



Australia Awards

Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility

Case Study in Vietnam
women in finance and
banking

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADS	Australian Development Scholarship
ANZ	Australia New Zealand Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development (former)
BIDV	Bank for Investment and Development
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CES	Course Experience Survey
DFAT	Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
HR	Human Resource
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGOs	International non-government organisation
MBA	Master of Business Administration
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NBV	National Bank of Vietnam
NGOs	Non-governmental organisation
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
SAV	State Audit Office of Vietnam
SCB	Scholarships and Alumni Branch (DFAT)
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Program
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UniSA	University of South Australia
UNSW	University of New South Wales
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UTS	University of Technology Sydney
UWA	University of Western Australia
VGAC	Vietnam Graduates from Australia Club
VNPT	Vietnam Post and Telecommunication Group
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

1. Executive Summary

This report details the long-term outcomes of Australian Government scholarship alumnae from Vietnam. Alumnae in this Case Study were women who all undertook studies in the field of banking and finance and completed their degrees between 1996 and 2005. This research was conducted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility (the Facility) and is the first Case Study of the Facility to focus solely on women.

The period between 1996 and 2005 marked an important time of rapid growth for Vietnam, following a decade of Doi Moi reforms that were beginning to translate into better socioeconomic outcomes for the population and the move towards a market oriented economy. This represented a critical time for alumnae returning to the country, where their newly gained Australian skills and experience were in high demand in the development of the banking and finance sector.

1.1 Findings

1.1.1 Development contributions

Alumnae have made significant contributions to the development and internationalisation of the banking and finance sector in Vietnam, **indicating Australia Awards long-term Outcome 1 is being achieved**. Alumnae developed a broad range of skills on award that enabled them to contribute to the development of the sector, including technical skills in accounting, auditing, risk management, strategic planning, and English skills. They also developed a range of soft skills such as critical thinking, intercultural competency, leadership and integrity.

Examples of contributions to development include:

- the development of standards, policies and procedures and codes of conduct within the finance sector
- leadership and commitment to ethical practice
- training and capacity building
- mentoring and knowledge sharing.

Alumnae identified the following factors which enabled them to make positive contributions:

- economic climate which required specific technical skills in banking and finance and English language skills
- soft skills and strong personal characteristics
- multinational corporations provided a strong corporate culture and training
- support from their organisations and families.

Alumnae highlighted the following challenges in making further contributions:

- English language barriers
- integrating into the Vietnamese corporate culture
- social expectations.

1.1.2 Economic and public diplomacy outcomes

There is **strong evidence of enduring cooperation and partnership between Australia and Vietnam**, which were developed as a result of the skills or contacts alumnae forged in Australia. Professional links have been established through employment opportunities with Australian organisations in both Australia and Vietnam. Research partnerships and academic links have been fostered through research collaboration and further studies in Australia. Alumnae have also developed long-lasting personal networks with other Australian alumni in Vietnam and friends in Australia. Examples of ongoing links with Australia and Australians include:

- employment with Australian organisations such as, the ANZ Bank and RMIT University in Vietnam, and BankWest in Australia
- facilitating trade partnerships and promoting investment opportunities in Australia and Vietnam
- strengthening ties with Australian education institutions and academics through further postgraduate studies and research collaborations
- leveraging professional networks through connections with Australian Alumni in Vietnam.

These examples of enduring partnerships demonstrate that the **Australia Awards long-term Outcomes 2 and 3 are being achieved** by alumnae in this Case Study. It also provides the strongest evidence to date of alumnae making a positive contribution to economic and public diplomacy outcomes, across all Case Studies conducted by the Facility.

Alumnae identified a number of key factors that enabled them to develop and maintain partnerships with Australian organisations:

- a strong network of local and Australian Government supported alumni associations facilitate opportunities to link alumnae with Australian organisations
- Australian skills and experience gained on award gave alumnae an advantage over other graduates to secure employment opportunities with Australian organisations
- flexible award conditions allowed alumnae to seek employment opportunities with Australian organisations on their return, or stay in Australia to further their studies.

Alumnae identified a number of challenges in developing and maintaining partnerships with Australia and Australians:

- lack of coordination across various alumni associations resulting in loss of opportunities for alumni engagement
- lack of stakeholder investment to build relationships with alumni for more purposeful engagement
- loss of connection over time creates barriers for active involvement in alumni networks.

1.1.3 Views of Australia and Australian expertise

Alumnae in this Case Study hold enduring positive views about Australia, Australians and Australian expertise, indicating **achievement of Australia Awards long-term Outcome 4**. In general, alumnae expressed gratitude to Australia and Australians who supported them during their studies in Australia. In particular, alumnae highlighted positive views of:

- the quality of teaching and learning
- the quality of Australian education which provided them with employable skills on their return to Vietnam
- cultural experiences and lifestyle in Australia.

Alumnae noted that these positive views were a result of the strong pastoral care and support services provided by their institutions and encouragement from academic staff, as well as support from their families who shared in childcare and household responsibilities. While alumnae pointed to initially struggling with English language skills, discrimination, the separation from family and friends, culture shock and family expectations, these did not impact their overall positive views.

1.1.4 Impact on addressing equity issues

Through a commitment to gender equity in the Australia Awards in Vietnam, women have consistently outnumbered men in successfully gaining an award since 2003. Alumnae in this Case Study have continued to have an impact on promoting social inclusion in their workplaces and their communities. Despite some of the barriers faced by women in Vietnam, most alumnae have been able to overcome constraints such as family responsibilities to reach senior level positions in their careers, both in the public and private sectors.

Alumnae who came from rural areas have made a positive impact in the lives of those in their provinces by providing education and training opportunities and helping to lift them out of poverty.



Australia Awards alumnae are developing the finance and banking sector in Vietnam – study shows

Australia Awards alumnae are contributing to:



Development of standards, policies and procedures and codes of conduct



Training and capacity building



Leadership, transparency and ethical practice



Mentoring and knowledge sharing

Australia Awards results

1 Alumnae provided strong examples of development contributions

Achieved ✓

“In my role, in my career, I’m very proud of being able to contribute to auditing. To be able to provide the control and standards to government expenditure in other departments. So it’s going to help progress the country and bring standards to the sector.”



2 Alumnae are contributing to cooperation between Australia and Vietnam

Achieved ✓

“I think networking is one of the major benefits [of the scholarship] because whenever we talk to someone who also studied in Australia before, it’s very easy to get the trust and some good feeling immediately. It’s also helpful in terms of business. Whenever I meet with some partner and then when we realise that we studied in Australia, then the composition changes immediately.”



3 Alumnae support effective institutional partnerships between Australia and Vietnam

Achieved ✓

Alumnae have maintained enduring links with Australian institutions since their return to Vietnam. These include business and employment opportunities, professional development courses and research collaborations. Alumnae have also made positive contributions to Australian organisations in Vietnam such as RMIT University and the ANZ Bank.



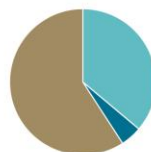
4 Alumnae view Australia and Australian expertise positively

Achieved ✓

“My experience of Australia is very positive. We have very strong feelings and a strong connection with Australia... Actually, Australia is like my second home.”



Participants: Alumnae who completed scholarships between 1996 and 2005



Case study participants:

■ Alumnae
■ Employer of an Alumna
■ Stakeholders

2. Background of the Study

The Facility is a four-year project funded by DFAT. Through this project, DFAT assesses the development contributions and public and economic diplomacy outcomes of Australia's investment in the Australia Awards.¹ The key research and reporting activities being undertaken are a quantitative Tracer Survey and qualitative Case Studies, which are prepared concurrently throughout the four years of the project.

This report gives the key findings of the Vietnam Case Study; the majority of the data collection for which was undertaken by the Facility in Vietnam in late October 2018. Follow-up interviews were carried out after the in-country fieldwork and data collection was completed in mid-November 2018.

2.1 Objectives

The Facility seeks to generate high-quality information on former scholarship holders, with a focus on less recent alumni. This information will provide a strong evidence base for country programs and the Scholarships and Alumni Branch (SCB) of DFAT to evaluate the impact of Australia Awards on alumni and, by implication, on their home institutions and countries.

2.2 Scope

The scope of the Facility is limited to alumni of DFAT's Australia Awards and previous DFAT-funded scholarships programs, awards (both long and short duration) and fellowships (managed by SCB).

2.3 Case Studies

The Case Studies are being conducted via an iterative approach whereby the qualitative phase can be designed based on what is learned from the initial quantitative phase.

The Facility Case Study methodology is explanatory and multiple in design. That is, cases are selected based on findings from the quantitative (survey) research, and the 'how' and 'why' of alumni experiences is explained in detail. Multiple Case Studies enable the researcher to explore differences within and between cases. Case Studies contribute to the evidence base for country programs, providing useful comparison across cases and Case Studies to build a robust understanding of diverse alumni experience.

¹ See <http://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/public-diplomacy/Documents/public-diplomacy-strategy-2014-16.pdf> and <http://dfat.gov.au/trade/economic-diplomacy/pages/economic-diplomacy.aspx>

2.3.1 Year 1 of the Facility

In the first year of the Facility, however, Case Study countries and themes were based on criteria such as availability and range of alumni details in the Global Alumni database; previous country or thematic research undertaken; investment priorities, and partner-country priorities. The cohort for Year 1 Case Studies were alumni who graduated between 1952 and 1995. In Year 1, the selected Case Study countries are Fiji, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Kenya. Field research took place between late October 2016 and March 2017.

2.3.2 Years 2 through 4

Subsequent Case Studies in Years 2–4 will be determined through the annual planning process. Case Studies will not be limited to geographic foci, and may be sectoral or regional as determined through findings of the annual Tracer Survey and planning and consultation process. Case Studies will also align with the priorities of the *Australia Awards Global Strategy: Investing in the next generation of global leaders for development 2016-2018* (the Global Strategy) and any other areas of importance as identified by SCB.

In Year 2, the selected Case Study countries and sectoral focus were Vanuatu – law and justice, Mongolia – finance, Solomon Islands - health, Indonesia - education, and China –public health and the environment. Field research occurred between mid-October 2017 and April 2018.

In Year 3, the selected Case Studies explore alumni who completed their award between 1996 and 2005. The countries and sectoral focus include: Vietnam - women in finance and banking, Mozambique -food, agriculture & natural resources, Cambodia – public health, Papua New Guinea- information technology & engineering (civil and electrical), and Pakistan-governance & leadership.

2.4 Country context

2018 marked 45 years of diplomatic relations between Australia and Vietnam. The bilateral partnership has been forged across political, security and economic activities and people-to-people links. Vietnam is one of Australia's fastest growing trading partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region (DFAT, 2018). Its rapid economic transition over recent years and gradual shift to a market-based economy has been spurred on by over 30 years of Doi Moi reforms since 1986. It has transformed Vietnam from one of the poorest countries in the world to a middle-income country by 2009.

Economic growth has brought development benefits to the majority of the population. Currently, 70 per cent of the population is under 35 years of age, with a life expectancy of 73 years (World Bank, 2017). There is a burgeoning middle class, made up of 10 per cent of the population and expected to reach 26 per cent by 2026 (World Bank, 2017). Healthcare and education services are better and more equitable. Access to education is almost universal at the primary level (98 percent adjusted net enrolment) and lower secondary levels (99 per cent gross

enrolment ratio) (UIS, 2018).² Quality of education has also improved, evidenced by high completion rates (97 per cent at the primary level and 92 per cent at the lower secondary level) and high achievement on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Glewwe et al, 2017). Infant mortality rates have dropped markedly over the last two decades from 33 to 19 per thousand live births, while the incidence of stunting in children under five has decreased from 61 to 23 per cent over the same period (World Bank, 2017).

Vietnam has made remarkable progress on gender equality across multiple measures. There is gender parity in primary and lower secondary school enrolment, with women overrepresented in higher education (UIS, 2018). Women's economic empowerment has improved with an increase in the number of women in paid work (driven by employment opportunities for women in foreign-owned export factories) and a labour force participation rate within 10 per cent of men's (a smaller gap compared to other similar economies) (World Bank, 2017). Female-headed households are also less likely to be poor than male-headed households (World Bank, 2017).

However, the World Bank cautions against risks that could threaten Vietnam's medium-term economic outlook. While Vietnam has achieved considerable economic growth that has reduced poverty and increased living standards, an estimated 9.3 million people are still living below the national poverty line (World Bank, 2016). Improvements in access and quality of basic education are fragile, with only one in two children who start primary school eventually graduate from high school. Students from poor, rural and ethnic minority areas are particularly worse off. Gender gaps persist in terms of women's access to high level leadership positions and a widening gender pay gap.

If Vietnam is to achieve its economic and development goals over the long term, it will need to develop a skilled workforce to meet the demands of a more globalised economy; improve transparency in governance to sustain private sector growth and encourage foreign investment; and increase investments in public sector services to ensure equity and social inclusion.

As Vietnam continues a shift towards a more open economy, with an increasingly wealthy middle class creating higher demands for imported goods, education and training services, it presents significant investment opportunities for Australian companies. In 2017, Australian investment in Vietnam was valued at \$2.3 billion (DFAT, 2018). Over the last five years, Australian companies have diversified and expanded their operations in Vietnam, including ANZ Bank and RMIT (DFAT, 2018). People to people links between Australia and Vietnam continue to deepen through education and training initiatives. In 2018, it was estimated that 22,826 Vietnamese students were studying in Australia, making it the leading educational destination for Vietnamese students (DFAT, 2018). There is an existing vibrant

² Gross enrolment ratio (GER) is the number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population for the corresponding population (UIS, 2018)

Adjusted net enrolment ratio (ANER) is the total number of students of the official primary school age group who are enrolled at primary or secondary education, expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population (UIS, 2018)

network of over 50,000 Australian Alumni in Vietnam, who have the potential to facilitate long-lasting links with Australia and Australian organisations (DFAT, 2016). Institutional partnerships have also been forged with Australian higher education providers to improve quality assurance, qualification recognition and vocational training. Australia continues its development cooperation with Vietnam, with an estimated \$84.2 million in official development assistance in 2018-19 (DFAT, 2018). The priorities of the Australian aid program will shift to reflect Vietnam's social and economic transition, focusing on private sector development, building a skilled workforce, and enabling women's economic development.

Box 1 Doi Moi

Doi Moi

In 1986, Vietnam embarked on a series of economic reforms, which would gradually transition the country from a centralised economy to a 'socialist oriented market economy'. Termed Doi Moi (renovation), the reform process was launched at the Sixth Party Congress at a time when the country was facing an economic crisis and a growing concern for the poor socioeconomic status of its people. The annual rate of inflation was over 700 per cent, revenues were low and the fiscal deficit was large, the government budget was constrained by high military expenditure, and some areas of the country were on the verge of famine (Van Arkadie & Mallon, 2004).

Reforms included policies to support the move towards a market-oriented economy under three main objectives: the development of the agricultural sector that would disband agricultural collectives to allow farmers to trade their products on the market; the expansion of consumer goods production and establishment of small service industries by the private sector; encouraging trade and foreign investment by relaxing regulations for foreign investors.

Following changes to foreign investment laws and reform of the banking sector in the early 1990s, Vietnam saw an influx of foreign investments. This period also coincided with the lifting of the 19-year US trade embargo (under the Trading with the Enemy Act), which also brought a flood of US companies and Vietnamese expats to invest in Vietnam. ANZ Bank was one of the first foreign banks allowed to open in Vietnam in 1993. It played a key role in providing technical assistance and institutional support to the Government of Vietnam in reforming the weak banking sector and bringing it in line with international standards.

By the late 1990s, the pace of reform had accelerated. The poorly performing public sector was rationalised, inflation was reduced to less than 10 per cent, agricultural production increased, the private sector flourished, the standard of living rose and the poverty rate dropped. Today, it is evident that reforms introduced under Doi Moi more than 30 years ago, has transformed Vietnam into a growing, politically stable economy that is providing improved socioeconomic outcomes for its people.

3. Methodology

This chapter includes an overview of the Case Study design, development and implementation. This is the tenth Case Study of the Facility. Vietnam was one of five Case Study countries proposed in the Year 3 Facility Annual Plan. As stated, Vietnam was selected as a Case Study country on the basis of having a sufficiently large numbers of alumni participants in the Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility Survey, Year 2, in the field of Management and Commerce. Of particular interest were the significant numbers of female respondents, 30 out of 52 who responded, many in formal or informal leadership roles in the private sector.

A decision was made to conduct the first all-female Case Study to gain focused data on the experiences of alumnae following their award in Australia, and at a unique time in Vietnamese history- the late 1990's- 2000's, when the fledgling finance and banking sector was rapidly transforming towards a market oriented economy.

3.1 Overall Case Study design

The purpose of the Facility Case Studies is to collect detailed qualitative data on the impact and benefits of the Australia Awards. The Case Study methodology proposed is based on the Facility Case Study Approach, which was developed in the inception phase of the Facility and reported in the Annual Plan for Year 1.

The Global Strategy and Australia Awards Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (the Framework) form the basis for the Case Study design. The research questions, propositions, data collection instruments, and report template are built around these frameworks. Findings reported by alumni are triangulated with relevant stakeholders such as employers and colleagues, and industry bodies thereby strengthening findings by providing further evidence to support or refute propositions. This methodology was developed by the Facility and SCB.

The overarching theory that has guided the design of this Case Study methodology is based upon the goal of the Australia Awards that '... partner countries progress their development goals and have positive relationships with Australia that advance mutual interests'.

The Case Study research questions are framed by the intended long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards as guided by the Framework:

1. How do alumni use the skills, knowledge and networks gained on award to contribute to achieving partner-country development goals?
2. How are Australia Awards contributing to Australia's economic and public diplomacy outcomes?
3. How has being an Australia Award alumni impacted alumni?
4. Are the benefits of receiving a scholarship experienced equally by all groups who have received them?

The primary unit of analysis for this Case Study is the alumnus or alumna. Case Studies seek to explore how alumni of Australia Awards have acted to contribute to the achievement of the goal and objectives of the Australia Awards.

3.2 Methods

The data collection method used for this Case Study was through interviews. A set of questions were developed for each key participant group, namely alumnae, colleagues and employers (both of alumnae and generally), alumni associations; and the DFAT staff and managing contractors working on the Australia Awards in partner countries. Questions for each key participant group (see Annex 2) align with the research propositions (located at Annex 1) and long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards. This ensures that data collected directly relate to the key questions the Case Studies are seeking to answer and that there is consistency across each Case Study.

3.3 Sample

At the time of planning this Case Study, data from the Year 2 Tracer Survey in Vietnam revealed 52 alumni who had completed scholarships in the field of Management and Commerce between 1996 and 2005 (the focus period for the Facility in Year 3). From this group, there was a significant cohort of female alumnae (30 alumnae), with the majority of these alumnae working in the private sector in formal or informal leadership positions.

This presented a unique opportunity to gain focused data on the experiences of alumnae following their award in Australia in a largely male-dominated sector and corresponds to “Ngày phụ nữ Việt Nam” - Vietnamese Women’s Day celebrations on the 20 October 2018. The focus on alumnae is also aligned with the three core objectives outlined in Australia’s current ‘Aid Investment Plan Vietnam: 2015-16 to 2019-20’; (1) enabling and engaging the private sector for development, (2) assisting the development and employment of a highly skilled workforce, and (3) promoting women’s economic empowerment. Eight alumnae were shortlisted and invited to participate (DFAT 2018b).

3.3.1 Contact details

Alumnae were initially contacted by the Facility through their updated contact details found in the Year 2 Tracer Survey. Researchers worked closely with the Alumni Engagement Manager from the managing contractor, Ms Mai Hoang Le to schedule interviews with available alumnae and stakeholders in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. One alumna, Ms Pham was recommended to the Facility by her friend and former classmate – Ms To.

Table 1 **Vietnam Case Study alumni participants**

Name	Gender	Australian Government scholarship	University	Award Completed	Current position
Dr Anh Thu NGUYEN	F	Australian Development Scholarship	University of Technology Sydney	2001	Lecturer/Course Coordinator RMIT University Vietnam
Ms Ngoc Thien Kim NGUYEN	F	Australian Development Scholarship	Monash University	2004	Senior Manager - Head of Finance Operation, Prudential Vietnam Assurance
Ms Kim Binh HOANG	F	Australian Development Scholarship	University of New South Wales	1997	Chief Accountant - Group Director, Accounting and Finance Department, VNPT NET
Ms Thu Mai NGUYEN	F	Australian Development Scholarship	University of New South Wales	2001	Freelancer / Former World Wild Fund for Nature, Business Finance Controller
Ms Minh Huong TO	F	Australian Development Scholarship	University of South Australia	1996	CEO/Board Director General Management Morgan Stanley Gateway Securities
Ms Thi Nguyet Chinh HOANG	F	Australian Development Scholarship	La Trobe University	2002	Castrol BP, Operations Manager
Thi Thu Vinh DAO	F	Australian Development Scholarship	University of Sydney	2002	Deputy Director General Auditing Department specialised No 7, State Audit Office of Vietnam (SAV)
Thi Thanh Binh PHAN	F	Australian Development Scholarship	University of South Australia	1997	Head of Wholesales Banking and Transformations, Techcombank

In addition to the eight alumnae who participated in the Case Study, 14 other people were interviewed in order to provide context, triangulate alumni perspectives and better understand the impact of the Australian scholarships on the outcomes for Vietnam and Australia. These additional interviews included current stakeholders such as: the Australian Embassy in Hanoi, the managing contractor Coffey International (Coffey) who manages the Australia Awards in Vietnam on behalf of DFAT, a representative from the Vietnam Graduates from Australia Club (VGAC), the Executive Director of the Australian Chamber of Commerce Vietnam, and a former ANZ Executive who set up operations in Vietnam during the early 1990's. Where possible and available, colleagues or employers of alumnae were also interviewed to gather further information about the impact of the alumni. Table 2 lists these participants. In total, 22 people were interviewed for the Vietnam Case Study.

Table 2 **Key stakeholder and employer/colleague interviews**

Name	Position	Reason for interview
Dr Cain ROBERTS	Second Secretary, Economic and Development Cooperation Section, Australian Embassy	Finance and banking overview
Mr NGUYEN Quang Anh	Senior Trade and Development Manager, Australian Embassy	Finance and banking overview
Ms Linh-Huong, NGUYEN Thuy	Senior Economic Analyst, Australian Embassy	Finance and banking overview
Ms Stacey NATION	Counsellor (Political), Australian Embassy	Australia Awards key stakeholder (DFAT)
Ms Ruth O'HAGAN	First Secretary, Australian Embassy	Australia Awards key stakeholder (DFAT)
Mr Michael SADLON	Program Director, Coffey International, <i>(managing contractor of the Australia Awards in Vietnam)</i>	Australia Awards key stakeholder
Ms Mai Huong LE	Alumni Engagement Manager, Coffey International	Australia Awards key stakeholder
Ms Kim Hoa NGUYEN	M&E Manager, Coffey International	Australia Awards key stakeholder
Ms Hoang-Yen t. VO	Founder & Director Disability Research & Capacity Development Center	Background around disability and inclusion
Mr Robert MCCLELLAND	Head of Department, School of Business and Management (Employer) RMIT Saigon South	Employer of Dr Nguyen
Mr Michael ROBERTS	Executive Director, Australian Chamber of Commerce Vietnam (AUSCHAM)	Business insights on bilateral relationships
Mr Warren TAYLOR	Former ANZ employer and trainer involved in building capacity in the banking sector in Vietnam.	Insight into ANZ Vietnam development
Ms Celia YEO	Education Services Director, Victorian Government Trade & Investment – South East Asia	Alumni engagement
Ms Vivian DO	Chairwoman - HCM Chapter, Vietnam Graduates from Australia Club	Alumni engagement

3.4 Exclusions

Seven Case Study alumnae were selected from Year 2 Tracer Survey data, while one alumna was recommended by her former classmate and good friend. This study excludes anyone who did not complete their scholarship.

3.5 Data collection

The Facility piloted all Case Study instruments with Australia Awards alumni who resided in Australia. This process validated the instruments and adoptions to questions were made. In addition, an interview guide template for researchers to record all data collected was developed and utilised. Following a review of Year 1 Case Study data, questions were adjusted for clarity.

This Case Study was conducted by Ms Jo Doyle and Ms Yung Nietschke, core Facility and Research Pool staff who bring relevant expertise in qualitative research and international development. Case Study researchers worked together to undertake data collection and report writing: one conducted the interview and the other recorded and took notes. This enabled high-quality reliable data to be gathered. At the conclusion of interviews, the researchers discussed and verified the data to ensure completeness and accuracy.

3.6 Process

The Case Study field research was undertaken in Vietnam from 21 to 29 October 2018. One interview was conducted via telephone due to availability. Alumnae were requested to provide their resume to researchers where available for further background information. Participants were provided with background information relating to the research and the Facility, and all provided written informed consent to their participation.

3.7 Data management and reporting

All interviews were voice recorded (with approval granted to do so). In addition, the Case Study researchers annotated responses during the interview. A transcription specialist transcribed all interview recordings. After the completion of the interview and transcription process, the Case Study researchers consolidated the written and oral recordings into a single near-verbatim transcript (with restarting of sentences and fillers excluded).

3.8 Transcription approval and coding

Interview scripts were subsequently coded using computer assisted qualitative data analysis software, NVivo. This enabled emerging themes to be identified and links to be made between participants that supported or refuted the research propositions, as aligned with the long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards.

Analysis of the Case Study data involved a strategy that was guided by the theoretical proposition developed under the conceptual framework for the Case

Study and by the techniques identified in the Facility's Case Study Approach document.

3.9 Limitations

There were a number of limitations of this research that were inherent to both the nature of the research and the research process, as discussed below.

3.9.1 Positive response bias

It is probable that alumni who felt that they had a positive experience as an Australian Government scholarship recipient and/or had success in their career following their award are more likely to agree to participate in Case Studies. In a study by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK, 'A study of research methodology used in evaluations of international scholarship schemes for higher education' (Mawer, 2014) recognition of positive response bias is highlighted:

...there is widespread recognition that a more pressing problem is nonresponse bias in which those who reply to sample surveys are likely to be engaged with alumni associations or tracing (e.g. Day, Stackhouse and Geddes, 2009) and disproportionately represent the 'successful' outcomes of scholarship programmes.

Accordingly, it is likely that the alumni in the Vietnam Case Study had a positive bias towards their experience, outcomes and views of Australia. The Facility has developed interview questions and analyses approaches to reduce the impact of this bias – these are applied consistently across all Case Studies. Through this approach, leading questions are avoided and alumni are offered opportunities to reflect on their outcomes at the beginning and at the end of the interview without specific questions to guide their answers.

3.9.2 Nature of the research

Outcome 1 of the Global Strategy is that 'alumni are using the skills, knowledge and networks gained on award to contribute to achieving partner-country development goals'. However, some alumnae have shaped development goals rather than contributed to them, and while it may be outside the purview of partner-country development goals that this research is being evaluated against, such contributions are still significant.

The Case Study researchers experienced difficulty in evaluating Outcome 2 'alumni are contributing to cooperation between Australia and partner countries', and Outcome 3 'effective, mutually advantageous partnerships between institutions and business [have been developed] in Australia and partner countries'. These two outcomes are aligned with the second research question for the Case Study 'How are Australia Awards contributing to Australia's economic and public diplomacy outcomes?' There is an overlap and difficulty in differentiating 'cooperation' and 'partnerships'. The research team delineated them by determining that Outcome 2 relates to people-to-people links including informal relationships; whereas Outcome 3 specifically relates to institutional links between the partner-country and Australia, which alumni have contributed to establishing.

No issues were encountered by the research team in collecting, collating, coding or analysing data related to Outcome 4 of the Australia Awards - 'Alumni view Australia, Australians and Australian expertise positively'.

3.9.3 Research process

The ability to code the interview transcripts effectively was dependent on understanding the partner-country development goals, which was not always possible. Researchers involved in the Case Study made concerted attempts to identify relevant secondary data such as policy documents, papers, books and digital resources to provide background and insight into development plans, policies and changes over the time span of 1996 -2005, the years of focus for Year 3 when these alumni completed their scholarship.

4. Development Outcomes

Summary findings

Alumnae have made significant contributions to the development of standards, policies and procedures and codes of conduct within the finance sector; leadership and ethical practice; and training and capacity building within the emerging financial and banking sector in Vietnam.

Examples of **contributions to development** include:

- development of accounting standards for Vietnam
- improving auditing standards, policies and quality control of government expenditure
- development of codes of conduct to improve transparency and reduce corruption
- training and capacity building sector wide
- policy contribution at the national and international level.

Key enabling factors

Alumnae identified the following factors which enabled them to make contributions following their scholarship:

- strong technical skills in the finance and banking sector
- English language proficiency and intercultural skills
- critical and strategic thinking skills developed on award
- strong family support
- a desire to contribute to the development of a market-orientated economy.

Key challenging factors

Alumnae highlighted challenges they have faced in making further contributions:

- English language barriers
- corporate governance and cultural differences between multinational firms, private Vietnamese companies and State run organisations
- Vietnamese parents and students not valuing local teaching staff as highly as expats.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter details the development impact of alumnae and explores the Australia Awards long-term Outcome 1: 'Alumni are using their skills, knowledge and

networks to contribute to sustainable development'. The analysis and discussion explores the following Case Study propositions:

- alumni use their skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to achieving partner-country development goals
- alumni develop skills, knowledge and networks on award that enable and are used to contribute to achieving partner-country development goals
- alumni understand, value and want to contribute to partner-country development goals.

This Case Study shows that Vietnamese alumnae have **made strong contributions** to banking and finance sector of Vietnam, with **impact at the local, national and global level**.

4.2 Background

Prior to the Doi Moi reform policies of 1986, there was 'virtually no financial markets' in Vietnam and there were only three State run financial institutions (Vuong, 2010). Doi Moi opened up the economy to the private sector investment, beginning the country's transition from a centrally planned economy towards a socialist market orientated economy.

From 1990 to 2010, Vietnam went through a major economic transformation. Doi Moi reforms 'revolutionised Vietnam's financial economy'; legitimising private ownership and entrepreneurship, and allowing the development diverse financial markets and creation of the stock market in 2000 (Vuong, 2004).

The Vietnamese government recognised the need to build human resource capacity in this sector and worked closely with the Australian Government to select the best students and employees to go on scholarship to gain specialised technical skills to help state owned organisations reform, and support foreign companies to establish operations in the transforming economy.

The alumnae featured in this Case Study returned to Vietnam at a unique turning point in the country's economic history. Their studies in Australia had equipped them with highly sought after technical knowledge, valuable English language skills and intercultural competencies which made them highly employable and allowed them to contribute to the rapidly developing finance and banking sector.

The following chapter will explore contributions of alumnae to the ongoing transformation and internationalisation of the Vietnamese economy through the development and implementation of corporate governance frameworks (policies and procedures, codes of conduct, operating guidelines and compliance); leadership and commitment to ethical practice; training and capacity building.

4.2.1 Skills development on award

Within this chapter are examples of a range of skills that alumnae developed while on their scholarship that they have been able to utilise on their return from Australia. While these skills are implicit throughout the analysis that follows, a list of skills identified by the alumnae, their colleagues and/or employers is provided here to highlight the breadth in knowledge gained by alumnae on award.

Generic/broad/soft skills developed include:

- critical thinking
- communication
- leadership
- intercultural competence
- integrity
- innovation

Areas in which *practical/technical/'hard'* skills were developed include:

- essential sector specific skills in: banking, finance, corporate governance, accounting and auditing
- English: reading/writing/listening/speaking
- policy development and implementation
- risk analysis and management
- strategic planning
- project management
- international compliance in finance and banking
- digital literacy

4.3 Alumnae contributions

The contributions of alumnae explored in this Case Study highlight involvement in the ongoing transformation and internationalisation of the Vietnamese economy. These alumnae have been a part of this maturation by developing and implementing corporate governance frameworks (policies and procedures, codes of conduct, operating guidelines and compliance); through leadership and commitment to ethical practice; and in their contribution to training and capacity building. These achievements are discussed in this section.

4.3.1 The Development of standards, policies and procedures and codes of conduct within the finance sector

Alumnae in this Case Study have been at the forefront of change within the finance and banking sector in Vietnam. These alumnae have contributed to the development and implementation of industry standards, policies and procedures, codes of conduct and built capacity within their organisations.

The early 1990's saw the opening up of the Vietnamese economy to foreign investors. Prior to the Doi Moi reforms in 1986, Vietnam did not have a financial sector and had only three State run banks: The National Bank of Vietnam (NBV), The Bank for Investment and Development (BIDV) and The Bank for Foreign Trade. As noted by former **ANZ executive Mr Warren Taylor**, who was a key advisor to the Vietnamese government at the time, the majority of Vietnamese

citizens held little faith in financial institutions, preferring to keep their money 'under the bed'.

Box 2 ANZ Vietnam

ANZ Bank has had a long history of cooperation in Vietnam, dating back to the early 1990s when it was invited by the Government of Vietnam to assist with developing and modernising the banking industry. As the private sector flourished under Doi Moi reforms, it was evident that the limited functions of the central banking system were inadequate to facilitate legitimate business operations and attract foreign investments.

During this time, ANZ Bank provided critical technical advice and institutional support to the Government of Vietnam to develop the skills of government officials and commercial bankers. Importantly, ANZ assisted Vietnam in developing laws introduced systems and standards to regulate the banking sector. Built on a relationship of trust and mutual respect, Australian advisors at ANZ also made significant contributions to reforms in other sectors, such as the establishment of a land titles system (which allowed the expansion of the agricultural sector) and the development of the aviation industry in Vietnam.

In 1993, ANZ was one of the first foreign banks to open a branch in Vietnam, and in 2008 was granted a banking license to operate a fully-owned foreign bank in the country. It had a prominent retail business which grew from 28 employees to 550 across eight branches in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, serving 125,000 customers. ANZ was the biggest Australian investor in Vietnam, until 2017 when the bank sold its retail business to concentrate on its commercial banking operations



Image 1 ANZ Vietnam Credit: Shutterstock Images

International standards

Alumnae have been involved in providing expertise in developing and establishing international regulatory standards both in Vietnam and internationally. These standards have helped strengthen the emerging financial and banking sector in Vietnam.

Ms Hoang Kim Binh received an Australian Development Scholarship (ADS) to study a Bachelor of Commerce at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in 1994 and then went on to study a one year Master of Accounting and Finance at Macquarie University as a self-funded student. Returning to Vietnam with a strong background in financial accounting, Ms Hoang Binh joined the global accounting giant Ernst and Young where her first project saw her work with the Ministry of Finance, with a team of foreign consultants to develop a set of accounting standards for Vietnam. Ms Hoang Binh recalled:

The whole project was bringing accounting standards to Vietnam. The difficult thing for us at that time was how to translate the Australian norms, the accounting - English norms, the US norms into the Vietnamese system and make people understand how to make the standards, how the standard was set, and to put it in Vietnamese words, really difficult. Even though at that time, some of the terms were not even translated yet. Everything was totally new.

Ms To Minh Huong is a banking and finance specialist, and the current Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Morgan Stanley Gateway Securities in Hanoi. She was one of the first alumnae from Vietnam selected to go on scholarship to study banking and finance, and undertook a Bachelor of Banking and Finance at the University of South Australia (1997). Ms To worked for Citi bank on her return to Vietnam from 1996 – 2000 and built up a range of skills and expertise in client relationship management of large multinational organisations and State owned enterprises in Vietnam.

Those alumnae who worked in the public sector have also been involved in the development of standards. **Ms Dao Thi Thu Vinh** is the Deputy Director General of the Auditing Department No VII of the State Audit Office of Vietnam (SAV), and her department is responsible for auditing banks and financial institutions. While on scholarship she studied a Master of Commerce (Government and Business with Accounting) at University of Sydney (2001-2002), returning with a strong background in international accounting standards and governance.

As her career progressed, she has held a number of senior leadership roles in areas such as Audit Policy and Quality Control and was involved in the development of new auditing standards, and the transition of SAV towards a legally independent agency in 2006.

In my role, in my career, I'm very proud of being able to contribute in auditing particularly, to be able to provide the control and standards to government expenditure in other departments. So it's going to help progress the country and bring standards to the sector.

Development of policies and procedures

Working in the not for profit sector in Vietnam in the South East Asia region for over 17 years, **Ms Nguyen Thu Mai** has provided specialized operational expertise in the areas of accounting and finance. Ms Nguyen Mai studied a Master of Commerce (Accounting) at the University of New South Wales and moved to the non-government organisation (NGO) sector on her return to Vietnam in 2001. During her various roles she has been responsible for the development and monitoring of financial and operational policies and procedures such as human resource policies, financial guidelines and manuals, and the establishment of accounting systems to ensure compliance to international donor regulations. For example as the Regional Manager of the Mekong River Commission Secretariat she was responsible for improving the accounting policies and procedures to ensure funding from 22 separate international development agencies. Ms Nguyen Mai recalls her 'contribution was very much appreciated by the donors at the time and also the senior management in the secretariat'.

Her work in the NGO sector has contributed to the effective planning and management of aid in Vietnam, Cambodia, Lao, and Thailand for organisations such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP), ActionAid Vietnam, and the Mekong River Commission Secretariat.

With over 20 years' experience working in the in the banking sector for ANZ Vietnam, **Ms Phan Thi Thanh Binh** is using her skills and knowledge to provide strategic direction and transform Vietnam's largest private sector bank - Techcombank. In her new role as Head of Wholesale Banking and Transformations, she is part of the senior leadership team reforming the bank and the local banking sector through providing strategic insight into new business opportunities and the development of policies and procedures to scaffold change.

Here [at Techcombank], I have to build and have to change the system a little bit to make change, even the processes and procedures, and think about what policy, what kind of markets we want to go to, what kind of strategy we want to play in the market. Everything is not completely well organised and we have to think about how to build up the system, how to make it run sustainably and make it work professionally.



Image 2 Techcom Bank Vietnam Credit: Shutterstock Images

Development of codes of conduct

Transparency is one of the central challenges with the financial and banking sector in Vietnam and a number of alumnae state that they have been actively involved in the development and enforcement of codes of conduct within their areas of expertise to ensure transparency.

Ms To is working with colleagues as part of her role on the Board of the Securities Association to revise the Code of Conduct for the securities market in Vietnam. She is using her Australian expertise to identify 'gaps' and revise the code to adapt to changes in the market.

In addition to the development of codes, alumnae are providing training mechanisms to inform staff of their corporate responsibilities. This type of training is changing corporate culture in Vietnam and helping make staff more accountable.

Ms Hoang Thi Nguyet Chinh, is the Operations Manager at Castrol BP Vietnam, insists training is the only way to ensure compliance to codes. She stated

We tried to provide - even with our distributors - some training and some explanation on how to adhere to the code of conduct. As we say it helps in their own business as well, because they can manage their staff better

4.3.2 Leadership and the commitment to ethical practice

A strong theme to emerge during the Case Study was the impact of alumnae on workplace culture within the sector in Vietnam through the introduction of corporate governance structures and the strong emphasis on operating with ethics and integrity.

A number of alumnae interviewed attributed their strong commitment to ethical practice to their studies in Australia while on award, which provided them a framework of acceptable business practices, underpinned by strong corporate ethics.

According to **Ms Nguyen Ngoc Thien Kim**, who studied a Bachelor of Banking and Finance at Monash University and now works as a Senior Manager – Head of

Finance Operations for Prudential Vietnam – ‘studying in Australia transformed me...It’s not [just] about my knowledge, but about my working behaviour, working attitude, and I think - my ethics.’

Ms Nguyen Kim attributes advice from a final year lecturer at Monash University on the value of integrity as leaving a lasting impact on her belief system and resonating throughout her career.

He said that your integrity is your most valuable asset that you have to keep if you work in the financial industry. If you work in an industry, and you lose your integrity, so this means you lose it all. So I still keep that saying until now... If I’m confused whether it’s right or wrong, I just follow my beliefs. It’s a case of either do it because it’s integrity -- it keeps my ethics. It’s important.

Studying a Bachelor of Economics at La Trobe University, Ms Hoang Chinh returned to Vietnam in 2002. She attributes her studies in Australia to broadening her perception of the world and her way of thinking and providing her with a firm grounding in ethical practice.

Before, we rarely talked about that [corruption]... In Vietnam, business was: you go with whatever to deliver the result. You can bribe the government to get control. But one good thing I learnt - I studied corporate governance or studied law... [was to] understand the value of integrity and the value of good corporate governance in business... [This] was very new to Vietnam at that time as well.

Ms Hoang Chinh stated these skills were embedded in her at an early age and reinforced by working for foreign owned organisations such as Unilever and Castrol BP. As she has undertaken more senior roles she has become acutely aware of the need to mitigate risk and have strong corporate frameworks to protect business interests and ensure ethical behaviour of employees, shareholders and board members.

4.3.3 Training and capacity building

Alumnae in the Case Study cite the importance of training and mentoring others as essential to building capacity within their organisations and supporting the ongoing improvement of the finance and banking sector. Many alumnae gave examples of how they are actively involved in formal training programs as teachers or professional development facilitators, or through informal knowledge sharing and mentoring of colleagues within their organisations.

Educational leadership

Dr Nguyen Anh Thu, is an award winning lecturer at the School of Business and Management at RMIT Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City, and is making significant contributions to teaching and learning in Vietnam through the use of industry based projects.

In 2001, she completed a Master of Business Administration at the University of Technology Sydney as part of an Australian Development Scholarship. On her return from Australia she worked for the Accor hotel group before being drawn to the idea of teaching business at the newly open RMIT Vietnam campus and joined the team there in 2002. She has worked for RMIT Vietnam since 2002, completing her Doctoral Degree in Business in 2018.



Image 3 Dr Nguyen and her students Credit: Dr Nguyen, RMIT University Vietnam

As a strong advocate for student centred learning, Dr Nguyen states she is committed to bridging the gap 'between theory and practice' and ensuring 'students are well prepared for the workplace.' She works with a range of companies to create authentic industry based learning opportunities for her students in a range of subject areas. Examples of student assignments include: the creation of a digital marketing campaign for online shopping retailer Lazada Vietnam, and an evaluation of 'eco-friendly cosmetic trends' for L'Oréal Vietnam.

In recognition of Dr Nguyen's contributions to improving teaching and learning, she received the global RMIT - Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education Award for Teaching Innovation in November 2018. Dr Nguyen stated

My Australian education taught me the value of authentic assessment in engaging students in real world problems with an authentic audience in industry and communities. I focus students on delivering real values through solving real problems of industry and communities. My students are challenged to interact with industry and communities and apply knowledge and skills learned in my courses to provide solutions.

Dr Nguyen was nominated by her colleague and Head of the Department at the School of Business and Management, Associate Professor Robert McClelland. In his submission, he described Dr Nguyen as possessing an 'outstanding talent, experience and acumen that inspires and is deserving of recognition. This talent is genuinely altruistic for the benefit of students, her peers and her discipline.' He also highlighted Dr Nguyen's strong research skills and commitment to student-centred learning approaches and cited her consistently high Course Experience Survey (CES) data and her 2016 Award for Excellence in Teaching, and as examples of her great rapport with students and her teaching expertise.



Image 4 Deputy Vice-Chancellors Education Award Ceremony Credit: Jo Doyle, Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility

Corporate training and strengthening institutions

Ms Nguyen Mai currently runs a consultancy service for small NGO's in Vietnam to help these organisations set up systems and train staff to administer aid programs which are compliant to international standards. Using her wealth of experience from over 10 years in the NGO sector as a senior operations manager, Ms Nguyen helps set up transparent systems and operational guidelines so that fledgling NGOs can attract and administer foreign aid more effectively.

I provide my advice on various finance and operational issues, because those local NGOs, in order to survive, they have to apply for funds from various INGOs or even international agencies. The NGOs that I provide consultancy services to now, they got their big award from USAID. So one of the conditions by USAID is that they have to improve their operational matters overall, everything, including HR, finance and procurement, everything.

Ms Nguyen Mai's work is helping build financial and human resource capacity of organisations such Live and Learn Environmental Education, which aims to empower community groups in South East Asia to design and implement

environmental sustainable education projects and media campaigns at the grassroots level.

Professional Development training

Alumnae are using professional development workshops, induction sessions, trainee management programs and conferences to upskill their staff and build capacity within their organisations. For example Ms Hoang Chinh believes training is essential to ensuring staff follow the organisations' code of conduct and operating procedures. She provides induction and training conferences for all her sales staff and distributors so that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities as employees or representatives of Castrol BP. She stated 'I think one of the things that I'm proud of in my area of work is: with our conference, we also stand up [for] the value of non-compromising for bribery'.

Dr Nguyen set up and ran a social enterprise – a small trainee coffee shop in her hometown of Hue City to provide local unemployed graduates valuable hospitality skills. The business ran for about four years and helped upskill her local community and created opportunities for them to enter into the tourist and service industry.

When I went back home [from Australia] I saw a lot of young Vietnamese graduates. They have a university degree but they have no job. So I went back and I invested actually 500 million Vietnamese dong to open a coffee shop and I deliver a lot of training there, not only how to be a barista, a bartender but also service.

4.3.4 Mentoring and knowledge sharing

Alumnae interviewed in the Case Study reported sharing their skills and knowledge learnt in Australia through informally mentoring of colleagues and others within their industry. As senior leader at the telecommunications giant VNPT-Net, Ms Hoang Binh reflected:

I think I am very proud of the way that I get to share my knowledge with my colleagues - how to work in a group of people, manage a group of people to work and to have better results compared to working as individuals, to share the information, the way I was taught in Australia.

Alumnae have also volunteered to mentor others within their organisations and within their networks such as Ms Hoang Chinh who mentors economics students from the University of Economics. Other alumnae have participated as guest speakers at events hosted by the Vietnam Graduates from Australia Club for future students and those returning home from scholarship.



Image 5 VNPT-Net Telecommunications Giant Credit: Jo Doyle, Australia Awards Global

Tracer Facility

Enabling factors

4.3.5 Economic climate

As noted in the background section of this chapter, the alumna in this chapter returned to Vietnam at a time when the financial sector was rapidly internationalising.

Alumnae all state that they returned to Vietnam to an economic climate which was full of opportunities for those with qualifications in banking and finance sector and English language skills. Ms To recalled

When I came back to Vietnam, at that point in time, we were one of the first students who graduated from a Western country, and when we returned to Vietnam, there were only a few international banks in Vietnam at that point in time. So when we applied for the position, I think we immediately got admitted.

Ms Hoang Chinh joined a management trainee programme at Unilever on her return to Vietnam. At that time, Unilever was the largest foreign corporation in Vietnam and their training program was based on the company's British model. Ms Hoang Chinh recalled how Unilever was a young and ambitious company which was

...willing to let the young people make decisions, make proposals and make impacts in the business. I was given the task of leading a lot of new projects, especially in the area of customer development, which was a completely new area at Unilever.

Access to opportunities, allowed many of these women to lead projects and develop skills ahead of their peers. Ms Hoang Chinh noted that she was lucky to join the organisation during a time when Unilever were looking to transition to locally based staff which gave her increasingly more senior roles within the organisation.

They wanted to give more power to the local people. So they used to be a corporation full of ex-pats because at that time there were not enough Vietnamese or qualified [local staff] because the talent pool was very limited. Vietnam had just been open for a few years.... so [for] seven years, so they didn't have enough people. So the people who came back who were good in English, that could communicate well, very young and eager to learn, we came back just at the right time.

4.3.6 The need for technical skills

Alumnae returned from Australia with sought after technical knowledge and skills which made them highly employable in the rapidly transforming financial sector. These technical skills ranged from specialist knowledge of economics, accounting, banking and finance, risk management, international trade, corporate governance and compliance.

Australian business qualifications, English language skills and intercultural competencies developed while on award, made these alumnae ideal candidates for the growing number of multinational organisations who were joining the emerging private sector in Vietnam at that time. Six of the eight alumnae who participated in this Case Study returned to Vietnam and joined the private sector, working for multinational organisations such as Unilever, Citibank, Ernst and Young, and ANZ.

Ms To recalled returning to Vietnam in 1997 with a Bachelor of Banking and Finance, from the University of South Australia. She started work as a Financial Analyst for Citibank and discovered that she was one of the few local staff members with qualifications in banking and finance.

Most of colleagues at that time in Vietnam didn't have any background in banking and finance. So for Citibank, they selected the students from the Foreign Language University in Vietnam because they thought that the first thing they needed was English skills, and then after that they would train the banking expertise for those staff. I think I was the only one who had the banking and finance background at that point in time in the bank, which helped me a lot.

Ms Hoang Binh recalled that when she returned to Vietnam she wanted to work for one of the big four accounting firms (Ernst & Young, KPMG, Deloitte or Pricewaterhouse Coopers) and found her technical skills and Australian qualification highly sought after.

I was really lucky because when they read the resume, immediately I got an interview, because Australia is well known, and the university was well known, and the degree was well known. So I almost instantly got a job in the Big Four, in two of the Big Four companies.... I started at Ernst and Young.

Ms Phan recalled there wasn't a lot of competition for banking roles and alumni from Australia were in high demand 'because not many people at that time had that kind of background knowledge or training or qualifications.'

People respected you because you got a very good education. And I think the other thing is also about the language, because Vietnam [was] opening up and there are a lot of foreigners coming, and whether you work for a state-owned

organisation or whether you work for a foreign-owned organisation, you need to deal with that.

Having both the technical and English language skills meant that these alumnae were well respected and often promoted quickly. They were given opportunities to lead projects and make contributions to their organisation faster than many of their peers because of their unique skills and knowledge. According to Ms To:

I think I was promoted very fast in Citibank because I had some experience in Australia, which is quite different from the other colleagues, who only studied and worked in Vietnam. So we can always talk about something which is international more easily than someone who has not had that experience.

But not all the alumnae in the Case Study returned to the private sector. Ms Nguyen Mai was drawn to working in the NGO sector and found her strong communication skills, extensive accounting knowledge, and her experience of working for the British Council in Vietnam prior to going on award, made her highly employable.

The opening up of the Vietnamese economy also saw a need for highly trained public servants to help navigate public institutions through reform and to design and implement public policy. Returning to her role at the SAV in 2002, Ms Dao was able to use her strong understanding of international accounting standards developed on award to help support and lead change within her organisation.

4.3.7 Soft skills and strong personal characteristics

Alumnae all cited their time studying in Australia as being transformational, allowing for the development of critical and strategic thinking skills which enabled them to access opportunities and develop their careers in Vietnam as the financial sector evolved. Ms Hoang Chinh spoke for many of the alumnae when she recalled

What I brought back from Australia most, was the way of thinking - the open mindedness. Mostly, it was the thinking patterns. So it allowed me to adapt to the changes, go on with the changes and ride the changes faster.

Ms Dao felt her studies 'changed her views about accounting and finance' and her management course taught her to think critically and strategically to lead teams to implement change.

Ms Phan reflected on her ability to think critically which has enabled her to progress in her career and given her access to opportunities which has resulted in more and more responsibilities and senior leadership roles over time.

I think one of the very good things about Australian education is to teach you how to think, rather than teach you exactly how you do it. That actually helps me in my career. So if your way of thinking is right, then normally I think you get a very good result. And the good result comes by - so you can complete whatever task in the organisation in a very good way. So people recognise that, and that way, the opportunities come to you. So they ask you to do more. That means that you actually have more opportunity, you have a bigger scope of work, you have a bigger role, and I think that that's naturally [happened to me] since I've come back to Vietnam.

Other soft skills such as communication skills, intercultural competencies, adaptability and independence all equipped these women to navigate the changing economic climate in Vietnam.

In addition to these valuable soft skills these alumnae all possessed strong personal characteristics which allowed them to work in the competitive finance sector over the last 20 years. These characteristics include: courage, assertiveness, tenacity, and resilience.

4.3.8 Institutional support

As a member of the Vietnamese public service Ms Dao was given leave to undertake her scholarship in Australia and was supported by her department to undertake a year of English preparation training prior to going to study in Melbourne in 2001.

...at that time, you still keep your position at your office and still have some salary, not the full salary but some salary, about 40% of the total salary, something like that. But it allows you to continue to study.

After completing her Master of Commerce, Ms Dao was required to return to her role as the Deputy Director of the International Corporation Division of SAV, and worked there for a year and a half before moving to a senior role within the Auditing Department.

4.3.9 Multinational corporations provided strong corporate culture and training

For those women who joined the private sector and began working for large multinational organisations on their return to Vietnam, they were provided with ongoing professional development opportunities and a corporate culture which had strong, well established systems, guidelines and procedures.

Alumnae recalled they were able to build upon their technical skills and develop their business acumen in a regulated environment where their skills were valued and respected by local and expatriate staff.

Ms Hoang Chinh and Ms Nguyen Kim both joined Unilever when they returned from Australia. Although they worked at the company at different times they both attributed the organisation as having a big impact on their careers and providing them with a firm grounding in corporate culture and training. Ms Hoang Chinh recalled

I was only at Unilever for three and a half to four years, but my learning from those times has shaped my thinking and my business and the way to see business entirely. So I learned all the frameworks, all the strategic direction, the way to look at things and the thinking.

As alumnae progressed in their careers they were encouraged to pursue further study and training by their employers, colleagues and families. A number of alumnae returned to Australia to undertake post graduate degrees as either self-funded students or applied for scholarships to Australia, New Zealand and Japan. Ms Nguyen Kim received an Endeavour Award and studied a Masters degree in Australia.

Three alumnae in this Case Study were selected by their employers to undergo tailored leadership programs to enhance their leadership capacity: Ms Pham attending the exclusive Women in Leadership training course during her role at ANZ Vietnam; Ms Hoang Binh undertook a six month leadership course in Hawaii for VNPT NET; and Ms Nguyen Mai was selected for a two year leadership development course during her time at WWF, although the course was later cancelled due to funding cuts.

4.3.10 Family Support

All the alumnae attributed the strong support from their families as having a long lasting impact on their careers. Alumnae like Ms Nguyen Kim, whose mother's strong belief in her skills and abilities pushed her to apply for the scholarship initially and ensured she was able to get an opportunity to study in Australia against many odds. When she returned to Australia to complete her Masters degree, Ms Nguyen Kim's mother came to look after her young baby who was born while she was on award.

Parents also provided financial support to alumnae like Ms Hoang Binh who remained in Australia after her scholarship to undertake a one year self-funded Master of Accounting and Finance at Macquarie University.

Dr Nguyen was supported by her husband and family to undertake her scholarship in Australia, she was able to focus on completing her Master of Business Administration (MBA) while her two young children remained in Vietnam.

As their careers have progressed and alumnae have taken on more senior roles they have stated that they couldn't do the work they do without the support of their husbands and families.

4.3.11 Desire to make a difference

Case Study alumnae reported returning to Vietnam with a strong altruistic drive to improve the development of their country and share new ideas which enabled them to make a difference. This was influenced by the award itself and the opportunities that were available on their return to Vietnam based on their Australian qualifications and intercultural skills.

Ms Hoang Chinh pointed out that ADS alumni are very different to self-funded students which you see today.

To be honest, to share with you, there are differences between the students doing a scholarship and students going on their own, because their study background, their study motivation, their economic background and their interests are all very different.

Ms Phan reflected that Australian scholarships have enabled many recipients to help improve capacity within their organisations. Thus having a long term benefit for Vietnam as they are all now senior leaders.

At my time, there were about 200 scholarships, if I remember correctly, annually, there's at least 200 people in the system. I saw many people at that time working for state-owned organisations, and they returned and then were still blocked in the system and they are still in the state-owned organisations. So I don't see them actually moving from state-owned to foreign organisations because the difference

is quite large. So I think those people have a much bigger role. Nowadays their impacts are from what they learn and what they see, which is quite significant. So I think that's the value. The value is really about having a lot of people working in a different industries, working in different organisations and most of them become senior members in the organisations. So they made efforts and I think most of them tend to ... and we like to give them 'thank yous' or would like to say 'thanks to the [Australian] government' because they have great opportunities.

4.4 Challenges

4.4.1 English language skills

The main challenges identified by alumnae in this Case Study was the fact that many of them had not studied English prior to receiving their scholarships. During the late 80's and early 90's Russian was the main foreign languages taught in schools in Vietnam.

Six of the alumnae in this Case Study had to undertake some form of English language training prior to going on their scholarship. Many were provided with intensive English training by the Australian Government for up to one year prior to going to on scholarship.

Ms Hoang Chinh recalled 'at that time my English was not so great. I got about six months to stay in Hanoi learning English' before sitting the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam. Ms Hoang Binh recalled studying for one year prior to going to Australia, where she studied an additional Foundation level course at the University of New South Wales before starting her undergraduate degree.

Having to study additional English language classes also meant that sometimes an alumna would be separated from the main cohort group as they completed their studies. Ms Nguyen Kim recalled arriving in Australia a few months after the main group and feeling left out.

I arrived three or four months later, I felt a little bit lonely and a little bit left out because they already knew each other, they shared a house with each other they went to school with each other and they hung around with each other, so I was a little bit left out.

Ms Dao, who had studied her undergraduate degree in Russia recalled the difficulties she faced prior to going on her scholarship.

I applied for the AusAID scholarship. But at that time, studying in English in Vietnam was not as easy as nowadays because there was no internet, and communication and media in English were very rare. Most people studied English in evening class. So at that time my English was not so good, and when I applied for the AusAID scholarship, I had to study English in the Foreign University for about one year.

4.4.2 Cultural integration

Another common challenge was for alumnae who moved from a multinational organisation with a strong, defined corporate culture to a local company or state-owned enterprise was the difference in corporate culture. These women found the lack of structure difficult. For example, Ms Nguyen Kim joined a local start up stock

market company after leaving Unilever but found it very different to her previous organisation. She worked there for about a year and a half before deciding to move back to the multi-national environment which she felt was a more 'professional organisation'.

4.4.3 Social expectations

Early in her role at RMIT, Dr Nguyen found the attitude towards local Vietnamese teachers from some parents and students at RMIT Vietnam challenging because they had expectations that they would be taught only by expatriates.

I had a lot of stress because of the student perception when they looked at non-Vietnamese and Vietnamese, they might think, 'Why am I here and being taught by a Vietnamese person?' So I tried my best. Then I passed the first semester with the top teaching score, a very good evaluation. So students learn from the way that I deliver the lecture but also because I am a very practical person. I come from industry, so I bring into my teaching a very practical realistic perspective.

5. Economic and Public Diplomacy Outcomes

Summary findings

This Case Study provided evidence of strong and enduring links between alumnae and Australia and Australians, which **supports the Australia Awards long-term Outcome 2 and Outcome 3**. These links have been fostered with Australian organisations in Vietnam and in Australia, with Australian education institutions, academic partnerships, alumni associations and personal networks with Australians and other Vietnamese students' on award. Examples of partnerships included:

- joining Australian organisations in Vietnam and Australia and contributing their skills and knowledge to the organisation
- using professional networks to facilitate trade partnerships between Vietnam and Australia
- strengthening ties with Australian education institutions and academics through further postgraduate studies and research collaborations
- forging long lasting connections with fellow Vietnamese students while on award which broadened professional networks
- maintaining strong personal friendships with Australians they met while on award.

Key enabling factors

Key factors that enabled alumnae to develop and maintain partnerships with Australia and Australians were:

- the technical and soft skills gained on award gave alumnae an advantage over other graduates to secure employment opportunities with Australian organisations
- a strong network of local and Australian alumni associations that promote opportunities for linking alumnae with Australian organisations
- flexible award conditions that allowed alumnae to seek employment opportunities with Australian organisations on their return to Vietnam.

Key challenging factors

Factors that challenged alumnae in developing and maintaining partnerships with Australia and Australians were:

- loss of opportunities for alumni engagement due to a lack of coordination across various alumni associations

- lack of investment in time and commitment to build relationships with alumni for more purposeful engagement
- loss of connection over time creates barriers for active involvement in alumni activities and events.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes how alumni have contributed to Australia Awards long-term Outcome 2 ‘cooperation between Australia and Vietnam’, and to Australia Awards long-term Outcome 3 ‘establish effective, mutually advantageous partnerships between institutions and/or businesses in Vietnam and institutions and/or businesses in Australia’. Data was coded against these two long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards.

The M&E Framework describes activities under these outcomes as facilitating business or trade links, participating in international or regional bodies, or advocating for aspects of the relationship (for example, promoting study in Australia).

One of the implied on-award activities underpinning achievement of Australia Awards long-term Outcomes 2 and 3 is that scholars get the opportunity to make contact with Australian organisations while studying in Australia. This chapter explores this and other assumptions and describes the achievements of alumni in contributing to Australia Awards long-term Outcomes 2 and 3.

5.2 Background

In 2018, Australia and Vietnam marked 45 years of diplomatic relations. The partnership has been built on a long tradition of shared regional interests, economic cooperation and people-to-people links. The Strategic Partnership signed in 2017 between then-Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, elevated cooperation on a wide range of issues and changed the donor-recipient aid relationship to reflect Vietnam’s own plans for economic transition. This included a new focus on enabling the private sector, human capital development, women’s economic empowerment and ensuring the broad benefits of economic growth reach the poorest populations (DFAT, 2018).

The long history of economic and development ties between Vietnam and Australia is reflected in this Case Study through the links alumnae have forged and maintained with Australia and Australian organisations. In 1993, ANZ was the first foreign bank to establish a presence in Vietnam and has developed deep ties with Vietnam since that time. In an interview with the ANZ executive responsible for setting up the bank’s operations in Vietnam, he highlighted the trust and mutual respect that was embedded from the beginning of the partnership. This bilateral relationship created the foundation on which one alumna was able to build and maintain her links with Australia. She returned to Vietnam at a time when the banking sector was in its nascent form and was able to leverage her Australian skills and knowledge to gain employment and later to become acting CEO at ANZ.

RMIT is another Australian institution with a long track record in Vietnam. Established in 2000, RMIT is currently the largest Australian investor in Vietnam, after ANZ sold its retail banking business in 2017. It has over 7,000 students enrolled across its two campuses in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. One alumna is demonstrating strong and enduring links with RMIT through her role as a distinguished and awarded lecturer over the last 16 years with the institution.

The strong and vibrant network of Australian Alumni in Vietnam is estimated at over 50,000 (DFAT, 2016). Recognising the collective knowledge, expertise and influence of Australian alumni as a valuable diplomatic tool to strengthen ties between Australia and Vietnam, the Australian Embassy launched the *Australian Alumni in Vietnam Strategy 2016-2021* to guide strategic engagement with alumni in Vietnam. This Strategy was designed to implement the *Australia Global Alumni Engagement Strategy 2016-2020* by 'connecting, mobilising and celebrating' the achievements of Australian alumni in Vietnam.

Examples of institutional and personal links, which have stemmed from a strong history of bilateral cooperation between Australia and Vietnam and fostered by alumnae in this Case Study, are discussed below.

Box 3 RMIT Vietnam

RMIT is the largest Australian investor in Vietnam and the university attracts a diverse mix of local and international students from Australia, Europe, America and Asia. RMIT Vietnam was officially established in 2001 and offers both undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Ho Chi Minh and Hanoi. It has over 7,000 students and its purpose built campus in Ho Chi Minh has the look and feel of the RMIT Melbourne campus. It offers a range of Australian courses in the fields of: business and management, engineering, design and specialised English language programs.

Many international students spend a semester or two in Vietnam as part of RMIT's students exchange program. Australian students are able to apply for New Colombo Plan mobility grants to support their studies there and receive credit for the work undertaken. The programs are taught in English and are identical to those offered at RMIT Melbourne. The university employs local and internationally qualified staff.

5.3 Examples of cooperation and partnership

5.3.1 Alumnae are forging institutional and trade links with Australian organisations

Institutional linkages

Alumnae have maintained enduring links with Australian institutions since their return to Vietnam. These include connections with organisations in Australia through business and employment opportunities, professional development

courses and research collaborations. They have also made positive contributions to Australian organisations in Vietnam at RMIT University and the ANZ Bank.

Dr Nguyen, has been able to use her Australian skills and industry experience to pioneer innovative teaching practices throughout her 16-year career at RMIT Vietnam. As noted in the chapter above, this has earned her the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education's Award for Teaching Innovation for 2018. She also completed her Doctorate at RMIT and maintains strong links with her Australian supervisors through ongoing research collaborations. She is currently working on three research papers with her Australian supervisor for submission to international journals.

Ms Phan was employed by ANZ immediately on her return to Vietnam in 1997, in a junior administrative position. Since that time, she was able to leverage the skills and knowledge she'd gained in Australia to contribute to different areas of the bank and has been recognised for her contribution by being promoted to various senior roles over her 20-year career at ANZ. In 2015, Ms Phan was appointed acting CEO of ANZ Vietnam, a position which she found challenging but a good experience, as it allowed her to take on greater responsibilities and understand how different areas of the bank connect. She was also given opportunities to take on leadership roles for ANZ in the region, including as a board member of ANZ Vietnam and ANZ Royal in Cambodia, and chair of ANZ Laos. Ms Phan was also selected to participate in an executive leadership course for women, a highly-regarded program run by an Australian organisation called Chief Executive Women.

Ms To is another example of an alumna who has made a lasting contribution to an Australian organisation. She is the CEO of Morgan Stanley Gateway Securities, a securities company based in Hanoi with Morgan Stanley as its largest shareholder. After returning from award, Ms To was employed at Citibank Vietnam for two years. She then received a scholarship from the New Zealand government to undertake a Master of Business Studies (Banking) in 2000 and a Master of Management (Financial Economics) in 2001 at Massey University. At the completion of her Masters degree in New Zealand, she applied for and was successful in receiving a doctoral scholarship to study at the University of Western Australia (UWA). During that time, Ms To was approached by BankWest to assist them on the Basel II Project, to help BankWest meet its international regulatory requirements for risk management and capital adequacy. Ms To took leave from her doctoral studies to lead the Non-Retail Credit Risk Modelling Team through the process of developing, building, testing and validating several credit risk models from 2003-05. Her leadership in the successful completion of the project allowed BankWest to obtain advanced status accreditation from the Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority.

Other alumnae continued to forge linkages with Australian institutions after completing their Australia Award, and a number of alumni returned to Australia at a later date to undertake further studies. They were able to do this through scholarships from their educational institutions, the Australian Government or were self-funded. Dr Nguyen received funding from RMIT for her Doctorate, while Ms To received a scholarship from UWA to commence her Doctorate.

In 2004, Ms Nguyen Kim, finished her Bachelor degree at Monash University and returned five years later under the Endeavour Awards to undertake a Masters degree. Ms Hoang Binh was the only alumnae who was privately-funded. She decided to stay in Australia after completing a Bachelor of Commerce at the UNSW, to study a Master of Accounting and Finance at Macquarie University. Recognising the need for a post-graduate degree to advance her career in auditing when she returned to Vietnam, Ms Hoang Binh noted that:

It was a very quick decision because the Masters course is only one year. I was still young at that time. And lots of people say that it's easier if you take this straight away. If you come back and start working and then you get busy, you don't have time for that.

Trade links

Ms To is actively facilitating trade links with Australian industries in her role as the CEO of Morgan Stanley Gateway Securities, a company with interests in investment banking, capital raising and merger and acquisition transactions for local and international clients. She is also on the board of the Vietnam Securities Association and is using her connections to facilitate investment opportunities in Australia for Vietnamese investors. Ms To stated that 'if there's a chance that I can do anything, then I will try to promote Australia'. She added that because of her Australian education and her experience working in Australia, she has been asked by the Association to help arrange for a delegation of Chief Executives from some of the top 10 securities companies in Vietnam to visit Australia. She is using her networks in Australia and Vietnam (including contacts at the managing contractor's office in Hanoi) to facilitate bilateral trade partnerships, noting:

When we talk with the securities association, there's a demand from the clients of some of the securities companies to make investments in Australia. I told the contacts in Australia that there's this kind of event, so now they started to send out the opportunities that they have in Australia and then we [share] the idea with the companies in Vietnam. So I think it is just like a two-way communication. So we try to match the need from both sides.

These examples demonstrate that alumnae are making a significant contribution to positive bilateral relationships between Australia and Vietnam, and supporting Australia Awards long-term Outcome 3 by facilitating new and existing connections and partnerships between Australia and Vietnam.

5.3.2 Alumnae have maintained strong connections with other Vietnamese alumni

Most alumnae reported having a strong network of Vietnamese friends who studied with them in Australia. These friendships have been forged into both personal and professional networks, and alumnae have been able to leverage their networks in developing their careers and business interests. The benefit of a shared-experience in Australia not only creates a natural connection among alumni, but can help build trust and understanding which is critical in business. In Vietnam, as in many other Asian cultures, relationship building is the cornerstone of successful business partnerships and alumnae interviewed in this Case Study provided examples of this, as articulated by Ms To:

I think networking is one of the major benefits because whenever we talk to someone who also studied in Australia before, it's very easy to get the trust and some good feeling immediately. It's also helpful in terms of business. Whenever I meet with some partner and then when we realise that we studied in Australia, then the composition changes immediately.

Dr Nguyen is regularly involved with her university alumni network and where possible, engages with them to workshop business ideas and research projects. For example, using her University of Technology Sydney (UTS) alumni network in focus group interviews for a project on sustainable tourism.

Alumnae also identified closely with other Vietnamese students who studied at the same Australian educational institution or city. For example, Ms To stated that 'the Adelaide network is very, very strong' and provides networking opportunities for business leaders who studied in Adelaide, including the Chairman of Viettel which is the largest telecommunications company in Vietnam. Ms To has also maintained a strong personal connection with another alumna interviewed in this Case Study, Ms Phan, who studied the same course with her at the University of South Australia. Ms Phan, who was acting CEO at ANZ, said that she still keeps in contact with the friends she made on award and that 'most of them, if not all, are very successful, very, very successful'.

These women, who have progressed to senior leadership positions in the finance sector, are well-connected within a business community of highly successful individuals who have also studied in Australia. These alumnae, who have risen to positions of influence and prominence in Vietnam are contributing to the achievement of Objective 2 of the Australian Alumni in Vietnam Strategy, which seeks to build a network of leaders and advocates who can promote bilateral interests.

5.3.3 Alumnae have maintained positive relationships with Australians through their personal networks

All alumnae interviewed demonstrated a deep sense of gratitude to Australia and the Australian people they met while they were on award. This stemmed from a positive university experience, where alumnae were able to access wellbeing and academic support from their lecturers, course coordinators and student support services. Ms Hoang Chinh reflected on the two positive experiences she had when she arrived in Australia, one was support from international office at La Trobe University and the other was the Vietnamese community in Melbourne, which assisted her with housing, transportation and adapting to the cultural and academic culture in Australia.

Alumnae also described the lifelong friendships they have formed with Australian families who supported them while they were young students in Australia. Ms To has fond memories of her Australian host family who she remains in contact with. She regarded her host mother as her own mother. She described her experience as 'very lovely' because she was included in family events and they would regularly come to visit her. Similarly, Dr Nguyen had a host family who she refers to as her 'foster Australian parents'. She has remained in contact with them and has recently visited them in Wellington in 2016. Dr Nguyen has also developed a close

friendship with her former professor from UTS, stating that ‘every time I come back I visit her, the whole family, stay at her house and we cook together’.

Some alumnae were also able to draw support from their lecturers and course coordinators on their return to Vietnam, particularly in building their careers. For example, Ms To shared that her course coordinator wrote a very supportive reference letter which helped her secure a job at Citibank immediately after returning to Vietnam.

5.4 Enabling factors

A number of factors enabled alumnae to foster links and collaborate with Australia and Australians.

5.4.1 Strong Australian alumni networks foster opportunities to collaborate with Australian organisations

All alumnae interviewed in this Case Study were members of an alumni network, however, their level of engagement varies due to time and work commitments. As described in the above section, some alumnae are actively involved with their university alumni associations while others only participate when invited to specific events. For example, Ms Hoang Binh is a member of the UNSW alumni network and has attended events in Hanoi hosted by UNSW or the Australian Government. Ms To is a member of the Australia Global Alumni network and was recently invited to a high-level dinner with the Australian-ASEAN Council. She has also participated in professional workshops and seminars for Australian alumni.

The Australia Awards in Vietnam, managed by Coffey, facilitates professional links between Australia Awards alumni and Australian organisations through various activities and events. Mr Michael Sadlon, Program Director, described their role as a ‘matchmaker’ which connects different stakeholders with each other including alumni, Australian educational institutions, government and the private sector.

Alumnae have also been able to access Australian business contacts through the ‘matchmaking’ service of the Alumni Engagement Manager who is a member of the managing contractor’s team. For example, when Ms To, was organising a trade delegation visit to Australia, the managing contractor was able to connect her with businesses in Australia and vice versa. Ms Mai Huong Le, the Alumni Engagement Manager, highlighted other ways in which the managing contractor supports alumni such as mentoring programs, professional groups, panel discussions, workshops and competitions. The managing contractor also provides access to a Small Grants Fund, designed to help alumni advance a development or research priority area, improve alumni workplace environment or strengthen links with Australia.

One of the largest and most established alumni networks in Vietnam is the VGAC. It currently has over 6,000 members (many of whom are Australia Awards alumni) with five chapters across the country. VGCA is an active organisation which provides numerous networking opportunities and professional development workshops for alumni to maintain their engagement with Australian institutions.

Through their activities, they have formed partnerships with the Australian Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam, AusTrade and Australian educational institutions to promote professional and business networking opportunities for alumni. Ms Vivian Do, Chair of VGAC Ho Chi Minh Chapter, provided an example of this partnership:

We actually organised a coffee talk for the [University of Queensland] last week. So we organised a small workshop for them. They had two representatives from [the] business school and [the] engineering school coming in to talk about their school and also introducing their scholarship to potential students.

VGAC also provides professional development and mentoring opportunities for its members, through workshops and networking events. The organisation promotes and acknowledges the achievements of its alumni through the annual Australian Alumni Award. Each year, VGAC organises a gala dinner where alumni are invited to network with prominent Australians in the government and private sectors.

5.4.2 Highly valued Australian skills and experience helped foster links with Australian organisations

Alumnae who found employment with Australian organisations, both in Australia and in Vietnam, believed that the technical and English skills and experience they gained from their Australian education gave them an advantage over other graduates. When Ms Phan returned to Vietnam in 1997, she was one of only few foreign graduates who had the specialist skills in banking and finance to help build the nascent banking sector in Vietnam at a time. Compared to colleagues who graduated in Vietnam, she described how she was able to use her knowledge of international standards in banking and accounting processes to easily pass the exams conducted at ANZ. As she noted:

ANZ at that time, they looked for a certain type of knowledge and skill set, so the knowledge was there, so I was equipped with all the knowledge that was necessary for the job.

While technical skills were identified by alumnae as an important factor in securing job opportunities with Australian organisations, they also described the soft skills they gained while on award that helped them to succeed in the workplace. Dr Nguyen discussed how an Australian education has changed her mind set and how this in turn, has influenced the way she teaches her students at RMIT. As she explained:

So I think the biggest two things that I want to convey to my students and the younger generation is: transform how you think and transform how you do things. You can transform the world.

Mr Sadlon and Ms Le from the managing contractor also affirmed the importance of having soft skills in long-term relationship building within Vietnam. Citing examples from the competition called 'How Australia Transformed You', Ms Le noted that Australia Awards alumni become more open-minded and have a different sense of commitment when they return to Vietnam. Mr Sadlon added that it is easier to maintain a connection and engage with Australia Awards alumni (compared to self-funded alumni) because 'they feel as though they owe something'.

5.4.3 Flexible award conditions enabled some alumnae to strengthen links with Australian organisations post-award

Alumnae interviewed for this Case Study were either selected by the Government of Vietnam to apply for the ADS as promising high school graduates with outstanding university entrance scores or, were candidates from the 'open category'. Alumnae who applied under the 'open category' were not bound to return to their government institutions post-award. This enabled many alumnae to seek employment opportunities with Australian and other multinational companies on their return to Vietnam. Ms Phan was the only alumna who was employed by an Australian organisation, on her return. Others were able to find work with multinational companies such as Unilever (Ms Hoang Chinh, Ms Nguyen Kim) and Accor Hotels (Dr Nguyen), or with an international NGO such as ActionAid (Ms Nguyen Mai). Only one alumna returned to her role in the public service at the State Audit Office of Vietnam.

Several alumnae had the opportunity to return to Australia post-award to further their studies. After completing her Bachelor degree at UNSW, Ms Hoang Binh remained in Australia for one year as a self-funded student to complete her Masters degree at Macquarie University, returning to Vietnam in 1997. She has maintained her connection to both universities through their alumni associations. Dr Nguyen was invited to apply for a doctoral scholarship at UTS by her then supervisor, but decided to return to Vietnam at the completion of her Masters degree. Dr Nguyen has since completed her Doctorate at RMIT University, where she has been a lecturer at the Ho Chi Minh City Campus for the last 16 years. She has maintained a close personal friendship with her former supervisor from UTS and visits her regularly when she is in Australia. Dr Nguyen is now actively involved with both the UTS and RMIT alumni networks.

5.5 Challenging factors

A number of factors challenged alumnae in fostering links and collaborating with Australia and Australians.

5.5.1 The Australian alumni network in Vietnam is strong but coordination between stakeholders is fragmented

The network of Australian alumni associations in Vietnam is vibrant and provides many opportunities for alumni to connect with each other, as well Australian organisations. The alumni networks include VGAC, Australian education institutions, Australian state government organisations (such as Victorian Government Trade & Investment) and Australian Government (Australia Awards alumni). Most alumnae in this Case Study reported being involved with one or more alumni associations by participating in networking events, professional development workshops, high-level meetings, or by subscribing to mailing lists.

However, better and more efficient coordination between different partners could be improved. As one stakeholder noted:

...sometimes there's patch protection. The universities don't necessarily want to share what they're doing with another university. Or we find out at the last minute that there is a delegation coming. There has to be more coordination and more

planning. There are a lot of opportunities to bring people together. We don't have to create new opportunities. The opportunities are there. But it's about having the time, the notice, and the resources to bring all those people together.

Ongoing alumni engagement and relationship building is important within Vietnam. One suggestion is to be more strategic about how alumnae are engaged at a high-level. Mr Sadlon from Coffey noted that there are Australian alumni who are in positions of influence in the government or in business who could be involved in partnership talks between the governments of Australia and Vietnam.

Information sharing among Australian alumni stakeholders could be used more strategically to promote mutual benefits, for example, sharing opportunities to celebrate the achievements of Australian alumni and highlighting the value of Australian education. During the interview with Dr Nguyen for this Case Study, she shared that she had been awarded the RMIT Deputy Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Innovation. This information was communicated with the Australia Alumni Engagement Manager at the managing contractor and shared with DFAT, and a profile on Dr Nguyen was published on social media, celebrating her achievement.

Better coordination between stakeholders also avoids duplication of effort and inefficiencies in systems and processes. This is particularly important in a crowded network of alumni associations like Vietnam, where alumni are on numerous databases. A more coordinated and efficient method of collecting alumni information could prevent 'alumni fatigue' due to over-surveying or repeated requests for participation.

5.5.2 Relationship building could be used more purposefully to foster alumni engagement

In Vietnam, as in many other Asian cultures, relationship building is an important process that requires time and commitment. As described in the previous section, alumnae have formed long-lasting personal and professional relationships with fellow awardees, which they have been able to leverage in their business and careers. In engaging with alumni, Ms Vo from VGAC, said that the organisation relies on personal relationships within the network when contacting alumni, especially those who are in high-level positions. She further stated:

So any time we have any event or anything that's really exclusive, we actually personally call our alumni, brief them on that, make sure they are available because this is a benefit for themselves as well. Because if it's only an email or anything, they might not see the value of that. So we actually have to call them, tell them so that they see the value of that and then they start coming out and do the sharing.

Mr Sadlon indicated that personal relationships take a long time to cultivate and the rotating nature of Australian Embassy staff every three years may impede efforts to build enduring and meaningful relationships with alumni. The risk is that alumni end up fostering relationships with the managing contractor rather than the Australian Embassy. Ms Vo also identified the challenges of maintaining relationships with the alumni office of Australian education institutions, due to the high rotation of staff.

The alumni office is outside of Vietnam and the staff turnover is also high, so a lot of times we have that contact, they're been the contact for a few months and then suddenly it's quiet and then we know that the person is no longer there.

Mr Sadlon and Ms Vo viewed effective alumni engagement as promoting mutual benefits for the alumni and Australian stakeholders. For example, alumni are more likely to participate in events where there are opportunities for them to engage with high-level Australian representatives. Ms Vo suggested that a photo opportunity with the Australian Ambassador or Consul would be a useful way of showing alumni they are respected and valued. It also gives them a sense of pride as it recognises their 'status' and achievement in their career or in business. Mr Sadlon reaffirmed the view that mutual respect is important in maintaining relationships with alumni. He added that alumni want to be 'valued for their opinion' and need to be respected. Often when alumni are called upon at the last minute to attend an Australian Embassy event, it can be viewed as disrespectful because they are often highly successful people with demanding schedules. This kind of practice can be counterproductive to effective relationship building. Both Mr Sadlon and Ms Vo proposed a more strategic and coordinated approach that promotes more purposeful engagement, such as sharing opportunities for alumni to participate in high-level meetings with Australian Government and business representatives. These opportunities have mutual benefits as some Australian alumni are already in highly influential positions within the Vietnamese government or the business community.

5.5.3 Losing connections over time

For some alumnae, keeping in contact with Australian alumni networks and Australian organisations has been challenging due to the latent period of time since their return to Vietnam. Ms Nguyen Kim was an active member of the organising committee of the UNSW and ADS alumni networks for the first four years post-award, but is now less involved. Similarly, Ms Hoang Chinh said that she was one of the older alumni who graduated from La Trobe University, and therefore does not feel a close connection with alumni who have graduated more recently. This has discouraged her from actively participating in La Trobe University alumni events, although she 'still watch[es] and keep[s] an eye on them, to see what they are up to, and once in a while, I still join the alumni'. While alumnae find it difficult to engage with their alumni networks over time, they still see the value of being a member of an alumni network. Ms Hoang Binh noted that she does not regularly attend alumni events, but uses her network of UNSW alumni for advice by emailing the group with questions and seeking further information.

6. Views about Australia and Australian Expertise

Summary findings

Alumnae in the Vietnam Case Study hold enduring positive views about Australia, Australians and Australian expertise. In particular, alumnae have positive views of the quality of teaching and learning, Australian expertise in the banking and finance sector, and the relaxed and inclusive lifestyle.

The Australia Awards long-term Outcome 4, that 'Alumni view Australia, Australians and Australian expertise' has been achieved based on the evidence provided by alumni in this Case Study.

Alumnae shared examples of **positive views of Australia and Australian expertise** as a result of their positive experiences of life and study in Australia and the support they received on award.

While alumnae pointed to initially struggling with English language skills, discrimination, the separation from family and friends, culture shock and family expectations these did not impact their overall positive views. On-award support during the transition period may assist scholars to adjust and contribute to ensuring positive experiences of life in Australia and stronger networks with Australians.

6.1 Introduction

The Australia Awards aims to develop positive views of Australia, Australians and Australian expertise (DFAT, 2016). One element of the 'theory of change' that underpins the Australia Awards is that undertaking an Australian scholarship will result in outputs that include:

- awardees/fellows and their families have a positive experience of life in Australia
- awardees/fellows complete good quality, relevant education, training, other professional development and research activities.

It is assumed that these factors will translate to the long-term outcome of alumni viewing Australia, Australians and Australian expertise positively. This outcome, in tandem with those on skills, networks, cooperation and partnerships, will contribute to the goal of the Australia Awards that partner countries progress their development goals and have positive relationships with Australia that advance mutual interests (DFAT, 2016).

This chapter includes evidence of Vietnamese Australia Awards alumnae's views about Australia, Australians and Australian expertise based on their experiences in Australia and at Australian institutions. Their views relate to receiving effective support from their institutions, forging strong academic relationships with lecturers, creating enduring friendship with Australians in the workplace or while on award,

creating strong networks with other awardees, which has helped them to contribute to the transformation of the financial and banking sector in Vietnam.

These perceptions shared by alumnae and stakeholders demonstrate that the **Australia Awards long-term Outcome 4, 'Alumni view Australia, Australians, and Australian expertise positively', has been achieved.**

6.2 Examples of positive views of Australia and Australian expertise

All alumnae in this Case Study shared positive views as a result of their time in Australia and spoke warmly of their experiences living, studying and working in Australia. A number of alumnae found the opportunity to study in Australia as transformational. In this section, the positive views and experiences of alumnae are discussed in three broad areas: the quality of learning and teaching experienced at Australian institutions, respect for Australian banking and finance expertise, and the positive experiences of culture and lifestyle while in Australia.

6.2.1 Quality of learning and teaching

All alumnae expressed positive views about the quality of teaching and learning in Australia. Alumnae recalled their lecturers and tutors as 'friendly', knowledgeable, and very supportive; helping to develop their confidence and their critical thinking skills. Ms Nguyen Kim reflected that she found her lecturers really influential as they came from diverse backgrounds and shared their 'life experiences' in their teaching, opening her mind to different ways of thinking and provided a deeper insight into her subject matter and to Australian culture.

I talked to different lecturers, and different lecturers have a different views about life. Because I really appreciate the lecturers from Australian universities... So what they share with students is not about the academic stuff, about the tutoring stuff, but they want to share about the living experience, the life experience, the life lessons. So I think it's good.

A number of alumnae forged strong ongoing relationships with academic staff who acted as mentors and encouraged them to achieve their goals. Ms Nguyen Mai reflected that her time in Australia built up her confidence and ability to express her opinion which has shaped her career since.

For me personally, I became more confident of myself, more confident in expressing my opinion. Those are the issues that - I think you may see it from a lot of Asian people, going to uni, even though maybe you know it in your head, but you rarely dare to raise your hand. So I'm more open and more confident about myself whenever I talk in front of groups or people or in a big meeting or anything to convince any issues.

Coming from a rural background, Ms Hoang Chinh reflected that she had little knowledge of the world before studying in Australia and was dogmatic in her beliefs. She remembered fondly how she was encouraged to think critically during her time in Australia which transformed her thinking and opened her mind. She stated that she learnt how to 'accept the new things, accept the different points of view, how good things are brought to us by the diversity. So those changed my thinking completely.'

Ms Hoang Binh recalled arriving in Australia and being impressed by the 'beautiful, huge university', the wonderful facilities and 'a new way of teaching and learning'. She stated:

The first few years I didn't work at all. I just studied because it's new, so I got to know about the course, the way of learning, teaching and especially when you move from high school in Vietnam, the way of teaching is that you have the teacher guide is like the tutor. They guide you a lot. But when I went to Australia, I had to prepare, to plan everything by myself and do the work plan for the whole semester. So it was quite a new way of learning for me as well.

Ms Dao who completed her undergraduate degree in Russia also noted a big difference in the style of teaching and the course structure. She liked the 'flexibility' of being able to select different units as part of her Masters degree, and undertook a unit in management and learnt about the importance of strategic planning.

Alumnae who attended specialist English language programs prior to their university studies, attributed this to helping them to adapt to the Australian learning style and build their confidence in speaking English. For example: Ms Hoang Binh studied a one year Foundation program at UNSW prior to studying her Bachelor of Commerce and Masters degree.

It was really helpful...to get to know about the way of teaching, the teachers, the school, other ways of learning and to get used to English as well, because I studied Russian when I was in high school.

On their return to Vietnam, alumnae shared their positive experiences of studying in Australia with their family, friends and colleagues, often encouraged people in their networks to apply for scholarships or study in Australia. A number of alumnae in the Case Study returned to Australia either as scholarship recipients or self-funded students, while Dr Nguyen completed her doctoral studies at the Australian-run RMIT Vietnam and was supervised by Australian-based professors.

According to the Chairperson of VGAC Ms Vivian Do:

We actually have a lot of members who have finished their bachelor's, coming back to Vietnam, working for about two or three years, and then they will apply for a different Australian school for their Masters or some of them will apply for a scholarship to do a PhD in Australia.

Alumnae have also sent their own children to study at high school and undergraduate degrees in Australia. For example Ms To's eldest daughter studied the International Baccalaureate program at Kilmore International School in Victoria, before going onto study at Monash University. Ms To is a firm advocate for the Australian education system and actively promotes it within her networks. She also plans to send her youngest daughter to Monash.

I always have a strong belief in the education system in Australia. For example, my second daughter, she is now also studying in Hanoi-Amsterdam High School. Most of her class now, the children, they plan to go to the US. But when I have the parents meeting, I always ask them, 'Why don't they go to Australia?' So a few of them now will go to Australia.

6.2.2 Employability skills

All alumnae expressed positive views about the quality of their Australian educational experience and stated that they returned to Vietnam with sought after technical skills and intercultural skills which made them highly employable in the fledgling Vietnamese banking and finance sector.

According to Dr Nguyen, at that time, employers 'highly valued Australian education' as Australia was one of the first countries to invest in scholarships and the program had a strong reputation for educational excellence. This gave alumnae better access to employment opportunities especially in multinational organisations and opportunities to be promoted quickly. She recalled:

I guess I came back at the right time, in 2002. So I had no difficulty looking for a job. When I came back, I applied for maybe four or five companies and I got three offers. At that time, my employers valued the skills, they valued Australian education. And also, of course, they looked at the transcript and the subjects that I did in Australia, they looked at the score, they looked at the syllabus. They were very careful. But they highly valued Australian education. So I think that is the big advantage for people who graduated from Australian universities.

Working as an auditor for Ernst and Young on her return to Vietnam Ms Hoang Binh felt that her Australian qualification and experience of Australian culture really helped her.

It helped me a lot because first of all my English was good at that time, and the way of getting involved with foreigners at the Big Four was good, and the knowledge from Australia - most of the Vietnamese friends that graduated in Vietnam who got jobs with the Big Four companies, they had to relearn about accounting in the way that foreigners, especially the Big Four people do it. So it's lucky that I got the basics of the Australian accounting system and the way the people are teaching accounting and finance is different from Vietnam.

6.2.3 Lifestyle and cultural experiences

All alumnae have positive memories of Australian culture and refer to the lifestyle as 'relaxed' and 'balanced' and 'multicultural'. They made friends with local and international students while studying. Many also made friends with the local Vietnamese community and were helped with accommodation, transport and furniture. As Ms Nguyen Mai reflected:

We have some good friends, Australian friends and also Indian and German as well. We associated with the international community then...Australia is a country with various countries people from around the world you can meet. We have some good friends that we still keep in connection until today, from Indonesia and Malaysia and Singapore as well.

Dr Nguyen felt she was strongly influenced and impressed by Australian values.

I've worked with a lot of Australian people in my life and I also have taught a lot of Australian students in my life. What I can feel is: Australian people believe in values: integrity, respect -- inclusive country... So I learn a lot and exercise the principles when I teach my students. I uphold the values of human integrity, transparency, diversity, respect.

Many alumnae have returned to Australia on holiday with their families, to conduct business or catch up with former colleagues. They all love the diverse landscape and openness of Australia. Ms To travels to Australia 'very frequently, almost every year', and previously lived and worked in Perth for BankWest. She has fond memories and an ongoing connection to Australia.

My experience of Australia is very, very positive. We have a very strong feelings and a strong connection with Australia... Actually, Australia is like my second home.

Ms Hoang Binh visited Australia last year and took a driving holiday with her husband and two children.

I started to fly to the Gold Coast and then we rented a car and then drove all the way from the Gold Coast to Sydney and to Melbourne... We were driving so we could stop anytime, anywhere. So Port Macquarie and then the Australian national park. We actually rented a house in the Australian national park, living in a place where there's no internet, no TV. It was fantastic... My children, I think they were just like me when I came to Australia the first time, like, 'Wow! Wow! Wow!' Everything was new.

6.3 Enabling factors

Alumnae noted a number of factors that facilitated their positive views of Australia, Australians, and the quality of the Australian education system, discussed below.

6.3.1 Strong support services and facilities

Alumnae recalled being 'impressed' while on award by the strong pastoral care and support services provided to international students by their institutions. These services included: airport pick up and tailored orientation programs, counselling and wellbeing support, academic and English support, computer classes, organised sightseeing trips and cultural exchange programs. As Ms Hoang Chinh reflected during her time at La Trobe University: 'we had a wonderful support system to help us with housing, transportation, from the cultural to the academic'.

Access to high quality facilities, text books, the internet, and tools such as computers enabled alumnae to return to Vietnam with improved research and technical skills. This gave them an advantage over the majority of their peers on their return to Vietnam. Ms Hoang Binh recalled:

Australia is a very developed country...at that time it was totally different from Vietnam. Vietnam was not so developed as Vietnam at present. So everything was new, the way the internet opened to the whole things and the way you use the internet to do your research, and even the computer. At that time in Vietnam, I don't think in school we had computers, like we didn't have PowerPoint, we didn't know what it was. But when I moved to Australia, I got to learn about how to use a computer and then PowerPoint, Word, Excel, etc.

Ms To participated in the University of South Australia's (UniSA) cultural exchange program and was matched with a family from the beach suburb of Noarlunga when she first arrived. She remembered being just 19 years old, and she felt she had a surrogate family to learn about Australian culture and provide a sense of belonging.

So immediately we had some connection with an Australian family, like during the weekend we could visit them, the family could visit us. And if there's any family events, they would invite us to join in like birthday parties or going out. So it's was very lovely. And I still keep in touch with my host family until now.

Other alumnae received counselling and wellbeing support when they suffered homesickness or a family member was ill. For example, Ms Nguyen Kim received excellent support while pregnant when undertaking her Endeavour Award - postgraduate degree. As her baby was due during an examination period and she applied for a special venue for her three exams and managed to deliver her baby after her final exam.

I applied for a special examination venue ... I was very happy with the support from the university. So that examiner lady, they just kept being surprised when they saw me walk in. The first time was okay. The second time, 'Oh, you're still here?' And the third time, 'You make sure that you finish the exam, otherwise let us know because we're ready.' Because that old lady was very nice. So I finished. I had one summer break and then I had the final semester. And I got my mum to help me.

6.3.2 Strong academic links

Many of the alumnae developed close relationships with their lecturers, supervisors and tutors while in Australia. They recalled feeling respected and supported by academic staff and encouraged to achieve and tackle new opportunities. Dr Nguyen, developed a close relationship with Professor Lynn Crawford from UTS, which led to more academic opportunities. Dr Nguyen worked as a Research Assistant for her for a year in 2001 and Professor Crawford encouraged her to pursue further studies which ultimately led to her completing her doctoral studies.

When Ms To returned to Vietnam, her lecturer Peter Lennox provided her with a reference letter which helped her gain a position at Citibank. A number of her friends also received his support, and he helped a number of graduates gain coveted international finance and banking roles in firms such as Lehman Brothers in Japan.

I started working at Citibank and he gave me a very supportive reference letter, which helped me a lot in terms of immediately getting the position at the bank.

Ms Phan also was provided with a reference letter and formal introduction to ANZ Vietnam. This allowed her to gain an interview and she went on to work at the organisation for 20 years.

I got a reference from one of the professors. I think that helps. And when I went to the interview, it was quite easy. I got a shock at the time. It was so easy. You have some credentials already.

6.3.3 Support from family

Alumnae were all strongly encouraged and supported by their families to study in Australia and build their careers. Support ranged from regular communication and emotional support, financial support to pursue further studies, as well support with childcare and family commitments.

Ms Nguyen Kim's mother travelled to Australia and helped her when she had to balance looking after a newborn baby with her postgraduate studies. Dr Nguyen's

husband and family looked after their two young children in Vietnam while she studied her MBA.

Many alumnae attributed their strong family support as enabling them to succeed. Ms Phan stated that her success stems from her 'very strong support from the family' which has enabled her to put in the long hours needed to build a successful and rewarding career in the banking sector. Ms Pham reflected:

It's not about the time you spend. It's about the quality of time. So I don't have much time with my family but I have a lot of support from them... So that's a good thing. I have to spend a lot of time at work.

6.3.4 Part-time employment

A number of alumnae undertook part-time jobs while on award. They made Australian friends in their workplaces, learning new ideas and ways of doing things and gained a valuable insight into Australian cultural values. Dr Nguyen had a number of different jobs while she studied her MBA at UTS, including an opportunity to work at the Sydney Olympic Stadium during the 2000 Olympic Games. She recalled being inspired by people she met.

I met lovely and wonderful people and they taught me a lot about how to live your life and then inspire other people and then help other people.

Ms Nguyen Kim worked at a local bakery where she was mentored by her supervisor and made a number of close friends. She felt she gained a real insight into Australian values, and workplace culture.

I observed the way you Australian people balance things between work and life and what they perceive the most important thing in their life.

She saved money from her part-time job and her ADS allowance and was able to support her parents back in Vietnam through difficult financial times and put her younger brothers through school. When she returned to Vietnam she had saved '\$4,000 Australian dollars which was equivalent to 60 or 80 million Vietnam dong' at that time. This money helped lift her family out of poverty and put a deposit on a small house.

6.3.5 Strong networks

As seen in Chapter 5, alumnae also made strong connections with other ADS awardees while in Australia and forged lifelong friendships. These networks continued to provide ongoing personal as well as business connections. Ms Hoang Chinh reflected:

My two strongest networks are the network for my ADS students, where I have a lot of friends, still have a lot of friends now. Some of them are now extremely successful in the government. And then a very strong network from Unilever, so when I was very young in my professional career

6.4 Challenging factors

Although the majority of alumnae had positive experiences when they were in Australia some alumnae did experience challenges such as language difficulties, discrimination and separation from family and friends while in Australia.

6.4.1 English skills

Many alumnae struggled with their English language skills when they first arrived in Australia as they had studied Russian at high school. Although many undertook additional English language programs, they struggled to initially communicate confidently and doubted their abilities. Ms Dao remembered feeling like there was a communication gap between herself and her lecturers and this caused her to lack confidence.

Sometimes we had some questions we asked the lecturer in the lecture or in the tutorials, something like that. But it seemed to me there was still a gap in communication between the foreigners and the Australians... Sometimes we felt it was like we were foreigners and that we were not confident to contact the lecturers and the professors.

As Ms Hoang Chinh recalled it was difficult to make friends with Australians during her orientation as she was shy and didn't have enough English language skills to keep up with the local students. 'I didn't make a lot of contacts, first because of the language barrier. At the time, my English was not so great'.

6.4.2 Discrimination

While studying her MBA at UTS Dr Nguyen experienced discrimination from a lecturer who did not think international students could operate on the same level as local Australian students. According to Dr Nguyen the teacher 'never acknowledged international students, especially talent, and he had the tendency to mark down international students' assignments.' He accused Dr Nguyen and a fellow ADS student (who worked for Shell Vietnam) of plagiarism on one particular project.

Dr Nguyen recalled:

The comment on the assignment actually was an insult because the teacher commented, 'This is not the work of international students. They obviously must have outsourced Australian people to do this work.' But still a pass. And then I say, 'If you feel that we plagiarised, we must have a fail, right? But you gave us a pass.' So we wrote a letter to the Dean of the Faculty of Business and they organised a meeting.

Dr Nguyen and her colleague gathered evidence of their hard work and statements from their interviewees and submitted them to the Dean. Her supervisor Lynn Crawford also petitioned the lecturer to change his mark. Dr Nguyen recalled feeling empowered by standing up for their rights and getting the UTS equity team involved.

I sent the email to the Equity Unit at UTS and said that we want respect. 'We want you to realise that there is talent all over the world, including people from non-English speaking backgrounds. That's what we want. Mark, we don't care. We don't want to care about the mark. And we want to save face for the teacher. Okay, so just leave the mark where it is.' But after the semester, the Faculty of Business sent us an email saying, 'We suspend the teacher for one or two semesters to do more investigation because we also received other students' complaints about him.'

6.4.3 Separation from family and friends

Another key challenge faced by the alumnae was being separated from family and friends. A number of the younger alumnae struggled with homesickness when they first arrived and found it difficult to communicate with family in the pre-internet era. International calls were expensive and those with rural parents were unable to communicate regularly via phone. Ms Nguyen Kim, who was 18 years old when she arrived in Australia, remembered being homesick.

So it's a very lonely feeling. I cried a lot because I thought that it was too far away from Vietnam. And at that time there was no Viber, no Facebook. I think I still remember a couple of months after I arrived in Melbourne, I wrote a handwritten letter and sent it by post to my mum and my mum sent post to me. So it's just a very traditional way of communication. After the first semester, I know how to use Yahoo Messenger. But my mum, she had to go to a shop because at that time there was no internet at home and my family couldn't afford to have a computer, so went to a shop to pay some money for an hour and we chatted.

Dr Nguyen made the difficult decision to leave her two young children home in Vietnam as she wanted to concentrate on her studies. She remembers saying to herself:

'Okay, I have to focus on my study.' So I left my kids at home, and then they were four years old and two years old, so this was really hard. So the first semester, I could not focus on my study. I called home every day. I spent \$500 Australian dollars just to call home. So in the first semester break, I determined myself now: I have to stop that, otherwise I couldn't concentrate.

When Dr Nguyen was offered a scholarship to undertake doctoral studies at the end of her MBA she recalled feeling torn between pursuing her academic goals and obligations back in Vietnam, as she missed her young family and she had signed an agreement to return to Vietnam to work for two years as part of her scholarship. She recalled her husband wanting her to return after her MBA.

My husband came to visit in November 2001. I shared with him about the scholarship opportunity and then he told me, 'Oh, my god. Two years already! Why do you want to study?'

Dr Nguyen decided to return home to honour her obligations and postponed her doctoral studies. She eventually completed her doctorate part-time through RMIT.

7. Impact of Australia Awards on Addressing Equity Issues

Summary findings

Vietnam has made impressive progress in achieving economic and human development gains over the last three decades. However, the pace of economic growth has not necessarily translated into better or more equitable outcomes for all disadvantaged groups in the population. Communist policies supporting equal rights for women has not closed the gender gap in terms of women's representation at leadership levels, the widening gender wage gap, and women's participation in the economy. There are strong underlying cultural values attached to a patriarchal system that presents a persistent barrier for women.

While alumnae in this Case Study have not experienced gender discrimination in their careers, they acknowledge the impact of having children and taking time out to raise a family as particular challenges for women in their career progression. The Australian Government and stakeholders support women's access to the Australia Awards and provides alumnae with opportunities for professional development and networking under the Equity of Access Fund and other small grants. Through a commitment to gender equity in the Australia Awards, women have consistently outnumbered men in successfully gaining an award since 2003.

People with disability in Vietnam are still marginalised in society due to discriminatory policies and practices in education, health and in the workplace. Children with disability have poorer learning outcomes and limited opportunities to advance to upper secondary or tertiary education. Low educational outcomes impact employment prospects for people with disability, who tend to work in the informal sector often with low wages and poor working conditions. The Australian Government funded Equity of Access Fund supports people with disability to apply for an Australia Award through English language training as well as on-award support. The Australia Awards also prioritises applicants from rural and disadvantaged regions in Vietnam and provides them with additional support through the Equity of Access Fund.

Alumnae in this Case Study have continued to have an impact on promoting social inclusion in their workplaces and their communities. Despite some of the barriers faced by women in Vietnam, most alumnae have been able to overcome constraints such as family responsibilities to reach senior level positions in their careers, both in the public and private sectors. They have also been able to gain the respect of their male colleagues through their high-level skills, experience and personal attributes. Among the eight alumnae in this Case Study, two have reported taking on mentoring roles for younger men and women in their organisations. Alumnae who came from rural areas have made a positive impact in the lives of those in their provinces by providing education and training opportunities and helping to lift them out of poverty.

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the impact of the Australia Awards in addressing equity and disadvantage in Vietnam. It explores how interventions to 'address barriers to participation and provide on-award/post-award support where participation by women, people with disability and other disadvantaged members of society is low' (DFAT, 2016a, p. 12).

This chapter offers some context to equity issues in Vietnam, exploring the views of alumnae and stakeholders who participated in the Case Study. It outlines the strategies and initiatives supported by the Australian Government and other stakeholders to promote access to Australia Awards and professional development opportunities for women, people with disability and people from rural areas. It also highlights the contributions made by alumni to promote inclusion.

It should be noted that this is the first Case Study undertaken by the Facility to focus on women. Through the annual survey of alumni, it was identified that there was a high representation of women who studied banking and finance in Australia. This informed the research focus of the Case Study and the impact these alumnae had on the development of the banking and finance sector in Vietnam. This Case Study involved eight female alumnae, of whom three were from rural provinces and none were identified as having disability.

7.2 Background

Economic growth since the introduction of Doi Moi has brought significant improvements in the living standards for the Vietnamese people. The rapid development of the manufacturing and service industries has created job opportunities and a diverse income source for many who have come from subsistence farming. Unlike its Asian neighbours, Vietnam has not experienced significant increases in income inequality over the last two decades. Education and health outcomes have also improved, with better quality and access to schools and health services across the country. However, the pace of economic growth and social development has not reached all segments of society, particularly those living in rural areas and those from ethnic minority groups.

7.2.1 Gender

Compared to other countries in the region, Vietnam has achieved gender equality across multiple measures. According to World Bank estimates, female-headed households were less likely to be poor than male-headed households in 2015, and more women than men were attending school at the upper secondary and tertiary levels (World Bank, 2017). Women's economic empowerment has also improved, with an increasing number of women participating in the workforce (79 per cent compared with 86 per cent men) (DFAT, 2016b). The number of women represented in the National Assembly is one of the highest in the Asia-Pacific region (26.7 per cent) which is comparable to Australia (DFAT, 2016b). The current President of the National Assembly is a woman, considered the fourth highest position in the Communist Party.

Despite these achievements, gender inequalities persist. There is an ongoing lack of access for women in leadership positions. According to an International Labour Organisation (ILO) study, Vietnam ranks 76th out of 108 countries in its proportion of female managers (ILO, 2015a). Among the reasons cited in the ILO report were: gender discrimination practices in the workplace relating to recruitment practices; difficulties balancing family responsibilities; and lack of opportunities for training. Another study, conducted by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), reinforced the challenges faced by Vietnamese women entrepreneurs due to the burden of domestic responsibilities. It reported that traditional factors were a constraint for female entrepreneurs in starting a business, and when family responsibilities were reduced, opportunities for women in business also improved (UNIDO, 2010).

Women are also overrepresented in unpaid work and are more likely to be under-employed. There is a continuing income gap between men and women, where women were estimated to earn 20 per cent less than men in 2012 (World Bank, 2017). Other forms of gender discrimination include a widening sex ratio at birth (113 male to every 100 female births) due to a cultural preference for sons (World Bank, 2017).

The gender equity issues in Vietnam are a manifest of two different social and political traditions: the Confucian principles that support a male patriarchal system and the socialist ideals supporting the equality of all citizens. This creates both opportunities and challenges for Vietnamese women, who on the one hand, enjoy more economic and political rights than many of their counterparts in the Asia-Pacific region, but on the other hand, are constrained by traditional family values that hinder their full participation in the economy and the labour market. This highlights the need to introduce better policies in the workplace which enable workers with family responsibilities to engage and advance in their careers without discrimination. Studies have shown that such flexible policies could have wide-ranging benefits including the ability to attract and retain skilled staff, improvements in productivity and time management, and reduced absenteeism (ILO, 2015a).

Cultural expectations

Many alumnae interviewed in this Case Study attested to the challenges of balancing work with family responsibilities. As Ms Dao stated:

It's very difficult because it's not quite equal in terms of work and life balance for women versus men, so there's eight hours you work for both women and men but when you go home, it's usually the women who actually have to do all the household management for another three or four hours and the men aren't expected to do as much.

In particular, many alumnae identified having children and taking time out to raise a family as barriers to career progression. Even though Vietnamese law stipulates six months maternity leave for women, the perceived loss of productivity when a woman returns to work can be a discriminating factor for promotions, compensation and professional development opportunities. This view is consistent with research findings from the ILO study (2015a), which showed that 74 per cent of employers saw women's childbearing role and family responsibilities as having a negative affect on the company's costs and performance. The same study found

that when it came to promotions, the most important factor was performance followed by length of service, which indicates a merit-based process. However, the third most important factor cited by respondents was 'availability to work outside normal working hours'. This may limit women's access to promotions as they are less available due to family obligations outside working hours. As Ms Phan noted:

I think there's some discrimination for people who are going to have a baby... all of a sudden you need to stay home for six months. After that...you have to have more time with the baby and you cannot work late and that kind of thing. So in terms of perception about productivity, it is a real challenge for women during that time.

In contrast, alumnae also identified other cultural factors which may have benefited them in their careers. When asked to describe their motivations for studying banking and finance, several alumnae noted that a career in this sector was more traditionally suited to women and therefore, women are overrepresented in the financial industry in Vietnam. Among some of the reasons cited by alumnae were the traditional role women played in managing the family finances, while men were responsible for managing affairs outside the home. As Ms Phan explained:

When I was young, my parents always thought that engineering is for men, and say for education, it's more for women, and banking and finance and numbers for women. Nowadays maybe it's a little bit changed but I think that perception is still: technical is for men. Women still do the housework, "housework" meaning you do the finance in the home.

Even within the finance sector, women are more typically found working in the back office, while men are more likely to be in a sales role, which requires them to have more flexibility to work away from the office. Ms Nguyen Kim described her workplace:

So that's the reason why if you go to the office to see other people sitting around the desks, you will see most of them are female. It depends on the nature of the job. In the sales team, most of them are male and you won't see them in the office because they will be out.

Alumnae also described the drinking culture in Vietnam as a male-dominated tradition which is common in business transactions. While it would seem to limit women's access to career development, Ms To found it worked in her favour, as women in Vietnam are not expected to participate in the drinking culture.

I think it's better because if I'm a man in Vietnam then people often had to go for drinking beer after work, but for me I never have to do that. That's good for me, good for my health.

National policies and legal frameworks supporting women in the workplace

The Communist Party in Vietnam has long recognised the equal role women play in society and has introduced several orders and resolutions to promote gender equality. This extends to the business sector, where strong laws and policies provide a sound regulatory framework to support women's economic empowerment. For example, the 2012 Labour Code and the Law on Gender Equality requires that men and women are treated equally in the workplace. Further, the Vietnam National Gender Equality Strategy 2011-2020 commits to: promoting the participation of women in leadership and decision making with clear

targets for the public sector; enhancing women's economic empowerment to reduce gender gaps in the economy and labour market; and ensuring gender equality in the family by reducing the burden of family obligations for women.

The strong policy and legal frameworks supporting gender equity in the workplace may have provided alumnae with the right opportunities for career progression, as none of the alumnae in this Case Study reported experiencing gender discrimination in their careers. This was evident in both the public and private sectors.

Ms Dao, who is employed at the Vietnam State Audit Office, confirmed:

Within the government there are policies to promote gender equality and that includes pathways specifically for women to progress in their careers, and that's very clearly defined in government policies to promote women and to achieve gender equality... There's really no gender bias because it's all based on merit, so anyone can apply, a man or a woman. It's based on the number of years served in your current position and then all your professional development and training. Everybody gets the same opportunities and then you apply, like everybody else.

Similarly, alumnae who worked in the private sector felt that gender was not an issue in Vietnam, especially in banking and finance. In particular, Ms Phan believed that "for the banking industry in Vietnam you see a lot of women leadership, women leaders". Ms To shared an example from a counterpart from Thailand, who was surprised at the lack of gender discrimination in Vietnam compared to her own country, where female CEOs "may not feel as equal as the male CEO".

Alumnae felt they were given equal opportunities for professional development and leadership training, such as Ms Phan's selection to participate in the highly acclaimed Chief Executive Women training program conducted by an Australian organisation. Ms Nguyen Mai recalled being selected for the talent development program at the WWF, and was told by the regional manager that she was nominated because she "may have more challenges [as] a woman". Although this was an example of affirmative action, Ms Nguyen Mai felt she should have been selected based on merit rather than on her gender.

In general, alumnae reported that even though females were in the minority at senior level, they were well-respected by their male colleagues. As Ms To described:

For example, when we have the board meetings in the association, they always ask us to provide our opinion, even if I think some of the male CEOs, maybe they would not ask for the opinion but for females we always were asked to give some comments or opinions.

Ms Hoang Binh further added that, while she had "good respect...sometimes [she felt] sad, sometimes lonely because they all think the way a man thinks, not the way a woman thinks".

Personal attributes

As described in Chapter 4, alumnae described their own personal attributes as an enabling factor in the workplace. Characteristics such as assertiveness and self-

confidence have helped both Dr Nguyen and Ms Nguyen Mai in overcoming gender stereotypes in the workplace and gaining respect from their male colleagues. For example, Ms Nguyen Mai recalled:

I actually raised an issue about a financial sustainability risk...All the men looked at me like, 'Oh, she was tough. No woman would dare to say that'. And one guy, who was known as a very aggressive manager in the office wanted to stop me in the middle of my presentation. "Okay, thank you for your [question]...but let's wait until the end of my presentation before you raise your questions."

Dr Nguyen acknowledged the difficulties in changing the perceptions of traditional gender roles to improve gender equality in the workplace. In her previous role as the Managing Director of a local company and in her current role as a lecturer at RMIT, Dr Nguyen has always tried to lead by example by creating equal opportunities for men and women and by teaching her students values such as confidence and assertiveness, so they are more willing to speak up and be respected for their opinions.

7.2.2 Disability

According to the 2009 Vietnam Population and Housing Census, 7.8 per cent of the population (or more than six million people) over the age of five have disability (ILO, 2013). However, other estimates suggest the figure is closer to 15 per cent (ILO, 2013). Most people with disability live in rural areas, and experience lower education and health outcomes and fewer job opportunities compared to those without disability.

Children with disability are less likely to attend school and those that do, lack support in the form of accessible infrastructure, assistive technology, and funding support. As Ms Vo Hoang Yen, a stakeholder interviewed for this Case Study and the director of Disability Research and Capacity Development noted 'barriers to education still exist for people with disabilities... [especially for those] with a hearing impairment who only have access to the 9th grade, as upper secondary schools cannot accommodate them. Data from the National Coordinating Council on Disability (NCCD, 2010) indicates that access to education is a significant barrier for children with disability, with only 28 per cent of children with disability enrolled in school in 2008, mostly at the kindergarten and primary level. The rate of access to lower secondary education drops dramatically for children with disability, estimated at 0.91 per cent of the student population with disability (NCCD, 2010). The adult literacy rate among people with disability is also lower compared to those without disability (76.3 per cent and 95.2 per cent, respectively) (ILO, 2013).

Poor educational attainment also impacts the potential to participate in productive activities and the labour market. People with disability have lower labour participation rates and higher unemployment rates than people without disability (4.3 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively) (ILO, 2013). As a result, 80 per cent of people with disability in urban areas and 70 per cent of in rural areas, cannot support themselves and rely on their families or social allowances for their living expenses (ILO, 2013). A study conducted by the World Bank, using statistical analyses of census data, confirmed that disability is significantly correlated with poverty and unemployment in Vietnam (Mont & Nguyen, 2011). The study also found that disability during childhood is strongly linked to poor educational

attainment, which in turn leads to limited employment opportunities in adulthood and a higher incidence of poverty.

The Government of Vietnam has adopted and implemented laws, policies and initiatives to promote inclusion and expand opportunities for people with disability to fully participate in the labour market and achieve economic independence. This includes the Vietnam National Law on Disability (2010), which guarantees the rights of people with disability through equal access to education and healthcare, opportunities for employment and training, as well as accessibility standards for the construction of public places and public transportation. In addition, the Government has committed approximately \$20 million annually to support implementation of the National Action Plan to Support People with Disabilities 2012-2020, which includes vocational training support for 250,000 working-age people with disability (USAID, 2013). However, according to Ms Vo, implementation of government initiatives has been slow and challenges still exist for people with disability to access full funding support from the government.

7.2.3 Rural and Ethnic Minority Populations

Rural and remote areas and ethnic minority groups are disproportionately disadvantaged in access to education, health services and economic opportunities. The incidence of poverty remains the highest among rural populations and ethnic minority groups. While ethnic minority groups only make up 15 per cent of the population, they account for 60 per cent of the poor and the rate is projected to rise to 80 per cent by 2020 (World Bank, 2017). Approximately 31 per cent of ethnic minority children under five were stunted compared with 16 per cent of children in the general population (World Bank, 2017). People from ethnic minority groups are 12 per cent less likely than the rest of the population to be in paid employment, and are more likely to engage in the informal sector, family farming or small household enterprises (World Bank, 2017).

In response to the persistent rates of poverty among rural and ethnic minority households, the Government of Vietnam issued Resolution 80/NG-CP in 2011 to guide efforts in sustainable poverty reduction, with a target of 4 per cent reduction per annum by 2020. This was followed by approval of the National Targeted Program for Sustainable Poverty Reduction 2012-15, which prioritised resources to support social and economic development of the poorest areas in Vietnam. Policy initiatives included: increasing market access and social protection measures for the rural sector; skills improvement and vocational training; improving the investment climate for local enterprise development; and expansion of access to basic services.

7.3 Access to Australia Awards

Australia Awards in Vietnam has demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting gender equity and social inclusion. The Australia in Vietnam Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2020 provides a whole-of-government approach to improving the quality of life for women and girls in Vietnam. One of the priorities identified in this Strategy is to “ensure equal access for both men and women to scholarships and all learning opportunities”. As one stakeholder from the Australian Embassy in

Vietnam noted “Australia is the only serious player on gender issues in Vietnam...through direct programs as well as cross-cutting through all programs”.

Specific to the Australia Awards, the result of this long commitment has seen women consistently outnumbering men in scholarships awards since 2003 (Urbano, 2014). Gender equity principles are embedded across a number of initiatives supported by DFAT, and implemented by the managing contractor as part of Aus4skills initiative. For example, the Australia Awards in Vietnam supports a professional group on gender, where alumni meet regularly to discuss a specific area of interest and disseminate information to their networks. They are self-managed and regularly run events and training programs, such as a recent two-day workshop on policies to help promote gender equity in the workplace. This was conducted for alumni working on gender issues as well as those from the private sector who are interested in making policy changes in their organisations.

As noted in the Vietnam-Australia Partnership Human Resource Development Final Design Document, a 2014 DFAT review of regional disability policy found that Vietnam represented an example of best practice across the global Australia Awards for implementation of disability inclusion policy in Vietnam (DFAT, 2014). This was attributed to the commitment at post and within the managing contractor’s team, including the appointment of a Gender and Social Inclusion Adviser. However, applicants from disadvantaged groups still faced challenges in accessing awards due to a lack of opportunities in secondary schooling and limited English language skills (DFAT, 2014). The Equity of Access Fund was established to support awardees with disability and those from disadvantaged rural areas to ensure equal access for applicants and post-award alumni.

Awardees with disability are also provided with ongoing support while in Australia under the Equity of Access Fund. Ms Vo, Director at Disability Research and Capacity Development and an Australia Award alumna, provided a positive insight into her experience while on award. She noted that Australia Awards was the most helpful and generous scholarship for people with disability as it provided carer support and assistance from the scholarship team throughout her studies. The Australia Awards has supported two other colleagues, thereby, improving the capacity of her organisation.

7.4 Social equity impact of alumnae

Alumnae in this Case Study who have reached leadership levels in their professions have been able to use their influence to advocate for social equity and inclusion in their workplaces. This was mostly done through mentoring younger staff and creating equal opportunities for both male and female employees. When Dr Nguyen worked in the corporate sector as a managing director, she was acutely aware of the challenges women faced to ‘buy the hearts of male directors when you’re a female’. So she adopted a different approach in her leadership style to promote opportunities to showcase the talents of females in her team. She shared an example where she encouraged women, who had never had the opportunity to take a leading role in a project, to develop and present their ideas to the team. The

result saw a transformation in the office culture, where women were valued and respected and were able to have a voice. As Dr Nguyen recalled:

We changed the way male managers perceived female managers. And female managers became more confident and more assertive. Now they could speak up in the meetings, because in the past they kept quiet and male managers dominated all the talk.

Ms Dao, who is a senior auditor at the State Audit Office, was involved in the training program for staff to advance into senior positions at her department. She noted that of the 26 to 30 trainees, only one was a woman. As the only woman at the senior level, she was an important role model for other women to aspire to this level. As a female trainer, she provided a unique perspective to the men and women coming through the ranks. A 2014 DFAT study of alumni in Vietnam demonstrated that women faced more barriers to promotion within central government agencies, compared to their counterparts in the NGO or corporate sectors (Urbano, 2014). Therefore, mentoring programs such as these could be an important policy consideration to support career pathways for women in the public service.

This Case Study included three alumnae from rural provinces of Vietnam, two of whom have been able to transform the lives of others in their province through their scholarship experience. Dr Nguyen established a social enterprise café in her hometown, which provides training, and experience in hospitality skills for unemployed university graduates. The aim of the café was not only to generate employment opportunities but also to equip young people with life skills and values to make them more employable. Ms Nguyen Kim, who came from a poor family background, was able to use the money she saved on award to help lift her family out of poverty and support her two younger brothers to go to school.

8. Conclusion

Australia and Vietnam celebrated 45 years of diplomatic relations in 2018. This long history of cooperation has been forged across, political, economic development activities and importantly, people-to-people links. Alumnae in this Case Study have demonstrated the impact of an Australia Awards on fostering enduring links between these two countries. Australia is the leading international destination for Vietnamese students, and the growing number of Australian alumni in Vietnam represents a collective network of knowledge, expertise and influence to further strengthen ties between Australia and Vietnam.

This was the first Case Study undertaken by the Facility with a focus on women. Alumnae selected in this Case Study represented an overwhelming number of women who had completed scholarships in the field of Management and Commerce between 1996 and 2005. This presented a unique opportunity to gain insight into the experiences of alumnae's contribution to the banking and finance sector.

The period between 1996 and 2005 also marked a time of rapid socioeconomic development in Vietnam, and alumnae found themselves at the forefront of major economic reforms on their return. They possessed highly sought after skills and experience from their Australian education to make substantial contributions to the development of the emerging finance sector. This Case Study showed that alumnae were able to **fill the capacity gaps** that were necessary to transform the banking sector and modernise the economy. Alumnae who returned to Vietnam with a degree in banking and finance represent a **critical mass** of people who were able to make a positive impact in the development of their country.

These alumnae have been able to leverage the skills and knowledge they have gained to establish their careers in the banking industry, and have made remarkable progress within their organisations, in both the public and private sectors. It has taken some of them 10 to 20 years to reach the pinnacles of their profession. This **long-term horizon** was necessary to consolidate the skills and networks that have allowed them to reach positions of leadership and influence, where they are now making a positive impact in their fields.

This Case Study provides some of the **strongest evidence to date** of alumnae making a positive contribution to economic and public diplomacy outcomes. Alumnae are using their leadership roles and positions of influence to advocate for ongoing cooperation and partnerships with Australia and Australian organisations. This has been built on alumnae's **positive experience on award**, which have cemented their views of Australia and Australians. They are using their influence to promote Australia by fostering institutional linkages and facilitating trade links, within their professional and private networks.

This Case Study provided important insights into issues of gender equity in Vietnam. Positive outcomes have been achieved regarding Australia Awards access and achievement of women. The success of alumnae in this Case Study is

even more remarkable given the barriers women continue to face in Vietnam, due to deeply held cultural values attached to family responsibilities. These alumnae have been able to have significant impact in their careers, despite being in the minority at the senior leadership level in their organisations. This may be a result of a combination of factors that have worked to their advantage: a strong policy and legal framework promoting the equality of men and women underpinned by socialist ideals; the socially acceptable role of women in banking and finance; support from their families; and a **strong commitment of Australia Awards in supporting gender equity issues**.

9. Alumni Profiles

Dr Nguyen Anh Thu

I'm very proud that I can help other people to transform their lives... I'm proud that this opportunity... study in an Australian university transformed my life, transformed other people's lives and transformed the work that I can make an impact on.



Scholarship	Australian Development Scholarship
Years	2000-2001
Degree	Master of Business Administration
University	University of Technology Sydney
Current position	Lecturer, School of Business and Management, RMIT Vietnam
Brief biography	<p>Originally from Hue City, Dr Nguyen Anh Thu, is an award winning Lecturer at the School of Business and Management at RMIT Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City Campus, where she has worked for 16 years.</p> <p>A former senior executive and teacher, Dr Nguyen studied a Master of Business Administration at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) as part of an Australian Development Scholarship. While in Australia she was fortunate enough to work in a number of part-time positions including a role at the Olympic Stadium during the 2000 Sydney Olympics and as a Research Assistant at UTS, where she made a number of enduring personal and professional relationships.</p> <p>In 2002, Dr Nguyen returned to Vietnam and began working for the Accor hotel group before being drawn to the idea of teaching business at the newly open RMIT Vietnam campus in Ho Chi Minh City. An active entrepreneur, she has a range of business interests and has run a number of start-ups and a social enterprise café which trained unemployed graduates in Hue City.</p> <p>While balancing her teaching load and business interests, Dr Nguyen studied a doctoral degree at RMIT Vietnam part-time from 2012-2018. Dr Nguyen was awarded the RMIT University Deputy Vice-Chancellor's Education Award for Teaching Innovation for her work in providing authentic industry based assessments through partnering with companies such as Lazarda and L'Oréal to produce work ready RMIT students.</p>

Location at the time of field research: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Date of interview: 22/10/2018

Ms Nguyen Ngoc Thien Kim

I think studying in Australia transformed me. It's not about my knowledge but about my working behaviour, working attitude and I think my ethics.



Scholarship	Australian Development Scholarship
Years	2001-2004
Degree	Bachelor of Banking and Finance
University	Monash University
Current position	Senior Manager – Head of Finance Operations for Prudential Vietnam
Brief biography	<p>Ms Nguyen Ngoc Thien Kim is the Senior Manager – Head of Finance Operations at Prudential Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City where she has worked since 2011.</p> <p>She grew up in the small highland town of Buon Me Thuot, about 300 kilometres from Ho Chi Minh City and dreamed of working in a bank. Encouraged by her mother, Ms Nguyen applied for an Australian Development Scholarship and studied a Bachelor of Banking and Finance at Monash University.</p> <p>During her time in Australia she forged strong friendships and was mentored by both her lecturers and her supervisor at her part-time job at a local bakery. She found the experience of living and studying in Australia as ‘transformational’.</p> <p>Ms Nguyen returned to Vietnam in 2004 and joined Unilever for a number of years before working briefly in a Vietnamese stock market start-up company. In 2009, she undertook an Endeavour Scholarship at La Trobe University and completed postgraduate studies.</p> <p>After completing her studies she returned to Vietnam once again and began working for Prudential Vietnam, where she is currently the Senior Manager – Head of Finance Operations.</p>

Location at the time of field research: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Date of interview: 22/10/2018

Ms Hoang Kim Binh

I think I am very proud of the way that I get to share my knowledge with my colleagues and how to work in a group of people, manage a group of people to work and to have better results compared to working as individuals, to share the information, the way I was taught in Australia...



Scholarship	Australian Development Scholarship
Years	1994 - 1997
Degree	Bachelor of Commerce
University	University of New South Wales
Current position	Chief Accountant – Group Director, VNPT Net

Brief biography Ms Hoang Kim Binh, is the Chief Accountant – Group Director, of the State owned VNPT NET which is part of the Vietnam Post and Telecommunication Groups. It is one of largest telecommunication networks in Vietnam It has over 40,000 staff.

An Australian Development scholarship recipient in 1994, Ms Hoang first undertook a Foundation Studies and then a Bachelor of Commerce at the University of New South Wales. After completing her degree she made the decision to remain in Australia and study a one year Master of Accounting and Finance at Macquarie University as a self-funded student so she could become an auditor, after completing her studies she became a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and a Certified Practicing Accountant (CPA).

With a strong background in financial accounting she joined global accounting giant Ernst and Young as an auditor on her return to Vietnam. Ms Hoang worked on a number of capacity building projects during her time at the company and participated in the development of accounting standards for Vietnam.

Joining VNPT NET in 2001 she has since worked in a range of roles in both the auditing and accounting departments, taking more senior leadership positions. In 2007, she was selected to undertake a six month leadership course in United States of America and developed a range of skills which led to her taken more senior leadership roles, and is one of only 10 senior female leaders in her organisation.

In the beginning of 2018 she was promoted to role of Chief Accountant – Group Director of VNPT NET and is part of the senior leadership team navigating VNPT NET through the privatisation process to become a publicly traded and owned entity by 2019.

Location at the time of field research: Hanoi, Vietnam
Date of interview: 23/10/2018

Ms Nguyen Thu Mai

I became more confident of myself, more confident in expressing my opinion. Those are the issues that -- I think you may see it from a lot of Asian people, going to uni, even though maybe you know it in your head, but you rarely dare to raise your hand... So I'm more open and more confident about myself whenever I talk in front of groups or people or in a big meeting...



Scholarship Australian Development Scholarship

Years 2000

Degree Master of Commerce (Accounting)

University University of New South Wales

Current position Independent Financial Consultant

Brief biography Ms Nguyen Thu Mai is currently a Financial Consultant within the Not for Profit (NGO) sector in Vietnam and South East Asia. Prior to her scholarship, Ms Nguyen worked as a Financial Manager at the British Council for three and half years and was encouraged by a family member to apply for the Australian Development Scholarship.

She studied a Master of Commerce (Accounting) at the University of New South Wales and moved to the NGO sector on her return to Vietnam in 2001. Over the last 17 years she has worked as a senior financial controller and operations manager in a number of high profile aid organisations including the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP), ActionAid Vietnam, and the Mekong River Commission Secretariat.

Ms Nguyen has been responsible for the development and monitoring of financial and operational policies and procedures such as human resource policies, financial guidelines and manuals, and the establishment of accounting systems to ensure compliance to international donor regulations and has contributed to the effective planning and management of aid in Vietnam, Cambodia, Lao, and Thailand.

Now running her own a consultancy service for small NGO's in Vietnam, Ms Nguyen is providing her expertise to help fledgling organisations set up systems and train staff to administer aid programs. Thus ensuring ongoing transparency and international compliance.

Location at the time of field research: Hanoi, Vietnam
Date of interview: 24/10/2018

Ms To Minh Huong

We were one of the first students who graduated from a Western country, and when we returned to Vietnam, there were only a few international banks in Vietnam at that point in time. So when we applied for the position, I think we immediately got admitted. Most of colleagues at that time in Vietnam didn't have any background in banking and finance... I think I was the only one who had the banking and finance background at that point in time in the bank, which helped me a lot.



Scholarship	Australian Development Scholarship
Years	1993 - 1996
Degree	Bachelor of Banking and Finance
University	University of South Australia
Current position	General Director / Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Morgan Stanley Gateway
Brief biography	<p>Ms To Minh Huong is the General Director / Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Board Member of Morgan Stanley Gateway Securities in Vietnam, and is involved in providing expert advice to clients wishing to invest in Vietnam's securities market.</p> <p>Ms To studied a Bachelor of Banking and Finance at the University of South Australia (1993 to 1996). She returned to Vietnam after completing her degree and began working for Citibank, as one of the few overseas trained, local bankers. She rose quickly within the organisation and was instrumental in opening up new domestic commodity sectors in areas such as coffee production in the Vietnamese Highlands.</p> <p>From 1999-2001, Ms To undertook a Master of Business Studies (Banking) and a Master of Management (Financial Economics) at Massey University in New Zealand, before moving to Perth to undertake doctoral studies at the University of Western Australia (UWA). While at UWA she was invited by the Bank of Western Australia to lead a risk modelling team through Basel II.</p> <p>She returned to Vietnam in late 2004 and worked as a Chief Investments Officer at Vietnam Partners - a US investment bank, before joining Morgan Stanley Gateway Securities in 2007 as the General Director / CEO.</p>

Location at the time of field research: Hanoi, Vietnam
Date of interview: 25/10/201

Ms Hoang Thi Nguyet Chinh

I joined a management trainee programme in Unilever...

So I had a good economic background experience, and I came to an environment that empowered me a lot to make change.



Scholarship	Australian Development Scholarship
Years	1999-2002
Degree	Bachelor of Economics
University	La Trobe University
Current position	Operations Manager, Castrol BP Petco Ltd Vietnam
Brief biography	<p>Ms Hoang Thi Nguyet Chinh is the Operations Manager at Castrol BP Petco Ltd, which is a joint venture between BP Oil (UK) and the Vietnamese Petroleum Corporation.</p> <p>Growing up in the small coffee growing town of Buon Ma Thuot in Dac Lac Province in the central highlands of Vietnam, Ms Hoang never dreamed she would be able to study abroad. Studying her first year at the Economic University she applied for an Australian Development Scholarship.</p> <p>After completing pre-departure English language program she went to La Trobe University where she first studied at the English Language Department and then undertook a Bachelor of Economics. Graduating in 2002.</p> <p>On her return to Vietnam, she joined a management trainee program at Unilever, which was one of the largest multinationals in Vietnam at the time, and worked for three and half years. She was involved in a number of major projects, and given the opportunity to develop her leadership and strategic planning skills.</p> <p>In 2006 she was awarded a scholarship and studied a Master of Business Administration at the International University of Japan in Niigata. On her return to Vietnam in 2008 she worked for L'Oréal as a Business Controller for a year before joining Castrol BP Petco Ltd in 2009.</p> <p>Now the Operation Manager at Castrol BP Petco she is responsible for driving standardisation and compliance across all operational activities, supporting the development and implementation the country strategy, leading business development and managing a range of teams.</p>

Location at the time of field research: Hanoi (phone to Ms Hoang in HCMC), Vietnam
Date of interview: 25/10/2018

Ms Dao Thi Thu Vinh

In my role, in my career, I'm very proud of being able to contribute in auditing particularly, to be able to provide the control and standards to government expenditure in other departments. So it's going to help progress the country, and bring standards to the sector.



Scholarship	Australian Development Scholarship
Years	2001-2002
Degree	Master of Commerce (Government and Business Accounting)
University	University of Sydney
Current position	Deputy Director General of the Auditing Department No VII of the State Audit Office of Vietnam
Brief biography	<p>Ms Dao Thi Thu Vinh is the Deputy Director General of the Auditing Department of the State Audit Office of Vietnam (SAV) and has had a long career in the Vietnamese public service; reaching the highest rank of senior auditor within her organisation.</p> <p>Prior to joining the Vietnamese public service, Ms Dao studied a Bachelor of Finance and Banking in Russia from 1984-1989 and knew little English before applying for an Australian Development Scholarship. She completed a one year intensive English course prior going to Australia, then a six month English language course at the University of Sydney before embarking on her Master of Commerce (Government and Business Accounting) from 2001-2002.</p> <p>On her return to Vietnam she resumed her role as the Deputy Director of the International Corporations Department, before moving to the Auditing Department in 2004 as part of the SAV's rotation policy. Ms Dao has since gone onto hold a number of senior leadership roles in areas such as Audit Policy and Quality Control and was involved in the development of new auditing standards for the transition of SAV towards a legally independent agency in 2006.</p> <p>Now the Deputy Director General of the Auditing Department, she is in charge of auditing State owned banks and financial institutions.</p>

Location at the time of field research: Hanoi, Vietnam
Date of interview: 27/10/2018

Ms Phan Thi Thanh Binh

Then the opportunity at Techcombank came up...I had a meeting with the chairman and the CEO of Techcombank and they talked a lot about Vietnam and about the contribution to the country and the need of building a good bank, professional bank in Vietnam... the scope of work is really big and the impact is really big. So now, after 20 years' experience learning about a very professional organisation, I think I can contribute to the banks.



Scholarship	Australian Development Scholarship
Years	1993-1997
Degree	Bachelor of Banking and Finance
University	University of South Australia
Current position	Head of Wholesale Banking and Transformations Techcombank
Brief biography	<p>Ms Phan Thi Thanh Binh, is the Head of Wholesale Banking and Transformations, at Vietnam Technological and Commercial Joint Stock Bank –Techcombank, one of Vietnam's largest private sector banks.</p> <p>As one of the first cohorts to be awarded an Australian Development Scholarship in the finance and banking sector, Ms Pham studied a Bachelor of Banking and Finance at the University of South Australia.</p> <p>Returning to Vietnam in late 1997 she joined ANZ Vietnam where she worked for 20 years in a number of senior roles including the Acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in 2015 (six months) and various executive and board positions.</p> <p>After attending an ANZ Women in Leadership training program in 2017, Ms Pham felt inspired to look towards new leadership opportunities within the banking sector. She decided to move into the domestic banking sector to share her expertise and participate in the ongoing transformation of the banking industry in Vietnam.</p> <p>Joining Techcombank in 2017, Ms Pham is leading the Wholesale Banking Group's strategy and the bank's transformation agenda.</p>

Location at the time of field research: Hanoi, Vietnam
Date of interview: 27/10/2018

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Annex 1: Case Study Propositions

Explanatory Case Studies require the development of propositions that are intricately linked to the original research questions. A proposition is a statement that helps direct attention to something that should be examined in a Case Study. The researcher has to make a speculation, on the basis of the literature and any other earlier evidence, as to what they expect the findings of the research to be. When a Case Study proposal includes specific propositions, it increases the likelihood that the researcher can limit the scope of study and complete the project. The researcher can have several propositions to guide the study, but each must have a distinct focus and purpose. The data collection and analysis can then be structured in order to support or refute the research propositions.

For the Facility, propositions were formed using the Global Strategy outcomes as the basis. Sub-propositions were formulated by speculating on the underlying assumption or enabling factors that realise the proposition. In alignment with the methodology, instruments will be designed to collect data that both support and refute the propositions.

- 1 Alumni use their skills knowledge and networks to contribute to achieving partner-country development goals³.
 - a alumni develop skills, knowledge and networks on award that enable and are used to contribute to achieving partner-country development goals
 - b alumni understand, value and want to contribute to partner-country development goals.
- 2 Alumni are contributing to cooperation between Australia and partner countries
 - a alumni possess and are able to leverage their useful networks and relationships.
- 3 Effective, mutually advantageous partnerships between institutions and business [have been developed] in Australia and partner countries
 - a alumni possess and are able to leverage their useful networks and relationships
 - b partnerships that are developed are effective and mutually advantageous to participating countries.

³ This proposition differs from the Australia Awards Program Logic long-term outcome number 1 in order to link this proposition to the Goal of the Australia Awards Program. The use of the term 'partner-country development goals instead of 'sustainable development' makes the proposition and ensuing questions more relevant and relatable to alumni.

- 4 Alumni view Australia and Australian expertise positively
 - a alumni's views are underpinned by their experiences in Australia.
- 5 The benefits of receiving an Australia Award or scholarship are experienced equally by all recipients.
 - a receiving an Australia Award or scholarship positively addresses, rather than reinforces, imbalances that are associated with gender and disability.

Annex 2: Key Participant Questions

Alumni

[Validation question]

We understand you received an Australian Government Scholarship to study [level, field, years], is this correct?

Could you please confirm your current role and organisation?

1. Can you please tell us why you applied? What was your motivation?
 - a. Were there any barriers to accepting a scholarships and coming to Australia? [e.g. employer support, family responsibilities]
2. Can you tell me about your time in Australia experience as a student?
 - a Did you make any professional networks?
 - b Thinking about the networks that you might have developed during your scholarship, were there any that were long lasting; that resulted in working together or connecting other people?
3. After you returned, what was your job?
 - a What skills and knowledge gained during your time in Australia have been applicable in your work?
 - b What are some of the things that made it possible for you to apply your skills and knowledge after you returned home?
 - c What were some of the things that made it difficult to apply the skills and knowledge you gained after you returned home?
 - d What do you think is needed to assist alumni to use their skills and knowledge when they return home?
4. What do you believe are the greatest benefits of the Australian Government scholarship program?
5. Throughout your career, in what ways have you used Australian expertise in your work?
 - a Can you give an example of this, such as Australian-developed practices, equipment, ways of working, processes, theory/theorists, consultants, journals, models, etc.?
6. Are you currently or have been a member of an alumni association? (University/Australian Government scholarship recipient/ADS)
 - a What was the name of the association?

- b What do you get out of it?
 - c What more could alumni associations do for alumni?
 - d If not (a member of an association) why not?
7. Can you describe an achievement that you are most proud of, in your work or community?
 8. Compared with the males/females who have received a scholarship from (country x), how has your career progressed since returning home?
 9. Have there been any barriers you have had to overcome to progress in your career?
 10. Compared to peers similar to you but did not receive an opportunity to study overseas, do you believe there are any differences in how your careers have progressed?
 11. (Supporting Interviewer) did you have any questions you would like to ask of (alumni X)?

Employers/colleagues – For interviews regarding an individual alumni

[Validation question]

Could you please confirm your role and organisation?

1. Could you please tell us how long have you known [Alumni X] and in what capacity?
 - a Did you know [Alumni X] before s/he received the scholarship?
 - b Were you his/her manager?
2. To your knowledge, what new skills and knowledge did [Alumni X] use [in the workplace following their studies in Australia]?
 - a Could you provide examples of how this was applied?
3. How did the organisation support X to use his/her new skills and knowledge after returning from Australia?
 - a Did you have a role in supporting [alumni X] to reintegrate following their scholarship?
 - i If so why? What did this involve?
 - ii If not, why?
 - iii Developing a reintegration/return to work plan?
 - b Did X return to the same role following their scholarship?
 - c Did they receive additional responsibilities after their scholarship?
4. In your view, how did studying in Australia impact [Alumni X's] career?
5. Have you or your organisation benefited from any networks or friendships between [country X] and Australia created by the [Alumni X] as a result of receiving an Australian Government scholarship?

- a Please explain further; who and what?
- b What about any other countries?
- 6. Are you aware of any other links [Alumni X] has created between people in [country X] and Australia as a result of receiving an Australian Government scholarship?
 - a Please explain further; who, what why?
 - b What about between people in [country X] and any other countries?
- 7. What more could be done to increase opportunities to create institutional links between Australia and your country?
- 8. How has having an Australian Government scholarship recipient in your organisation impacted how you view Australia and Australian expertise?
- 9. Do you draw on Australian expertise for your work?

Employers/stakeholders – For interviews regarding alumni generally

[Validation question]

Could you please confirm your role in (X organisation)?

- 1. How familiar are you with the Australia Awards?

[If YES; a suggested probe if needed]

- a Estimated, how many Australian scholarship recipients have worked for your [ministry/organisation/sector/field]?

[If NO; probe further with]

- b Do you know of anyone who has received an Australian Government scholarship in your [ministry/organisation/sector/field]?
- 2. Has your (ministry/organisation/sector/field) benefitted from any links or networks developed by Australian Government scholarship alumni?
 - a Do you have any examples?
 - b What have been the results of this?
- 3. Has having Australian Government scholarship recipients in your (ministry/organisation/sector/field) influenced the way you view Australia and Australian expertise?
- 4. Have Australian Government scholarship recipients established any links between your [ministry/organisation/sector/field] and organisations in Australia?
 - a If yes what has been the result of these links?
 - b Benefits to you?
 - c Benefits to your workplace?
 - d Benefits to your country?
 - e If no, why not?

5. Are you aware if alumni have presented any opportunities on return to link your workplace or any other organisation in your country with an organisation in another country?
 - a If yes what has been the result of these links?
 - b Benefits to you?
 - c Benefits to your workplace?
 - d Benefits to your country?
 - e If no, why not?
6. What more do you think could be done to support links with Australian organisations?
7. In your view, what has been the overall long-term impact of having Australian Government scholarship recipients in your [ministry/organisation/sector/field]?
 - a How has having a number of Australian Government scholarship recipients over a number of years influenced your department's ability to achieve its goals and /or objectives?
 - b With regards to skills and knowledge; i.e. changed practices, processes or systems?
8. What are some of the things that make it easy or difficult for women to progress in their careers in your country?
9. What are some of the things that make it easy or difficult for those with a disability to progress in their careers in your country?
10. Comparing Australian Government scholarship recipients to their peers who did not receive an opportunity to study overseas, do you believe there are any differences in how their careers have progressed?

DFAT

[Validation question]

Could you please tell us about yourself and your role with the Australia Awards?

1. In your own words, what is the purpose of the Australia Awards?
 - a In your own words how does the Program achieve [points stated in the previous response]?
2. Based on your experience what would you say are the strengths of the Australia Awards?
3. How do you think alumni participation in the Australia Awards contributes to [Country X's] development goals?
 - a What evidence have you seen of this either personally or professionally?

- b How do you think the program lead to benefits for both Australia and [Country X]?
- 4. In your opinion, how do you think an alumni's participation in the Australia Awards contributes to a positive relationships between [Country X] and Australia?
 - a What factors/events have informed this opinion?
- 5. How do you think the Australia Awards contributes to gender equality and disability inclusiveness?
- 6. What other barriers do you think Australia Awards alumni have to overcome to progress in their careers in [Country X]?
- 7. What do you think are the barriers to achieving gender equality and disability inclusiveness?
 - a Do you feel [barriers stated in the previous response] have changed over time?
 - b In what way?
 - c Any other barriers?
- 8. If you had the power to change things about the Australia Awards what would you make different?
- 9. That covers the things I wanted to ask. Anything you would like to add?

Alumni Association

[Validation question]

Could you please tell us about yourself and your role with the alumni association?

- 1. In your own words, what is the purpose of the alumni association?
 - a What sort of services does the association provide?
- 2. What is the most valuable contribution the association provides for alumni?
- 3. What are some of the challenges involved in running an alumni association for alumni who have studied in Australia?
- 4. What activities does the alumni association provide to support women to progress in their careers in your country?
 - a What have been the outcomes of the program/s?
- 5. What activities does the alumni association provide to support those with a disability to progress in their careers in your country?
 - a What have been the outcomes of the program/s?

6. In what ways does the alumni association enable alumni to form new professional and personal networks?
7. What activities does the alumni association provide to help alumni remain connected to each other through face-to-face activities and social media?
8. How does the alumni association support alumni to remain connected to Australia?
9. What role does the alumni association play in fostering cooperation between your country and Australia?
10. What do you think should be done to assist your alumni association to contribute to greater cooperation between Australia and [Country X]?
11. Is the alumni association partnered with any institutions and businesses in Australia?
 - a If yes, what has been the result of these links?
 - i Benefits to you/association?
 - ii Benefits to alumni?
 - b If no, why not?
12. What more could be done to increase opportunities to create institutional links between Australia and your country?
13. How does the alumni association promote Australia and Australian expertise?

Gender Equality and Disability Inclusiveness Experts

Gender Equality

1. How does gender impact career?
2. What barriers are there to achieving gender equality?
3. What could or should be done to improve gender equality?
4. Compared with males who receive a scholarship to study overseas, how do you feel women's careers progress? [for DFAT or those with knowledge of scholarships]

Disability Inclusion

1. How does disability impact career?
2. What barriers are there to achieving disability inclusion?
3. What could or should be done to improve disability inclusion?

4. Compared with others who receive a scholarship to study overseas, how do you feel people with disability career's progress? [for DFAT or those with knowledge of scholarships]

Annex 3: Vietnam Case Study Participants

Type	Date (2018)	Name	Position or Degree
Alumni	22/10	Dr Anh Thu NGUYEN	Lecturer/Course Coordinator, RMIT University Vietnam
	22/10	Ms NGUYEN Ngoc Thien Kim	Senior Manager - Head of Finance Operation, Prudential Vietnam Assurance
	23/10	Ms HOANG Kim Binh	Chief Accountant - Group Director, Accounting and Finance Department, VNPT NET
	24/10	Ms NGUYEN Thu Mai	Freelancer / Former World Wild Fund for Nature, Business Finance Controller
	25/10	Ms TO Minh Huong	CEO/Board Director General Management Morgan Stanley Gateway Securities
	25/10	Ms HOANG Thi Nguyet Chinh	Castrol BP, Sales Operations Director
	27/10	Ms DAO Thi Thu Vinh	Deputy Director General Auditing Department No 8, State Audit Office of Vietnam
	27/10	Ms PHAM Thi Thanh Binh	Head of Wholesales Banking and Transformations, Techcombank
Alumni employers or colleagues	22/10	Mr Robert MCCLELLAND	Head of Department, School of Business and Management (Employer), RMIT Saigon South
Australian Embassy Hanoi	23/10	Dr Cain ROBERTS	Second Secretary Economic and Development Cooperation Section
	23/10	Mr NGUYEN Quang Anh	Trade and Development Manager
	23/10	Ms Linh-Huong, NGUYEN Thuy	Senior Economic Analyst
	23/10	Ms Ruth O'Hagan	First Secretary
	23/10	Ms Stacey NATION	Counsellor (Political) Embassy of Australia
Other stakeholders	24/10	Mr Michael SADLON	Program Director, Coffey International, managing contractor of the Australia Awards in Vietnam

Type	Date (2018)	Name	Position or Degree
	24/10	Ms Mai Huong LE	Alumni Engagement Manager, Coffey International, managing contractor of the Australia Awards in Vietnam
	24/10	Ms Kim Hoa NGUYEN	M&E Manager, Coffey International, managing contractor of the Australia Awards in Vietnam
	16/11	Ms Hoang-Yen t. VO	Founder & Director Disability Research & Capacity Development Centre
	21/10	Mr Michael ROBERTS	Executive Director, Australian Chamber of Commerce Vietnam (AUSCHAM)
	22/10	Ms Vivian DO	Chairwoman * HCM Chapter, Vietnam Graduates from Australia Club

