive network, demonstrating its expansive reach.

The alumni community reflects notable inclusivity, with 2,290 female alumni compared to 1,609 male alumni, and commendable participation from 31 persons with disabilities and 118 Indigenous Persons (IP). This highlights the program's alignment with GEDSI principles, fostering equity and representation.

Alumni expertise spans a wide range of priority areas, demonstrating the program's strategic alignment with national and regional development needs. Key areas include education with 496 alumni, governance and public policy (including civil society, media, and foreign relations) leading with 1,919 alumni, and trade and economics, business, and finance with 300 alumni. Other notable areas include environment (131 alumni), health (52 alumni), and human resources and organisational development with 251 alumni. Additionally, expertise in emerging areas such as peace and development (147 alumni) and information technology (96 alumni) showcase the breadth of skills contributing to global priorities.

The alumni network’s diversity and specialised knowledge create a robust platform for collaboration, capacity-building, and policy influence, advancing both Australia’s diplomatic priorities and the development goals of partner countries. The program's inclusive engagement ensures that alumni remain valuable ambassadors and contributors to key sectors, solidifying Australia’s position as a trusted partner in education and innovation.

#### Tracer Study

The 2023 Tracer Study highlighted the following key findings regarding REAPs:

Table 12: Tracer Study Findings on REAPs

**Findings from the 2023 Tracer Study revealed that:**

* 80% reported that their REAPs or initiatives have significantly contributed to the improvement in their work units/organisational capacity and staff competency including organisational goals.
* 60% reported that their REAPs or initiatives have contributed to Australian interests (e.g., investment and business linkages, promoting capabilities and credentials of Australians), education/institution, promoting Australia as an open and innovative society.
* 62% reported that their REAPs or initiatives have significantly contributed to the Philippine Development Plan or DFAT’s Australia’s AIP (2015–2018).
* 55% reported that their REAP contributed to GEDSI.
* 50% reported that their REAPs contributed to COVID recovery initiatives.

##### Stakeholders’ perceptions

**2.1 What do key informants think about AAAEP–P’s effectiveness?**

The key themes that interviewees spoke about regarding the *effectiveness* of the program underscored how well it equipped participants with practical skills and tools that have directly translated into tangible improvements across various sectors.

R1 applied her Australia Awards short course learnings to improve her work at the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), particularly in policy formulation and training facilitation. Through courses such as Training of Trainers, Coaching and Mentoring, and Policy Research and Development, she enhanced her ability to deliver training, engage in evidence-based policymaking, and implement structured coaching and mentoring within her department. These skills were particularly beneficial as she progressed to a section chief role, enabling her to support personnel development, optimise policy implementation, and enhance governance processes. The impact of her learning extended beyond personal career growth to institutional improvements. Her REAP, which focused on optimising fund utilisation and addressing the increasing number of orders at DPWH, was recognized as one of the best proposals and was endorsed for further review. She also played a role in developing a policy template for regional and district offices, ensuring a structured, evidence-based approach to policy drafting.

Many highlighted the significant impact of REAPs, which enabled them to implement targeted initiatives aligned with their organisational and community priorities. The program’s focus on leadership training and technical skills was felt to have empowered alumni to establish new programs, improve service delivery and create systemic changes, such as modernising governance systems and enhancing public health outcomes. Additionally, the strong alumni networks were seen to have facilitated ongoing collaboration and knowledge-sharing, ensuring the sustainability and amplification of these outcomes. Overall, the program was perceived as effective in fostering leadership, streamlining operations and driving measurable improvements across governance, education, health and community development. Detailed quotes from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) on effectiveness are set out in Appendix G.

‘The training allowed me to create climate-smart policies that directly addressed the needs of vulnerable populations, making a tangible difference in my work.’ R4.

‘The leadership training provided tools that improved service delivery within my office, allowing us to apply agile methods to streamline processes and enhance customer satisfaction.’ R5.

##### 2.2 What factors were crucial for the achievement or failure to achieve AAAEP–P outcomes?

The program’s knowledge, history and relationships in this space, particularly those facilitated by the managing contractor’s implementation team, are a key factor to the effective delivery of AAAEP–P.

The focus on developing and strengthening capacity among participants (being a higher education program) was an effective contribution to achieving the program’s EOPOs and goal. This was particularly noted in the government sector, where trained individuals were applying their new skills to improve institutional processes and outcomes. Good examples were also noted in the private sector.

Alumni demonstrated high-calibre impact on GPH and the Embassy’s objectives, especially through implementation of their REAPs, through application of the skills and knowledge that they gained while on award, or by leveraging individuals and resources they accessed via the Alumni Network and the communities of practice. Investment in alumni networks significantly amplified the Embassy’s influence and outcomes. Despite occasional confusion about alumni branding, for alumni, these networks provided valued platforms for knowledge sharing and career support.

The selection processes for scholarships, ICSP and short courses were well set up, focussing on transparency and established through the Targeted and Open processes. Some nomination processes within GPH agencies were individually critiqued, but these operated within a political economy outside the program’s sphere of influence. Opportunities exist to build on the program’s agreed merit-based selection process and ensure that any deviations are clearly communicated to stakeholders, particularly the PCC members who also served on the selection committee[[18]](#footnote-19). This would help to minimise risks to integrity and reputation.

The program’s governance arrangements, however, were less effective, particularly in the latter phase of the program, with fewer PCC and Board meetings. These limited opportunities for Embassy engagement and restricted governance mechanisms from effectively addressing program divergences, particularly those related to the work plan. To its credit, the managing contractor delivered a high-quality and impactful program within this weakened governance context.

The program’s use of MEL tools, such as competency scorecards and REAPs provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of the training programs and allowed for continuous improvement. Robust data collection and analysis were important for tracking the program’s outcomes. While the qualitative feedback was important, there was also a strong emphasis on gathering quantitative data to support the program's success stories.

Finally, the program’s *Communications and Public Diplomacy Strategy* was a key factor which supported the program’s achievement of its objectives. The strategy included several communications goals including *inter alia*:

* Stories on diverse alumni and their organisations that showcase how they use their skills, knowledge, and networks to contribute to sustainable development are captured, produced in different formats, and promoted through appropriate channels,
* Information about Australia Awards Scholarships (AAS) and other learning modalities of AAAEP–P that provide opportunities for a positive experience with Australia, Australians and Australian expertise, promoted to Filipinos in key sectors and positions, especially to women and disadvantaged groups, and
* Information, key messages and stories about alumni engagement activities are strategically communicated to diverse alumni.

The strategy guided the program in developing and disseminating various communications products, which contributed to advancing its higher-level objectives:

* A story bank of alumni profile stories, alumni contributions and achievements, and alumni’s REAPs,
* Case studies and video documentaries on alumni’s successful REAP implementation,
* A restructured and redesigned website to improve user experience, and
* Stories about awardee and alumni’s positive experience in Australia are produced and shared in AAAEP–P Facebook page.

Finally, despite the COVID-19 pandemic the program was able to retain a high degree of effectiveness by applying several strategies including: transition to virtual learning, application of new digital tools, adaptation of short course content to cover crisis management, digital governance, and public health responses, reorienting REAPs to be feasible in remote working environments, online peer learning and alumni events, and ensuring GEDSI and inclusion considerations were integrated into remote learning. These strategies helped the program to pivot, minimise disruptions, and engage in flexible, demand-driven learning in a challenging context.

##### 2.3 Was AAAEP–P’s reach (e.g., number of long–term scholarship slots and short course participants, etc.) sufficient to realise the required scale of change? Including women, LGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities and indigenous people's priorities.

The program demonstrated strong outcomes in advancing gender equality – the majority of the alumni is female due to proactive targeting by the program—and promoting GEDSI principles – targeted efforts to ensure inclusion of people with disabilities were conducted- which are central to Australia’s development strategy. However, there has been comparatively less emphasis on LGBTQIA+ inclusion. Additionally, challenges were identified in relation to supply chain service providers, including during the 2024 GEDSI Summit [[19]](#footnote-20). It was noted that the attitudes and facilities of some downstream service providers were not in line with the program’s strong commitment to GEDSI. Further due diligence of downstream service providers is needed to ensure the program’s GEDSI efforts are honoured.

AAAEP–P had remarkable success with an impressive number of scholars processed across diverse scholarship offerings. This mix of scholarships, targeting individuals with high potential, and its strong focus on HRD significantly contributed to building capacity within key GPH agencies and at subnational levels. As of August 2023 (most recent figures) 2,199 were from Luzon, 773 Mindanao, and 773 from Visayas. Again, this is likely due to population density and structural issues, such as the concentration of government and business organisations on Luzon. From an organisational HRD perspective investing in people’s skills and strengthening their networks is a developmentally sound approach to building human capital necessary to realise higher level objectives.

Given its robust branding, well-established processes, and a multi-skilled implementation team, it is understandable that the Embassy consistently leveraged the program's resources to support strategic priorities, including emerging priorities that were not anticipated in the original investment concept. While AAAEP–P has achieved notable success in building individual capacity and contributing to organisational development, at both national and subnational level, in terms of reach the program is out of step with the Embassy’s emerging increasingly flexible engagement strategy.

The program's highly efficiency but largely one-size-fits-all approach restricts its capacity to engage with and respond to emerging priorities and other ad hoc requests. This lack of flexibility has meant misalignment of the program with critical bilateral priorities and emerging sectors that require targeted and adaptive strategies.

One significant gap lies in the program's engagement with REAPs. These often have the potential to drive meaningful reform within GPH agencies, but their implementation under the current structure lacks the proactive analysis and collaboration necessary to position them within broader reform contexts. Without sufficient resources or strategic alignment, REAPs risk becoming siloed initiatives that fail to achieve their full impact. Furthermore, opportunities to use REAPs to advance high-priority reform issues and foster deeper GPH engagement remain underutilised. It would be unreasonable to place this responsibility solely on the current managing contractor’s implementation team. Supporting strategic analysis and effectively leveraging program resources to achieve these objectives necessitates dedicated analytical resources and support.

Another area of concern is the limited engagement with alumni networks. Alumni represent a valuable resource for advancing public diplomacy and development objectives, yet their potential remains underutilised. Targeted engagement with groups in critical areas such as defence, STEM and governance could create a powerful platform to support bilateral goals. However, without deeper investment in alumni analysis, resourcing and outreach, this network remains an underleveraged asset. Ensuring that alumni see tangible value in their continued participation is crucial to strengthening their role in advancing both governments' strategic priorities.

Finally, there is a conceptual tension between the integrity-founded reputation of the program’s selection and HRD focus, and the opportunity for a successor program’s processes and resources to respond to the reigning political economy in the Philippines. Folding in an additional category with tailored selection criteria including increased weighting on leadership and potential influence of the candidate appear warranted. It remains important that AAAEP–P’s hard-won reputation for integrity is protected. Specific strategies would be needed to ensure that reputational damage is avoided, including clearly communicating any new selection processes to governance mechanisms (such as the Program Board) and to external stakeholders (e.g., GPH).

***A potential new workstream – for consideration***

A future program could include a new workstream that builds on the strong AAAEP–P brand and focuses on targeted thematic areas and sectors. It would leverage the program’s proven processes while allowing flexibility to address emerging priorities. Key features of this workstream would include its own objectives, tailored selection criteria and resourced operations, avoiding perceptions of additional workload on the core program.

This approach would enable the Embassy to develop a network of stakeholders in critical sectors, by offering sector-specific scholarships, fellowships and study visits. A Senior Advisor embedded at the Embassy would play a pivotal role in adapting AAAEP–P processes to suit these new contexts, ensuring alignment with both governments’ strategic priorities. Moreover, the advisor could strengthen TNE initiatives and engage Australian universities, capitalising on momentum from recent Austrade efforts.

***Enhanced Engagement with REAPs and Alumni Networks***

A proactive approach to REAPs under the proposed second workstream would amplify the program’s influence. By conducting upfront analysis and collaborating closely with GPH agencies, the program (in concert with existing sectoral teams at the Embassy) could position REAPs within broader reform contexts. This would enhance existing sectoral teams’ policy engagement through improved internal coordination and tracking of REAP-driven reform policy dialogue. This would provide the Embassy with heightened opportunities to engage on high-priority reform issues, including those issues currently outside sectoral teams’ remit. An embedded Senior Advisor would facilitate identification of additional opportunities for Embassy involvement in REAP-driven policy reform.

Similarly, alumni engagement offers untapped potential for the Embassy to leverage its networks for public diplomacy and development objectives. Targeted engagement with alumni groups—such as those in defence, STEM, or governance—could create a powerful think tank supporting Embassy priorities. For this to succeed, alumni must see tangible value in participation, underpinned by political economy analysis and targeted resourcing. Strengthening these connections would deliver dividends for both governments, ensuring the program’s enduring legacy.

##### 2.4 To what extent has AAAEP–P changed norms or processes among its partner GPH agencies (i.e., the processes for utilising the benefits of alumni)?

There are two perspectives to consider in addressing this question, linked to the lens through which the program is evaluated.

From a HRD perspective, agency stakeholders indicated that the program aligned well with organisational needs. The OTNA process was regarded as useful, and the REAPs were deemed highly relevant, despite some implementation challenges—particularly the changes in management between the departure and return of long-term scholars.

From a leadership and influence perspective, there may be opportunities to target specific reformers who could work within the system to accelerate the pace of reform. However, challenges associated with this approach include the risk of selected emerging leaders losing influence upon their return. There are also reputational risks as this ‘hand-picked’ approach is out of step with the merit-based selection process for which AAAEP–P and AA is known. It might also be perceived as ‘tied aid’ which Australia’s development assistance is not.

##### 2.5 To what extent has AAAEP–P changed the lives of its beneficiaries (alumni) in the priority sectors?

The evaluation team heard several cases where scholars who have participated in the program (or its predecessors) have had exponential impact on specific sectors in the Philippines. Some evidence of this is illustrated in the case studies below.

Program’s Value and Relevance

The AAAEP–P’s tailored support for stakeholders through relevant short courses and degrees has proven essential for small and medium enterprises and government leaders. Participants consistently highlighted the program's logistical and psychological support, its inclusivity (e.g., gender diversity and support for people with disabilities), and its strong alumni network as critical to sustaining their impact. The program's structured approach to integrating learnings into actionable REAPs ensures long-term benefits for participants and their communities. The AAAEP–P has significantly impacted diverse stakeholders by enhancing professional capacities and fostering long-term relationships. Through scholarships, short courses, and alumni engagement, the program has contributed to individual growth and broader sectoral advancements in the Philippines, addressing critical areas such as agriculture, family enterprises, and human resource management.

The case studies below highlight achievements of two Australia Awards alumni who continue to remain engaged as a result of the program’s alumni engagement activities. They provide useful snapshots of the value of alumni engagement, and the benefits which flow from Australia Awards Scholarships.

Case Studies

**Case Study 1: Nerissa Canguilan,**   
*Master of Social Change and Development, University of Newcastle, Australia  
Australia Awards Leadership Scholarship Recipient, Indigenous Person*

Assistant Commissioner (ASCOM) Nerissa Canguilan of the Philippine Civil Service Commission (CSC) embodies the transformative power of education and leadership. A graduate of the University of Newcastle under an Australia Awards Leadership Scholarship, **she credits the preparatory programs and mentorship provided by AAAEP–P for equipping her with the skills to excel academically and socially**. These programs, which covered practical and cultural aspects of studying in Australia, helped her transition smoothly into academic life.

During her studies, ASCOM Nerissa became an active leader in the Filipino student community, benefitting from a supportive network and cross-cultural experiences. She gained invaluable opportunities, including an internship with a global NGO, leadership training, and exposure to Australian parliamentary processes—experiences she fondly describes as a ‘mini–United Nations.’

Professionally, ASCOM Nerissa has had a stellar career. Rising through the ranks from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to becoming the only non-lawyer Assistant Commissioner of the CSC, she credits her Australia Awards scholarship for enhancing her confidence, leadership, and technical skills. A proud Indigenous Igorot woman and advocate of GEDSI, she integrates these principles into her work, driving systemic changes in human resource management and championing gender-responsive policies.

Her advocacy extends to grassroots communities, where she educates on GEDSI and gender-responsive budgeting, delivering practical solutions like improved water systems to reduce women’s burdens. A working mother and family breadwinner, she inspires others by showcasing how education and resilience can lead to meaningful change.

ASCOM Nerissa’s journey is a powerful testament to the impact of education and leadership, Indigenous communities, and civil service professionals striving for inclusivity and equity.

**Case Study 2: Agricultural Development and Export Growth**

*A two-week study tour in Australia led to production of a national standards sustainable farming manual that has stimulated a durian export industry*

Husband and wife Emmanuel and Mary Grace Belviz, beneficiaries of several AAAEP–P training programs, have applied their learnings to revolutionise the durian farming industry in Davao City.

Emmanuel's participation in a short course (including two weeks in Australia) on Good Agricultural Practices led to the creation of a manual that became instrumental in developing Philippine national standards for sustainable farming. These practices facilitated compliance with export requirements, culminating in the approval of durian exports to China.

Emmanuel’s leadership as President of the Durian Industry Association continues to uplift local farmers by improving access to international markets.

Similarly, Mary Grace’s training in family enterprise management has ensured the smooth succession and sustainability of their family business, contributing to long-term industry stability.

**Case Study 3: Organisational Development and Policy Impact**  
*A Masters in HRM has strengthened the Civil Service Commission’s training evaluation framework, achieving 90% implementation.*

Erwin Cudis, a Master’s graduate in Human Resource Management through the AAAEP–P, has leveraged his Australian education to drive systemic changes within Philippine organisations.

His REAP focused on enhancing the Civil Service Commission’s training evaluation framework, achieving 90% implementation.

Erwin’s expertise has also been pivotal in shaping national employee well-being policies and supporting mental health initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic. His continued engagement with alumni networks fosters cross-sector collaborations that amplify the program’s developmental impact.

**Case Study 4: Disability advocate forging ahead in the business world**

Naprey Almario, a 2018 Australia Awards scholar and Master of Information Systems graduate from Curtin University, exemplifies resilience, determination, and the power of education in transforming lives. Known to many as the “dancing, strong-wheeled” housemate on *Pinoy Big Brother (PBB)* in 2011, Nap has since become a prominent advocate for persons with disabilities (PWDs), championing accessibility and inclusion across the Philippines.

As a child, Nap enjoyed an active lifestyle filled with outdoor play, dancing, and boundless energy. However, at the age of eight, his life changed dramatically when he contracted polio, leaving him paralysed from the waist down. Despite this setback, Nap's drive to succeed remained unwavering. Today, he runs a travel agency, teaches information technology part-time at universities in Davao, and serves as a private sector representative and PWD advocate in the city government of Davao.

Naprey’s Australia Awards journey began unexpectedly. Initially hesitant to apply, he was inspired by his involvement in a mentoring program for scholars with disabilities and the encouragement of his family, friends, and the Australia Awards team. Through their support, Naprey secured a scholarship to Curtin University, where he found an empowering environment that celebrated diversity and inclusion.

Nap described his experience in Australia as “amazing.” The program provided him with an electric wheelchair and swiftly addressed any accessibility challenges, such as replacing a missing cushion on his wheelchair during his flight. He emphasised how disability support extended beyond academic needs, ensuring he felt fully included and free from discrimination while studying and living in Australia.

Motivated by his exposure to GEDSI principles, Naprey sees himself as a bridge for advancing these values in government and the broader community. His REAP exemplifies this commitment, as he developed a comprehensive database of differently-abled persons within his organisation, a critical step toward better understanding and addressing their needs.

Naprey’s journey—from overcoming personal challenges to becoming a leader and advocate—is a testament to the transformative power of education and the Australia Awards program. His story inspires others to push boundaries and embrace inclusivity in all aspects of life.

His wish for Australia Awards and for all of its sub-contractors or suppliers to be strongly aligned with the GEDSI principles and standards that AAAEP–P promotes. “*If we practice accessibility, then we should ensure that our service providers/suppliers like hotels and event organisers are also following suit and that they are sensitive to the needs of persons with disability. Sometimes, suppliers are just good with words, but fail at execution*.”

**Case Study 5: Australia Awards Alumni leads establishment of paediatric oncology in the Philippines**

*Dr. Amy Dy, Paediatric Oncologist,*

*Executive Director of the Cancer Treatment and Support Foundation Inc.*

*Chairman Emeritus of the Philippine Board of Paediatric Oncology*

*Evaluator, Philippines Council for NGO Certification*

*Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children Fellow, 1989.*

Dr. Amy Dy made history in 1999 as the founding chairman of the Philippine Board of Paediatric Oncology and contributed to the establishment of the Philippine Society of Paediatric Oncology as a founding trustee in 2000. This milestone followed her esteemed fellowship at The Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, now known as The Children’s Hospital, in Sydney, Australia, in 1989 [[20]](#footnote-21).

In 1989, Paediatric Oncology was not yet a field in the Philippines. Dr. Amelia Fernandez, chair of the Department of Paediatrics at UP-PGH, and Dr. Ernesto O. Domingo, chancellor of UP Manila, collaborated to send Dr. Dy to Australia through the AIDAB Colombo Plan scholarship. The goal was for Dr. Dy to become the first fully trained Paediatric Oncologist in the Philippines. After completing her fellowship at RAHC, Dr. Dy played a key role in training future paediatric oncologists at UP-PGH.

After completing her fellowship in Paediatric Oncology at The Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children in Sydney, Dr. Dy maintained strong connections with the paediatric oncology unit and regularly engaged with Australian paediatric oncologists at international conferences. This helped expand her network and facilitated the exchange of knowledge between Australia and the Philippines.

Dr. Dy played a key role in promoting knowledge exchange by inviting prominent Australian paediatric oncologists to deliver lectures at major conventions in the Philippines. These experts shared their insights and experiences with Filipino paediatricians.

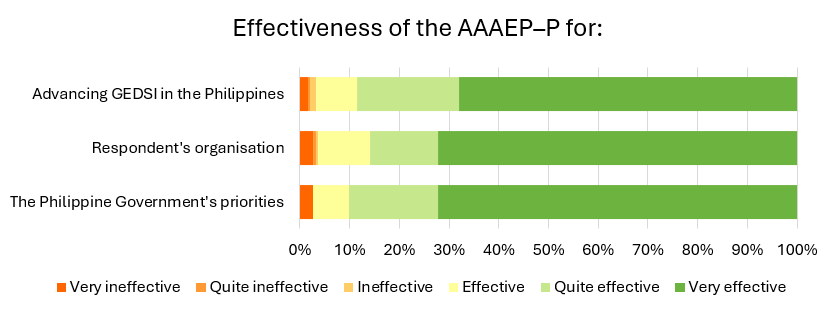
Dr. Dy was also committed to capacity-building in the Philippines, exemplified by her sending a doctor for specialised training in neuro-oncology, addressing the lack of paediatric neuro-oncologists in the country. She also served as an important liaison for Filipino doctors seeking training in Australia, helping to validate information for those interested in furthering their expertise.

Additionally, Dr. Dy was actively involved in research, notably participating in the interview process for a translational research project led by Dr. Stewart Kellie, which focused on paediatric oncology in the Philippines. This demonstrated her dedication to advancing both research and professional development in the field.

*‘Patients with cancer, whether children or adults, are considered people with disability in our in our country. So, all of them, without exception, whether they are still being diagnosed, on therapy, or survivors, they are called persons withdisabilities, and that is the main area in one’s indigency that we are concerned about. The disability of the children with cancer, regarding the gender, it doesn't have much effect on paediatric cancer, the gender equality, not so much. Because I mentioned earlier, many, majority of our patients are indigents, so we have several patients who can afford treatment, but many of them, majority are indigents, and so the programs of the foundation and our society includes support for those who cannot afford, for those who have no access, if they are not supported. So that's how my work promotes social inclusion.’* — Dr. Amy Dy

Alumni survey responses on impact of various scholarship offerings on personal and professional lives, and on organisations, are set out in Appendix I. The figure below indicates that roughly 90% of respondents felt that the program was effective in advancing GEDSI, in support their organisation, and in advancing the GPH’s priorities. This is an impressive result.

Figure 1: AAAEP–P’s Effectiveness to: advancing GEDSI, respondent’s organisation and GPH priorities



##### 2.6 How well does AAAEP–P routinely collect and use MEL data and reports, including for management decision-making, learning and accountability purposes?

The program implemented a comprehensive MEL Strategy, most recently updated in March 2023.

AAAEP–P applied a ‘before-and-after design’ [[21]](#footnote-22) for its MEL activities, which compared baseline levels and data generated against outcome indicators at different stages of implementation. The MEL Strategy employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating quantitative data derived from desk research, the alumni and AAAEP–P activity participant databases, and the quantitative sections of various beneficiary and key partner surveys. The program generated qualitative information from focus group discussions (FGDs), KIIs, updates on the risk registry, and the qualitative sections of surveys.[[22]](#footnote-23)

The program produced semi-annual monitoring reports (SAMRs), Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs), Thematic Reports, Investment Monitoring Reports, Rapid Midterm Assessment, and a Rapid End-of-Program Assessment. The monitoring and evaluation system (MES) therefore was a core element of the program’s implementation, with responsibilities spread across the implementation team, the Embassy, and the PCC. The AAAEP–P Team was responsible for developing, updating and maintaining the MES. DFAT, the Program Board and the Program Coordinating Committee were the intended primary recipients of MEL outputs using the information to perform their decision-making and management functions.

AAAEP–P has a well-established MEL mechanism, which collects detailed reports in line with AA requirements. The AAAEP–P MEL framework aligns closely with Australia Awards requirements, demonstrating compliance with DFAT’s MEL standards while incorporating localized adaptations to address the specific context of the Philippines.

Key features of the MEL system include:

Alignment with DFAT’s MEL Standards

*EOPO-focused evaluation*: The MEL framework is designed to monitor progress against **End of Program Outcomes (EOPOs)**, consistent with key Australia Awards global program objectives, including fostering skills development and building strong alumni networks.

*Data-driven insights***:** Regular collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data are aligned with Australia Awards requirements to ensure evidence-based program improvements.

Contribution to Australia Awards Objectives

AAAEP–P's MEL framework supports the core objectives of Australia Awards:

*Capacity-building outcomes***:** Tracks participants’ professional and organisational performance improvements to ensure alignment with DFAT’s focus on skills and knowledge transfer.

*Alumni engagement and impact***:** Measures the contribution of alumni to development priorities to address the Australia Awards goal of sustaining long-term development partnerships.

*Inclusivity metrics***:** Evaluates outcomes related GEDSI which aligns with DFAT’s commitment to inclusive development.

Program-Specific Adaptations

While aligned with Australia Awards, AAAEP–P’s MEL framework also integrates program-specific adaptations, such as:

*A Focus on Philippine development priorities***:** Ensures MEL indicators are relevant to local contexts while reflecting Australia Awards’ overarching objectives.

*Collaborative reporting***:** Engages stakeholders like GPH agencies and alumni networks in MEL processes to strengthen alignment with bilateral goals.

##### 2.7 How well does AAAEP–P manage risk and to what extent are risk management policies and practices (including in relation to fraud control and safeguards) followed?

The program has well-established risk management processes in place. Risk is reported and reviewed by DFAT quarterly in a Risk Management Report. Significant or emerging risks are reported immediately or as needed, depending on their urgency and potential impact on program delivery. This approach ensures that DFAT remains informed of ongoing and new risks, allowing for timely mitigation measures to be implemented collaboratively. Risk management for fraud control and safeguards is implemented well.

Part of AAAEP–P’s process is the handover of the scholars to the universities,[[23]](#footnote-24) once their settle-in procedures are done. In one of the Alumni interviews conducted, an incident of “bullying” involving a few scholars was shared (in confidence). In fear of negative news reaching AAAEP–P, the scholar dealt with this incident with support from the University Coordinator.

Information was also shared on scholars taking on cleaning jobs to earn extra money to support family members who are either staying with them or back in the Philippines. While this may be appropriate, the AAAEP–P could encourage scholars who need to work to take on jobs that would aid their intellectual or education journey like technical or research-related tasks. Care would need to be taken to ensure such work does not adversely affect time available for study.

Sub-cultures between the targeted and open categories were also observed, with the scholars from the open category perceived to be more elite due to the more highly competitive process they went through. While this is not a popular sentiment, AAAEP–P could deepen or diversify their relationship building strategies with the scholars to ensure fairness and equity.

##### 2.8 To what extent has the AAAEP–P achieved its GEDSI (mainstreaming) targets with reference to Post’s Gender/GEDSI Action Plan and the AAAEP–P's specific GEDSI targets?

The program guaranteed that women, men, and people of diverse identities have equal opportunities to obtain awards to acquire, advance, and utilise new skills and to contribute to development and gender equality in the Philippines. Through Alumni learning events, AAAEP–P has discussed the risks to gender equality and how these barriers can be addressed. The program also referred to the standards set out in the Australia Awards Global Strategy and has developed their own GEDSI Strategy that outlines the framework used in the planning, selection, implementation and monitoring of the program’s activities.

Scholars in the targeted category were encouraged to address and implement perceived GAD issues in their REAPs for their respective organisations and were mentored by the program to tap the Philippine government-mandated 5% budget on GAD. The program also allocates a set percentage of the total budget to address gender and inclusion issues. Under the previous facility, one of the risks to the program was government agencies not proposing female candidates in the targeted category or not sufficiently valuing their experience on their return. AAAEP–P managed these risks by providing gender and inclusion training to targeted agencies and gender training to participants and mentors to ensure gender does not act as a barrier for returning scholars. The evaluation team’s interviews confirmed that agencies valued and incorporated this training into their policies and procedures. The scholars also demonstrated their evolving interest on GEDSI by designing learning events that deepen their understanding as a community of government and private practitioners.

All AAAEP–P efforts contribute to DFAT’s priority on gender equality even while the Department’s International Gender Equality Strategy is yet to be finalised, including the Mission’s GEDSI Strategy. In the Philippines, the AAAEP–P has continuously supported the development program through capacity building of partners in DFAT’s longstanding focus on education, peace and security, including in Muslim Mindanao, and disaster and climate resilience, with a focus on gender and social inclusion. Over the years, the AAAEP–P has also widened its support to the broader needs of the Mission in the Philippines, especially towards public diplomacy and trade.

It has to be noted too, that despite the lack of clear GEDSI targets at the Mission level, the program logic of AAAEP–P was updated in 2023 reflecting and weaving GEDSI into all outcomes to ensure that the program benefits diverse sets of scholars and alumni (men and women, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, marginalised groups and people in all their diversity).

##### 2.9 Were the target outcomes appropriate and related to the program objectives?

AAAEP–P’s target outcomes map onto its higher-level objectives. The program aimed to achieve several key target outcomes that aligned with the higher-level objective of building the capacity of professionals and institutions in the Philippines to drive national development. The program’s key outcomes included strengthening human capital through scholarships and short courses, enhancing institutional capacity by organisations benefiting from returning scholars’ expertise, and effective alumni engagement which fostered and developed collaborative networks of professionals committed to ongoing development. Integration of GEDSI principles ensured that the program’s impact was inclusive and far-reaching, aligning with its higher-level inclusive development objective through inclusion of groups experiencing marginalisation in capacity-building activities.

These outcomes were aligned with the program's broader strategic objective of supporting the Philippines’ socio-economic growth and governance reforms. In developing batches of well-trained professionals, AAAEP–P directly contributed to workforce development, equipping individuals with the skills necessary to address the socio-economic growth and governance reform development challenges. Returning scholars were able to apply new skills and approaches to innovate and strengthen their organisations’ efficiency. The program’s alumni engagement (and alumni networks) through platforms for shared learning, mentorship, and engaging on policy dialogue further amplified this, with the program’s benefits expected to extend well beyond its term.

The target outcomes were well aligned with the overarching program objectives, supported Australia's development assistance priorities and also reinforcing bilateral relations through a shared commitment to education and professional development to drive development impact and closer economic and strategic ties.

## Efficiency

Key Evaluation Question 3:

To what extent was AAAEP–P administered and delivered efficiently?

Resource Allocation and Staffing

AAAEP–P consistently demonstrated efficient use of its resources, balancing a relatively small number of staff with its broad mandate. With 14 technical staff members the program successfully managed hundreds of scholars and alumni annually. The program managed over 2664 alumni (post-graduate scholars from 2015 to 2024 intakes on their REAPs and short course participants since 2017). This brings the total to 4665 alumni that the program manages in its alumni database, across multiple categories, demonstrating the team’s capacity to handle significant workloads with limited human resources.

However, this efficiency sometimes came at a cost, particularly in monitoring REAPs and providing support to partner organisations. Delays in these areas were noted, especially during periods when the team redirected efforts to address emerging priorities within the context of constrained staffing levels.

Budget Trends and Financial Management

AAAEP–P maintained a steady budget allocation over the review period, with annual funding around AUD 5 million. This provided financial stability for the program to sustain core activities. Notably, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the program adapted by reallocating funds to support virtual learning and hybrid engagement models. In 2021, approximately AUD 500,000 was redirected to develop online platforms and provide IT support for scholars.

The program delivered around 30 short courses virtually in 2020-2021, reaching around 1,000 participants despite travel restrictions.

Table 13: Short Courses Implemented in 2020-2021 (during Pandemic) and participant numbers

| **Course** | **No** |
| --- | --- |
| DTI Targeted Selection Interviewing – Batch 1 (Structured Interviewing) | 15 |
| DTI Targeted Selection Interviewing – Batch 2 (Structured Interviewing) | 14 |
| Short Course in Business Intelligence and Data Analytics Batch 2 | 30 |
| CSC – GEDSI Mainstreaming | 42 |
| DILG – Peace Building | 29 |
| DPWH – Coaching and Mentoring | 76 |
| PPPC – Contract Management | 17 |
| Short Course on Law of the Sea Batch 4 | 100 |
| DBM – IFMIS | 26 |
| Diploma in OD | 24 |
| Facilitating Digital Learning | 19 |
| Designing E-Learning Short Course | 32 |
| DBM Trainers Training on Business Process Management | 35 |
| Senior Leaders’ Session on Design Thinking Batch 1 | 40 |
| Short Course in Business Intelligence and Data Analytics Batch 3 | 29 |
| Digital Learning Design & Facilitation | 11 |
| Short Course on Law of the Sea Batch 5 | 88 |
| Public Sector Project Management (Batch 2) | 39 |
| Policy Research and Development (Batch 2) – Public Policy Leadership and Management | 33 |
| NEDA Workshop Series | 72 |
| DTI Market and Business Intelligence and Financing | 63 |
| DBM – Public Policy and Management | 4 |
| CSC – Short Course on Design Thinking | 47 |
| BOI – Short Course on Design Thinking | 14 |
| DTI – Short Course on Design Thinking | 138 |
| GEDSI Mainstreaming Batch 2 | 17 |
| MAFAR Training on Strategic Planning | 41 |
| Law of the Sea Batch 6 | 41 |
| Designing E-Learning Batch 2 | 23 |

The program also managed logistical support efficiently during this period, with a notable reduction in administrative costs due to the shift to virtual platforms. Transitioning to online delivery and hybrid engagement methods, ensured uninterrupted service delivery for scholar support and learning activities.

Sound financial management, efficient use of resources, and adaptability to external challenges meant that the program met most of its 2018 to 2023 objectives. Contingency planning and flexible budgeting remain ongoing challenges for the program.

Anecdotally, feedback was received from the MC that some scholars felt that the stipends they receive fell short of covering their living expenses, as they have not kept pace with inflation. Scholars therefore took up manual labour work/cleaning to support their living expenses. There may be a need to re-evaluate stipend amounts for in Australia scholars.

##### 3.1 What, if any, significant administrative constraints or unexpected costs were experienced, and how were they managed?

The administration demands associated with several different scholarship offerings are significant. They include advertising rounds, selecting candidates, course preparation activities, pre-departure briefings, on award support, re-entry and reorientation and alumni activities. Inevitably, logistics can go wrong and AAAEP–P is not immune to this phenomenon. Routine interruptions and delays undoubtedly occurred. The evaluation team is not aware of significant logistics hurdles, and the implementation team appears to be on the whole a well-oiled machine.

Table 13: Number of Program Participants by Sex from the Start of the Program[[24]](#footnote-25)

| **Subprogram** | **Female** | **Male** | **Total** | **% Female to Total** | **IP Female** | **IP Male** | **IP Total** | **PWD Female** | **PWD Male** | **PWD Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Scholarships | 316 | 232 | 548 | 58 | 10 | 9 | 19 | 6 | 7 | 13 |
| ICSP | 24 | 12 | 36 | 67 | 22 | 14 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Short Course | 1,223 | 857 | 2,080 | 59 | 16 | 9 | 25 | 16 | 24 | 40 |
| **Total** | **1,563** | **1,101** | **2,664** | **59** | **48** | **32** | **80** | **22** | **31** | **53** |

‘Visa processing delays were a major issue, but the support from the Australian Embassy helped mitigate these challenges.’ R2.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented significant challenges for the program, particularly for AAS and for delivery of fellowships and Australian elements of Short Course Awards (SCAs). The program responded by implementing several adjustments to ensure the continuity of its programs and activities while adhering to public health protocols. Key measures included:

* ***Online Platforms***: this ensured that learning and development opportunities continued despite mobility restrictions. Online tools and technologies were used to deliver capacity-building initiatives and alumni engagement activities.
* ***Enhanced Digital Infrastructure***: enhanced digital infrastructure and provision of technical support to participants facilitated online learning and engagement. Accessibility issues were addressed to ensure inclusivity in digital programs, particularly for individuals with limited internet access or technological resources.
* ***Flexible Program Design***: Courses were adapted to shorter, modular formats to accommodate the challenges of remote learning and participants’ varying availability. Schedules were adjusted and flexible timelines were introduced to account for disruptions in participants’ professional and personal lives.
* ***Strengthened MEL****:* MEL processes were adjusted to track progress and gather feedback on virtual implementations. Surveys and virtual focus group discussions were conducted to understand participants’ experiences and areas for improvement.
* ***Support for Scholars and Alumni***: Additional support such as mental health resources and peer-support networks were established to address the stresses of the pandemic. Alumni networks were activated to provide mutual support and share strategies for adapting to pandemic-related challenges.
* ***Maintaining Engagement and Communication***: Regular virtual meetings and events ensured continued engagement with scholars, alumni, and stakeholders.
* ***Integrating Pandemic-Relevant Content***: Training and workshops incorporated themes related to pandemic response, resilience, and recovery, ensuring that the program remained relevant to the evolving context.

Resourcing for emerging priorities/ad hoc requests

The AAAEP–P team, though small, has shown remarkable adaptability in responding to emerging priorities and ad hoc requests for support from the Embassy that arose during program implementation. The implementation team was initially contracted to fulfill specific roles based on their position descriptions, with the assumption that their efforts would contribute directly to achieving the program's EOPOs through implementing the annual work plan.

However, the dynamic nature of emerging priorities/ad hoc requests often required the involvement of multiple team members, leading to a necessary shift in focus. While this demonstrates the team’s flexibility and commitment, it has also resulted in delays in meeting some of the annual plan targets, particularly in areas such as REAP monitoring and in providing support to partner organisations—both critical components of the program's success.

The design-refresh report contained a recommendation to allocate a flexible budget line of 5% to address emerging priorities/ad hoc requests. It appears that this was never implemented. Currently, AAAEP–P engages additional short-term staff or select activities to support emerging priority/ad hoc requests. This is particularly to support administrative and alumni-related work. However, these measures are not sufficient to fully mitigate the strain on core program activities. It is understood that there was resistance to increasing staffing for the MC from the Embassy which considers the program to be well resourced. The current MC is aware that there are implications for staffing of the current workload. It can be assumed that a contracted was signed based on a commercial offering of the current staffing complement for implementation of the program.

##### 3.2 Were program resources used appropriately/proportionally to the results achieved?

Over the 2018–2024 period the program used resources effectively evidenced by the consistent delivery of outputs aligned with DFAT's strategic priorities. The program maintained a lean team structure with staff having strong multi-tasking capabilities and adaptability in response to emerging priorities and challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite resource constraints and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, the program delivered high-quality outputs, including scholarship opportunities, short courses, and alumni engagement initiatives.

The program’s total agreement value was AUD 15.5 million, with consistent adherence to budget allocations across all reporting years. During 2020, DFAT approved additional resources to handle increased *ad hoc* activities, reflecting the program’s ability to scale effectively [[25]](#footnote-26). The Program maintained a lean team structure with staff having strong multi-tasking capabilities and adaptability in response to emerging priorities and challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite resource constraints and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, the Program delivered high-quality outputs, including scholarship opportunities, short courses, and alumni engagement initiatives.

In terms of resource appropriateness and efficiency, the program closely monitored budget allocation, with reports showing that the program operated within its budget constraints. Procurement used competitive bidding processes to achieve value for money, aligning with DFAT procurement rules. Innovations, such as electronic event management minimised operational overheads and increased efficiency. The MES also ensured that resources were aligned to activities with measurable outcomes (e.g., addressing partner organisations’ competency gaps).

The program’s use of resources was proportional to the results achieved, including the high quality and timely delivery. Over the reporting period, the program completed key deliverables such as the OTNAs and monitored hundreds of REAPs. The small implementation team was also able to deliver a range of alumni engagement activities, such as the Knowledge Sharing Series, Alumni Grants Scheme, and most recently the GEDSI Summit. Finally, flexibility in resource deployment allowed the program to address emerging challenges, including DFAT’s ad hoc requests and evolving development needs.

As can be expected, external factors and emerging priorities/ad hoc requests contributed to delays for certain activities, such as the OTNA and REAP monitoring. While the program was occasionally required to divert resources from planned targets in response, flexible budgetary practices and the engagement of short-term staff helped mitigate the impact of these diversions. However, as noted, the absence of a dedicated budget line for emerging priorities was a key limitation.

##### 3.3 Was AAAEP–P an efficient use of resources compared to similar programs or with alternative ways of achieving the same outcomes?

The program’s implementing team was small compared to similar sized programs in other Southeast Asian countries (i.e., Vietnam). There are usually only two members with responsibility for each sub-component of the program[[26]](#footnote-27). While this represented a cost efficiency dividend, it was possible in part due to the Team leader’s (and implementation team’s) experience gained over several years working in the program (and its predecessors). While such efficiencies provide a demonstration effect for similar-sized Australia Awards programs elsewhere, the current resourcing and program structure is not suited to support the Embassy’s emerging priorities, which fell outside the approved budget for the annual work plan. The program’s response to these emerging priorities had implications for the program in terms of time the impost on the team and presented challenges for the implementation team in absorbing unplanned work outside the agreed work plan.

Table 14: AAAEP–P staff resources compared to other scholarship programs

| **Country[[27]](#footnote-28)** | **LTA** | **STA** | **LES** | **Program Features** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Philippines | 1 | 3[[28]](#footnote-29) | 18[[29]](#footnote-30) | Bilateral program, AAS, SCA, ISCP, Alumni Activities |
| PNG | 7 | 11 | 56 | Combination of in-country scholarships and AA scholars going to Australia and short courses. |
| Indonesia | 3 | 3 | 45 | Combination of AA Indonesia program and AA Nusantara scholarships, support the management of the new LDPD scholarship, and also ASEAN scholarships as needed. |
| Africa | 8 | 5 | 0 | Regional program covering over 25 countries. No LES as all staff are from different African countries. |

However, overall the program operated in a highly efficient manner appropriately deploying its resources to achieve objectives. It was noted that the program has a heavy administrative load but delivered on its work plan efficiently. MEL processes were used effectively to monitor performance and assure efficiency.

The strong reputation that AAAEP–P has cultivated is an invaluable asset to the program. Despite having a relatively small team, the program has demonstrated remarkable efficiency by successfully managing and processing a substantial number of scholars across various categories. This underscores its effective utilisation of resources while maintaining high standards of delivery.

##### 3.4 How did AAAEP–P allocate resources to achieve inclusive, equitable and gender– transformative (if not, responsive) results?

While AAAEP–P was strategic in mainstreaming GEDSI in its operations, events, and outputs, there was no intentional budget allocation for the ‘gender/GEDSI mainstreaming’ of activities. However, the program had budget for **specific** **GEDSI events** such as GEDSI Summits, CoPs and short courses. The responsibilities of mainstreaming GEDSI were performed mostly by the program Team’s Director, as these are part of her innate expertise and interests, as opposed to having a program dedicated GEDSI resource. Other members of the team like the MEL Specialist and other select staff also help in GEDSI mainstreaming as GEDSI has become an additional fit for their role and core tasks.

DFAT’s approval of the updated Program Logic in 2023 could have been the best time also to have resource allocation for GEDSI. This would demonstrate (to the scholarships, public diplomacy, and development communities) that GEDSI is a significant objective of AAAEP–P by weaving GEDSI into all outcomes and with proper resource allocation for execution of GEDSI activities and operations.

##### Stakeholders Perceptions

##### What do key informants think about the program’s efficiency?

The key themes that interviewees spoke about regarding the *efficiency* of the program highlight its ability to deliver impactful outcomes despite resource constraints and logistical challenges. Participants consistently noted the streamlined processes, such as course counselling, visa assistance, and the use of centralised management systems, which minimised overhead costs and ensured timely support for scholars. The program's hybrid approach to learning, combining online and face-to-face sessions, was praised for maximising learning while accommodating professional commitments. Logistical support, including pre-departure briefings and real-time adjustments, ensured a smooth experience for participants, even amid challenges like government transitions and the pandemic. Additionally, the program's tailored use of local coaches and templates enabled effective project implementation and knowledge transfer. These factors collectively demonstrate the program's efficiency in delivering quality education, fostering professional development, and achieving value for money. Detailed quotes from KIIs on efficiency are set out in Appendix G.

## Sustainability

Key Evaluation Question 4: To what extent are AAAEP–P stakeholders (e.g., partner organisations and alumni communities, etc.) capable and prepared to continue the positive effects of the program without support in the long term (e.g., influencing a GPH enabling environment that supports GEDSI)?

##### 4.1 How will formal community of practice alumni groups continue to conduct activities without sustained funding from the Australian Government?

Alumni interviewed were enthusiastic about the benefits of participating in alumni activities where those activities matched their own interests and needs. Although anecdotally, several alumni valued the opportunity to engage with the Embassy, the greater interest for alumni was access to networks of Filipinos who because of the shared Australia Awards experience provided an easier entrée. Essentially, the alumni activities and CoPs are vehicles for Filipinos establishing networks and resource people that they can ‘tap’ when needed. This is an interesting and highly valuable unintended consequence of the program, and a great credit to the program’s ambition in that it is sufficiently flexible to be locally interpreted.

While these networks are inherently valuable, it is unlikely that they would be sustained at the current pace and scale were funding to be withdrawn. The investment in CoPs is value for money on two counts: it is incubatory for knowledge exchange and network building; and it provides the Embassy with access to a source of highly skilled strategic thinkers (a think tank). Opportunities exist to more closely leverage this expertise and thinking, particularly through alignment with the priority investment areas of the Australian aid program in the Philippines – essentially drawing on these networks to more purposefully support the mutually agreed priorities of both governments. Ongoing financial support from the Embassy, a level of continuity in CoP leadership, and consistency in coordination will be required.

More generally on sustainability, AAAEP–P delivered high quality educational outcomes to a group of highly talented and motivated individuals, building sustainability through skills development (including leadership) within GPH and the private sector. REAPs contributed to the program’s sustainability outcomes, with several individuals interviewed becoming leaders in their field citing the focus achieved through REAPs as the incubator for their work.

Changes in the program’s governance arrangements’ membership, including shifts in membership, impacted the program’s strategic influence and sustainability. The pandemic, turnovers in GPH members of governance mechanisms (PCC and Board), and variations in the level of senior management engagement from the Embassy affected the program’s strategic outcomes and long-term viability. Despite this, the program continued to deliver results for individual participants and their organisations, building sustainability at these levels.

Sustainability was also enhanced by a strong focus on building a sense of ‘belonging’ with the AA brand and engagement with the Embassy via various events (knowledge sharing, Ambassador’s visits etc.). This sense of belonging or association with the Embassy was cited as a motivating factor for some participants, particularly those who had studied at postgraduate level in Australia or who had travelled to Australia for short courses and fellowships.

From within the DFAT program management team there was a view that the alumni network would be a sustainable force for future collaboration and knowledge sharing. This was also reflected in the interviewees’ responses.

‘Sustainability is not just about compliance; it is about systems and processes being embraced and integrated into how business is conducted, so it becomes the norm rather than an add-on.’ R3.

From a subject matter perspective, gaps in opportunities to study PhD level were mentioned, as a PhD was felt necessary for a leadership position in government. Experts in STEM indicated that the Philippines needed more high-quality research capability, and that developing the Philippines’ research capabilities via PhDs was a priority (e.g., soil science, forensics, climate change); other stakeholders indicated that the absence of a significant salary/career dividend associated with pursuing a PhD lessened its attractiveness.

‘The agile approach from the leadership course taught us to adapt within policies and innovate while staying within regulatory boundaries, which improved our service delivery and event planning. …The re-entry action plans that we implemented created lasting frameworks for economic enterprise management that continue to deliver results years after completion.’ R2.

##### 4.2 To what extent are stakeholders capable and willing to continue to influence a GPH enabling environment that supports GEDSI?

The AAAEP–P has established methods to institutionalise more effective approaches for implementing GEDSI, building on the scholars’ Australian education, training, and experiences. The REAP has proven to be a highly strategic tool, especially when combined with the GEDSI course or module, in enhancing the planning and design capabilities of the scholars. In most cases, GEDSI has been thoughtfully integrated into the design of REAPs. While implementation can vary due to different factors, when a REAP is executed with the full support of the home institution and/or local government unit, GEDSI often achieves significant success.

Since 2017, 56% of AAAEP–P women alumni occupied at least supervisory positions and have used their influence to improve organisational systems and processes and staff competencies. Alumni members, following their participation in a short course on GEDSI mainstreaming, have also continued to advocate for GEDSI-sensitive practices and activities such as the convening of annual regional GEDSI conference and the establishment of a gender and development certification program for regional offices of the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

The Philippines Public-Private Partnerships Centre, a partner agency, has also adopted AAAEP–P's GEDSI scorecard to support its efforts at measuring and improving their capacity and competency on GEDSI. The scorecard was also used by the Civil Service Commission to expand their gender and development toolkit to include disability and social inclusion.

‘Through the program, we included LGBTQ+ representation and persons with disabilities in key decision-making roles in our local government initiatives.’ R2

During the recent GEDSI Conference organised by AAAEP–P, REAP stories highlighting GEDSI integration were highlighted through an exhibit. One of these is using plastics in the production of road construction materials, adopted by the Department of Public Works and Highways. Another is the promotion of cultural preservation and sustainable livelihood by engaging local artisan communities all over the Philippines. After joining the Women Trading Globally program, Ms. Anya Lim was able to partner with Filipino Australian entrepreneurs and bring Anthill Fabric’s collection to Melbourne and Sydney.4

##### Stakeholders’ perceptions

##### What do key informants think about the program’s sustainability?

The key themes that interviewees spoke about regarding *sustainability* focus on embedding practices and knowledge into institutional systems to ensure long-term impact. Many highlighted the importance of integrating learnings into regular operations, from governance processes and resource management to economic enterprises and public policies. Alumni networks were consistently mentioned as crucial for sustaining collaboration, knowledge exchange, and systemic improvements across various sectors. Programs that involved capacity building, evidence-based policymaking, and fostering partnerships were credited with creating enduring change. Additionally, tailored approaches such as embedding GEDSI principles, training others, and aligning initiatives with organisational strategies were recognised as essential to maintaining relevance and continuity. Collectively, these insights indicate that AAAEP–P’s sustainability is most likely to be achieved through deliberate efforts to institutionalise learnings and build effective networks. Detailed quotes from KIIs on sustainability are set out in Appendix G.

## GEDSI Findings

Key Evaluation Question 5: Questions related to equity and inclusion are integrated in each of the evaluation criteria to examine the extent, benefits, challenges and lessons learned in GEDSI mainstreaming used by the AAAEP–P. This reflects the updated program logic which weaves GEDSI into all outcomes.

Consistent with the latest Aidworks Annual Investment Monitoring Report, the Evaluation Team found the AAAEP–P performing strongly in terms of GEDSI mainstreaming (5/6), as evidenced by the integration of GEDSI across its processes. The program has supported a range of activities promoting GEDSI, including GEDSI Summits and Conferences, Alumni Grant Scheme-funded projects that promote and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Alumni Knowledge Sharing Series, and GEDSI Communities of Practice.

Although GEDSI is not explicitly listed as one of GPH’s Organisational Development Goals, the AAAEP–P has strengthened its project management through the active integration of GEDSI in its key documents (such as the GEDSI Strategy and MEL Strategy and Plan), processes, operations, and, to the extent possible, in course contents and the re-entry action plans for scholars

While there were few observations that could improve AAAEP–P’s GEDSI practice, the majority of the Alumni Network interviewed by the Evaluation Team confirmed the positive processes practiced by AAAEP–P such as the GEDSI briefings and lectures, reasonable accommodation for scholars with disability/disabilities, and integration of GEDSI in their REAPs. The Evaluation Team also lauds AAAEP–P’s gender scorecard or checklist for their activities.

Unpacking the GEDSI concept continuum, AAAEP–P was very good in supporting female empowerment, disability-inclusion, as well as members of the indigenous groups. There was not much focus extended towards understanding and integration of LGBTQIA+ rights and other elements of social inclusion, such as LGBTQIA+ sensitisation, inclusion of LGBTQIA+-led activities from among the scholars themselves, and the continuing discourse about the issues of LGBTQIA+ people as part of the broader social inclusion efforts of the Program.

The evaluation team also observed there was no human resource dedicated for GEDSI alone, and the budget for GEDSI implementation was mostly mainstreamed in regular budget items.

##### Stakeholders’ perceptions

##### What do key informants think about AAAEP–P’s approach to GEDSI?

The key themes that interviewees spoke about regarding GEDSI highlighted the importance of embedding inclusion principles across all aspects of the program and beyond. Many emphasised that the program successfully integrated GEDSI components into its scholarships, short courses, and REAPs, ensuring gender sensitivity, equity, and disability inclusion were not treated as add-ons but as central elements of capacity-building. Alumni credited GEDSI-focused training with enabling them to design inclusive policies, improve workplace practices, and advocate for underrepresented groups in their respective sectors.

Several participants shared examples of GEDSI principles fostering systemic change, such as introducing employment quotas for persons with disabilities, empowering women in traditionally male-dominated fields, and supporting marginalised communities through economic and social development initiatives. Integration of GEDSI into alumni networks was seen as critical for sustaining these efforts and promoting collaboration among diverse groups.

However, some interviewees highlighted areas for improvement, such as the need for more targeted activities to support persons with disabilities, greater inclusivity in alumni engagement, and structured approaches to integrating GEDSI principles into program implementation. Others called for expanded outreach to marginalised groups, including LGBTQIA+ individuals and indigenous populations, to ensure that inclusivity efforts address diverse identities and needs comprehensively.

Overall, interviewees consistently stressed the transformative impact of the program’s approach to GEDSI in shaping their approaches to leadership, governance, and community development, noting its potential to create lasting change across sectors and communities.

# Lessons Learned

Lessons can be drawn from AAAEP–P’s implementation to improve outcomes and inform its successor program?

Adhering to Selection Processes

Strict adherence to agreed selection processes is essential to maintaining the integrity and reputation of Australia Awards. Any deviations must be transparently declared and clearly communicated to governance bodies to uphold trust and accountability.

Maintaining Relevance to Development Objectives

The relevance of an ODA-funded scholarship program is rooted in its alignment with the development objectives of the partner country, as outlined in frameworks like the Philippine Development Plan, Australia’s International Development Policy, and the Development Partnership Plan (DPP). As agreements on how Australia will support these objectives may evolve, the program must be structured to adapt swiftly to emerging priorities without compromising its established success in Australia’s development engagement in the Philippines.

Maximising Investment in Alumni

Alumni engagement is most effective when alumni see clear benefits in participating in activities and experience an open and inclusive environment. Supporting alumni activities, particularly those focused on specific topics, generates momentum, interest and influence. Engaging with the Embassy during these activities further enhances their impact. Resourcing is necessary to sustain these efforts, both for the program and the Embassy.

‘Expanding outreach to underrepresented groups, such as persons with disabilities, would enhance inclusivity in future programs.’ R2.

Be Clear with Your Brand

Clearly articulate AAAEP–P's purpose and priorities to stakeholders, particularly if transitioning from development to public diplomacy. Define directions, values, and selection processes to ensure alignment with the Mission's priorities.

Strategically harmonise the tension between development and public diplomacy. Leverage AAAEP–P’s role in supporting issues, themes, or advocacies already funded by other DFAT projects to foster collaboration and deepen analytics, particularly in areas like GEDSI.

Get Organised

Respond to alumni requests for improved visibility into their peers' projects, locations, and affiliations to facilitate bilateral and group networking. Enhance existing platforms for publicly acceptable information sharing with DFAT's support.

Establish organised knowledge or talent-sharing platforms to enable DFAT to design strategic learning events or discussions with alumni, creating opportunities for collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Keep alumni networks updated on Australia's current and emerging priorities to strengthen their potential as technical or strategic advisors. However, ensure equity considerations for other stakeholders and service providers when seeking alumni input.

Building and Maintaining Relationships Comes with a Cost

Acknowledge that sustaining relationships with alumni requires regular support. While alumni often contribute to give back to Australia, the Embassy should invest in sustaining these networks, such as by providing dedicated secretariat support to coordinate activities and maintain engagement.

Strengthening GEDSI Mainstreaming

AA’s strength in GEDSI integration is evident through its development and use of scorecards to enhance partner organisations’ GEDSI capacity and guide internal implementation. While these tools are valuable, their effectiveness depends on consistent application and utilisation.

The remaining program term offers an opportunity to deepen the understanding and practice of GEDSI, recognising it as a framework for intersectionality. This presents the GoA with a chance to demonstrate thought leadership and influence among GPH agencies through the AAAEP–P.

##### What do alumni say are the key lessons for AAAEP–P?

The key themes that interviewees spoke about in relation to lessons learned from the program revolve around adaptability, inclusivity, strategic alignment, and effective implementation. Many highlighted the importance of tailoring programs to different contexts and maintaining flexibility to balance emerging priorities with core objectives. The need for strong governance, clear communication, and collaboration between stakeholders was emphasised as critical for program success. Alumni networks emerged as a recurring theme, with suggestions to leverage them for strategic collaborations, improved engagement, and sustained impacts. Inclusivity in all aspects—from participant selection to event logistics—was identified as essential for reflecting program values and reaching underserved groups. Effective implementation of REAPs required adequate preparation time, funding, and long-term mentorship to maximise outcomes. Additionally, the importance of academic preparedness, clear expectations, and stakeholder buy-in (particularly by senior management in GPH agencies) were underlined as pivotal for aligning training outcomes with organisational needs. Interviewees also recognised the significance of fostering partnerships at local, national, and international levels to ensure programs address evolving geopolitical and community challenges.

# Conclusions

Relevance

Over the evaluation period, the program consistently demonstrated strong alignment with the strategic priorities of both the GoA and GPH. It successfully integrated GEDSI principles into its framework, ensuring it addressed critical development needs. The program’s adaptability to emerging themes like climate change and digital transformation further reinforced its relevance, reflecting its responsiveness to evolving priorities. AQR Rating trends consistently reflect high performance, averaging **5 out of 6**.

The evaluation team rates the program’s relevance at **5.5 out of 6**.

* The program’s HRD focus and REAPs made it highly relevant to GPH agencies’ needs.
* Strong alumni engagement supported both government’s priorities to a high degree.
* The integrity-centred approach was highly relevant for fostering enduring relationships in several sectors.

Effectiveness

The program effectively achieved its IOs and EOPOs. Alumni demonstrated significant contributions to systemic improvements in governance, education, and public health, leveraging skills gained during the program. MEL mechanisms provided valuable insights, though some reports highlighted areas for refinement. GEDSI-focused initiatives achieved measurable social impact, with 45% of surveyed alumni leading related activities by 2024. AQR/IMR effectiveness ratings consistently averaged   
**4.8 out of 6**, reflecting substantial outcomes.

The evaluation team rates the program’s effectiveness at **5.5 out of 6**.

* The program’s HRD focus, its range of offerings (AAS, SCAs, ICSP, and alumni activities), were key to its effectiveness.
* Notable examples of high-calibre individuals making significant contributions to the GPH’s objectives, aligning with the Embassy’s priorities.
* REAPs were particularly important for delivering results and were most effective where agency leadership was involved and engaged.
* The integrity-based selection process showcased the prestige of the awards, bolstering Australia’s reputation and value proposition in a competitive scholarships sector.

Efficiency

Resource utilisation was consistently strong, with significant cost savings achieved through innovative delivery mechanisms, such as online and blended learning formats during COVID-19. Administrative processes and partnerships with local organisations enhanced delivery while minimising delays. The program also made efficient use of local learning service providers and harmonised planning with partner agencies. AQR/IMR efficiency scores averaged **4.9 out of 6**, showcasing its operational effectiveness.

The evaluation team rates the program’s efficiency at **5 out of 6.**

* The implementation team’s detailed sector knowledge and deep relationships drove efficiency. This was particularly noticeable, given the comparatively lean implementation team size.
* Resources were applied, including for emerging priorities, but this resulted in workflow disruption for core program activities.

Sustainability

Sustainability efforts focused on empowering alumni networks and embedding institutional reforms. Alumni-led REAPs and initiatives demonstrated lasting impacts, particularly in areas like GEDSI and public service delivery. While efforts to ensure financial independence of alumni activities showed progress, challenges such as turnover in focal points and long-term funding remain. AQR/IMR sustainability ratings averaged **4.5 out of 6**, indicating room for improvement in ensuring long-term benefits.

The evaluation team rates the program’s sustainability at **5 out of 6**.

* The HRD focus and application of REAPs maximised the sustainability of the program’s investment.
* Program facilitated alumni networks have inherent sustainability over the short term but are unlikely to be sustained without ongoing external funding over the long term; this is not uncommon for AA programs globally.
* Sustainability of alumni networks is enhanced by Embassy engagement and fostering a sense of ‘belong’ to/with the AA brand.

GEDSI

###### Gender equality

The program made comprehensive efforts to promote gender equality, exceeding engagement targets with women consistently representing a significant proportion of participants. GEDSI scorecards and tailored training programs significantly advanced gender equity across sectors. Notable initiatives included mainstreaming gender approaches in government services and empowering women leaders. AQR/IMR gender equality ratings averaged **5 out of 6**, reflecting consistent success.

###### Disability Inclusion

Inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs) remained a core focus, with participation rates exceeding targets. Alumni-led initiatives, such as accessible education projects, contributed to policy reforms and improved inclusivity. Comprehensive accessibility measures ensured equitable participation. AQR/IMR disability inclusion ratings consistently achieved an average of **5 out of 6**.

The evaluation team rates the program’s GEDSI at **5 out of 6**.

* The AAAEP–P largely integrated GEDSI in its activities, ensuring understanding, accessibility and reasonable accommodation, despite lacking a dedicated GEDSI resource outside the time-poor Team Leader.
* GEDSI quality assurance of service providers would assist to bring the program’s GEDSI principles further into real world application.
* Alumni were overwhelmingly supportive of the requirement to demonstrate GEDSI integration in REAPs, fostering consideration in their workplaces.

Overall Program Score

The program has selected, counselled, supported, mentored, and encouraged high quality candidates to participate in the various categories of the awards it administers. The program also built, encouraged, and managed engaged groups of alumni from different awards categories, who were an on-call network throughout Philippines and significant and accessible brains trust for the Embassy.

**The evaluation team rates the program overall at 5 out of 6.**

# Recommendations

Relevance

To ensure the successful completion of the current program, it is essential to flag emerging priority-related activities as early as possible to minimise any adverse impact on the work plan. Where necessary, additional resourcing should be considered to support these efforts. Furthermore, key governance meetings—both operational and strategic—should be convened to maximise engagement and strengthen constituencies.

**Recommendation 1**: Flag emerging priority activities early to minimise adverse impacts on the work plan and consider additional resourcing if necessary. (Operational)

**Recommendation 2**: Regularly convene key governance meetings, both operational and strategic, to maximise engagement and build strong constituencies. (Operational)

Effectiveness

A future phase of the program could include a parallel workstream, that has a separate set of objectives (not limited to organisational development/HRD), but which leverages AA’s reputation and processes to meet the Embassy’s broader objectives. To achieve this, a senior Advisor working to the Embassy to conduct analysis of how AA processes could be applied to different contexts for different objectives is warranted e.g., fellowships and study visits, targeted sectoral scholarships including PhDs (forensics, soil science). This role could also work on building a Transnational Education activity, linking with Austrade’s efforts and the interest identified from Australian universities following the recent Austrade TNE event.

With additional resourcing at the Embassy, and the folding into a future program of scholars selected on different criteria, there are opportunities for a future program to leverage policy dialogue around REAPs more effectively. This would not only increase the chances of their successful implementation but provide opportunities for the Embassy to influence issues through engagement with key stakeholders and their colleagues and supervisors in GPH agencies. It would require up front analysis, and a more proactive approach to working with GPH agencies to place REAPs within reform contexts. Again, this would require engagement by the Embassy, and appropriate resourcing (e.g., a senior advisor) who would work with existing sector teams who are already engaging in policy dialogue on reform areas beyond HRD. (e.g., economic reforms, education etc.). The senior advisor could also enhance internal coordination to ensure that existing sectoral teams policy engagement is mapped, monitored, and elevated.

A future phase of the program could also to include a more proactive engagement on REAP development by a senior advisor (embedded at the Embassy), particularly for the second workstream, to build a constituency at the GPH agency around implementation, to provide opportunities for Embassy engagement, and to heighten the Embassy’s dialogue on reform issues. This also aligns with the Australia Awards Global Strategic Framework by helping scholars at the individual level to apply skills and knowledge gained from Australian education in the workforce, at the organisational level to strengthen institutions, and at the country level to by supporting partner governments’ development priorities.

While the program punches above its weight on alumni engagement, there are opportunities for more targeted engagement and use of alumni. Several groupings exist, including defence alumni, and alumni centred on different themes and subject matter. These represent a free ‘think tank’ for the Embassy, but it is important to ensure that alumni (and their organisations) see the value in participation. Heightened/more targeted engagement could render dividends both to the Embassy and to the Philippine Government, but this needs to be underpinned by analysis, including political economy analysis.

**Recommendation 3**: Recruit a senior advisor to the Embassy in the future program to:

* + analyse how a future program’s processes can be applied to different contexts (sectors and stakeholders), such as fellowships, study visits, targeted sectoral scholarships (e.g., PhDs in forensics or soil science), and Transnational Education (TNE) initiatives linked to Austrade’s efforts, and
  + proactively link REAPs to policy dialogue. This could be achieved by working with GPH agencies to closely link scholarships (and hence REAPs) to specific reform efforts beyond Human Resource Development (HRD). This would heighten Embassy engagement and visibility on GPH reform issues. (Strategic)

Efficiency

Leveraging the Australia Awards brand and associated quality more effectively requires a different approach that builds on but does not dilute the branding and reputation of a highly regarded and well-functioning core program in the Embassy’s portfolio. Adding in a second workstream (with its own objectives, selection criteria etc.) which sits alongside the ‘core’ workstream (AA proper), and which is appropriately resourced would support the Embassy’s ambition to leverage AA to engage with and develop a network of targeted stakeholders in particular sectors. This workstream could be underpinned by an operational platform which is shared with the ‘core’ AA workstream and would allow the Embassy to draw on administrative processes, resources, and expertise. The workstream would need to be specifically funded (to minimise perceptions about additional workload and under-resourcing).

A separate workstream would also highlight the importance of the contribution of this strategic line of work to both government’s agreed priorities. It would need to have built in flexibility, permitting the future program to deftly respond to changing priorities while maintaining the core AA brand’s attraction.

**Recommendation 4**: For the program’s increased responsiveness to emerging priorities, develop a second, parallel workstream alongside the core AA workstream, with tailored objectives, selection criteria, and appropriate resourcing, to engage and offer scholarships to targeted stakeholders in specific sectors for strategic purposes while leveraging the quality of AAAEP–P brand and operational platform. It is important that this second workstream is specifically and appropriately resourced to emphasise its strategic contribution to both governments’ priorities. This ‘twin-track’ approach would allow the flexibility for responsiveness to changing priorities and emerging leaders (and key stakeholders) while maintaining the core AAAEP–P program’s integrity and reputation. (Strategic)

Sustainability

A future program could more concretely and formerly link alumni in different GPH agencies, different sectors (e.g., defence, STEM), with development and public diplomacy objectives of the Embassy. Again, resourcing analysis, and engagement are required to build this approach in a more comprehensive manner.

**Recommendation 5**: Enhance alumni engagement by establishing targeted groups (e.g., defence alumni, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) alumni) linked to the Embassy’s development and public diplomacy objectives/sectors, ensuring alumni and their organisations see value in participation. This approach would need to be informed by political economy analysis and would need to be appropriately resourced. Inclusion in a future program of financial and human resources to support Embassy-wide alumni would add to the strategic coherence (e.g., support for managing defence alumni, including establishing an accessible database of alumni). (Strategic)

GEDSI

There is also an opportunity to enhance the program's implementation by aligning it more closely with Australian values and policies, such as the Gender Equality Policy and Disability-Inclusive Development. This includes ensuring that engagement with scholars from vulnerable or marginalised groups is meaningful, valued by all stakeholders, and avoids any perception of tokenism. This approach will foster more impactful and inclusive outcomes for the program.

For the future program, specific GEDSI resourcing is recommended, to move beyond GEDSI mainstreaming so that it is complemented with targeted GEDSI activities, recognising the alumni talent pool that could assist. This will also support the Philippine Government to increase its understanding of what GEDSI is and how it works.

While it may be late in the current program, it is strongly recommended that for the next program design, DFAT allocate dedicated human resources and funding specifically for GEDSI mainstreaming and focused activities. Furthermore, it is essential that financial monitoring includes tracking expenditure against the planned GEDSI budget. This financial analysis will not only ensure fiscal accountability but also support the GEDSI MEL framework, reinforcing the program’s commitment to gender equality, disability inclusion, and social inclusion across all stages.

**Recommendation 6**: Strengthen program implementation to align with Australian values and policies (e.g., GEDSI) by ensuring meaningful engagement with scholars from vulnerable or marginalised groups. (Operational)

**Recommendation 7**: Allocate specific GEDSI resourcing in the future program to complement mainstreaming with targeted activities, leveraging the alumni talent pool and supporting GPH’s understanding and application of GEDSI principles. (Operational)

Additional GEDSI Recommendations

**Recommendation 8**: Have allocation/slots per region, and more equitable distribution (rural vs urban focus, Metro Manila vs non-Metro Manila placements).

**Recommendation 9**: Deepen the discussion on GEDSI as a conceptual framework and as a practice and clarify how it aligns or differs from intersectionality. AAAEP–P is strong in supporting women empowerment and disability inclusion, and in supporting the capacity- building of scholars from indigenous communities. Is AAAEP–P prepared to take on the discussions about Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression (SOGIE), LGBTQIA+, and other components of Social Inclusion?

**Recommendation 10**: The GoA, through DFAT and the AAAEP–P, has an opportunity to be a strong thought leader in advancing GEDSI (Philippines remains to promote gender and development). One example of this opportunity is the REAP which, according to former Deputy Head of Mission David Dutton, is an innovative mechanism of the scholarship program in the Philippines to ensure awardees use what they have learned to initiate genuine positive changes in their workplaces and in society. The REAPs have demonstrated the value of thoughtfully integrating GEDSI in its design and implementation. As CEO Ms Cherrie Atilano[[30]](#footnote-31) intimated, ‘the Alumni Networks serve as a big pool of experts or think tank that the Embassy can tap.’

As one of the lead development partners of GPH, Australia can further strategise how GEDSI can advance in the form of policy, budget, and practice in its key government partners. This will also influence the meaningful execution of GEDSI which can facilitate sustainability over time.

**Recommendation 11**: AAAEP–P should also consider hiring a person with disability as a member of the team, to identify the meaningful points of participation by persons with disabilities as a standard operation procedure. These include revisiting the full program cycle, especially the development of strategic directions and documents, and key stages of implementation. (It is important to explain to these stakeholders the level of their engagement so as not to raise expectations, rather highlight the value of their contributions and articulate how the program will use their inputs.) It also merits obtaining their access audit clearance for every activity to ensure their participation with ease, to events organised the program.

* 1. Background, purpose and approach

The *Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program – Philippines* (AAAEP–P) is an eight–year (2018–2026), $31 million program that provides Australia Awards scholarships, short courses, local scholarships (ICSP) and alumni engagement activities to further contribute toward achieving the shared development goals of Australia and the Philippines.

The Subsidiary Arrangement indicates that ‘*the program aims to give beneficiaries and through them their organisations, the skills, knowledge and desire to contribute to development that is aligned to the Partners’ shared goals…. and create relevant and useful networks and relationships that allow Australia and the Philippines to take forward their mutual interests in the Philippines’[[31]](#footnote-32)*.

*‘Australia Awards are prestigious study opportunities that offer the next generation of global leaders an opportunity to undertake study, research and professional development in Australia (or to be funded by Australia). It builds skills and capabilities, people–to–people links and institutional partnerships in areas that contribute to Australia's foreign, trade and international development priorities, and which ultimately contribute to the Philippine Government’s development priorities.’*

Abt Associates, on behalf of DFAT, engaged Sustineo to conduct an evaluation of the AAAEP–P.

*Aims of Evaluation*

This evaluation report aims to promote continuous improvement and ensure that Australia’s international development program is adapting its approaches to achieve effective outcomes in line with its aim of advancing a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific region. The aims of the evaluation include:

* assess how well AAAEP–P aligns with the strategic objectives of GPH and Australia, especially considering Australia’s International Development Policy, Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028, and forthcoming Australia-Philippines Development Partnerships Plan 2024-2029.
* assess the efficiency and effectiveness of AAAEP–P’s implementation, and
* provide recommendations for future activities and improvements that should be considered during the remainder of the program and the design of AAAEP–P’s successor program.

*Methods*

The evaluation team conducted KIIs, small group discussions, KIIs in the sidelines of the GEDSI Summit, document review, and survey of alumni. Seventy nine in-country interviews were conducted from 2-13 September 2024.

The evaluation team specifically sought consent to record the conversations, and to use names in stakeholders lists and for quotations. All participants agreed to recording, and use of names.

Table 15: List of Stakeholders Consulted per scholar category

| **Classification** | **Target** | **Confirmed** | **Interviews Completed (as of Friday, 4 Oct 2024)** | **Names** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Core Group | 10 | 10 | 10 | Maximo Macalipes, Christabel Ribo, Ava Melia Remonde, Lizabel Holganza, Erwin Cudis, Emmanuel Belviz, Mary Grace Belviz, John Maynard Gan, Joji Ilagan-Bain, Naprey Almario |
| Short Course | 11 | 11 | 11 | Cherizalyn Unabia, Julia Judith Geveso, Leim Jonni Lactuan, Dir Rey Albert Uy, Momer Suringa, Rowena Taliping, Renze Carlo Santos, Mark James Evangelista, Joana Angela Prianes, Director Juan Angelo Rocamora, Jonnie Glorioso |
| Self-Pay | 11 | 6 | 6 | April Valle, Ma. Corazon De Ungria, Macy Cruz, Atty Earl Charles Villarin, Maria Kathleena Laurel-Vasquez, Yuri Marshall |
| In-country Scholarship | 3 | 3 | 3 | Dir. Windel Diangcalan, Zuhaina Abubacar, Janor Balor |
| Fellowship | 3 | 3 | 3 | Dr. Amy Dy, Mark Penalver, Joji Ilagan-Bian |
| Defence | 2 | 1 | 1 | Gen Benjamin Madrigal Jr |
| PA3I | 3 | 3 | 2 | Jonalyn Villasante, Professor Alvaro Calara |
| AACPh | 4 | 4 | 4 | Marby Tabungar, Michael Angelo Malicsi, Jose Decolongon, Naprey Almario |
| Other Category | - | 9 | - | Daisy Punzalan Bragais, Carmen Zubiaga, Ms. Maria Criselda Bisda, Dr. Jayson Ibanez, Dr. Cherrie Atilano, Dr. Jaime Manalo, Jeffrey Tarayao, Gabriel Sebastia Lizada, Dr. Kat Roa |

This report seeks to:

* Generate evidence and learning to improve implementation and inform future designs
* Support an organisational culture focused on innovation and continuous learning
* Reinforce public confidence in government by demonstrating performance
* Strengthen staff program management, knowledge and skills
* Assist in meeting financial and non-financial performance accountability obligations under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013[[32]](#footnote-33).

**History and Structure of the Program**

In 2017 in lieu of a full Investment Design Document (IDD) DFAT prepared a Detailed ‘Investment Concept’ for AAAEP–P which included five EOPOs:

* alumni and where relevant, their organisations have and use skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development,
* Australia has alumni in key sectors and positions,
* links and/or formal partnerships between institutions and businesses in Australia and Philippines are activated and matured,
* Australia, Australians and Australian expertise is viewed positively in the Philippines, and
* scholarships and alumni activities have improved gender equality and women’s empowerment.

In July 2023, as part of the Adaptive Design and Procurement Pathway to align the AAAEP–P’s program logic with the goal and outcomes of the Australia Awards Global Strategy 2021-2024, DFAT prepared an Updated IDD which simplified the EOPOs from five to the following two:

* Diverse alumni and, where relevant, their organisations, use skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development, and
* Diverse alumni have contributed to strengthen cooperation between the Philippines and Australia.

Program activities during both phases remained relatively unchanged as follows:

**Australia Awards Scholarships**: These are long-term master's or doctoral study in Australia by a contracted tertiary institution and includes opportunities to participate in supplementary Australia Awards programs and enabling activities, disability

support, reintegration, and award engagement.

**In-Country Scholarships and Split-Side Modalities:** The in-country scholarships program helps strengthen select Philippine institutions or individuals in priority fields, providing options for local postgraduate study. For 2022-2026, AAAEP–P will consider more split-side programs where courses and other learning opportunities are held both in the Philippines and Australia to stretch resources without reducing scholarship numbers. These will also increase linkages between Australian and Philippine institutions. Co-funding schemes may also be explored whereby partner Philippine government agencies fund local costs while AAAEP–P would finance the costs of Australian learning service providers or activities held in Australia[[33]](#footnote-34).

**Short Courses/Non-Formal Learning Opportunities**: These address identified competency gaps in partner Philippine government organisations and are targeted to senior officials and primarily delivered by Australian learning service providers Nonformal learning opportunities are discrete activities designed to respond to emerging needs and demands identified by Post or requested by partner Philippine government agencies (c g, benchmarking visits and fellowships in Australia).

**Alumni Engagement**: Alumni engagement activities aim to grow a community that actively promotes Australia and advances mutual interests. AAAEP–P will deliver flexibly designed activities that are useful and responsive to different alumni needs and cohorts to encourage participation. Wherever possible, AAAFP-P will organise and co-fund activities with alumni groups, relevant government and non-government organisations, AusTrade, and the Australia New Zealand Chamber of Commerce in the

Philippines.

The Investment Concept contained a flexible toolkit of four key activities: long-term scholarships, short courses, fellowships, and alumni activities.

**Background to the evaluation**

AA are a key component of the Australian Aid program and provide prestigious international study opportunities that offer the next generation of global leaders an opportunity to undertake study, research and professional development in Australia and the region. It builds skills and capabilities, people–to people links and institutional partnerships in areas that contribute to Australia's foreign, trade and international development priorities. By investing in human capital, Australia Awards support growth and stability in the region and strengthen links and relationships in mutually agreed development sectors[[34]](#footnote-35).

AAAEP–P is an eight–year (2018–2026), $31 million program that provides Australia Awards scholarships, short courses, local scholarships and alumni engagement activities to further contribute toward achieving the shared development goals of Australia and the Philippines.

Since 2018, AAAEP–P has been assisting GPH to advance the capabilities of future leaders and civil servants through scholarships, short courses and other nonformal learning opportunities. The program also aims to bridge private sector skills gaps, support the emergence of a new generation of Philippine leaders with strong links to Australia, and furthers public diplomacy efforts aimed at strengthening the relationship between the two countries through alumni engagement activities. AAAEP–P works with 11 partner GPH agencies, Australian and Philippine educational and training institutions, scholars and alumni to deliver its EOPOs. It also works with non-partner GPH agencies to deliver activities aimed at addressing urgent or emerging priority areas. DFAT’s agreement with Tetra Tech International Development, the implementing partner, to implement AAAEP–P will end on 30 September 2025.

**Evaluation purpose and approach**

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess whether and to what extent AAAEP–P has been delivering design outcomes. The evaluation will also provide recommendations for improvements for the remainder of the program. Insights and suggested improvements may also be incorporated into a new successor program/procurement process expected in the first half of financial year 2025.

**Key Evaluation Questions**

The following key evaluation questions (KEQs) were developed in consultation with DFAT.

**KEQ1 Relevance:** To what extent does AAAEP–P align with the strategic priorities and needs of GoA and the GPH?

**KEQ2 Effectiveness:** To what extent has AAAEP–P achieved its IOs and EOPOs?

**KEQ3 Efficiency:** To what extent was AAAEP–P administered and delivered efficiently?

**KEQ4 Sustainability:** To what extent are AAAEP–P stakeholders (e.g., partner organisations and alumni communities, etc.) capable and prepared to continue the positive effects of the program without support in the long term (e.g., influencing a GPH enabling environment that supports GEDSI)?

**KEQ5 GEDSI:** Questions related to equity and inclusion are integrated in each of the evaluation criteria to examine the extent, benefits, challenges and lessons learned in GEDSI mainstreaming used by the AAAEP–P.

**Lessons learned:** What lessons can be drawn from AAAEP–P’s implementation to improve outcomes and inform its successor program?

A full set of Key Evaluation Questions and sub-questions are set out in Appendix D.

**Methodology**

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach to data collection comprising document review, stakeholder consultation and a brief survey of participants in AAAEP–P long-term scholarships, In-Country Scholarships (ICSP) and short courses. Data collection and analysis was guided the key evaluation questions, developed in consultation with DFAT and Abt Associates. The survey results assisted the evaluation team to assess program effectiveness, identifying trends, and shaping recommendations for improvement. Quantitative data measured participant satisfaction, skill application, and career impact, while qualitative responses highlighted key themes such as training relevance, barriers to participation, and workplace integration. The evaluation team cross referenced the findings with interview and focus group note. The evaluation team identified gaps e.g., improved alumni engagement, which directly informed recommendations for program enhancements. Survey results were also cross referenced against the evaluation criteria, with the results of this cross-referencing summarised in Appendix I.

**Key Methodological Limitations**

Several limitations affected the evaluation methodology including:

* Reliance on self-reported data have associated response bias, as participants may have exaggerated successes or underreported challenges in surveys and interviews.
* Time and availability of stakeholders to participate in evaluation interviews and/or complete the evaluation survey, might have skewed the responses elicited, and resulted in selection bias, with only those individuals with available time responding to surveys and making themselves available for interviews.
* Availability of longitudinal data was limited – e.g., of long-term career impacts, institutional changes, or policy influence. The available data primarily captured short-term learning outcomes.
* Selection bias may have seen an overrepresentation of engaged alumni with positive experiences, and underrepresentation of alumni who disengaged or faced challenges.
* Isolating the program’s direct impact was challenging, as alumni successes were influenced by other external factors such as the level of workplace support, national policies, and alumni’s participation in other training programs, including of other development partners. Attribution was therefore challenging.
* Variability in delivery modes, particularly the shift to virtual short courses in 2020-21, may have led to differences in engagement levels, effectiveness, and accessibility compared to in-person programs.
* Institutional feedback was limited and consequently, the evaluation focussed on individual participant experiences rather than systematic institutional changes in GPH agencies.
* Measuring GEDSI impact, such as capturing deep behavioural and systemic changes within institutions, was complex, and beyond the scope of the report.
* COVID-19 disruptions affected course delivery, participation, and follow-up activities, affecting consistency in program quality and resulting in variable outcomes across different cohorts. Accurately capturing these variations was not possible.
* AAAEP-P’s effectiveness is difficult to accurately measure in the absence of like for like comparable data of other similar programs.
* Data gaps in private sector engagement may mean that the evaluation primarily reflects government sector participants, overlooking potential impacts on private sector and NGO beneficiaries.

This report is therefore to be read noting that these factors have influenced the data, and the conclusions drawn from those data.

**Stakeholder Consultations**

The evaluation team consulted stakeholders in-person and remotely. A list of the stakeholders consulted is set out in Appendix F.

* 1. AAAEP–P Program Logic

**Goal**

To support the Philippines to progress its development goals and have positive relationships with Australia that advance mutual interest.

**Phase 1 End of Program Outcomes (EOPOs), 2018–2022**

| **EOPO** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| **EOPO 1** | Alumni and where relevant, their organisations have and use skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development |
| **EOPO 2** | Australia has alumni in key sectors and positions |
| **EOPO 3** | Links and/or formal partnerships between institutions and businesses in Australia and Philippines are activated and matured |
| **EOPO 4** | Australia, Australians and Australian expertise is viewed positively in the Philippines |
| **EOPO 5** | Scholarships and alumni activities have improved gender equality and women’s empowerment |

**Phase 2 EOPOs, 2023–2026**

| **EOPO** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| **EOPO 1** | Diverse alumni, and where relevant, their organisations use skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development |
| **EOPO 2** | Diverse alumni have contributed to strengthening cooperation between the Philippines and Australia |

**Intermediate Outcomes (IOs)**

| **IO** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| **IO 1** | Diverse alumni and, through them, their organisations, have skills and knowledge to contribute to development that is aligned to our shared goals |
| **IO 2** | Australia, Australians, and Australian expertise are valued and viewed positively by alumni and Partner Organisations |
| **IO 3** | Diverse alumni actively participate in alumni engagement activities |

* 1. Summary Chronology of AAAEP–P

| **Year** | **Key Developments** | **Key Results** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2010–2017 | Preceding Phase (PAHRODF): Institutional capacity building, early GEDSI integration, and lessons learned informing AAAEP–P design. | Strengthened capacity of government and civil society organisations, mainstreamed GEDSI principles, and established foundations for AAAEP–P. |
| 2017 | Launch of AAAEP–P: Focused on governance, disaster resilience, and peacebuilding. Initial scholarships offered. | First cohort of scholars commenced postgraduate studies in Australia. |
| 2018 | Targeted short courses and enhanced alumni engagement through forums and collaborative activities. | Addressed capacity gaps in partner agencies and strengthened alumni networks. |
| 2019 | Strengthened MEL framework and expanded GEDSI integration in activities. | Improved alignment with EOPOs and increased inclusivity in scholar  selection. |
| 2020 | Responded to COVID-19 with online delivery of courses, alumni engagement, and resilience-focused capacity building. | Maintained program engagement during pandemic restrictions. |
| 2021 | Updated Theory of Change, GEDSI mainstreaming, and hybrid delivery models introduced. | 50+ civil service leaders trained in GEDSI; increased accessibility for participants. |
| 2022 | Sector-specific short courses and Alumni Grants Scheme initiated. | 300+ government officials trained; alumni-driven projects enhanced grassroots impact. |
| 2023 | Expanded partnerships and digital transformation courses delivered. | 400+ participants benefited; identified future strategies for greater impact. |
| 2024 | Celebrated program achievements and  developed sustainability strategies. | GEDSI institutionalized; strengthened alumni networks and development partnerships. |

* 1. Key Evaluation Questions

**KEQ1. Relevance:** To what extent does AAAEP–P align with the strategic priorities and needs of the GoA and the GPH?

* 1.1. To what extent does AAAEP–P align with GPH’s development policies?
* 1.2 To what extent is AAAEP–P consistent with the GoA’s strategic priorities?
* 1.3 To what extent is AAAEP–P consistent with Australian development policies, including but not limited to GEDSI?
* 1.4 To what extent do AAAEP–P's GEDSI priorities align with and support GPH priorities[[35]](#footnote-36)?
* 1.5 To what extent does AAAEP–P substitute or complement other interventions in the Philippines, regardless of funder? (coherence)

**KEQ2. Effectiveness:** To what extent has AAAEP–P achieved its IOs and EOPOs?

* 2.1 To what extent have targets for the IOs and EOPOs been attained?
* 2.2 What factors were crucial for the achievement or failure to achieve AAAEP–P outcomes?
* 2.3 Was AAAEP–P’s reach (e.g., number of long–term scholarship slots and short course participants, etc.) sufficient to realise the required scale of change?
* 2.4 To what extent has AAAEP–P changed norms or processes among its partner GPH agencies (i.e., the processes for utilising the benefits of alumni)?[[36]](#footnote-37)
* 2.5 To what extent has AAAEP–P changed the lives of its beneficiaries (alumni) in the priority sectors?[[37]](#footnote-38)
* 2.6 How well does AAAEP–P routinely collect and use MEL data and reports, including for management decision–making, learning and accountability purposes?
* 2.7 How well does AAAEP–P manage risk and to what extent are risk management policies and procedures (including in relation to fraud control and safeguards) followed?
* 2.8 To what extent has the AAAEP–P achieved its GEDSI (mainstreaming) targets with reference to Post’s Gender/GEDSI Action Plan and the AAAEP–P's specific GEDSI targets?
* 2.9 Were the target outcomes appropriate and related to the program objectives?

**KEQ3. Efficiency:** To what extent was AAAEP–P administered and delivered efficiently?

* 3.1 What, if any, significant administrative constraints or unexpected costs were experienced, and how were they managed?
* 3.2 Were program resources used appropriately/proportionally to the results achieved?
* 3.3 Was AAAEP–P an efficient use of resources compared to similar programs or with alternative ways of achieving the same outcomes?
* 3.4 How did AAAEP–P allocate resources to achieve inclusive, equitable and gender–transformative (if not, responsive) results?

**KEQ4. Sustainability:** To what extent are AAAEP–P stakeholders (e.g., partner organisations and alumni communities, etc.) capable and prepared to continue the positive effects of the program without support in the long term (e.g., influencing a GPH enabling environment that supports GEDSI)?

* 4.1 How will formal community of practice alumni groups continue to conduct activities without sustained funding from the Australian Government?
* 4.2 To what extent are stakeholders capable and willing to continue to influence a GPH enabling environment that supports GEDSI?

**KEQ5. GEDSI:** Questions related to equity and inclusion are integrated in each of the evaluation criteria to examine the extent, benefits, challenges and lessons learned in GEDSI mainstreaming used by the AAAEP–P.

* 1. Data Collection Guide

The Evaluation Team used the data collection guide below for information gathering. Questions were tailored during interviews as needed.

**SUMMATIVE EVALUATION**

**Relevance**

**Key Evaluation Question (KEQ) 1: To what extent does AAAEP–P align with the strategic priorities and needs of the GoA and the GPH?**

| **Sub-Questions** | **Data Sources and Method** |
| --- | --- |
| 1.1 To what extent does AAAEP–P support the GPH in implementing its development policies? | Program Documents, GPH policies, Interviews, FGDs |
| 1.2 To what extent is AAAEP–P consistent with the GoA’s strategic priorities? | GoA documents, Interviews |
| 1.3 To what extent do AAAEP–P's GEDSI priorities align with and support GPH priorities? | GoA documents, Interviews |
| 1.4 To what extent is AAAEP–P consistent with Australian development policies, including but not limited to gender equality and disability and social inclusion (GEDSI)? | GoA documents – International Development Policy; GEDSI Policies, Interviews |
| 1.5 To what extent does AAAEP–P substitute or complement other interventions in the Philippines, regardless of funder? | Other DP’s program documents, Interviews |

**Effectiveness**

**Key Evaluation Question (KEQ) 2: To what extent has AAAEP–P achieved its IOs and EOPOs?**

| **Sub-Questions** | **Data Sources and Method** |
| --- | --- |
| 2.1 To what extent have targets for the IOs and EOPOs been attained? | Program Reports, MTR, IMRs etc., Interviews |
| 2.2 What factors were crucial for the achievement or failure to achieve AAAEP–P outcomes? | Program Reports, MTR, IMRs etc., PPA of MC, Interviews |
| 2.3 Was AAAEP–P’s reach (e.g., number of long–term scholarship slots and short course participants, etc.) sufficient to realise the required scale of change? | Program Reports, MTR, IMRs etc., Interviews |
| 2.4 To what extent has AAAEP–P changed norms or processes among its partner GPH agencies? | GPH documents, Program Reports, MTR, IMRs etc., Interviews, FGDs, Survey |
| 2.5 To what extent has AAAEP–P changed the lives of its beneficiaries? | Program Reports, MTR, IMRs etc., Interviews, FGDs, Survey |
| 2.6 How well does AAAEP–P routinely collect and use MEL data and reports, including for management decision–making, learning and accountability purposes? | Program Reports, MTR, IMRs etc., Program Financial Reports, Interviews |
| 2.7 How well does AAAEP–P manage risk and to what extent are risk management policies and procedures (including in relation to fraud control and safeguards) followed? | Program Reports, MTR and Interviews |
| 2.8 To what extent has the AAAEP–P achieved its GEDSI (mainstreaming) targets with reference to Post’s Gender/GEDSI Action Plan and the AAAEP–P's specific GEDSI targets? | Program Reports, MTR, IMRs etc., Interviews, FGDs, Survey |
| 2.9 Were the target outcomes appropriate and related to the program objectives? | Program Reports, MTR and Interviews |

**Efficiency**

**Key Evaluation Question (KEQ) 3: To what extent was AAAEP–P administered and delivered efficiently?**

| **Sub-Questions** | **Data Sources and Method** |
| --- | --- |
| 3.1 What, if any, significant administrative constraints or costs were experienced, and how were they managed? | Program Reports, MTR, IMRs etc., Interviews |
| 3.2 Were program resources used appropriately/proportional to results achieved? | Program Reports, MTR, IMRs etc., Program Financial Reports, Interviews |
| 3.3 Was AAAEP–P an efficient use of resources compared to similar programs or with alternative ways of achieving the same outcomes? | Program Reports, MTR, IMRs etc., Other DPs’ reports, Interviews, FGDs |
| 3.4 How did AAAEP–P allocate resources to achieve inclusive, equitable and gender transformative (if not, responsive) results? | Program Reports, MTR, IMRs etc., Interviews, FGDs |

**Sustainability**

**Key Evaluation Question (KEQ) 4: To what extent are AAAEP–P stakeholders (e.g., partner organisations and alumni communities, etc) capable and prepared to continue the positive effects of the program without support in the long term?**

| **Sub-Questions** | **Data Sources and Method** |
| --- | --- |
| 4.1 How will formal community of practice alumni groups continue to conduct activities without sustained funding from the Australian Government? | Program Reports, MTR, IMRs etc., Interviews, FGDs, Survey |
| 4.2 To what extent are stakeholders capable and willing to continue to influence a GPH enabling environment that supports GEDSI? | Program Reports, MTR, IMRs etc., Interviews, FGDs, Survey |

**Equity and Inclusion**

**Key Evaluation Question (KEQ) 5: Questions related to equity and inclusion are integrated in each of the evaluation criteria to examine the extent, benefits, challenges and lessons learned in GEDSI mainstreaming used by the AAAEP–P. This reflects the updated program logic which weaves GEDSI into all outcomes.**

| **Sub-Questions** | **Data Sources and Method** |
| --- | --- |
| n/a | n/a |

**FORMATIVE EVALUATION**

**Lessons Learned**

**Key Evaluation Question: What lessons can be drawn from AAAEP–P’s implementation to improve outcomes and inform its successor program?**

| **Sub-Questions** | **Data Sources and Method** |
| --- | --- |
| Relevance: What would improve the AAAEP–P’s relevance? | Interviews, FGDs, Survey |
| Effectiveness: What would improve the effectiveness of the AAAEP–P? | Interviews, FGDs, Survey |
| Efficiency: What would improve the AAAEP–P’s efficiency? | Interviews, FGDs, Survey |
| Sustainability: What would make the outcomes of the AAAEP–P more sustainable, equitable and inclusive? | Interviews, FGDs, Survey |

* 1. Consultations with Stakeholders

In total, 329 stakeholders were reached during the evaluation. The evaluation team conducted 58 one-hour interviews in-country. Additionally, the evaluation team's GEDSI specialist conducted brief interviews with 21 stakeholders in the margins of the Australia Awards 2nd Regional GEDSI Alumni Leadership Summit, held on 9–10 September 2024 at the Novotel Manila. In total there were 250 responses to the online alumni survey, including a slightly higher proportion of females than males.

Table 16: List of Stakeholders consulted during the evaluation

**Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

1. **Moya Collett** - Deputy Head Of Mission, DFAT Post – Philippines
2. **Johanna Stratton** - Counsellor, Political, DFAT Post – Philippines
3. **Peter Adams** - Counsellor, Development, DFAT Post – Philippines
4. **Rollie De la Cruz** - Portfolio Manager, Australia in the Philippines, DFAT Post – Philippines
5. **Grace Borja** - Senior Program Officer, Economics, DFAT Post – Philippines
6. **Jonathan Monis** - Program Officer, Health, DFAT – Philippines Post
7. **Eduardo Cajina** - Assistant Director, Development Agreement Management, DFAT – Canberra
8. **Lea Hekimian** - Procurement Manager, DFAT – Canberra

**Managing Contractor**

1. **Mialin Javallena** - Program Director, Tetra-Tech International Development – Implementation Team
2. **Ramel Sangalang** - MELQI Advisor, Tetra-Tech International Development – Implementation Team
3. **Felipe Sasa** - IT/Knowledge Management, and soon-to-be Mindanao Engagement Manager handling the in-country scholarship in BARMM, Tetra-Tech International Development – Implementation Team
4. **Angela Ferrer** - Senior Program Manager, Alumni Engagement, Tetra-Tech International Development – Implementation Team
5. **Jen Alcantara** - Communications Specialist, Tetra-Tech International Development – Implementation Team
6. **Laine Buenaventura** - Finance and Administration Management, Tetra-Tech International Development – Implementation Team
7. **Nayra Simeon** - Senior Program Manager, Scholarship, Tetra-Tech International Development – Implementation Team
8. **Nelson Salansan** - Associate Director, Transformational Education, Short Course Advisor, Tetra-Tech International Development – Implementation Team
9. **Gretchen Dobson** - Associate Director, Scholarships, Tetra-Tech International Development – Corporate Office
10. **Tham Dinh** - Senior Program Manager, Tetra-Tech International Development – Corporate Office

**Alumni – Scholarship**

1. **Maximo Macalipes** - Economic Enterprise, City Government of Davao
2. **Kristian Ablan** - Assistant Director, Department of Trade and Industry
3. **Marby Tarbungar** - National Convenor 2024-2026 – AACPh; Founder and Lead Consultant, Prevo Design x Innovation
4. **Christabel Ribo** - Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator, LGU Jaro
5. **Ava Melia Remonde** - Instructor V, University of San Carlos
6. **Erwin Cudis** - Assistant Professor; Assistant Human Resource Director, University of San Carlos
7. **Mary Grace & Emmanel Belviz** - Owner/Manager, Rosarios Delicacies
8. **John Maynard Gan** - Co-op Specialist – Member Services & Innovation, Advancing Innovation and Systems-thinking for Social Change (ACDI/VOCA)
9. **Michael Angelo Malicsi** - Founding National Convenor – AACPh; Head of Culture and Growth, UnionDigital Bank
10. **Jose Decolongon** - Former National Co-Convenor – AACPh; Adjunct Faculty, Asian Institute of Management
11. **Joji Ilagan-BIan** - Founding Chair; Chairman; President, AA Alumni Association in Davao, Mindanao Technical Vocational Education and Training Association (MinTVET); Joji Ilagan-Bian (JIB) International Schools
12. **Naprey Almario** - Member; GEDSI Convenor – AACPh, Association of Differently Abled Persons

**Alumni – ICSP**

1. **Dir. Windel Diangcalan** - Director, Technical Management Service (TMS), Office of the Chief Minister, BARMM
2. **Zuhaina Abubacar** - Senior Program Associate, United Nations (UN) – World Food Programme (WFP)
3. **Janor Balo** - Program Coordinator/Department Chair, Ateneo de Davao University

**Alumni – Short Course (including fellowships & study visits)**

1. **Cherizalyn Unabia** - Section Chief, Bureau of Construction
2. **Julia Judith Geveso** - Local Government Operations Officer VI, Department of Interior and Local Government
3. **Leim Jonni Lactuan** - Senior Labor and Employment Officer, Department of Migrant Workers (DMW)
4. **DIR Rey Albert Uy** - Director II, Civil Service Commissions (CSC) – Region VIII
5. **Momer Suringa** - Chief Human Resource Specialist, Civil Service Commission (CSC) – Region IV
6. **Cherizalyn Unabia** - Section Chief, Bureau of Construction
7. **Dr. Amy Dy** - Executive Director; Chairman Emeritus; Head – Pediatric Oncology Section, Cancer Treatment and Support Foundation, Inc; Philippine Board of Pediatric Oncology; St. Luke's Medical Center Global City
8. **Rowena Taliping** - Project Evaluation Officer V, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)
9. **Joji Ilagan-Bian** - Supervising Legislative Staff Officer II, House of Representatives, Congress of the Philippines – Committee on Foreign Affairs
10. **Nerissa Canguilan** - Assistant Commissioner, Civil Service Commission (CSC)

**Alumni – Self Pay**

1. **April Valle** - Urban Planner, Self-employed
2. **Mark Penalver** - Executive Director, Interfacing Development Interventions for Sustainability

**Alumni – GEDSI Champion**

1. **Daisy Punzalan Bragais** - Director IV, Civil Service Commission (CSC)
2. **Carmen Zubiaga** - President, Women With Disabilities Leap to Social and Economic Progress (WOW-LEAP Inc)
3. **Ma. Corazon De Ungria** - Director; University Researcher V and Head of Laboratory, Philippine Genome Center; University of the Philippines (UP) – Diliman

**Alumni – Climate Change Champion**

1. **Dr. Jayson Ibanez** - Director – Research and Conservation, Philippine Eagle Foundation
2. **Dr. Jaime Manalo** - Scientist II and Head of Socioeconomics, Philippine Rice Research Institute

**Alumni – Private Sector**

1. **Jeffrey Tarayao** - President (One Meralco Foundation) and Chief Corporate Social Responsibility Officer (Meralco), One Meralco Foundation and Manila Electric Company (MERALCO)

**Alumni – Education Institutions**

1. **Gabriel Lizada** - Assistant Professor, Ateneo de Davao University (AdDU)

**Alumni - PA3i**

1. **Jonalyn Villasante** - OIC Committee Secretary of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Supervising Legislative Staff, House of Representatives

**Other Organisations**

1. **Bernice Vanguardia** - Trade and Investment Commissioner to Manila, AusTrade
2. **Kimberley Cuesta** - Business Development Manager, AusTrade
3. **Gerald Divinagracia** - Deputy Director General, Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA)
4. **Joel Cruz** - Director, Department of Trade and Industry

**Stakeholders interviewed at the 2024 GEDSI Summit, Manila**

The Evaluation Team’s GEDSI Specialist participated in the Australia Awards 2nd Regional GEDSI Alumni Leadership Summit, held on 9–10 September 2024 at the Novotel Manila. The event, titled *GEDSI-liency: A Collaborative Journey towards Inclusive Climate Action*, brought together approximately 100 participants, including Australia-educated alumni from the Philippines and the broader Indo-Pacific region. Many of these alumni hold leadership positions across key sectors of society, underscoring the significant influence of the AA on regional leadership and inclusive development.

During the summit, the GEDSI Specialist conducted short interviews with several participants during conference breaks and interactive learning excursions. These engagements provided rich qualitative insights into the alumni’s experiences, their current roles, and how they integrate GEDSI principles in their professional and personal spheres. The GEDSI Advisor had meaningful interactions with the following individuals:

* + 1. Ramon Reyemmanuel Apilado, Administrative Manager, Tahanang Walang Hagdanan, Inc. (TWHi)
    2. Gil Francis Arevalo, Disaster Management Specialist, United Nations
    3. Alvaro Calara, UPLB
    4. Errol Dela Cruz, Phil Navy
    5. Jackiya Lao, DSWD FO 12 Division Chief
    6. Amina Rasul
    7. Christianne “Kritzia” Santos
    8. Faridah Kristi Wetherick
    9. Krissy Bisda
    10. Joel Dannug
    11. Dr Kat Roa
    12. Atty Amanah Lao
    13. Ma Cyrrel Valentin
    14. Agnes Radam
    15. Charmine Puig
    16. Lady Hanifah Mindalano-Alonto
    17. Ma Lourdes Eudela
    18. Mariechell Arma
    19. Dr Wilham Hailaya
    20. Cherrie Atilano
    21. Joel Dannug

The information gathered during these brief interviews was triangulated with documented evidence, KIIs, and responses from the Alumni Survey.

* 1. Key Informants’ responses grouped by evaluation criteria

**Thematic Analysis of Stakeholders’ Comments**

The Design Team conducted a thematic analysis of stakeholders’ responses elicited during interviews. Emerging themes are set out below with reference to the evaluation criteria. A list of statements which underpins this analysis has been retained. Illustrative quotes are included.

**Relevance**

Stakeholders’ responses **emphasised practical applicability**, **alignment with national and international priorities, and addressing gaps in critical sectors** **as key elements of the program’s relevance**. Participants not only found the training useful but were able to implement their learnings in ways that benefited both their personal development and the public sector’s broader goals.

Responses **emphasised how the program directly aligned with the needs of the participants' organisations or sectors**. "*The re-entry action plan we developed focused on automating processes in our department, addressing a critical backlog issue and directly aligning with organisational priorities."*

Responses note how **the program's focus areas align with both national and international development objectives**. *"The benchmarking trip to Australia was incredibly relevant as it allowed us to align our technical-vocational curricula with Australian standards, enhancing the employability of our graduates."*

Several participants **highlighted how the program provided essential skills that helped address critical gaps in their sectors, particularly in areas like healthcare, disaster management, and governance**. *"The program gave me the opportunity to focus on mental health, a critical area in the Philippines that is often overlooked, especially in disaster response and relief operations."*

Responses **highlighted how the learning gained from the program had immediate, tangible real world impacts on the participants' work and the communities they served**. "*The ICSP scholarship program gave me the knowledge to address disaster risk management and climate change adaptation, which are critical to my role in providing strategic advice to the government."*

**Effectiveness**

**The overall theme of stakeholders’ responses on effectiveness showed that the program was highly effective, with substantial impacts across multiple sectors**. Whether it was improving organisational performance, developing leadership capacity, addressing community needs, or creating sustainable practices, participants successfully applied their learning to achieve measurable and meaningful outcomes. The role of mentoring and program design also emerged as a key contributor to the program's success.

**Participants highlighted how the knowledge and skills they gained directly impacted their work or community with real world application and tangible outcomes**. *"The DNA analysis laboratory I now head was built on the foundation of my Australian education, enabling us to provide critical forensic support in the Philippines."*

**Leadership development was also a recurrent theme**, with participants applying the skills gained to improve governance, develop new departments, and lead initiatives. "*The pilot program in process mining has significantly improved ARTA’s capability to analyze and streamline government processes, leading to tangible improvements in service delivery."*

**Another significant theme was the impact on community development, particularly in the areas of health, education, and social welfare**. *"The grant we received under the Australian Embassy’s program enabled us to establish the first HIPAA-compliant mental health platform in the Philippines, addressing a critical gap in the healthcare system."*

**Responses indicated that the impact of the program extended beyond the individuals and their immediate projects, contributing to sustainable practices and long-term benefits**. *"I successfully implemented my re-entry action plan by establishing the Islamic Studies program at Ateneo, which remains a full-fledged department today."*

Stakeholders also highlighted that **the impact of program design, particularly mentoring and guidance on shaping their REAPs and their successful implementation**. *"The mentoring I received from Dr. Francisco Magno was invaluable in shaping my re-entry action plan, which is now being integrated into the public sector’s policy framework."*

**Efficiency**

Responses on efficiency focussed on **the need for careful planning, resource management, and organisational support**.

Responses highlighted how **the program efficiently streamlined various processes to enhance delivery, ensuring smooth operations even under challenging conditions** such as limited resources or transitions in government leadership. "*Despite the challenges of government transitions, the program still managed to deliver results quickly, showing its ability to adapt and work within the constraints of changing administrations."*

Another prominent theme was **the optimisation of available resources—both human and financial—to achieve effective outcomes without overspending**. *"Using local coaches for REAP monitoring has reduced costs while still achieving effective outcomes for participants and organisations."*

**Several responses mentioned how logistical challenges**, including pre-departure briefings, coaching, and continuous support, were handled in ways that **minimised administrative burdens on participants while maintaining a high standard of service**. "*The logistical support provided by the embassy ensured a smooth process from application to the completion of my studies, allowing me to focus on my* *professional development."*

**Sustainability**

Responses on sustainability illustrated that **sustainability was achieved through multiple intertwined approaches**: embedding changes into institutional practices, fostering continuous improvement, leveraging alumni networks for knowledge-sharing, and building lasting collaborations.

Responses also **emphasised the importance of institutionalisation of learning**. "*Sustainability is about embedding systems and processes into normal operations so that they become the norm rather than an add-on."*

**A recurrent theme** **was the role of alumni networks in sustaining the benefits of the program**. *"Through the alumni engagement platform, we continue to share strategies and best practices, ensuring that the program’s benefits extend beyond individual scholars to broader communities*."

Responses also highlighted that **the integration of new practices, tools, and frameworks into policy or organisational structures ensured sustainability**. *"The tools and frameworks introduced during the program have been embedded in institutional practices, ensuring that initiatives like gender mainstreaming continue to create long-term impacts*."

Responses highlighted that **sustainability was also about creating a culture of continuous improvement within organisations***. "By encouraging evidence-based policymaking, the program has left a lasting impact on how our office approaches its work, creating a culture of continuous improvement."*

**Collaboration with partners, including local government units, academic institutions, and NGOs, was also seen as a critical factor** for sustainability. *"Partnering with HR units ensures continuity of initiatives, even during leadership transitions in government agencies*."

**GEDSI**

Responses on GEDSI indicated that **while significant advancements have been made, challenges remain in ensuring consistent implementation across partner organisations**.

Responses **emphasised how GEDSI principles are woven into coursework and training**, including specific modules on disability inclusion, gender sensitivity, and diversity. This integration fosters understanding and action on inclusivity in real-world scenario. “*Short courses now include specific modules on disability inclusion and gender sensitivity, ensuring participants can integrate these principles into their work*."

**Respondents mentioned how GEDSI principles have been mainstreamed in their organisations and personal projects**. There was an emphasis on creating environments that prioritised inclusivity in both public and private sectors. *"Inclusivity is critical to process design. We emphasise accessibility for persons with disabilities in digitalised government services, though we recognise there’s much more to achieve."*

**Responses highlighted the benefits of initiatives aimed at empowering marginalised groups,** such as women, LGBTQ+ individuals, persons with disabilities, and indigenous communities. The focus is on breaking barriers and creating opportunities for leadership and participation*. "The program emphasised gender sensitivity and inclusion, integrating these principles into Sharia law education and policy-making in the Bangsamoro region.*"

**A recurrent theme was the challenge of ensuring that GEDSI principles are consistently and comprehensively embraced by partner organisations**. Some responses noted that while GEDSI was integrated in principle, real action and engagement required continual effort and structure. "*The challenge lies in ensuring GEDSI principles are fully embraced by partner organisations and not treated as an add-on*."

**Alumni networks were noted as playing a critical role in promoting GEDSI**, with many responses noting the importance of creating a more inclusive, consistent, and visible platform for alumni engagement*. “The program’s focus on inclusivity, particularly in creating safe spaces for indigenous women to voice their perspectives, was groundbreaking and transformative."*

**Several responses indicated that the program encouraged participants to integrate GEDSI principles into policy development**, especially in areas like governance, peacebuilding, and public services. *The course highlighted the importance of crafting policies that address gender and disability biases, which has influenced my work on ensuring inclusivity in policy development."*.

**Lessons Learned**

Responses regarding lessons learned collectively **highlighted the need for adaptive planning, collaborative execution, inclusive participation, and sustainable outcomes**.

Responses **highlighted the need to ensure flexibility in program design and execution to meet evolving needs and external challenges**. *"Programs must focus on adapting to current global geopolitical challenges, ensuring that alumni are equipped to contribute effectively in highly polarised contexts."*

Responses also **highlighted the importance of thorough planning, clear communication, and structuring programs in a way that accommodates participants' needs and obligations**. *"Better pre-course information, particularly on the content and expectations, would help participants better prepare and align the training with organisational needs."*

**The importance of building strong relationships with stakeholders and fostering collaboration, particularly with alumni networks was mentioned as a key lesson**. *"Alumni networks are underutilised; more targeted activities could foster collaboration among participants from different agencies to further amplify program outcomes."*

**Actively ensuring marginalised groups have access to opportunities and fostering inclusive environments was also highlighted**. *"The importance of creating safe spaces for marginalised voices, especially indigenous women, is critical for driving inclusive conservation and development practices."*

**Responses also highlighted that effective monitoring, evaluation, and post-program support ensure long-term impact**. *"Sustaining post-program initiatives requires better collaboration with local government units and funding mechanisms to ensure long-term impact."*

* 1. Survey Questionnaire

**Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program Philippines**

**Participant Survey**

**About the AAAEP–P**

The Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program – Philippines (AAAEP–P) is an eight–year (2018–2026), AUD$31 million program that provides Australia Awards scholarships, training and non-formal learning opportunities (e.g., short courses), local scholarships and alumni engagement activities to further contribute toward achieving the shared development goals of Australia and the Philippines.

AAAEP–P’s goal is: To support the Philippines to progress its development goals and have positive relationships with Australia that advances mutual interest.

AAAEP–P’s End of Program Outcomes (EOPOs) are:

* EOPO 1: Diverse alumni, and where relevant, their organisations use skills, knowledge, and networks to contribute to sustainable development, and
* EOPO 2: Diverse alumni have contributed to strengthening cooperation between the Philippines and Australia.

Gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) is woven into all outcomes to ensure a diverse alumnus (men and women, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, marginalised groups).

**The Evaluation**

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has commissioned Sustineo to undertake an evaluation of AAAEP–P and to prepare an End of Program Evaluation Report.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess whether and to what extent AAAEP–P has been delivering its outcomes. The evaluation will also provide recommendations for improvements for the remainder of the program, and for a future phase.

The Evaluation Team has been tasked to evaluate the program against the following criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI). The team is also tasked to identify lessons learned.

**The survey and your insights**

As a participant in the program’s activities, you are invited to complete this brief survey, (10 - 15 minutes in duration).

The survey is completely anonymous, and your identity will not be recorded or used in the evaluation report. The survey is structured on the AAAEP–P key activities - Australia Awards Long-term Scholarships (in Australia), In-Country Scholarship Program (ICSP), short courses, alumni engagement, and broader engagement.

If you have any questions about the survey you may contact the evaluation team’s M&E specialist at: [Douglas.Smith@sustineo.com.au](mailto:Douglas.Smith@sustineo.com.au)

**1. Respondent Information**

Please provide the following information about yourself.

1.1 Gender

* Male
* Female
* Self Identify
* Prefer not to share this information

**2. Australia Awards Postgraduate Scholarships (in Australia)**

2.1 Are you an Australia Awards scholar (in Australia)?

* Yes [if ‘Yes’ branch to Q2.2]
* No [if ‘No’ branch to Q3]

2.2 Year of commencement of Australia Award studies

* prior to 2018
* 2018
* 2019
* 2020
* 2021
* 2022
* 2023
* 2024

2.3 Australia Awards Postgraduate Scholarships are offered in two categories - Targeted (nominated by Philippine government agencies) and Open (non-targeted, open to all citizens, including from the private sector). In which category did your application fall:

* Targeted category
* Open category

2.4 *Please rate your satisfaction with the quality of the following stages of the AAAEP–P program using the scale below (based on the five criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and GEDSI).*

*1 – Very Dissatisfied, 2 – Quite Dissatisfied, 3 – Dissatisfied, 4 – Satisfied, 5 – Quite Satisfied, 6 – Very Satisfied*

1. Introductory information and promotional material about the Australia Awards Scholarships
2. The user friendliness and support services of the scholarship application process
3. The fairness, equity and inclusion of the assessment and selection process by the program
4. The ease of course selection and enrolment
5. Course counselling (discussions with Australian universities about possible programs relevant to your interests and REAPs)
6. REAP mentoring received
7. Pre-departure briefing
8. On-award support, enrichment and engagement (including support for the living experience while in Australia)
9. Reintegration support
10. The implementation of your Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP)
11. GEDSI mainstreaming, equity and inclusion elements (e.g., course content, reasonable accommodation, safeguards)

2.5 Please provide any comments relating to the satisfaction ratings provided above.

**3. In-Country Scholarship Program (ICSP)**

3.1 Have you participated in the In-Country Scholarship Program?

* Yes [if ‘Yes’ branch to Q3.2]
* No [if ‘No’ branch to Q4]

3.2 Year of commencement of ICSP

* prior to 2018
* 2018
* 2019
* 2020
* 2021
* 2022
* 2023

3.3 *Please rate your satisfaction with the quality of the following stages of the ICSP using the scale below (based on the five criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, GEDSI and lessons learned).*

*1 – Very Dissatisfied, 2 – Quite Dissatisfied, 3 – Dissatisfied, 4 – Satisfied, 5 – Quite Satisfied, 6 – Very Satisfied*

1. Introductory information and promotional material about the ICSP
2. The user friendliness and support services of the scholarship application process
3. The fairness, equity and inclusion of the assessment and selection process by the program
4. The ease of course selection and enrolment
5. REAP mentoring received
6. On-award support, enrichment and engagement
7. Post-scholarship support
8. The implementation of your Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP)
9. GEDSI mainstreaming, equity and inclusion elements (e.g. course content, reasonable accommodation, safeguards)

3.4 Please provide any comments relating to the satisfaction ratings provided above.

**4. Short Courses**

4.1 Have you participated in a Short Course Award (including, a fellowship or study visit) implemented by the Program?

* Yes [if ‘Yes’ branch to Q4.2]
* No [if ‘No’ branch to Q5]

4.2 *Please rate your satisfaction with the following elements of the short course(s) that you participated in* *using the scale below (based on the five criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, GEDSI and lessons learned).*

*1 – Very Dissatisfied, 2 – Quite Dissatisfied, 3 – Dissatisfied, 4 – Satisfied, 5 – Quite Satisfied, 6 – Very Satisfied*

1. Information about the short course(s)
2. The application and selection process for short course(s)
3. The organisation and delivery of short courses
4. The value of short courses to my career progression
5. The value of the short course to your organisation
6. The integration of GEDSI as part of the short course(s)

4.3 Please provide any comments relating to the satisfaction ratings provided above.

4.4 The governments of the Philippines and Australia are working strategically to support the Philippines to progress its development objectives and to have positive relationships that advance mutual interests. As a result of this close engagement, emerging priorities are periodically identified to advance progress towards this goal.

Thinking about the above, to what extent do you think that Short Course Awards, (including fellowships, and study visits) would be an appropriate modality to address emerging priorities?

*Please rate your response using the scale below*

*1 – Very Inappropriate, 2 – Quite Inappropriate, 3 – Inappropriate, 4 – Appropriate, 5 – Quite Appropriate, 6 – Very Appropriate*

4.5 What do you think could be done differently to make the Short Course Awards more useful for addressing emerging priorities? *[please provide written response here]*

**5. Alumni Engagement (AE)**

AAAEP–P Alumni are an important element of the Program. Alumni have a valuable influence in contributing to the sustainable development of the Philippines and in supporting a strong strategic relationship between the Philippines and Australia.

5.1 Which AAAEP–P course did you participate in?

* Australia Awards Postgraduate Scholarships (e.g., Masters/PhD studies in Australia)
* In-Country Scholarship Program (ICSP) (e.g., University studies the Philippines)
* Short Courses (training and non-formal learning opportunities, e.g., fellowships, study visits)

*5.2 Please rate your satisfaction with the following elements of alumni engagement using the scale below (based on the five criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and GEDSI).*

*1 – Very Dissatisfied, 2 – Quite Dissatisfied, 3 – Dissatisfied, 4 – Satisfied, 5 – Quite Satisfied, 6 – Very Satisfied*

1. Information about engagement activities
2. The range of AE opportunities available to alumni
3. The organisation and delivery of AE activities
4. The usefulness of AE activities for my career
5. The usefulness of the AE to your organisation
6. The usefulness of the Alumni Grant Scheme

5.2 Please provide any comments relating to the satisfaction ratings provided above.

**6. Broader programmatic questions**

*Please rate the overall AAAEP–P program using the scale below (based on the five criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and GEDSI).*

*1 – Very Bad, 2 – Quite Bad, 3 – Bad, 4 – Good, 5 – Quite Good, 6 – Very Good*

6.1How would you rate the relevance of your course to:

1. The Philippine government’s priorities
2. Your organisation
3. Advancing GEDSI in the Philippines
4. Your career progression
5. Your personal life

6.2. How would you rate the effectiveness of Australia Awards in supporting:

1. The Philippine government’s priorities
2. Your organisation
3. Advancing GEDSI in the Philippines

6.3. How efficiently do you think AAAEP–P uses its resources?

6.4 How well does the program prioritise and allocate resourcing for GEDSI?

6.5. How would you rate the extent to which the AAAEP–P has assisted the Philippine Government or the private sector to maximise continuing benefits from Australia Awards alumni (for example increased knowledge and skills, and relationships and networks)?

*Please provide a written response to the following questions:*

6.6.

**AAAEP–P’s goal** is: *To support the Philippines to progress its development goals and have positive relationships with Australia that advances mutual interest.*

**AAAEP–P’s End of Program Outcomes (EOPOs)** are:

* EOPO 1: Diverse alumni, and where relevant, their organisations use skills, knowledge, and networks to contribute to sustainable development, and
* EOPO 2: Diverse alumni have contributed to strengthening cooperation between the Philippines and Australia.

Thinking about AAAEP–P's higher-level objectives (its goal and EOPOs set out above), from your experience, what do you think is the biggest challenge for the program in contributing to these higher-level objectives?

6.7. A key component of this evaluation is to contribute to the strengthening of the program through identifying useful and practical recommendations for future programming. Please share your insights as to what should be considered in the planning and design of the next phase of the program (including GEDSI considerations).

**THANK YOU FOR YOU PARTICIPATION IN THIS SURVEY. Your insights will be valuable in shaping the program for your future Filipino kababayans!**

* 1. Alumni Survey Responses Mapped to Evaluation questions

Respondents’ profile

In total there were 250 responses to the online alumni survey, including a slightly higher proportion of females than males (Table 7). As noted in Table 8, more alumni were from the Short Course Awards, compared to the Australia Awards Scholarship and In-Country Scholarship Program.

Table 17: Gender profile of respondents

| **Item** | **Number** |
| --- | --- |
| Male | 103 |
| Female | 139 |
| Self-Identify | 4 |
| Prefer not to share | 4 |
| **Total** | **250** |

Table 18: Participation profile of respondents

**Participation by Category**

| **Category** | **Male** | **Female** | **Self-identify** | **Prefer not to share** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Targeted category | 29 | 52 | 0 | 0 | 81 |
| Open category | 43 | 30 | 0 | 3 | 76 |

**Participation by Program/Award**

| **Program/Award** | **Male** | **Female** | **Self-identify** | **Prefer not to share** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Australia Awards Scholarship | 28 | 34 | 2 | 1 | 65 |
| In-Country Scholarship Program | 30 | 44 | 2 | 2 | 78 |
| Short Course Awards | 77 | 91 | 1 | 3 | 172 |

Perceived relevance and effectiveness of the AAAEP–P

This section presents alumni views regarding the relevance and effectiveness (Table 9) of the AAAEP–P related to the needs and priorities of stakeholders.

Table 19: Respondents’ view on the relevance and effectiveness of AAAEP–P courses by gender[[38]](#footnote-39)

**RELEVANCE**

| **Item** | **% Male Agreed** | **% Female Agreed** | **% Total Agreed** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Relevant to the Philippine government's priorities | 89 | 90 | 90 |
| Relevant to respondent's organisation | 96 | 96 | 96 |
| Relevant to advancing GEDSI in the Philippines | 95 | 96 | 96 |
| Relevant to respondent's career progression | 96 | 95 | 96 |
| Relevant to respondent's personal life | 98 | 96 | 97 |

**EFFECTIVENESS**

| **Item** | **% Male Agreed** | **% Female Agreed** | **% Total Agreed** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Effective in supporting the Philippine Government's priorities | 99 | 96 | 97 |
| Effective in supporting respondent's organisation | 98 | 95 | 96 |
| Effective in advancing GEDSI in the Philippines | 96 | 97 | 97 |

A strong majority of alumni survey respondents felt that their studies were both relevant to the Philippine government’s priorities (96%) and effective in supporting those priorities (97%). Similarly, alumni survey respondents felt that their studies were relevant to their employer / host organisation (96%) and effectively supported the work of the organisation (96%). Respondents also felt that their studies were relevant to (97%) and effective in (96%) advancing GEDSI in the Philippines.

At an individual level, alumni survey respondents were very positive about the relevance of their AAAEP–P courses to their career progression (96%) and personal life (97%).

Satisfaction with elements of the Australian Awards

This section presents alumni satisfaction with elements of the Australia Awards program (Table 10).

Table 20: Respondents' satisfaction with elements of the Australia Awards

| **Item** | **% Male satisfied** | **% Female satisfied** | **% Total satisfied** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The quality of introductory information and promotional material about the Australia Awards Scholarships | 95 | 94 | 94 |
| The user friendliness and support services of the scholarship application process | 96 | 94 | 95 |
| The fairness, equity and inclusion of the assessment and selection process by the program | 95 | 94 | 94 |
| The ease of course selection and enrolment | 93 | 93 | 93 |
| The implementation of your Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP) | 90 | 93 | 92 |
| Course counselling (discussions with Australian universities about possible programs relevant to your interests and REAPs) | 93 | 94 | 94 |
| REAP mentoring received | 93 | 95 | 94 |
| Pre-departure briefing | 95 | 94 | 94 |
| On-award support, enrichment and engagement (including support for the living experience while in Australia) | 95 | 95 | 95 |
| Reintegration support | 94 | 93 | 94 |
| GEDSI mainstreaming, equity and inclusion elements (e.g., course content, reasonable accommodation, safeguards) | 93 | 94 | 94 |

The majority of respondents were satisfied with elements of the **AAAEP–P**, including the quality of introductory information and promotional materials (95%), the user friendliness and support services of the scholarship application process (95%), the fairness, equity and inclusion of the assessment and selection process by the program (94%), pre-departure briefing (94%), on-award support, enrichment and engagement (95%), reintegration support (94%) and mainstreaming of GEDSI (94%). In terms of course selection while participating in the AAAEP–P, 92% of respondents were satisfied with the ease of course selection and enrolment, while 94% of respondents were satisfied with course counselling support including discussions with Australian universities.

In relation to the REAP component of the AAAEP–P, most respondents reported positive experiences with 92% satisfied with the overall implementation of their REAP and, 94% of all respondents satisfied with the REAP mentoring they received.

Satisfaction with elements of the Short Courses

This section presents alumni satisfaction with short courses under the Australia Awards program (Table 11).

Table 21: Respondents' satisfaction with elements of short courses

| **Item** | **% Male satisfied** | **% Female satisfied** | **% Total satisfied** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Information about the short course(s) | 96 | 93 | 95 |
| The application and selection process for short course(s) | 96 | 93 | 95 |
| The organisation and delivery of the short course(s) | 96 | 93 | 95 |
| The value of the short course(s) to career progression | 96 | 93 | 95 |
| The value of the short course(s) to respondent's organisation | 96 | 93 | 95 |
| The integration of GEDSI as part of the short course(s) | 96 | 89 | 93 |

The majority of respondents expressed high levels of satisfaction with all elements of the **short courses they participated in**. Specifically, 95% of respondents were satisfied with the information provided, the application and selection process, the organisation and delivery of the courses, and their value for career progression and organisational benefit. Satisfaction with the integration of GEDSI principles was slightly lower at 93%. While satisfaction levels were consistent across genders for most elements, female respondents reported slightly lower satisfaction (89%) with the integration of GEDSI compared to male respondents (96%).

Satisfaction with elements of the In-Country Scholarship Program

This section presents alumni satisfaction with the in-country scholarship program under the Australia Awards program (Table 12).

Table 22: Respondents' satisfaction with elements of the In-Country Scholarship Program

| **Item** | **% Male satisfied** | **% Female satisfied** | **% Total satisfied** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The quality of introductory information and promotional material about the ICSP | 95 | 86 | 90 |
| The user friendliness and support services of the scholarship application process | 95 | 86 | 96 |
| The fairness, equity and inclusion of the assessment and selection process by the program | 95 | 86 | 90 |
| The ease of course selection and enrolment | 95 | 83 | 88 |
| REAP mentoring received | 95 | 86 | 89 |
| On-award support, enrichment and engagement | 95 | 86 | 90 |
| Post-scholarship support | 95 | 86 | 89 |
| The implementation of your Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP) | 89 | 83 | 86 |
| GEDSI mainstreaming, equity and inclusion elements | 95 | 83 | 88 |

The majority of respondents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the stages of the **In-Country Scholarship Program**, with overall satisfaction ranging from 86% to 96% across various elements. Respondents were particularly satisfied with the user-friendliness and support services of the application process (96%). Slightly lower satisfaction was noted for the implementation of REAPs (86%) and GEDSI mainstreaming elements (88%).

Female alumni respondents reported consistently lower levels of satisfaction compared to male respondents, with notable differences in areas such as course selection and enrolment (83% vs. 95%) and GEDSI mainstreaming (83% vs. 95%).

Satisfaction with elements of alumni engagement

This section presents alumni satisfaction with elements of alumni engagement related to the Australia Awards program (Table 13).

Table 23: Satisfaction with elements of alumni engagement

| **Item** | **% Male satisfied** | **% Female satisfied** | **% Total satisfied** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Information about engagement activities | 91 | 95 | 93 |
| The range of alumni engagement opportunities available to alumni | 87 | 94 | 91 |
| The organisation and delivery of alumni engagement activities | 89 | 95 | 92 |
| The usefulness of alumni engagement activities for your career | 87 | 95 | 92 |
| The usefulness of the alumni engagement to your organisation | 89 | 95 | 92 |
| The usefulness of the Alumni Grant Scheme | 92 | 96 | 94 |

Respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with various elements of **alumni engagement**, with overall satisfaction ranging from 91% to 94%. The Alumni Grant Scheme received the highest satisfaction (94%), followed by the information about engagement activities (93%). Female respondents consistently reported slightly higher satisfaction across all elements compared to male respondents, with notable differences in the range of engagement opportunities (94% vs. 87%) and the usefulness of activities for their career (95% vs. 87%).

* 1. Emerging Priority requests

Table 24: Ad hoc / Emerging Priorities requests from the Embassy

| Name of Activity | # of people involved | Level of Effort (estimated person days) | Specific tasks |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Law of the Sea training - Batch 1 on April 16-20, 2018; Batch 2 on 13-17 August 2018; and Batch 3 on 1-5 April 2019.  Name of LSP: Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS), University of Wollongong.  Participating agencies: *Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of National Defense, Philippine Navy, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippines National Police, UP Maritime Studies, Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine Coast Guard, Department of Energy, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, National Security Council, Office of the President, MARINA, Office of Solicitor General, Philippine Air Force, Department of Justice, Supreme Court of the Philippines, Philippine Senate, National Coast Watch Council-Secretariat,*  *Palawan Council for Sustainable Development*  *Philippine Center for Transnational Crime, National Intelligence Coordinating Agency,*  *Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration,*  *National Mapping and Resource Information Authority, Department of Science and Technology, Maritime Industry Authority* | Six (6)   * Program Director * Tertiary Education Adviser * Senior Program Officer for Short Course * MELQI Adviser * IT/KM Officer * Finance and Admin Manager | * Program Director – 30 days * Tertiary Education Adviser – 30 days * Senior Program Officer – 30 days * MELQI Adviser – 15 days * IT/KM Officer – 10 days * Finance and Admin Manager – 20 days | * Consultation meetings with Maritime section of the Embassy and DFA on the TOR. * Coordination with DFA and Embassy on the list of participants * Consultation meetings with ANCORS, Embassy and DFA on the training design per batch. * Link ANCORs with local LSP for the admin and logistic requirements of the activities. * Follow-up nominations from target agencies * Brief DFA on the final arrangements of the activity and the development of the opening and closing program per batch. * Brief ANCORS on the REAP requirement of the training * Follow up and monitor the registration of participants and their pre and post competency assessment per batch. * Monitor the conduct of the training * Monitor the REAP implementation * Review the completion reports per batch. * Present and submit completion reports to DFA per batch. |
| Dam Design and Safety Short Course with Benchmarking in Australia  *Training Date: 28 November to 09 December (Australia) and In-country training and REAP Coaching: January to July 2023*  *Name of LSP: Entura Clean Energy and Water Institute*  *Name of Agency trained:*  *National Irrigation Administration (NIA)* | Six (6)   * Program Director * Tertiary Education Adviser * Senior Program Officer for Short Course * MELQI Adviser * IT/KM Officer * Finance and Admin Manager | * Program Director – 10 days * Tertiary Education Adviser – 30 days * Senior Program Officer – 40 days * MELQI Adviser – 5 days * IT/KM Officer – 7 days * Finance and Admin Manager – 10 days | * Consultation meetings with the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) to determine specific training needs in the context of their request on dam design and safety; negotiation of cost-sharing arrangements, among other things. * Finalisation of the RFT and TOR with NIA. * Conduct the pre-bid conference for interested bidders. * Preparation and conduct of the Tender Assessment Panel * Negotiate with the University of Tasmania regarding customisation and finalisation of the short course. * Prepare and conduct the pre-departure briefing with the LSP. * Coordination, admin and logistic support with participants * Monitoring the conduct of the activity. * Review of inception, completion and REAP implementation reports |
| Emergency Broadcasting Short Course  *Training Date: September 28-30, 2022 in Australia and*  *In-country training and REAP Coaching: October 2022-March 2023*  *Name of LSP: Australia Broadcasting Corporation International Development (ABCID)*  *Name of Agencies trained:*  Philippine Information Agency, *Bureau of Communication Services (BCS);*  *Freedom of Information Program Management Office;*  *Office of the Press Secretary;*  *Peoples Television Network, Inc;*  *Philippine Broadcasting Service;*  *News and Information Bureau- Philippines News Agency;*  *Intercontinental Broadcasting Corporation;*  *Presidential Broadcast Staff-Radio Television Malacañang;*  *National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council* | Six (6)   * Program Director * Tertiary Education Adviser * Senior Program Officer for Short Course * MELQI Adviser * IT/KM Officer * Finance and Admin Manager | * Program Director – 7 days * Tertiary Education Adviser – 20 days * Senior Program Officer – 15 days * MELQI Adviser – 5 days * IT/KM officer – 7 days * Finance and Admin Manager – 10 days | * Consultation meetings with the concerned agencies targeted for this activity to determine specific training needs in the context of their request. * Consultation meetings with Australia Broadcasting Corporation on the customisation of the training design and admin support of the activity for Australia and in country activities. * Coordination, admin and logistic support with target government agencies and their respective participants. * Preparation and conduct pre-departure briefing with the LSP. * Monitoring the progress of the in- country training and coaching. Monitoring * Review of inception, completion and REAP implementation reports |
| Media Benchmarking Study Freedom of Information and Human Rights  *Study Date: March 5 to 12, 2023 (Australia)*  *Name of LSP: Griffith University*  *Organisations/Agencies trained:*  *Philippine Daily Inquirer; PhilStar.com; Rappler; MindaNews;*  *GMA News, ABS CBN News*  *Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism; Daily Guardian* | Six (6)   * Program Director * Tertiary Education Adviser * Senior Program Officer for Short Course * MELQI Adviser * IT/KM Officer * Finance and Admin Manager | * Program Director – 3 days * Tertiary Education Adviser – 15 days * Senior Program Officer – 15 days * MELQI Adviser – 3 days * IT/KM Officer – 3 days * Finance and Admin Manager – 10 days | * Consultation meetings with concerned DFAT officials regarding their expectations of the activity and the development of the TOR. * Development of the RFT and TOR. * Conduct of Pre-bid Conference. * Preparation for the open tender process * Conduct the Tender Assessment Panel * Coordination, admin and logistic support with target government agencies/participants * Prepare and conduct a pre-departure briefing with the LSP. * Review of the completion report |
| Taste of Australia   Taste of Australia and the Philippines is a series of events (e.g., book signing, cooking demo, instructions, masterclass for culinary students) that highlight Filipino cuisine with a taste of Australia by Yasmin Newman, a Filipino-Australian food and travel content creator, cookbook author, and businesswoman. Yasmin shared well-loved Filipino dishes using Australian ingredients from her cookbook Under the Coconut Skies: Feasts and Stories from the Philippines.  *18-22 April 2023* | Ten (10)   * Program Director * Senior Project Manager (AE) * Project Officer (AE) * Finance and Admin Manager * 2 Finance and Admin Staff (Manila & Davao) * Communications Manager, * Communications Officer * IT/KM Officer * Admin Staff (Davao) | * Program Director – 10 days * Senior Project Manager (AE) – 30 days * Project Officer (AE) – 30 days * Finance and Admin Manager – 10 days * Finance and Admin Staff (Manila & Davao) – 10 days * Communications Manager – 15 days * Communications Officer – 15 days * IT/KM Officer – 5 days * Admin Staff (Davao) – 10 days | * Plan and arrange logistics for 6 events * Morning Tea with alumni at HOM’s residence * Afternoon Tea with alumni at SM Aura * Masterclass at JIB Davao * Networking Dinner with Davao alumni at Tiny Kitchen * Afternoon Tea at Panco Café * Cook-off at Lyceum of the Phils, Batangas * Design and produce collaterals for 6 events (emailer, posters & exhibit boards) * Prepare a guest list, invite and confirm alumni participants * Source out and engage suppliers for events and provide admin and logistic support for YN (transport, accommodation and per diem) * Facilitate set-up, registration, program, guest interaction and egress * Manage photo and video documentation for all events |
| Australia Alumni Excellence Awards Awarding Night  (Full execution by AAAEP–P)  *26 February 2024*  *Note: AAAEP has supported this activity for the past years because the lead group is the Embassy's public diplomacy team. In 2024, the full execution and funding were transferred to AAAEP.  AAAEP’s main role in AEA is focused on promotion, short-listing with Post, profiling of candidates, secretariat for the panel interview, video documentation of the winners. The preparation and management of the awarding night was given to AAAEP in 2024.* | Ten (10   * Program Director * Senior Project Manager (AE) * Project Officer (AE) * Finance and Admin Manager * Finance and Admin Staff * Communications Manager * Communications Officer * IT/KM Officer * 2 Scholarships Officers | * Program Director – 5 days * Senior Project Manager (AE) – 20 days * Project Officer (AE) – 20 days * Finance and Admin Manager – 10 days * Finance and Admin Staff – 10 days * Communications Manager – 10 days * Communications Officer – 10 days * IT/KM Officer – 5 days * 2 Scholarships Officers – 3 days | Additional tasks on full execution:   * Venue selection, ocular inspection and coordination * TOR release and Pre-bid Conference for event management supplier * Tender Assessment Panel * Manage release of invites, confirmation of guests, VIP seating arrangement and ushering * Coordination, contracting, payment of venue and event management supplier * Coordination with event management supplier on branding and design layouts for the event * Support for program, event management and documentation * Facilitate set-up, registration, program, guest interaction and egress |
| PRIDE March  *22 June 2024* | Seven (7)   * Program Director * Senior Project Manager (AE) * Project Officer (AE) * Finance and Admin Manager * Finance and Admin Staff * Communications Manager * Communications Officer | * Program Director – 2 days * Senior Project Manager (AE) – 7 days * Project Officer (AE) – 7 days * Finance and Admin Manager – 5 days * Finance and Admin Staff – 5 days * Communications Manager – 5 days * Communications Officer – 5 days | * Design and produce collaterals (emailer, social media cards) * Prepare a guest list, invite and confirm alumni participants * Facilitate payment to suppliers for shirts, eco-bags and flags and provide admin and logistic support for the team * Coordinate assembly and participation of alumni participants * Manage photo documentation |

* 1. Summary of AQRs/IMRs – Key comments and scores

The table below represents the average scores of results in the AQRs/IMRs over the period 2018-2024.

Table 25: Average AQR/IMR Scores over the period 2018–2024

| **Criterion** | **Average AQR/IMR Score** |
| --- | --- |
| Relevance | 5.0 |
| Effectiveness | 4.8 |
| Efficiency | 4.6 |
| Sustainability | 4.5 |
| Gender Equality | 4.4 |
| Risk Management | 4.7 |
| Disability Inclusion | 4.3 |
| Climate Change | 4.2 |

The table below summarises key comments and scores for each evaluation criterion, grouped by year, with comments and scores on a 1 to 6 scale.

Table 26: Comments and scores over the period 2018–2024

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criterion | Year | Comments | Score |
| Relevance | 2018  2019  2020  2021    2022  2023  2024 | Strong alignment with GoA and GPH priorities. GEDSI integrated effectively to address marginalized groups' needs.  Clear alignment with strategic priorities in Australia and the Philippines. GEDSI focus ensures inclusion of vulnerable groups.  Supports gender equality and Indigenous inclusion while remaining aligned with shared development goals.  Focused alignment with national goals; GEDSI integrated into course offerings and alumni outcomes.  Program’s activities remain relevant to government priorities, addressing partner needs while maintaining strong GEDSI integration.  GEDSI-focused programs aligned with national development strategies, emphasizing skills development for marginalized groups.  Adapts to emerging priorities like climate change and digital transformation while continuing alignment with Australia’s and the Philippines’ shared priorities. | 4.5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6 |
| Effectiveness | 2018  2019  2020  2021  2022  2023  2024 | Achieved key objectives, with strong GEDSI mainstreaming and significant alumni contributions. MEL data collection effective but could be further improved.  Alumni contributions drive institutional improvements and support governance goals. GEDSI targets consistently met.  Strong alumni contributions to national priorities, particularly in gender equality, disability inclusion, and climate resilience.  GEDSI-focused REAPs and alumni activities support systemic improvements in governance and inclusion.  High alumni impact across gender equality, climate resilience, and public sector reform. GEDSI programs exceed expectations.  Alumni effectively implement GEDSI-focused projects in priority areas like education, governance, and climate resilience.  Alumni projects address critical issues, including climate adaptation, disability inclusion, and gender equality. | 4.3/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6 |
| Efficiency | 2018  2019  2020  2021  2022  2023  2024 | Resources efficiently utilized; GEDSI programs integrated into processes effectively.  Partnerships and sound financial management enhance operational efficiency.  Effective cost management supports a wide range of GEDSI programs while maintaining outcomes.  Blended online and in-person delivery reduced costs and ensured continuity during the pandemic.  Resources efficiently allocated to GEDSI-focused projects, particularly climate change adaptation and disability inclusion.  Streamlined processes minimize costs while effectively addressing GEDSI priorities.  Efficient use of resources to deliver programs addressing emerging themes like digitalization and climate adaptation. | 4.4/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6 |
| Sustainability | 2018  2019  2020  2021  2022  2023  2024 | Alumni-driven initiatives and knowledge-sharing sustain program outcomes.  GEDSI-aligned initiatives and alumni collaboration foster long-term impact.  Alumni networks foster systemic changes, supporting sustainable GEDSI implementation.  GEDSI pilots enhance partner institutions’ capacity and alumni networks sustain program goals.  Alumni-led initiatives integrate GEDSI and climate adaptation into institutional practices, ensuring sustainability.  Alumni implement projects that embed inclusivity and resilience within national and local policies.  GEDSI-focused reforms sustain long-term outcomes through partnerships with government agencies. | 4.3/6  4/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  4/6  4/6 |
| Gender Equality | 2018  2019  2020  2021  2022  2023  2024 | Strong integration of gender equality principles in all program aspects.  Women leaders supported through scholarships; gender balance in program participation maintained.  GEDSI initiatives improve representation and engagement in policy-making processes.  Gender-sensitive practices embedded in alumni-driven projects and institutional strategies.  Programs addressing gender inequality achieve substantial outcomes, particularly in leadership roles.  Alumni projects empower women in governance and education while advancing gender equality.  GEDSI-focused efforts continue to promote gender inclusivity in leadership and decision-making. | 4.5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6 |
| Disability | 2018  2019  2020  2021  2022  2023  2024 | Disability inclusion embedded in project design, with accommodations ensuring equitable participation.  Programs promote accessibility, including resources and training for people with disabilities.  GEDSI initiatives enhance access for disabled participants in leadership programs.  Alumni-driven disability inclusion programs align with GEDSI principles, strengthening advocacy.  Strong progress in disability-inclusive leadership and education initiatives, driven by GEDSI scorecards.  Alumni projects improve accessibility in public services and educational institutions.  Focus on expanding disability inclusion in governance and capacity-building programs. | 4.4/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6 |
| Climate Change | 2018  2019  2020  2021  2022  2023  2024 | GEDSI activities include resilience-building components addressing climate risks.  Climate-focused REAPs promote sustainability through policy and community action.  Alumni integrate climate change adaptation strategies into institutional practices.  REAPs include innovative approaches to climate resilience and natural resource management.  Alumni-driven initiatives enhance climate resilience in public and private sectors.  Collaborative projects integrate climate resilience strategies, supporting long-term environmental sustainability.  REAPs address climate adaptation and resilience through inclusive and innovative approaches. | 4.5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6 |
| Risk Management | 2018  2019  2020  2021  2022  2023  2024 | Risks effectively managed through governance frameworks and stakeholder collaboration.  Strengthened risk mitigation strategies ensure program delivery during uncertainties like political transitions.  COVID-19 adaptations demonstrate the program's capacity to manage risks while maintaining outcomes.  Risk assessments embedded into REAPs and alumni engagement ensure long-term project viability.  Robust governance frameworks and adaptive management support risk mitigation  Proactive risk management in alumni initiatives ensures success despite logistical challenges.  Risk management strategies address emerging challenges, including global health and climate crises. | 4.5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6  5/6 |

* 1. Current Board and PCC Members

**AAAEP-P Program Board Members**

**Atty Karlo Alexei Nograles**

Chairperson, Civil Service Commission (CSC)

Australia Awards Short Course Attended: Digital Transformation Strategy Development and Implementation – Australia Benchmarking Study Visit (2024)

Before being appointed the CSC Chairperson, he was the Cabinet Secretary (2018–2022) and acting Presidential Spokesperson (2021–2022) in the Duterte administration.

As Cabinet Secretary, he was:

* Co-Chair of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Disease
* Chair of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Zero Hunger
* Chair of the National Irrigation Administration
* Chair of the Cabinet Assistance System (CAS
* Chair of the Cabinet Cluster Secretariat.

Before being appointed Cabinet Secretary, he was Chair of the House Committee on Appropriations. He served as a three-term congressman of the 1st District of Davao City.

Chairperson Nograles graduated from Philippine Science High School. He holds a BS in Management Engineering from Ateneo de Manila University and a Juris Doctor from the Ateneo de Manila Law School.

He was a professional lawyer and previously worked for the Nograles law firm in Davao City. He was born and raised in Davao City, the second among four children of Prospero Nograles, the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Rhodora Bendigo-Nograles, a cousin of President Rodrigo Duterte.

As an outstanding legislator, he has received numerous prestigious awards, including the Golden Globe Awards for Excellence in Public Service in 2015 and 2016.

**Michel Kristian Ablan**Assistant Secretary, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

Australia Benchmarking Attended: Benchmarking on Freedom of Information in Australia (2022)

Asec Ablan is currently an Assistance Secretary at the Department of Trade and Industry, supervising the Management Services Group. Previous to this, he was the Undersecretary for Administration at the Department of Education where he oversaw administration, planning, and ICT. And before that, he worked at the Presidential Communications and Operations Office (PCOO) for 6 years as its Assistant Secretary and Undersecretary for administration, finance, and freedom of information.

A lawyer by profession and a career public administrator with over 20 years of experience. In 2021, Philippine President awarded him the Gawad CES—the highest award a career public official can receive, for work in access to information.

**Joseph J. Capuno**Undersecretary, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)

Joseph J. Capuno serves as the Undersecretary for Investment Planning of NEDA. As Undersecretary, he is tasked to oversee the formulation of strategies for efficiency in linking the government’s planning, programming and implementation of projects. He is also tasked to provide policy guidance in the project appraisal, monitoring and evaluation of big-ticket infrastructure projects of the national government, formulation of development plans and policies, and programming of the official development assistance (ODA), among others.

**AAAEP-P Program Coordinating Committee Members**

* **Joel Cruz**Director IV, Human Resource and Administrative Service, DTI

Australia Awards Short Courses Attended:

* Australia Awards Short Course on GEDSI Mainstreaming Batch 1, University of Queensland (2018)
* Australia Awards Short Course in Digital Transformation Strategy Development and Implementation – Australia Benchmarking Study Visit, University of Adelaide (2024)
* **Joseph Norley Capistrano**OIC – Director, Public Investment Staff (PIS), NEDA

Australia Awards Scholarships Attended: Master of Public Policy and Management, Universtiy of Melbourne (2012)

* **Nerissa Canguilan**Assistant Commissioner, CSC

Australia Awards Scholarships and Short Courses Attended:

* Master of Social Change and Development, University of Newcastle (2012)
* Australia Awards Short Course on Design Thinking (2023)
* Australia Awards Short Course on Strategic Communications (Senior Officer Group) – Batch 3 (2024)
* PAHRODF Training on Managing Performance and Rewards (2015)

1. This evaluation is intended to act as a final evaluation for the program, noting that the current phase will conclude in 2026. The evaluation report is intended to provide recommendations for the remainder of the program. Insights and suggested improvements may also be incorporated into a new successor program/procurement process which is expected in the first half of financial year 2025. See Appendix A for further detail. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Aka ‘partner organisations’. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Additional GEDSI recommendations are set out in Section 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. <https://pdp.neda.gov.ph/updated-pdp-2017-2022/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <https://2040.neda.gov.ph>, p. 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. <https://pdp.neda.gov.ph/philippine-development-plan-2023-2028/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. The eight objectives are: (i) economic growth and stability; (ii) poverty reduction and inequality; (iii) human capital development; (iv) infrastructure development; (v) climate resilience and environmental sustainability; (vi) regional development; (vii) good governance, and (viii) global competitiveness. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Respondent’s identities are anonymised. A record of attributed quotations is kept confidentially on file. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Strategy Paper for Achievement of Program Outcomes, March 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. AAAEP–P Communications and Public Diplomacy Strategy. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. [PH to achieve upper middle-income status by 2025 | Philippine News Agency](https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1205987?utm). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. DFAT released the DPP for the Philippines which runs from 2024 to 2029 on 17 October 2024. This was after field work was completed. The DPP consists of three objectives: (i) enhancing conditions for stability; (ii) bolstering inclusive and sustainable growth; and (iii) Increasing institutional and community resilience to social, economic and climate-related shocks. The DPP makes specific reference to scholarships relevant to objectives (i) and (ii). The AAAEP–P therefore will continue to remain relevant to the DPP for the remainder of the program’s term. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. https://vuxano.com/international-scholarships-for-philippine-students/?utm [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Only binary gender figures are available. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. An earlier investment (HDROF) mobilised the first two batches, and AAAEP–P Phase 1 provided on award management for these batches. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Only binary gender figures were available. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Some of whom are legacy alumni generated under previous scholarship investments but with whom the program continued to engage and build relationships. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. In 2024 the Civil Service Commission Assistant Commissioner Nerissa Canguilan and DFAT’s Joh Stratten, both members of the PCC, sat on the selection committee. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. A ramp was not provided to the stage, which resulted in one MC who is a person living with a disability not being able to access the stage. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. https://journalnews.com.ph [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Imas, Linda and Rist, Ray (2009). The Road to Results: Designing and Conducting Effective Development Evaluations. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. See Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy, p17. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. DFAT notes that the duty of care for all on award students resides with the Australian universities and not the Managing Contractor. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Source: M&E Report as of December 2024, Table 9, p23. (updated alumni data). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. See: 2020 Partner Performance Assessment (PPA), p4. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Email communication from Team Leader, 22 August 2024. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Email communication on 14 October 2024 from DFAT’s Global Education and Scholarships Section, Global Programs and Partnerships Branch | Development Policy Division. Note that a strict 1:1 comparison is not possible as the programs have different modalities that require appropriate staffing structures. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. During the first six years of AAAEP, there was one full time LTA (Mark Kilner, the Tertiary Education Adviser) who handled our short courses. There was one STA who assisted with short courses when this LTA was vacated. Two STAs were engaged to assist with the GEDSI Strategy and the Alumni Strategy. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. All staff are LES, including the Program Director. LES roles are: 1. MELQUI Adviser; Communications Specialist and 1 junior staff; Alumni senior project officer and 1 junior staff; Scholarship senior project officer – 2; Mindanao engagement manager/IT officer - plus 1 junior staff (based in Davao); Finance and Admin Manager plus 2 admin staff, 1 driver; IT staff – 2 who are based in Davao; HRD Specialist; Short Course Coordinator; Program Director. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. Agricultural Systems International, Inc. (AGREA). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Subsidiary Arrangement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Philippines Relating to the Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program Philippines, Clause 7.2, December 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. DFAT Development Evaluation Policy 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. The ICSP component commenced in 2012 to provide postgraduate study opportunities for individuals in the Bangsamoro region who are unable to study in Australia due to work or family commitments. In July 2015, the program was expanded to build a pool of potential leaders and technical specialists. See: [Australia Awards Philippines - ICSP](https://dev.australiaawardsphilippines.org/icsp) . [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/australia-awards?utm\_source=chatgpt.com [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. Including women, LGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities and indigenous people's priorities. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. Desirable if there is sufficient time/resources. The evaluation team aims to include case studies to reflect this. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. Desirable if there is sufficient time/resources. The evaluation team aims to include case studies to reflect this. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. Respondent agrees if they responded “Relevant”, “Quite relevant” or “Very relevant”. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)