



Australia Awards

# Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility

Philippines Case Study:  
Peace, Security and  
Inclusive Development

August 2020



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Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>ABS-CBN</b>	Alto Broadcasting System—Chronicle Broadcasting Network (Philippines)
<b>ALA</b>	Australian Leadership Award
<b>ASEAN</b>	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>BARMM</b>	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
<b>CHED</b>	Philippines Commission on Higher Education
<b>COVID-19</b>	2019 Novel Coronavirus
<b>DFAT</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
<b>DILG</b>	Department of the Interior and Local Government
<b>ESARO</b>	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
<b>GEDSI</b>	Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion
<b>Gen San</b>	General Santos City
<b>GTF</b>	Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility

<b>IAG</b>	Institute for Autonomy and Governance
<b>INGO</b>	International non-government organisation
<b>LGU</b>	Local government unit
<b>MILF</b>	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
<b>OPAPP</b>	Officer at the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
<b>PA3i</b>	Philippine Australian Alumni Association
<b>PCVE</b>	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
<b>REAP</b>	Re-Entry Action Plan
<b>Rido</b>	Clan to Clan Conflict
<b>SCB</b>	Scholarships and Alumni Branch (DFAT)
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund

# Executive Summary

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This report has been developed based on interviews with seven alumni and various stakeholders to examine the long-term outcomes of Australia Awards scholarship alumni from the Philippines. The alumni of focus for this Case Study undertook scholarships in Australia in studies relating to peace, security and inclusive development. This research was conducted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility (GTF) in July 2020.

The overall aim of the Australia Awards is to help 'partner countries progress their development goals and have positive relationships with Australia that advance mutual interests'. This aim is extrapolated in four long-term outcomes for the Australia Awards, which form the basis of the findings for the alumni from this Case Study.

## Outcome 1: 'Alumni are using their skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development'

Alumni in this Case Study have used the skills and knowledge developed in Australia to make contributions in:

- **humanitarian and emergency response**—through providing technical assistance and inclusive programming in post-conflict and disaster-affected areas
- **peacebuilding and inclusive development programming**—alumni are contributing to inclusive development through inclusive political dialogue, technical advice, training, design, implementation and evaluation
- **indigenous rights and political representation**—advocacy, inclusion and political representation of indigenous peoples in the formation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)
- **improving professional practices**—among local government agencies, international non-government organisations (INGOs), media organisations and within the education sector.

For the alumni in this Case Study, Australia Awards Outcome 1—development contributions—is being **achieved**.

## Outcome 2 & 3: ‘Alumni are contributing to cooperation and partnerships between Australia and partner countries’

All seven alumni in this group described an ongoing relationship with links formed during their award. These links are both informal and formal and are largely with fellow alumni, international and Australian students, and university academics. These included:

- **academic relationships**—with supervisors and other academic staff met while on award. In some cases, these have resulted in collaboration in academic research and sharing ideas
- **links with other students**—such as ongoing friendships with classmates that involve sharing common interests in fields of expertise
- **working with Australians** or on programs **funded by the Australian Government**—in areas such as peacebuilding, humanitarian and emergency response programming
- **alumni networks**—through formal and informal alumni activities.

For alumni in this Case Study, Australia Awards long-term Outcome 2—cooperation with Australia—is being **achieved**.

## Outcome 4: ‘Alumni view Australia, Australians, and Australian expertise positively’

Alumni in this Case Study hold strong, positive views of Australia. Key elements in the building of these positive views are:

- **high regard for Australian expertise** in inclusive development, peacebuilding and conflict-related studies
- **satisfaction with the high standard of teaching and learning** they received on award
- **equity and social inclusion** experienced while living in Australia.

For alumni in this Case Study, Australia Awards long-term Outcome 4—positive views of Australia—is being achieved.

## Factors contributing to achieving these outcomes

Based on the evidence collected in this Case Study, the success of the scholarship for these alumni is due to several important factors. To varying extents for each alum, these factors include:

- **the quality of the skills and knowledge developed and enhanced** while on award
- **interactive classroom learning**
- **extracurricular and experimental learning**
- **the individual motivation** of each of these alumni to make a difference
- **mentorship** from supervisors and **work experience** while on award
- the **broadening of mindset** from living and studying in Australia
- **Re-Entry Action Plans (REAP)**
- alumni **networks**.

The continuation of these supports and policies for selection in the Australia Awards will increase the likelihood of successful outcomes for alumni in the future.

## Challenges to achieving these outcomes

A couple of consistent themes relating to the challenges confronted by alumni since returning home were identified in this Case Study. These challenges can impact the extent to which the long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards can be achieved. Working towards understanding and where possible addressing these, could be beneficial to improving outcomes in the future. Key challenges identified are:

- some alumni were unable to complete their REAP due to changes at the **organisational level** (departmental transfers, change in supervision or location)
- **limited employment opportunities post award** for those who had to resign from their jobs to go on award (alumni from the open category)
- **resistance to change** within organisations
- **burn out and stress**
- **COVID-19**.



## Global Tracer Facility

# Australia Awards alumni in the Philippines - supporting peace, stability and social inclusion

## Australia Awards alumni are contributing to:



Humanitarian and emergency response



Peacebuilding and inclusive development programs



Indigenous rights and political representation



Improvements in professional practices

## Australia Awards results

Alumni provided strong examples of development contributions



"I listen to the smallest, faintest voice in the room... I want that voice heard in the development part that we do in the intervention, in the school that we're building, in the houses that we're trying to build for them who were displaced by conflict, that, for me, is something I would directly attribute as having been honed, clarified, even deeply because of my Australian scholarship."



Alumni are contributing to cooperation between Australia and the Philippines



"I've also been in touch with my classmates, Australian and other international students who were not part of the Australia Awards program. We're still in touch right now. I've made really good friends with them, so we're still talking to each other, sharing our experiences. We keep on updating each other every now and then."



Alumni view Australia and Australian expertise positively



"Definitely my academic experience was an eye opener. I got to meet a lot of very helpful professors, amazing intelligent students from all over the world, and definitely it also enriched my views on how peace should be handled...I had a 180-degree change in my perception...I came to understand that peace is actually an ongoing process."



Participants: Alumni who completed scholarships between 2010-2017



### Case study participants:

- female alumni
- male alumni
- anonymous alum
- employer of alumni
- stakeholders



# 1. Introduction

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The Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility (GTF) is a project which commenced in 2016 and is funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Through this project, DFAT assesses the development contributions and public and economic diplomacy outcomes of Australia's investment in the Australia Awards. The key research and reporting activities being undertaken annually by the GTF are a quantitative Global Tracer Survey and qualitative Case Studies, which are prepared concurrently throughout the project.

This report provides the key findings of the Philippines Case Study, which focussed on Filipino alumni who completed their scholarship in Australia between 2010 and 2014 in the areas of peace, security and inclusive development. Previous case studies conducted by the GTF have involved in-country, face-to-face interviews with alumni and stakeholders. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this Case Study was the first to engage in wholly remote data collection. Interviews for this Case Study were undertaken by Facility researchers using online videoconferencing in July 2020.

## 1.1 Objectives

The GTF seeks to generate high-quality information on former scholarship holders, with a focus on less recent alumni. This information provides 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, on their home institutions and countries.

All research by the GTF is undertaken with close reference to the long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards. These outcomes underpin the interviews, surveys and the reporting of the GTF. The long-term outcomes are detailed in the *Australia Awards Global Strategy: Investing in the next generation of global leaders for development 2016–2018* (the Global Strategy) and the *Australia Awards Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework* (the Framework). The outcomes of focus for this Case Study are:

- Alumni are using their skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development.
- Alumni are contributing to cooperation between Australia and partner countries.
- Alumni view Australia, Australians and Australian expertise positively.

In addition to these long-term outcomes, gender and disability inclusion are overarching cross-cutting priorities of Australia's aid priorities outlined in the *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper* (Australian Government, 2017). These themes are incorporated into the analysis of this report, where relevant.



## 1.2 Scope

The GTF's specific focus is on alumni of DFAT's Australia Awards and previous Australian Government-funded scholarship programs, awards and fellowships. For each Case Study undertaken by the GTF, this focus is further refined to a specific cohort of alumni based on the years they completed their scholarship or fellowship and particular field of education or sector.

For this Philippines Case Study, the research focus is on alumni who completed their award between **2010 and 2014** and studied in fields of peace, security and inclusive development.

## 1.3 Country context—Peace, conflict and inclusive development, and the Australia Awards in the Philippines

Australia has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the Philippines, celebrating 70 years of bilateral relations in 2016. A Presidential Proclamation also declared 22 May as Philippines Australia Friendship Day (DFAT, n.d.a). Reflecting the length of the Australia-Philippines partnership, the bilateral development cooperation has spanned more than 50 years and is 'now one of Australia's largest aid programs' (Australian Embassy, the Philippines, 2016). In 2019-20 total Australian Official Development Assistance to the Philippines is an estimated \$79.7 million (DFAT, n.d.b). Since 2001, investment in development in the Philippines has included the areas of training and human resource development and support to the Mindanao peace and development process (Australian Embassy, the Philippines, 2016). Since the 1950s, Australia has provided over 4,000 postgraduate education and training opportunities to Filipinos to support building capacity of emerging leaders to drive change (Australian Embassy, the Philippines, 2019). The Australia Awards in the Philippines are offered through two categories, Targeted and Open. The Targeted category is comprised of nominated applicants from selected partner government agencies identified by the Australian Embassy and Philippines Government as essential to achieving shared development priorities. The Open category is open to all other individuals from the private, non-government organisations, academe and public sector agencies not covered by the targeted category who intend to pursue studies in the identified priority fields.

### REAP—A unique element of Australia Awards in the Philippines

*A Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP) outlines how you intend to use the competencies you will acquire in Australia to contribute to Philippine development—Australia Awards Philippines<sup>1</sup>*

The REAP has been developed and refined by the Australia Awards Philippines as a comprehensive reintegration program which acts to ensure organisational or community benefit from a scholar's award. This rigorous approach requires applicants to articulate a project which will utilise their Australian education to contribute to change and impact for development on their return to the Philippines. The REAP should also address gender equality and social inclusion and have agreement from the organisation participating. Applicants are also required to secure a mentor who will guide them throughout their plan to assist in achieving successful completion of their REAP.

1 For further information: <https://www.australiaawardsphilippines.org/staging-v2/scholarships/applicants/what-is-the-reap>



## 1.4 Alumni and other interview participants

Seven alumni (3 men, 3 women, 1 anonymous) were interviewed for this Case Study. Each had studied in Australia and completed their scholarship between 2010 and 2014. All had undertaken studies relating to peace, security and inclusive development. The seven alumni of focus are introduced below, with their award details and current occupation. Detailed profiles are provided in Chapter 6.



**Ms Annaliza Laylo**

Master of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney  
  
Technical Advisor, Save the Children, Nigeria



**Mr Daniel Abunales**

Master of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney  
  
Program Coordinator, Ecology and Social Justice, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Southeast Asia



**Ms Primy Cane-Fuentes**

Master of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney  
  
Freelance Journalist and Photographer



**Professor Rey Danilo Lacson**

Master of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney  
  
Project Manager, EnPoID Bangsamoro, Institute for Autonomy and Governance



**Mr Crisanto Cayon**

Master of International Crisis Management, Monash University

Program Manager, Peace Connect, The Asia Foundation, Cotabato City



**Ms Nerissa Canguilan**

Master of Social Change and Development, University of Newcastle

Regional Director (IV), Civil Service Commission Regional Office II, Philippines Civil Service



**Alum A**

Master of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney

Philippines Civil Service

In addition to the alumni, nine stakeholders participated in interviews for this Case Study to provide a contextual understanding of the Philippines and the Australia Awards, and further explore the contributions of alumni. These stakeholders included one employer and mentor of an alumnus, two staff from the managing contractor of the Australia Awards in the Philippines, six staff from the Australian Embassy in the Philippines, and one partner government stakeholder. Further details on interview participants are available in the Methodology section (Annex 1).



## 2. Development Outcomes

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This Case Study demonstrates the impact that alumni can make within the first ten years post award. Alumni in this group are making development contributions in humanitarian and emergency response programming, peacebuilding, media accountability and journalism studies, inclusive development, indigenous rights and political representation.

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter details the development impact of the participating alumni 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 explore the following Case Study propositions:

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

The alumni who are the focus of this Case Study are each making contributions to development. The examples in this chapter highlight these contributions across a variety of activities spanning peacebuilding and sustainable development as well as mentoring and capacity building. The examples discussed in this chapter help to show that for the alumni in this Case Study, long-term Outcome 1 of the Australia Awards is being achieved.

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## 2.2 Skills developed on award

This chapter highlights examples of a range of skills that alumni have developed and utilised on their return from Australia. While these skills are implicit throughout the analysis that follows, provided below is a list of skills identified by the alumni to highlight the breadth in knowledge gained on award.

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### **‘Soft’/interpersonal skills include:**

- communication
- intercultural competency
- critical thinking and problem-solving.

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### **‘Hard’/ technical skills include:**

- conflict negotiation, resolution and mediation
  - designing and implementing peacebuilding and inclusive development programs
  - advocacy
  - project management
  - leadership and mentoring
  - research practice
  - gender, diversity and social inclusion.
-



## 2.3 Alumni contributions

Summarised below are the ways in which the seven alumni in this Case Study have contributed to development in the Philippines and internationally.

Below are the key contributions in development among the alumni of focus in this Case Study.

Humanitarian and emergency response	Peacebuilding and inclusive dialogue	Inclusive development programming	Improving professional practices in peace journalism	Capacity building
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>technical advice and inclusive programming in post-conflict and disaster-affected areas</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>facilitating inclusive political dialogue through community mediation and formal peace negotiations</li><li>advocacy of indigenous land ownership and inclusion of indigenous peoples in the peace process in Mindanao</li><li>political recognition and representation of indigenous peoples in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>contributing to inclusive development programming through technical advice, training, design, implementation and evaluation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>inclusive programming within the local government and INGO sectors</li><li>media accountability and journalism studies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>training and technical advice for international monitors on the peace process in Mindanao</li><li>innovative and interactive gender sensitivity and development training practices of regional civil servants</li><li>formal and informal mentoring in the workplace.</li></ul>

A previous report by the GTF, *Global Impact of Australian Aid Scholarships: long-term outcomes of alumni*, collates the three Global Tracer Surveys by the GTF covering alumni who completed their award from the 1990s to 2010. Of the Filipino respondents (n = 318), 98 per cent of alumni agreed or strongly agreed that they had passed on their skills and knowledge to others. Similarly, 95 per cent agreed or strongly agreed they had introduced improved practices and innovations through their work (compared with 98% and 96% of alumni from all countries, respectively). The alumni in this Case Study reflect the overall responses of the Filipino alumni in the Global Tracer Surveys, with all alumni able to build on their skills and expertise to improve practices and share their knowledge with others.

### 2.3.1 Humanitarian and emergency response

Post award, two alumni, **Mr Crisanto Cayon** and **Ms Annaliza Laylo**, have built careers in the international non-government organisation (INGO) sector, directly contributed to providing humanitarian and emergency response programming in the Philippines, Africa and South East Asia.

In 2010, while working as a Peace Program Officer at the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), Ms Laylo received an Australian Development Scholarship to study a Master of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney. Ms Laylo left the government sector in 2013 to become an Education in Emergencies Specialist for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Philippines, where she provided technical advice and training on peacebuilding and educational programs. Since 2017, she has worked for several INGO's including Mercy Corps in South Sudan, and Save the Children in the Philippines, Thailand and Nigeria. Ms Laylo is also on the standby emergency humanitarian worker for RedR Australia and UNICEF's ESARO (Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office) Rapid Response Mechanism and was deployed in 2019 to Mozambique's Sofala province after tropical cyclones Idai and Kenneth to implement UNICEF's Education Cannot Wait Grant.

Mr Cayon studied a Master in Crisis Management at Monash University (2011 to 2012) and returned to the Philippines to work in the INGO sector providing emergency humanitarian support to displaced groups in the Mindanao region through peacebuilding, education and conflict recovery programs. While working for UNICEF, he coordinated the humanitarian response for the Zamboanga siege in 2014 and the Peacebuilding and Recovery Program in the Lanao del Sur province in 2017 after the Marawi conflict.

Both alumni have worked closely with diverse ethnic, religious, and political groups in post-conflict or disaster environments to provide displaced children and young people with educational opportunities.

### 2.3.2 Peacebuilding and inclusive dialogue

An anthropologist and academic, **Professor Rey Danilo Lacson** has over 20 years of experience working towards peace, stability and inclusive development in Mindanao. Prior to going on award, Professor Lacson was the Director of the Notre Dame University Peace Centre and was actively involved in providing academic support to the Peace Process. He resigned from his role to pursue an Australian Development Scholarship and studied a Master of Peace and Conflict Studies at Sydney University in 2014.

Returning to the Philippines, Professor Lacson was invited to join the team at the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG) where he has contributed as a Project Manager on several Australian Government-funded peace and development programs. Through these programs aimed at promoting a peaceful political climate in the Mindanao region, Professor Lacson has been able to use skills and knowledge enhanced on award to facilitate inclusive political dialogue among local government units (LGUs), political leaders, provincial clan leaders and indigenous groups. Professor Lacson noted:

*The objective of political dialogue is to achieve practical and peaceful solutions to problems. At a deeper level, the aim is to address conflict drivers and foster reconciliation, build a greater national consensus and social cohesion, and define a shared vision of the future.—Odendaal (2011)*

*Using my skill in community mediation, applying it on a higher scale, especially between the political leaders, provisional leaders and the clan leaders of the political sides. [My role in] getting them on board the peace process and being comfortable in the negotiation process was the achievement that I am most proud of.*





Professor Lacson (seated on the right), at the Forum on Federalism, Autonomy and Mindanao Peace Process. Photo: Professor Ray Danilo Lacson

Professor Lacson has also played an influential role in improving political recognition and inclusion of indigenous peoples in the peace process in Mindanao. While in Australia, Professor Lacson remained active in facilitating dialogue in Mindanao, using his network to push for political representation of indigenous peoples within the formation of the new autonomous region and supported the call for two reserved seats in parliament for indigenous peoples.

*My contribution there, was that, while in Australia, I kept urging my friends in the indigenous peoples to get their population really established: how many and in what area, where they are actually living, and get that census and have at least a taste in terms of the statistics. They started that out, so, while in Sydney, they sent me the raw data, and I found time to write the demographics of the indigenous peoples of the autonomous region. And I finished that while in Sydney and got it published, and that's the one they are using now, at least, that's the one they are using to demand their political recognition in the Bangsamoro.*

On Professor Lacson's return to Philippines, he began working at IAG and planned to undertake his Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP)<sup>2</sup> around the use of 'community mediation' in the reduction of local clan conflicts or 'rido', which would often escalate into conflict between the rebels and the government. However, the project's scope grew, and he found himself participating in the larger peace process. Professor Lacson recalled:

*I came back to the Philippines and worked in the DFAT project that really evolved into not just a program between and among clans, but it supported the real peace process between the government and the rebels. It brought me to facilitate dialogues at the municipal level, provincial level, and even in the legislature in Congress and in the Senate during that time. I was there when the Bangsamoro Organic Law<sup>3</sup> was signed.*

Through his work at the IAG, Professor Lacson was able to facilitate inclusion of indigenous voices to the negotiation table. He is currently Project Manager of EnPoID Bangsamoro (Enhancing Political Dialogue for Inclusive Peace in the Bangsamoro)<sup>4</sup>, an Australian Government-funded capacity-building program for LGUs to ensure inclusive political dialogue and consensus among political groups in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

2 Re-Entry Action Plans (REAPs) are a unique requirement for all Australia Awards Philippine scholars to complete a project on return to the Philippines that utilises their Australian education to create change and impact for the benefit of their organisation or community.

3 For further information on the Bangsamoro Organic Law: <https://pia.gov.ph/features/articles/1018364>

4 For further information: <http://enpoldbangsamoro.iag.org.ph/>



The Bajau people are traditionally a nomadic seafaring community, many were displaced during the 2013 Zamboanga siege. Photo: Shutterstock

### 2.3.3 Inclusive development programming

Six of the seven of the alumni featured in this Case Study have directly contributed to inclusive development programming post award, through technical advice, training, program design, implementation and evaluation. Many of these alumni have worked in post-conflict situations, employing skills which were enhanced on award, such as conflict sensitivity training and inclusive consultation, to support peacebuilding and inclusive development programming.

For example, as a Program Coordinator at Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation in Thailand, **Mr Daniel Abunales** attributes his Master of Peace and Conflict Studies as providing him with a strong foundation in gender, intersectionality and sustainable development which has helped in his work on social inequalities in South East Asia:

*I was actually able to apply what I've learnt in Australia... being introduced to concepts of peace, conflict, violence, gender, intersectionality, these things actually widened my perspective. It has helped me become a better program manager now.*

Alumni are also employing techniques learnt on award to build ownership and empower local communities. For example, Mr Cayon uses inclusive techniques 'honed' in Australia, to help include communities in development initiatives aimed at improving their livelihoods. While working on a school building project in Zamboanga City for the displaced Bajaus / Sama Dilaut 'sea gypsies' of Tawi-Tawi Island in Southern Philippines, Mr Cayon set up a public consultation process with the community to find out what they wanted in a school. He ensured that the consultation process included a variety of leaders and stakeholders, such as school-aged children, women, traditional elders and representatives from the three different ethnic groups in the community. Mr Cayon recalled:

*As a result of that consultation, the construction of schools, of temporary shelters, and of wash facilities were designed according to the specifications of the Bajau people as a whole and not just of their traditional leaders.*

Ms Laylo is another alum working closely with 'communities and government partners' on development projects. At the time of interview, Ms Laylo was a technical advisor and leading the development of peacebuilding and education programs for young people affected by the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. Her background in Peace and Conflict Studies allows her to be able to prepare a 'conflict analysis' as part of her programming and ensure all staff and stakeholders receive conflict sensitivity training for that context. Ms Laylo noted that as a result of her award, 'all the skills: peacebuilding, conflict resolution, concepts and other skills are very handy.'



Peace journalism, in contrast to war journalism, aims to present all sides of the story. Photo: Shutterstock

Working in the government sector, **Ms Nerissa Canguilan** and **Alum A** are also helping to improve inclusive development programming at the community level. For example, Ms Canguilan has been actively involved in improving gender-sensitive planning and budgeting practices among local government agencies to ensure development programs are more inclusive at the community level.

*I am one of the subject matter experts on gender on development. We conduct gender sensitivity training; we conduct gender-responsive planning and budgeting among government agencies.*

### 2.3.4 Improving professional practices in peace journalism

#### Improving teaching and learning within journalism studies

Post award, Mr Abunales and **Ms Primy Cane-Fuentes** have been active in promoting best practice in investigative journalism across the sector and within their workplaces. Both alumni have a background in broadcast media and communications and studied a Master of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney, undertaking key units on the media's role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Peace journalism aims to present stories on conflict from all angles, using language which aims to reduce conflict, limit propaganda and bias, and offer a balanced insight into the socio-political and cultural context of the event being reported (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2014).

*Right now, the war journalism style of producing stories is still really active. When I give my talks, that the peace journalism way of presenting your story is really “more balanced,” “more fair,” and it gives more context to the story, so people don’t immediately jump the gun and contribute more to conflict. Instead, they try to understand all sides that are involved in the story.—Ms Cane-Fuentes*



Following the completion of his award, Mr Abunales returned to his role at the VERA Files, a non-profit media organisation involved in promoting ‘excellence in journalism’<sup>5</sup>. Working closely with his manager and mentor, Ms Yvonne Chua, Mr Abunales was encouraged to change his Australia Awards Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP) and designed a national tertiary syllabus on Peace Journalism and Conflict Relating Reporting. The syllabus was modelled on the 2013 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)<sup>6</sup> Model curricula for Journalism Education. According to Ms Chua, the syllabus had ‘a very big impact’ on journalism studies within the Philippines, strengthening institutional capacity to teach a subject area which had traditionally been taught ‘tentatively’ before. Ms Chua recalled:

*In terms of impact, I know that a number of them [educators] told me that Mr Abunales’ syllabus became one of their references, not as a full-blown course, but in some of the units that were taught... [Through this work] they were able to see how the UNESCO template was put into action. That means a lot because it also means raising the standards of syllabus development among journalism.*

Mr Abunales was able to also strengthen the VERA Files media fellowship program through his skills developed on award and as part of his REAP, providing mentoring and formal training in peace journalism to trainee journalists.

Unable to return to her role as a regional broadcast journalist at ABS-CBN Cagayan de Oro (Mindanao) on her return from award, Ms Cane-Fuentes adapted her REAP to focus on informing high school students and teachers about the importance of peace journalism. She noted:

*Originally, my re-entry plan was supposed to be about integrating peace journalism into our own local channel... but because there was a change in leadership, I couldn’t. So, I decided to hold a conference for campus journalists instead. It was attended, by about 200 high school kids and their advisors, who work on their campus papers. It was the teachers who were coming to me after the lectures, and they were like, “Why aren’t we teaching our kids this?” This [peace journalism] should be standard...*

### Promoting fact-checking and investigative journalism

While working at VERA Files, Mr Abunales was promoted to the role of Editor, and Deputy Project Director of the fact-checking initiative which promotes research and media accountability within the Philippines. According to Mr Abunales, the initiative has led to scrutiny within the sector and the creation of a designated fact-checking unit in a number of ‘media organisations’, while also facilitating media reform and policy change at the national level. Mr Abunales added:

*I think the international community also noticed it because Facebook eventually tapped us as one of their third-party fact-checkers. Many people are not happy with Facebook’s policies but at least we are able to do something with this kind of project, and we are able to contribute in the fight against information disorder.*



Mr Abunales (centre) at a fact-checking event for VERA Files at Bulacan State University in Northern Philippines. This event was organized by the Philippine Press Institute. Photo: Mr Daniel Abunales

<sup>5</sup> For further information: <https://verafiles.org/about>

<sup>6</sup> For further information: <https://en.unesco.org/unesco-series-on-journalism-education>

### Advocacy for improved practice within the workplace

While working as a news reporter for the ABS-CBN national news team in Manila from 2015 to 2017, Ms Cane-Fuentes was able to advocate for changes in journalist practices in reporting conflict-related stories. She was able to use skills and knowledge gained in Australia to advocate for changes in the way conflict was reported within her news department and found 'allies in the newsroom'. Ms Cane-Fuentes recalled:

*I tried to tell them about how stories aren't just to inform people. We can have another purpose. We can bring people together... So, that's what peace journalism is about. It's choosing how to present your story in a way that promotes more understanding; it promotes people to look beyond what's usually there. It usually helps people to feel good, at the end of the day...I saw a lot of other journalists applying it to their stories as well.*

Ms Cane-Fuentes' calls for changes in journalistic practices while at ABS-CBN Manila facilitated the introduction of a professional development unit for staff called 'Appreciative Inquiry' which explored the nuances around reporting on conflict and the framing of media reports.



Ms Cane-Fuentes and colleagues investigating a story for ABS-CBN. Photo: Ms Primy Cane-Fuentes



Ms Cane-Fuentes, General Santos City, 2017 seminar on Peace Journalism for the City Government of General Santos with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). Photo: <http://www.minbull.com/2017/09/peace-journalism-seminar-making-change.html>

Through connections made on award, Ms Cane-Fuentes was invited to train local government officers and local journalists in peace journalist practices in General Santos City in Mindanao. The offer of work came through her former classmate and fellow Australia Awards alumna, Ms Rochelle Sero, who was working as Provincial Director in the region. Ms Cane-Fuentes recalled:

*I was sponsored by their local government to teach their own information officers, as well as the local journalists in their city, about peace journalism because she wanted them to be able to write their stories in a way that would help bring their city together—because Gen San [General Santos City] is in the south and there are also conflict areas in Gen San. They had a project about peacebuilding in their city, and one of the chapters of that project was teaching their local journalists and their information officers how to produce their news better, how to word it better, which is what we learnt in the conflict resolving media unit.*

### 2.3.5 Capacity building

#### Formal training and development

All alumni interviewed for the Case Study are actively involved in sharing their knowledge and skills refined on award through formal training and capacity building within their sectors. This work includes academic and professional development training across different sectors (Professor Lacson, Ms Canguilan, Mr Abunales and Ms Cane-Fuentes), as well as formal training of field staff, development partners and colleagues through workshops and training sessions on inclusive practices (Ms Laylo, Mr Cayon, Professor Lacson, Alum A, Mr Abunales and Ms Canguilan). Many alumni like Mr Cayon cite that training helps to build capacity within their organisations for the next generation and is part of their responsibility as leaders in their field. Mr Cayon stated:

*I had the chance to be accepted to a Masters degree and to an Australia Award, and the only thing I can meaningfully do that's easy is to use my leadership position to train younger ones, the next liners.*

Working as an academic, Professor Lacson is a part-time lecturer in the peace program at Notre Dame University and often called on as an expert on the peace process. He also provides formal training and technical support to international monitors involved in observing the ongoing peace process in Mindanao.

*I am a regular resource speaker—and they call it trainer—to get them a good start on monitoring because I think they send monitors on a biannual basis. So, each time a new team comes, they always seek me out to give an orientation and an overview of the things that transpired in the peace process...*

Both Alum A and Ms Canguilan are building the capacity of LGUs and civil servants in their roles as Regional Directors within the Philippines Government. For example, Ms Canguilan as an accredited coach is responsible for ‘training the trainers’ within her organisation, designing materials and activities for training packages and delivering sessions to scaffold inclusive development programming at the local government level. Ms Canguilan has introduced new techniques, reducing lecture heavy training sessions, replacing them with structured interactive activities to build the capacity of staff. Ms Canguilan noted:

*I had a subject [in Australia] which was called Organisation or Human Capacity Building, and we had so many interactive learning exercises in that subject, I liked his approach. It was there where I learnt how to do the World Café technology, different technologies of participation. I learnt a lot of ways of connecting with people. In the Civil Service Commission, we can have trainings, and I [introduced to this training] the practices that I learnt there [in Australia] It is something different from what we used to do.*

As part of her department’s response to COVID-19, Ms Canguilan has been leading the transition to online training, using innovative techniques such as webinars and online modules to replace traditional face-to-face training. She is also using blended learning techniques she observed while undertaking an Australian Leadership Award to develop a leadership module for government staff wishing to progress in their careers.

*I make use of the concepts that I learnt there, because [it was] the whole point... I brought home with me my folders, the hard copies, and I go over them often. I review them; I get ideas from them. It was there that I learnt, as early in 2012, the leadership competencies that I'm now implementing in the Commission...*

### Informal mentoring in the workplace and the local community

Alumni are also contributing to informal mentoring of junior staff and trainees in their workplaces. For example, both Mr Abunales (VERA Files and Heinrich Böll Stiftung) and Ms Cane-Fuentes (ABS-CBN, Manila) have run informal ‘brown bag’ learning over lunch sessions for colleagues in areas such as peace journalism and the Mindanao conflict. Others like Ms Canguilan are sharing their skills and knowledge within their local communities through volunteering. A member of the Zonta Club, an international women’s organisation, Ms Canguilan is using her expertise to train women how to run community development projects, using techniques such as asset-based community development which she learnt on award and honed as a trainer at the Civil Service Commission

*As a member of the Zonta Club, our main focus is women’s empowerment, helping women who are victims of violence, empowering women, so we have projects that deal with advocacy, and teaching. So, we are now at the grassroots level; we reach out to women in the communities....I felt that in order to sustain all these efforts on gender and development, I should not confine myself within the realm of my work in the office. So, I have also gone out and worked with community-based women.*



Ms Nerissa Canguilan running online training for staff at the Civil Service Commission during Covid-19. Photo: Ms Nerissa Canguilan



## 2.4 Factors influencing these outcomes

Cumulatively, the Australia Awards provided a transformative experience for alumni. This transformation occurred through the skills and knowledge gained and increased self-confidence resulting from their experiences and achievements in Australia. Four alumni experienced challenges in their ability and opportunities to contribute to development through their workplace. These are mostly beyond the influence of the Australia Awards Philippines. There is potential to provide further support in the area of wellbeing to assist alumni in navigating workplace stress and burnout, a relevant topic in the current context of COVID-19 presenting unforeseen challenges and pressures on individuals and their communities.

The following graphic outlines factors identified as having helped or challenged this group of alumni's abilities to contribute to development, and align with different stages of the Australia Awards cycle as a means of pinpointing where the Australia Awards in the Philippines could consider policies for encouraging or improving particular aspects.

### 2.4.1 Enabling factors

#### Applicant motivation

The response from five alumni (Alum A, Mr Cayon, Mr Abunales, Ms Canguilan and Ms Cane-Fuentes) regarding their motivation to apply for the Australia Awards demonstrated the personal and professional drive integral to their commitment to the challenge of international postgraduate studies to enhance their contributions to development. Motivation is a factor also highlighted by the Australian Embassy in Manila as a distinguishing feature of the Australia Awards. Ms Cane-Fuentes exemplifies how her drive to improve practices is translated post award when she encountered resistance to change:

*I was trying really hard to implement what I thought was the right way to present my stories. So, I had to be creative, instead of applying [peace journalism principles] on big stories...I started applying them in smaller stories, just so they could see the effect.*





### Partner organisations—Targeted category alumni

Two alumni (Alum A and Ms Laylo) in this group were from the ‘Targeted category’. This category of the Australia Awards in the Philippines is comprised of nominated candidates from select government offices the Australian Embassy has partnered with on shared development priorities. Through the partnership, identified organisational capacity development needs informed the courses Targeted awardees could undertake to ensure alignment with needs.

Ms Laylo stated that her course as a result ‘was very much in line with what I was doing and it’s still in line with what I am doing right now’. The Australia Awards Philippines describes the partnering an ‘advantage’, with the purpose of the scholarships to ‘strengthen their organisation’ and to meet ‘the competency gaps’ identified.

According to a partner government stakeholder the relevance of the courses to their organisation’s needs is enhanced through mentoring support and the Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP) components of the Australia Awards. Consultation with a mentor to develop a REAP during the internal application stage guides their staff to ‘think about the reason why they want to go [to Australia] so that they can help the department.’ REAPs are designed to ‘address’ capacity gaps within the organisation and ‘within the scope of influence’ of the staff member.

The government representative noted that it is popular initiative due to ‘the collective impact’ of ‘leadership and experience sharing’ throughout the organisation, which encourages others to seek out further professional development and scholarship opportunities, which strengthens long-term organisational capacity. The representative also cited the close working relationship with the Australia Awards office and targeted agencies, and overall program design as key to the success of the initiative.

*The reason why the Australia Awards has a greater impact or maybe it’s the most popular is because how it’s managed’.*

### Relevant work experience

The work experience before the award for five alumni (Ms Laylo, Mr Cayon, Ms Canguilan, Ms Cane-Fuentes and Professor Lacson) contributed to their postgraduate studies and enhanced their depth of skills and knowledge. Professor Lacson undertook his Australia Awards with 13 years working on the Mindanao peace process and stated that this benefited his experience:

*When I embarked on the scholarship program, I had, as my capital, my experiences of how things could be done more effectively in terms of the peace process...[it’s] why I got so serious with my studies because I already carried with me some hard experiences and some hard questions and queries that needed to be answered factually. And I was so sure why I got into the scholarship, I was so sure what I wanted to study and what I wanted to look for, and I did not hunt around anymore, just simple planted directly into what I was looking for.*

### Relevant and improved skills and knowledge

All seven alumni stated their technical and soft skills and knowledge were improved in Australia and have been useful in their work over the years since return. Ms Canguilan stated both her Masters’ course and Australian Leadership Award (ALA) equipped her with a range of skills and approaches that she utilises in her workplace trainings—‘I could make use of the concepts that I learnt there....I review them, I get ideas from them’. Mr Abunales’ manager, Ms Chua stated that post award, Mr Abunales became their ‘resident expert’ on peace processes and ‘had an edge’ compared to his peers regarding his skills.

### Interactive classroom learning

Five alumni (Ms Laylo, Mr Cayon, Mr Abunales, Ms Canguilan and Professor Lacson) stated a highlight of their learning was their interactive classroom discussions with diverse peers contributing their experiences and practices. Ms Laylo described her Master of Peace and Conflict Studies as ‘a very international program’:

*It was interacting and the casual conversations with these people which I really appreciated and learning more about other cultures and learning more about others’ point of view... So, the academic was not really the be-all of my program, but it’s more understanding other people’s [views], for me.*

### Extracurricular and experiential learning

Five alumni (Alum A, Mr Cayon, Mr Abunales, Ms Canguilan, Ms Cane-Fuentes) referred to opportunities to learn through practice in and outside of the classroom. Alum A participated in an Australian community group practising peace advocacy, which ‘improved my skills in group dynamics’ that they apply in the workplace. For Ms Canguilan, in addition to the ALA practical experiences (which ‘was like a total package’), her Masters’ course also embedded field trips for practice-based learning where ‘we compared, and we shared experiences’.

### Broadened mindset

Four alumni (Alum A, Mr Cayon, Mr Abunales and Ms Canguilan) identified a broadened mindset as a result of living and studying in Australia. For example, Mr Cayon stated that time away from the Philippines enabled him to take a step back and ‘to look at my situation in Mindanao more from an observer perspective’:

*Australia really did open an already open Cris; [Mr Cayon]; it opened me more...I always allow myself the time and the opportunity to hear other people’s experiences, enabling me to use their experiences to appreciate my experiences more deeply, and that’s something I would credit to my Australian education.*

### Recognised learning by employers

Four alumni (Mr Cayon, Ms Laylo, Ms Canguilan, and Professor Lacson) referred to advancement opportunities post award. Although the Australia Awards Philippines identifies this as a supplementary outcome of the scholarships, the alumni stated recognition of their Australian postgraduate degree and increased capabilities by employers were factors in attaining opportunities. Professor Lacson recalled his manager saying with an Australian degree:

*You will not find it very difficult to find a job, because many organisations, even international organisations working in Mindanao, will have you on the top list of the skills that they’re looking for.*

Ms Canguilan experienced feeling more ‘visible’ after her Australia Award and Australian Leadership Award—‘After Australia, I was promoted twice already...After my scholarship, I think I got noticed, based on my potential, based on the competencies that I have developed’.

### Mentor and workplace support

Two alumni referred to workplace support in their reintegration experience. Ms Laylo stated her reintegration experience benefited from their ‘very supportive’ direct supervisor, as well as ‘consciously’ seeking support in the workplace on return. Mr Abunales’ manager, Ms Chua, was also his Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP) mentor and provided significant guidance throughout his award experience and successful completion of his REAP. Of her mentee, Ms Chua stated ‘I had great faith in Daniel’.

### Re-Entry Action Plans (REAP)

Two alumni (Mr Abunales and Professor Lacson) referred to their REAPS as beneficial to their workplace and enabled them to apply their Australian-learned skills and knowledge, demonstrating the intended ‘mechanism’ through this approach by the Australia Awards Philippines. Mr Abunales stated that his REAP provided him with an additional learning experience which helped to prepare him for similar tasks at VERA Files such as designing in-house capacity training. He viewed that through ‘the experience of doing a model course syllabus, I was able to apply in my work with VERA Files as a project manager’.

### Alumni networks

Two alumni referred to the role of their networks in their reintegration experience. Mr Cayon stated existing professional networks helped in attaining one of his short-term consultancies. A Filipino classmate from Australia invited Ms Cane-Fuentes to speak on peace journalism for a local government city peacebuilding project. Ms Cane-Fuentes was able to utilise this opportunity for her REAP.

## 2.4.2 Challenging factors

The factors which have limited or required significant navigation for four alumni to contribute to development through utilisation of their Australian-acquired skills and knowledge have occurred post award.

### Changes to the organisation on return

One alum from the Targeted category returned following a national election and change in leadership, which impacted their organisation to the extent that it felt like ‘a totally different organisation’. Coupled with transfers to different divisions and changes to core tasks, completing a REAP also became unfeasible. The Australia Awards Philippines and the government stakeholder participant both recognise this challenge of continuity post-election. An Open category alum experienced similar challenges when changes occurred within their organisation and their previously held position was no longer available on their return. Although it took a year before securing a position, they were able to utilise this time to implement their REAP.



### Attaining ongoing employment

Despite applying for jobs before leaving Australia, one Open category alum stated it was a 'difficult' experience and observed direct competition with international consultants during large-scale international emergency responses in the Philippines. They also noted a need to rebuild their 'social capital' in the sector post award, 'that's when I realised "I think a Masters is not enough, you really should have good social capital from work"'.

### Resistance to change in the workplace

One alum stated that influencing change in the workplace through 'changing mindsets and how we view peace is really a hard job'. They also observed fellow alumni who post award, returned to 'business as usual', identifying the ability to 'inject change' in an organisation as 'really difficult'.

### Burnout and stress

Two alumni referred to burnout and stress due to the nature of their work, occurring either prior to their study or in the time since. Support for managing and preventing burnout and stress is an area which all Australia Awards alumni may likely benefit from, particularly in the current climate of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

### COVID-19

All alumni at the time of interview referred to ways COVID-19 has impacted their work, including changes or delays to project and program priorities. While some alumni have been able to pivot to remote work and delivering via online platforms, one alum stated that their services to communities have been challenged: 'COVID-19 has really impacted the economy negatively right now'.

### Facilitating factors for alumni in completing their Re-Entry Action Plans (REAPs)

The alumni in this Case Study identified several factors which enabled or challenged their ability to complete their REAPs—the objectives that they develop towards the end of their award designed to help them in thinking through and planning out the way in which they will use their new skills and knowledge when they return home. Importantly, the findings in this Case Study reflect the facilitating factors identified in the 2017 study *Rapid Assessment of Australia Awards Scholarships and the Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP)*. In particular, findings show that the role of a mentor is a significant contributing factor enabling a successful REAP completion as well as alumni capacity to be flexible in adapting their scope. Summarised below are the enabling and challenging factors identified in this Case Study. These factors are also common to the broader long-term experience of alumni to successfully contribute to development.

#### REAP enablers:

- **Alumni networks:** Two alumni (Ms Cane-Fuentes and Mr Abunales) were able to utilise opportunities offered through their networks to apply to their REAP.
- **Alumni flexibility:** Ms Cane-Fuentes and Mr Abunales demonstrated flexibility in adapting the scope to ensure their ability to complete their REAP with impact. Ms Chua, the mentor to Mr Abunales, highlighted flexibility as essential for open category alumni and their mentors 'in order to allow room for modifications or a total reengineering of a proposal'.

- **Organisational support:** Professor Lacson, an open category scholar, stated his organisation was supportive of his REAP as it was mutually beneficial and met organisational priorities.
- **Mentor Support:** The mentoring program component of the REAPs was a key factor for Mr Abunales and highly valued by Ms Chua who stated that without continuity of mentor support and 'somebody who understands the skills that they've acquired' could present challenges to alumni. The partner government stakeholder participant similarly identified alumni who had 'close coordination with their mentors and with their superiors in the office' as the 'common thread'.

#### REAP challenges:

- **Transfer/New job:** For two alumni, internal transfers and searching for a job presented challenges to time, opportunity, and scope that could not be overcome. Mentor, Ms Chua, stated that continuity of a mentor was an important element to REAP success, but often in such changes, the mentor is unable to continue.
- **Lack of funding and resources:** Three alumni referred to accessing funding and resources as a significant challenge that impacted the scope of their planned REAPs.
- **Lack of organisational support:** Organisational support can be imperative to a REAP proceeding. One open category alum was unable to continue with their planned REAP when their original organisation changed in management personnel.

## 3. Public Diplomacy Outcomes

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Alumni in this Case Study are contributing to Outcome 2, cooperation between Australia and Philippines, and internationally, at an individual/micro level through knowledge sharing with fellow Australia Awards alumni, Australian and international students, and Australian academics. Australia's commitment to supporting peace and security in the Philippines is reflected in the coincidental opportunities' alumni have undertaken working with Australians and on Australian-supported investments.

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the extent to which alumni are contributing to Australia Awards long-term Outcome 2: 'Alumni are contributing to cooperation between Australian and partner countries.'

The *Australia Awards Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework* (the Framework) describes Outcome 2, cooperation, as being the connections and networks between alumni and Australia which represent the people-to-people links such as alumni associations, friendships, or professional connections with former lecturers. The 'seeds' for these outcomes are intended to have been developed on award. It is anticipated that alumni engagement then assists as a post-award mechanism to maintain alumni's relationships with Australia.

This chapter explores the extent to which alumni in this Case Study have been able to develop and maintain connections and professional networks based on their time on award in Australia. The findings from this group of alumni suggest achievement of Outcome 2—cooperation and are the result of meaningful interactions with a range of groups on award which have been sustained via online communication and shared professional interests.

### 3.2 Networks and links developed on award

All seven alumni in this group described a relationship formed during their award that continued following their return to the Philippines. These ongoing links are both informal and formal and are mostly with fellow alumni, international and Australian students, and university academics. In addition, reflecting Australia's close partnership with the Philippines in the area of peace and stability, some alumni are also working with Australians and on Australian-supported programs. The outcome of these links and interactions support Outcome 2, cooperation, at an individual/micro level through knowledge sharing and ongoing communication between individuals in the area of peace advocacy, practice and programs.

The links maintained by the group of alumni in this Case Study again reflect the results of the combined GTF Global Tracer Surveys. Analysis of these Global Tracer Surveys shows that alumni from the Philippines (n=298) were most commonly in frequent contact with other scholarship recipients (52% were 'often or always' in contact), friends in Australia (41%), fellow Australian students (32%), and their host institutions (20%). In all these measures, Filipino alumni were more likely to continue to be engaged than was the global average for Australian alumni. These higher levels of engagement by the Filipino alumni in the surveys support the quality of the networks described by the alumni in this Case Study and indicate that the Filipino alumni are able to form and then maintain meaningful connections as a result of their award.





### 3.2.1 Informal and formal links developed on award

All seven alumni have ongoing links with fellow students, Australia Awards alumni, and university academics. Most of the alumni state that these links have a mix of personal and professional purposes, and largely comprise the contribution by this group of alumni to Outcome 2, cooperation, through knowledge sharing. Highlights of examples for the alumni are detailed below:

*We have a chat group with some of my professors from my class... Sometimes we do professional or academic discussions. Like we have one classmate who has a video blog. He's also a teacher in Western Australia, I think, and he's into terrorism consultancy, so we can access his write-ups, his research because he also offered that to us as classmates in the same class.—Alum A*

*I've also been in touch with my Australian classmates and other international students who were not part of the Australia Awards program. I've made really good friends with them. We keep on updating each other. [And] Two of my professors, I have been in touch with them until now: Jake Lynch, who was my dissertation supervisor...we constantly email each other to update whenever we have projects that we think would interest us. So, he did some research, and last year we had a conversation over Skype also. We were talking about his current research. – Mr Abunales*

*My professor in environment, I think years after, we are friends on Facebook, so I would connect with them, and one time he sent through mail a pouch of the materials that he shared with me that I could make use of.—Ms Canguilan*

*I'm still in contact and very good friends with my fellow AusAID [now Australia Awards] scholars, not just in the Philippines but from other parts of the world.—Ms Cane-Fuentes*

### 3.2.2 Working with Australia and Australians

Post award, three alumni have worked with Australians or on Australia-supported programs. These interactions are not from connections developed in Australia but do reflect Australia's commitment to supporting peace and stability in the Philippines and internationally. For example, Ms Laylo is on the emergency deployment roster for RedR Australia, which is 'partly funded by the Australian Government'<sup>7</sup>. Similarly, Mr Cayon has worked on emergency responses in the Philippines supported by Australia, undertaking a leadership position 'in a conflict response for UNICEF'. Mr Cayon was also working with Australians to deliver recovery programs. Professor Lacson is also working for an organisation with strong links to Australia, the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG) is supported by DFAT. Under the Australian Partnerships for Peace<sup>8</sup>, the IAG is a local institution that forms part of the five NGOs involved in the partnership program. Of this link to Australia, Professor Lacson stated, 'For me, it was just a realisation or a fulfilment of what they say as 'paid-for work'. So, paid for work by scholarship, especially a DFAT-funded project supporting the peace process. That was a happy coincidence'.

Another alum, Ms Cane-Fuentes, has contributed to research conducted by her professor, Jake Lynch, investigating journalism in conflict areas—'He's been doing a lot of studies, especially in the Philippines, so he does interviews [with] Filipino journalists. We email from time to time, and he sends questionnaires that we send back'.

### 3.2.3 Australia Awards alumni engagement and networks

All alumni in this Case Study, to varying extents, have been involved with alumni associations since their return. While some have been with their Australian university association, engagement has primarily been through local Australia Awards alumni engagement opportunities. Overall, the engagement can be described as infrequent, but with some meaningful contributions by two alumni sharing their experiences and expertise with fellow alumni and new awardees.

Ms Cane-Fuentes has spoken at a knowledge sharing seminar for Australia Awards Philippines alumni, and Mr Cayon has attended pre-departure meetings for new awardees to share his experiences. Additionally, Ms Cane-Fuentes has hosted the Australian Alumni Excellence Awards organised by the Australian Embassy.

<sup>7</sup> For further information: <https://www.redr.org.au/home>

<sup>8</sup> For further information: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/philippines/development-assistance/Pages/improving-conditions-for-peace-and-stability-philippines>

Some of the alumni have participated in Australia Awards alumni engagement events, typically those organised by the Australia Awards Philippines. For example, while Ms Laylo is now primarily engaged through online updates. When working in Manila, Ms Laylo was an active alum attending conferences and events and recalled an ‘annual gathering when a UNICEF representative would come from Manila, and they would have dinner together’. Similarly, Alum A stated that before their departure to Australia, ‘we were reminded that there was a community of international students’ from which they have continued their membership and has attended one meet-up.

The Australian Embassy in Manila noted that networking amongst alumni is through ‘organic’ alumni activities. The networks with fellow alumni described by this group appear to reflect this observation. For example, although Mr Abunales stated his primary involvement with the Australia Awards as an alum is through the Australia Awards Philippines, he is also in communication with an international group of Australia Awards alumni:

*My Australia Awards cohort, my entire batch, we’re still in touch until now through social media, through Facebook... So I really am good friends with my cohort from the Pacific Islands, Indonesia, Nepal and other parts of South Asia, and of course, South-East Asia also, because proximity wise, we’re near to each other.*

### 3.3 Facilitating factors

For this group of alumni, the factors which enabled or challenged their ability to build or maintain networks through their award are largely influenced by individual factors and supplementary programs to the Australia Awards. Where the Australia Awards Philippines can maintain and continue their influence in supporting achievement of Outcome 2, cooperation, is utilising professionally oriented engagement via social media platforms such as Facebook. From this group of alumni, this is a preferred format for sharing knowledge and news at a peer-to-peer level.

The following graphic outlines factors identified as having helped or challenged this group of alumni’s abilities to contribute to cooperation, and align with different stages of the Australia Awards cycle as a means of pinpointing where the Australia Awards team could consider policies for encouraging or improving certain aspects.







### 3.3.1 Enabling factors

All seven of the alumni in this Case Study mentioned factors which assisted them in building or maintaining the networks on and post award.

#### Extracurricular activities

Five alumni stated activities that occurred outside of their courses enabled them to meet other students. Three alumni (Mr Cayon, Ms Cane-Fuentes, and Professor Lacson) referred to their pre-award programs which prepared them for academia in Australia. Ms Cane-Fuentes stated her preparatory program 'helped me to make a lot of friends...most of the scholars and non-scholars who were part of IAP had different courses from me'. Ms Laylo stated there was a link program at her university for Filipino students 'where the Philippines kept on sending people in the same program. So, I'm still connected with them right now professionally and personally'.

Ms Canguilan, who also undertook an Australian Leadership Award stated this enabled her to engage with '77 other scholars coming from different parts of the world.' and described part of the experience 'was the excitement of meeting people. It was like a mini United Nations'.

#### Awardee/Alumni motivation

One alum, Mr Cayon, highlighted his approach to active networking on and post award, which demonstrated a strong motivation to utilise the award opportunity to meet other professionals. While on award at Monash University, Mr Cayon reached out to professors at other universities in Melbourne. From this he stated, 'I still keep in touch with professors from La Trobe, RMIT, Melbourne Uni, and from time to time whenever I need access to journal, I go to their portal for some of those things.' Post award, Mr Cayon stated that fellow Australia Awards alumni are 'a good network to stay in touch with' and as they are 'good in their fields' and peers he can turn to for work-related advice.

#### Social media and online communication

Four alumni (Mr Abunales, Ms Canguilan, Ms Cane-Fuentes and Alum A) mentioned social media and online communication such as email as their means of remaining connected and sharing knowledge with fellow students and their lecturers and course coordinators. While all four alumni mentioned Facebook, one alum also stated how a fellow student shares their research with their cohort via a vlog (video blog). Communication via Facebook was both informal and formal and has enabled these alumni to remain connected to their cohort of fellow students.

#### Australians working in the sector

Reflecting the broader Australia-Philippines relationship in peace and security, four alumni mentioned the connections they have maintained on award or developed on return with Australians who also work in their sector. The professional basis of connections developed on award has been with lecturers and course coordinators and is a source of ongoing knowledge sharing. For example, Ms Cane-Fuentes has contributed as a participant for research conducted by her course coordinator who undertakes studies to understand how journalists approach conflict news coverage. Australia's investments and contributions to peace and security in the Philippines has also resulted in two alumni (Mr Cayon and Professor Lacson) working on Australian-supported aid projects, as well as with Australian professionals working in the sector.

### 3.3.2 Challenging factors

The alumni in this group largely did not experience challenges to meeting peers and other Australians while on award. However, three of the seven alumni specified difficulties they encountered on- and post-award which limited their opportunities to maintain engagement with their networks from Australia and with the Australia Awards in the Philippines.

#### Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP) completion for further opportunities

One alum stated non-completion of their REAP, which occurred due to circumstances beyond their control, is now a barrier to applying for further Australia Awards alumni opportunities. Without this criterion, they stated applying to opportunities such as the alumni grant that 'if there's an opportunity, I would'. The Australia Awards Philippines team articulated that the REAP completion criteria is intended as an incentive and a way to assess alumni's commitment to contribution. However, there is a chance that this can limit engagement from otherwise qualified and committed alumni.

#### Awardee and alumni time constraint

While on award, one alum stated they did not undertake an internship or work experience: 'I didn't have a chance for that.' The balance between practical experiences outside of their coursework and achieving the demands of academic rigour has been cited in previous GTF case studies by alumni, which can limit the opportunities for exposure to a broader network of people while in Australia.

Post award, another alum observed that their own and fellow alumni's time constraints as a challenge to creating meaningful engagements. When this alum sought to engage with their local alumni association to develop opportunities for alumni to share their knowledge, they stated it 'fizzled', likely due to 'our own professional engagement connected to our [REAP] and the engagement we finally land after our scholarship'.

#### Alumni mobility

Two alumni stated that their local and international mobility over the courses of their career since their award has made it difficult to remain engaged as alumni, due to frequency or their location is outside the remit of the Australia Awards in the Philippines.

## 4. Alumni Views of Australia

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Alumni in the Philippines Case Study hold enduring positive views of Australian expertise in inclusive development and peacebuilding, the high standard of teaching and learning within Australian universities, and Australia as a relaxed and inclusive society.

### 4.1 Introduction

The aim of Outcome 4 of the Australia Awards is that ‘alumni view Australia, Australians, and Australian expertise positively’. To achieve Outcome 4, the Australia Awards Monitoring and Evaluation program logic (DFAT, 2017) identifies three key components for building a positive view of Australia:

- alumni were able to establish links within Australia
- alumni had positive experiences on award in Australia, through both living and studying in Australia
- alumni continue to have positive experiences in their interactions with Australia and Australians post award.

Outcome 4 of the Australia Awards recognises that long-lasting positive personal and professional attitudes to Australia are ‘fundamental to alumni contributing to cooperation between Australia and their home countries, and more broadly to the bilateral relationship’ (DFAT, 2016). As is apparent through this quote from the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, this outcome is also a significant basis for the achievement of Outcome 2—cooperation, discussed in the previous chapter.

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.

### 4.2 Examples of positive views of Australia, Australians and Australian expertise

Alumni in this Case Study highlighted three broad factors that have shaped their views of Australia: 1) high regard for Australian expertise in peacebuilding and inclusive development; 2) the quality of teaching and learning in Australia; and 3) positive lived experiences in Australia. The general sentiments of these alumni are consistent with the findings from previous case studies undertaken by the GTF.

All alumni interviewed for this Case Study spoke fondly of their time in Australia and expressed their gratitude for the valuable experience and knowledge they gained on award. For many, the experience was ‘transformational’ and allowed them to return to the Philippines with new techniques and renewed enthusiasm for social inclusion and peacebuilding. Examples of the enduring positive views alumni have of Australia, Australians and Australian expertise relating to the three overarching themes are discussed below.

The examples of positive views shared by the alumni in this Case Study provided a deeper examination of the strong positive sentiment shared by Filipino alumni across the three Global Tracer Surveys. Across all alumni from the Philippines who responded to the previous Global Tracer Surveys (n=318) were consistent positive views. For example, the Philippine survey respondents’ views of Australian skills and experience were positively influenced as a result of their award experience (98%), as were their views of Australia (98%), and of Australian people (96%).

### 4.3 High regard for Australian expertise in peacebuilding, inclusive development and conflict studies

All alumni in this Case Study cited their high regard for Australian expertise in inclusive development, peacebuilding and conflict-related studies. For the five alumni who studied the Master of Peace and Conflict Studies at Sydney University, there was strong respect for the global reputation of the University of Sydney's Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. For example, Mr Abunales felt a great sense of pride for studying at a globally recognised centre known for 'academic excellence', he added:

*I'm really proud to be part of the Centre during my time because the lecturers are not just of good calibre and they know what they're talking about. Aside from the theories, they know what they're talking about because they have first-hand experience and handled humanitarian programs in specific countries or a specific region. But at that same time, I think that the core values of the Centre are actually aligned with mine, so it's an academic environment with a core focus on advocacy and activism.*

Mr Cayon, who studied a Master of International Crisis Management at Monash University, cited Australia as a well-known leader in inclusive development programming both academically and through the Australian Government's aid program. He attributed his studies as allowing him 'to look at international development more clearly, and more, straight in the eye.' As a result, he has a greater appreciation and 'tripled' his understanding of 'social inclusion and 'equity issues' since studying in Australia.

Ms Canguilan, who studied at Newcastle University, found her course 'responsive' to the training needs of herself and her fellow students from the development sector that she and her fellow students. She stated:

*The Master of Social Change and Development has several subjects in it that would include social change and environment, social change and gender and development, and social change and food security. So, I think it's one course that is more responsive to the needs, especially of developing countries or maybe projects that are being done or implemented by the United Nations. My classmates in that course were also scholars coming from Malawi and the Philippines and other countries from the Pacific region, and mostly I think from the African region.*

Alumni also cite the respect for Australian qualifications and the prestige of receiving an Australia Awards scholarship in the workplace and among potential employers. Several alumni spoke of increase 'credibility' and 'employability' due to their Australia expertise. Ms Canguilan noted:

*My exposure in Australia made me more confident, especially when you speak before people and you do some trainings. It pays a lot, but people know that, especially when you're introduced as: "She finished her Master of Social Change and Development in the University of Newcastle, Australia", somehow it adds to that credibility and the integrity, and maybe people have more confidence listening to you because they know that you have had some special trainings abroad...*

In addition, several alumni also found that their Australian qualifications also gave them access to increased opportunities to work internationally (Mr Abunales, Mr Cayon and Ms Laylo). Ms Laylo stated:

*I was able to penetrate international development work... and even design work after that. I think it had a lot to do with me being part of RedR Australia, because I have an Australian diploma, and I think it played a big part in getting the United Nations work and in international NGOs.*



## 4.4 High quality of teaching and learning in Australia

All alumni, who participated in this Case Study expressed positive views about the quality of teaching and learning they experienced in Australia. Alumni recalled their lecturers and tutors as 'friendly', 'approachable', and 'experts in their fields', as well as the facilities and support services as being of a very high standard. As an academic, Professor Lacson was impressed with the library and resources:

*I learnt a lot. I spent much time in the library reading and trying to locate materials that were relevant for my study and to my interest, and was very, very happy that I found out the University of Sydney has an archive on Mindanao and many materials which I couldn't find any more in Mindanao...*

Mr Cayon recalled that he found the style of teaching and learning very 'different' to his undergraduate studies in the Philippines. It had a 'global outlook', and the teaching environment was 'open' and inclusive.

*It's a different approach to education: one that allows for freedom of expression, freedom of thinking and engagement.*

Furthermore, alumni stated that they learnt a lot from class discussions and group work. Several alumni highlighted the diverse mix of the international students within their courses, which 'enriched' their learning experience. Alumni appreciated that they were able to 'share' their knowledge and bounce ideas and field experience around with lecturers and other students. Many alumni remain in touch with professors and friends that they made on award. Ms Laylo recalled 'in one class I remember there were 21 of us and we were 18 countries, so it was a very good exposure for different cultures, different nationalities.' Alum A stated:

*Definitely, my academic experience was an eye-opener. I got to meet a lot of very helpful professors, amazing, intelligent students from all over the world, and it also enriched my views on how peace should be handled... It improved my understanding on peace, and I had a 180-degree change in my perception because before I thought peace was an outcome, was a result, but, after completing the course, I came to understand that peace is actually a process.*

Several alumni mentioned that their studies also changed the way they would personally deal with conflict post award. Ms Cane-Fuentes added:

*I loved my course at the University of Sydney, aside from what I learnt that I could apply professionally because peace journalism deals not just with other people but also with issues within you. We have the psychology of peace and all. It also changed me, I think, as the person and how I handle my personal conflicts.*

## 4.5 Experiences in Australia

As with other case studies conducted by the GTF, the social and cultural aspects of the alumni experience on award also added to the positive impression they gained about Australia. Overall, alumni enjoyed the social interactions they had with Australian friends, other international students and being part of the Australian community. They have 'vivid' memories of their Australian experiences and recalled the food, 'efficient transport system', 'open-mindedness' and sense of 'safety'.

For many alumni who had not been abroad before, it was a chance to experience a different culture for the first time. Ms Laylo recalled:

*I had a blast...it was really, wonderful because I was in Sydney and it's a very exciting, rewarding experience because that was my first time to live aboard.*

Alum A plans to take their family to Australia on holiday after COVID-19 travel restrictions are lifted.

*I appreciated the experience with having an Australian education—being exposed to the Australian way of life, the Australian culture. But I'm also planning to go back there and reconnect with friends... I'm planning to take my family to Australia so that they will also experience the same experience and learn.*

At a practical, societal level, many alumni found the experience of living in Australia broaden their understanding of social inclusion and cultural diversity. Professor Lacson stated:

*While in Australia one of those great things that I realised would be cultural diversity and equality, gender sensitivity and many of those things. It's really being lived out in Australia, and especially in respect of the indigenous people's rights. Those are very outstanding things that I saw and realised.*

Ms Canguilan added that life in Australia gave her a 'firsthand experience, how social inclusion should work' in relation to ethnicity and 'how social inclusion was being practised' among different groups like indigenous peoples and the 'LGBTQI' community.

*I belong to an indigenous people's group called the Ibanag. As an IP, especially that I am dark-skinned—and I don't know if you know this, that I have some regional Indonesian [heritage], so I may speak differently, I look different, but you know what, I am really very appreciative of my stay in Australia where social inclusion was a great deal.*

## 4.6 Enabling and challenging factors in the development of positive views

Like previous studies by the GTF, the alumni in this cohort's experiences of life and study in Australia has been typically positive. The following factors, to varying extents, have enabled and challenged their views. These factors contributed to alumni having positive experiences of study and life in Australia and supported their ability to contribute to long-term Outcomes 1 and 2.

The following graphic outlines factors identified as having helped or challenged this group of alumni's views developed while in Australia, and align with different stages of the Australia Awards cycle as a means of pinpointing where the Australia Awards team could consider policies for encouraging or improving certain aspects.







#### 4.6.1 Enabling factors

Prior to award, the bilateral relationship and reputation of the Australia Awards attracted some alumni to apply.

##### The reputation of Australia Awards

The Australia Awards scholarships in the Philippines are well regarded amongst the open and targeted category alumni. One alum described it as a 'lucrative award' making it 'a very competitive award' within their organisation. Another alum, in comparison to other scholarships, perceived it to be 'the most generous...I actually like it because everything is being well taken care of'.

##### Familiarity with Australia

For Mr Cayon, working with Australians and seeing Australia's investment in peacebuilding and development influenced his interest in seeking postgraduate study in Australia. 'I didn't want to take a Masters in a country where it doesn't have direct relevance or significance for me and my country...having seen the portfolio of AusAID [now DFAT], I thought that, "there's an opportunity that I could take a Masters in a country that actually sees Asia and the Philippines more closely than the others".'

On award, alumni's experiences were enhanced by their support networks and opportunities outside of their coursework.

##### Academic support

Two alumni pointed to their academic preparation course prior to their first semester as helping them to prepare for Australian postgraduate study, adjust to life in Australia and make new friends. Ms Cane-Fuentes stated:

*For those few weeks, it really helped us create a sense of family. Aside from learning the basics, it helped us get to know each other, bond, so that we'd have friends, even outside of our respective classrooms, because most of the scholars and even non-scholars who were part of the IAP had different courses from me.*

##### Extracurricular and off-campus experiences

Three alumni participated in activities outside of their university coursework, two of whom received the additional, selective Australian Leadership Award (ALA). Ms Canguilan stated that being an 'Australian Leadership Awardee gave me more experiences' such as conducting a mock debate in the Australian Parliament, which made her time in Australia 'even more exciting and interesting'. Similarly, Mr Cayon highlighted undertaking casual work which gave him greater exposure to life in Australia, stating that by 'being with the community there, living it, that gives you a different perspective of your Australian education'.

#### Diaspora and community engagement

Two alumnae, Ms Cane-Fuentes and Ms Canguilan, highlighted their participation with local Filipino community groups which enhanced their experiences in Australia. Ms Canguilan was Vice-President of the Association of Filipino Students at the University of Newcastle, which participated in activities at the university such as Harmony Week. She stated that these activities sharing Filipino culture in Australia 'made us proud to be together and hang our Philippine flag here'.

#### 4.5.2 Challenging factors

While alumni reflected on their Australia Awards scholarship experiences positively, the following factors shared by three alumni were mentioned in their description of their experiences in Australia and their perspective of this time.

##### The relevance of course content

One alum stated they observed during their course, the content of the Master of Peace and Conflict missed focussing with depth on the recent events in the regions closest to Australia, with much of the discussion based on the Middle East and South Africa. They also offered this feedback regarding the relevance of the regional focus to their course coordinators, stating:

*"It would be best if the focus was also on topics based on South East Asia." It's just in their backyard, and things are happening very, very fast in the area of peace and conflict in South East Asia...*

##### Negative encounters in public

Two alumni mentioned negative personal encounters, with one specifically experiencing racism, stating that 'I can brush it off. I'm not saying that we should ignore it, but because of the beautiful experiences that I've had, it's the one that actually I can remember during my time in Australia'. While both balanced their experiences as positive, as the alum stated, the time since their awards indicates how their memory of these negative encounters remain.



## 5. Conclusion

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This Case Study highlights the substantial contributions Australia Awards alumni from the Philippines are making to inclusive development and peacebuilding within the Philippines and internationally.

Alumni contributions include technical assistance and implementation of humanitarian and emergency response programming (Philippines, Africa and South East Asia), inclusive dialogue and representation in the peace process in Mindanao, indigenous rights and political representation (Philippines), and improved professional practices within the local government sector, media organisations, and the education sector in the Philippines. In addition, the use of Re-Entry Action Plans by the Australia Awards Philippines is demonstrable as a useful mechanism for ensuring the benefits of the scholarships are shared with organisations and communities.

As a result, this Case Study shows strong achievement of Australia Awards long-term Outcome 1—contributions to development. The findings here also reflect the broader global outcomes explored by the Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility. Combining the GTF's three Global Tracery Surveys, consisting of nearly 6,000 alumni, showed most alumni globally (96%) and most alumni from the Philippines (95%) were using their knowledge and skills to make improvements to policy and practice in their work places and were sharing these skills with others (98% globally, 98% in the Philippines) (Edwards & Taylor, 2019).

This Case Study also found that alumni developed strong relationships while on award with Australian academics, other Australia Awards scholars, classmates, friends and members of the Filipino diaspora. Alumni use social media to stay connected, and this has led to 'organic' alumni engagement among some of the alumni through sharing ideas, projects and research online. Post award, three alumni have worked with Australians or on Australian-supported programs in the fields of peacebuilding, humanitarian and emergency response programming. These interactions are not from connections developed in Australia but do reflect Australia's commitment to supporting inclusive development, peace and stability in the Philippines and internationally. For alumni in this Case Study, Australia Awards long-term Outcome 2—cooperation with Australia—is being achieved.

Australia Awards alumni also demonstrated strong positive views of Australia. The alumni highlighted Australia's inclusive society, the high standard of teaching and learning within the university sector, and Australia's global reputation for peacebuilding and inclusive development expertise in the field of academia and as part of Australia's aid program. For alumni in this Case Study, Australia Awards long-term Outcome 4—positive views of Australia is being achieved.

With security in the region a shared objective of the Philippines and Australia, the long-term history of cooperation is reflected in the ongoing people-to-people links contributed to by alumni who continue to support knowledge sharing and collaboration. The findings of this Case Study demonstrate that nearly a decade following their Australia Awards scholarship, alumni have utilised their enhanced expertise and skills to contribute to peace, stability and inclusive development in the Philippines and internationally. Supported by the benefits of their Australian education, it can be assumed the contributions to sustainable development by alumni will continue as the Philippines strives towards its goals of a stable and inclusive society.



## 6. Alumni Profiles

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Mr Daniel Abunales

I think overall, the entire Australian experience is one of the best parts of my life so far. In terms of academic experience, I've learnt a lot. I was introduced to concepts of peace with justice. I had a better understanding of what gender is. So, all these new concepts that actually can be applied to the kind of work that I do back in the Philippines and even the kind of work that I do now in Bangkok.

### Scholarship

Australia Awards Scholarship,  
Australian Leadership Award

### Year

2014

### Degree

Master of Peace and Conflict Studies

### University

University of Sydney

### Current position

Program Coordinator, Ecology and Social Justice, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Southeast Asia

### Biography

With a background in advocacy, media and communications, Mr Daniel Abunales received an Australia Award scholarship to study a Master of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney and was the first scholarship recipient from Biliran Province in Eastern Visayas (Region 8).

While on award, he also undertook the Australian Leadership Program and specialised in the media's role in peacebuilding. He completed his dissertation on the media coverage of the peace negotiations between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

On his return to the Philippines, he re-joined the VERA Files, a non-profit media organisation and became the Editor and Deputy Project Director. He was responsible for the coordinating and mentoring journalists as part of the VERA Files media fellowship programs and overseeing the research content of articles produced by journalists from across the Philippines. He has published several journal articles and designed the Peace Journalism Model Course Syllabus for Journalism Education on conflict-sensitive reporting in the Philippines, on behalf of the Philippines Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as part of his Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP).

In 2019, he moved to Bangkok and joined the German green political foundation, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, as the Program Coordinator for Ecology and Social Justice. He is responsible for program design, implementation and evaluation, staff training and engagement with ASEAN partners throughout the Southeast Asian region.



## Ms Annaliza Laylo

I think [the scholarship] opened a lot of opportunities for me which made me grow professionally and personally...I was able to access bigger organisations, even outside the Philippines, and once you're exposed to these different professional experiences, then, of course, you learn things about yourself and you have experiences as well that make you grow personally. So, it's opened a lot of doors for me.

### Scholarship

Australian Development Scholarship

### Year

2010

### Degree

Master of Peace and Conflict Studies

### University

University of Sydney

### Current position

Technical Advisor, Save the Children, Nigeria

### Biography

Specialising in peacebuilding, disaster reduction and education in emergencies, Ms Annaliza Laylo works as a Technical Advisor for Save the Children, Nigeria.

Ms Laylo received an Australian Development Scholarship in 2010 while working as a Peace Program Officer at the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP). On her return from award she became a Program Manager and managed the implementation of the Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration Program for the Cordillera Peoples' Liberation Army.

In 2013, Ms Laylo left the government sector to become an Education in Emergencies Specialist for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Philippines, where she provided technical advice, training and peacebuilding educational programs. Since 2017, she has worked for a range of international non-government organisations including Mercy Corps in South Sudan, and Save the Children (Philippines, Thailand and Nigeria). Ms Laylo is also a standby emergency humanitarian worker for RedR Australia and UNICEF's ESARO Rapid Response Mechanism. In 2019, she was deployed in Mozambique's Sofala province after tropical cyclones Idai and Kenneth and developed and implemented UNICEF's Education Cannot Wait Grant.

In her current role, Ms Laylo is providing training and technical assistance to Save the Children staff in Nigeria. At the time of interview, she was working remotely from the Philippines due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and is leading the development of peacebuilding and education programs for young people affected by the Boko Haram insurgency.



Ms Primy Cane-Fuentes

[I am proud of] being able to share with other people what I learnt, that there is an alternative to the kind of news that you're given, that there is a way that journalists can contribute to nation-building, that even though you're not rich or powerful in government, you can affect the way a country moves. Just with the way that you present and write your stories, and being able to share that with the kids that I talked to, the campus journalists I talked to and seeing this understanding sort of light up on their faces. I think that's what I'm most proud of.

#### Scholarship

Australian Development Scholarship

#### Years

2013–2014

#### Degree

Master of Peace and Conflict Studies

#### University

University of Sydney

#### Current position

Freelance Journalist and Photographer

#### Biography

Early in her career, Ms Primy Cane-Fuentes worked as a regional television journalist and news anchor for ABS-CBN Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao. She became interested in the ways conflict and ethnicity were presented in the media and decided to pursue further studies. She applied for an Australian Development Scholarship and resigned from her position to study a Master of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University in Sydney in 2013 to 2014.

During her studies, she took several units on dealing with peace journalism and the media's role in conflict and peacebuilding. On her return to the Philippines, she was unable to re-join her organisation due to a hiring freeze. This caused her to pivot her Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP) to focus on building the capacity of high school students interested in a career in journalism. She ran several workshops on peace journalism and the role of the media in conflict resolution while also working as a freelance journalist.

In 2015, Ms Cane-Fuentes joined ABS-CBN News team in Manila as a broadcast journalist and was able to use her skills and knowledge gained in Australia to advocate for changes in journalist practices. This directly led to the introduction of a professional development unit for staff called "Appreciative Inquiry" which explored the nuances around reporting on conflict. In 2017, Ms Cane-Fuentes decided to take a '180-degree' career move and is now working behind the camera as a photographer and freelance journalist.



## Professor Rey Danilo Lacson

Using my skill in community mediation, applying it on a higher scale, especially between the political leaders, provisional leaders, getting them really on board the peace process and being comfortable in the negotiation process was the achievement that I am most proud of, gaining their trust and really getting them to sit at the table to talk about those very, very sensitive issues.

### Scholarship

Australia Awards Scholarship

### Year

2014

### Degree

Master of Peace and Conflict Studies

### University

University of Sydney

### Current position

Project Manager, EnPoID Bangsamoro, Institute for Autonomy and Governance

### Biography

An anthropologist and academic, Professor Rey Danilo Lacson has over 20 years of experience working towards peace, stability and inclusive development in Mindanao. An expert in Mindanao history, Professor Lacson has also worked to strengthen the rights and representation of indigenous groups through his role as a peace educator, advocate and member of the Mindanao Think Tank.

Prior to going on award, Professor Lacson was the Director of the Notre Dame University Peace Centre and was actively involved in providing academic support to the Mindanao Peace Process. He resigned from his role to pursue an Australia Awards scholarship and studied a Master of Peace and Conflict Studies at Sydney University in 2014.

Returning to the Philippines, he was invited to join the team at the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG) and has since worked as a Project Manager on a number of Australian Government-funded peace and development programs aimed at promoting a peaceful political climate in the Mindanao region through inclusive political dialogue with local government units (LGUs), political leaders, religious and indigenous groups.

Professor Lacson is currently leading the EnPoID Bangsamoro (Enhancing Political Dialogue for Inclusive Peace in the Bangsamoro), a capacity-building program funded by the Australian Government working to build inclusive political dialogue in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).





Ms Nerissa Canguilan

I love conducting trainings, I love empowering people, I love inspiring people. And I can do this by continuing the implementation of the learning and development programs that we have. We conduct trainings, supervisory development trainings, gender and development trainings. We conduct values orientation. And I just love doing my work because it gives me the opportunity to share what I have, to share my knowledge, to share my skills, my competencies as well.

#### Scholarship

Australian Development Scholarship

Australian Leadership Award

#### Year

2012

#### Degree

Master of Social Change and Development

#### University

University of Newcastle

#### Current position

Regional Director IV, Civil Service Commission, Regional Office II, Philippines Civil Service

#### Biography

A career civil servant, Ms Nerissa Canguilan, worked for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in several roles and before moving to the Civil Service Commission. With a background in science, program management and evaluation, she became interested in facilitating social change through targeted programming.

In 2012, Ms Canguilan received an Australian Leadership Award and was the first Australian Government scholarship recipient in her agency and region. As part of her Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP) she developed a training module to mainstream gender and development training for local government units (mayors and governors) in two provinces within the Cordillera Administrative Region.

In 2016, Ms Canguilan was promoted to Director III – Office for Financial Affairs and Assets Management and was assigned to the central office in Manila. She was able to use her skills to include gender-responsive planning and budgeting. In 2018, she was again promoted to Director IV level and assigned to her home province. She trained as a coach and became a subject matter expert for gender and development within her department and is now responsible for providing gender sensitivity training in her region. Ms Canguilan is currently studying a short course online on Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) through the University of Queensland funded by the Australian Government through the Australia Awards Philippines.



Mr Crisanto Cayon

When I was in Australia studying, there were several major events in Mindanao that would have otherwise easily impacted on my life, being a practitioner, if I were physically here in Mindanao, but because I was away, it gave me time to look at those critical events, humanitarian events... So, I've been able to really look at my situation in Mindanao more from an observer analyst experience or perspective, rather than somebody who's involved, who's doing programming and implementation in the field. And for me, that was very enriching.

#### Scholarship

Australian Development Scholarship

#### Years

2011–2012

#### Degree

Master of International Crisis Management

#### University

Monash University

#### Current position

Program Manager, Peace Connect, The Asia Foundation, Cotabato City

#### Biography

Mr Crisanto Cayon has over 15 years' project management experience in conflict and post-conflict settings. His expertise includes providing inclusive emergency humanitarian support to displaced groups in the Mindanao region through peacebuilding, education and conflict recovery programs.

While working at the Asia Foundation on the Conflict Management Program (CMP) in Mindanao, Mr Cayon received an Australian Development Scholarship. Following his return to the Philippines in 2012, Mr Cayon has continued to work on a range of humanitarian and peacebuilding programs in the Philippines. In 2014, Mr Cayon joined UNICEF as the Chief of the Zamboanga City Field Office where he coordinated the humanitarian response to the Zamboanga siege and worked closely with diverse ethnic, religious and political groups including indigenous clans to help displaced children receive educational opportunities.

In the response to the Marawi conflict in 2018, Mr Cayon was an Emergency Specialist with UNICEF and implemented the Peacebuilding and Recovery Program in the Lanao del Sur province. In 2019, he headed UNICEF's portfolio on Peacebuilding and Local Governance supporting child-focused local government programming in the newly-instituted Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

In 2020 Mr Cayon re-joined The Asia Foundation as the Program Manager of Peace-Connect a three-year program to stimulate social cohesion and promote mutual trust among Mindanao's diverse communities, through peacebuilding, preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE).



## Alum A

It improved my understanding on peace, and I had a 180-degree change in my perception, because before I thought peace was an outcome, was a result, but, after completing the course, I came to understand that peace is actually a process...We cannot really talk about peace without justice. You cannot totally divorce justice from peace because you cannot have peace with injustice, so it has to be taken at the same time, because when you seek justice, you respect rights of people from all walks of life, whether they're rich or poor, whether they're learned or illiterate.

### Scholarship

Australia Awards scholarship

### Year

\* \* \* \*

### Degree

Master of Peace and Conflict Studies

### University

University of Sydney

### Current position

Civil Servant, Philippines Civil Service

### Biography

An official in the Department Interior and Local Government, Alum A studied a Master of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney and is involved in peacebuilding programming, enhancing security and public safety. Alum A is actively engaged in the Philippines' COVID-19 response, particularly in providing support to local government.

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# Annex 1: Methodology

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This chapter includes an overview of the Case Study design, development and implementation. The 19th Case Study of the GTF, the Philippines was one of four Case Study countries proposed in the Year 5 Facility Annual Plan. The Philippines was initially selected as a Case Study country in Year 4 (2019/20) but cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the Year 5 annual planning process for 2020/21, it was decided to pursue this Case Study to utilise the links and networks built in early 2020. Given this Case Study did not involve travel and fieldwork in the way previous GTF research has, the Case Study was reset and adapted. The GTF, working together with Post and Australia Awards Philippines managing contractor, was put in touch with alumni to conduct interviews online or on the telephone. These interviews explored outcomes of alumni from the Philippines who had studied in the areas of peace and security, and inclusive development.

## Overall Case Study design

The purpose of the GTF Case Studies is to collect detailed qualitative data on the impact and benefits of the Australia Awards. The Case Study methodology is based on the GTF Case Study Approach, which was developed in the inception phase of the GTF 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 GTF 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 alum 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.

The case studies are being conducted via an iterative approach whereby the qualitative phase can be designed based on what is learnt from the initial quantitative phase. In essence, the GTF implements this by drawing on data collected through a Global Tracer Survey and using this data as one of the means of developing the focus and scope of a number of case studies carried out in the following year.

As such, the planning and initial scoping of this Case Study was undertaken on the basis of the GTF's Year 3 Global Tracer Survey, which surveyed alumni who completed their scholarships between 2011 and 2016.

## Methods

The data collection method used for this Case Study was through interviews, either online or on the telephone and tailored to the needs of the individual being interviewed. A set of questions were developed for each key participant group, namely alumni, colleagues and employers of alumni, alumni associations, partner government stakeholders; and the DFAT staff, and managing contractors working on the Australia Awards in partner countries<sup>9</sup>. Questions for each key participant group align with the research propositions (located at Annex 2) 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.

## Sample

The planned focus for the Philippines Case Study was gender, peace and security, scheduled to go into the field in early 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the cancellation of this Case Study in Year 4. The annual planning process for Year 5 confirmed that work undertaken earlier in the year could be utilised to go ahead and test the feasibility of undertaking a case study entirely through remote data collection.

Working closely with the Australian Embassy and the Australia Awards Philippines it was decided that the alumni in focus would be scholarship alumni who studied in the fields of gender, peace and security prior to 2017. This aligned with DFAT's aid priorities in the Philippines, primarily Objective 3: Improving conditions for peace and stability (which focuses on Mindanao region).

Using data collected from the Global Alumni database, Year 3 Global Tracer Survey and lists supplied by the Australia Awards Office in Manila, 30 alumni were identified as fitting the criteria of the sample population. To ensure a mix of alumni from government, INGO and the private sector, GTF researchers shortlisted 10 alumni.

Alumni were contacted by the Australia Awards Philippines on behalf of the GTF. Several alumni declined to participate or did not reply. Alternative alumni from the corresponding sector were contacted as an alternative.

A total of seven alumni agreed to participate (3 women, 3 men and 1 who choose to be anonymous), and interviews took place online using an online video conferencing platform during July 2020.

During the analysis of the data, the researchers found that there was a strong theme of inclusive development which went beyond gender and incorporated indigenous rights, inclusive political dialogue and representation, and inclusive development programming. It was decided to adapt the title of the case study to include these nuances.

**Table 1 Philippines Case Study alumni participants**

<b>Interview Date (2020)</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Award Completion Year</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>Course and University</b>	<b>Current Position</b>
9/07	F	Annaliza Laylo	2010	Australian Development Scholarship	Master of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney	Technical Advisor, Save the Children, Nigeria
9/07	M	Daniel Abunales	2014	Australia Awards scholarship	Master of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney	Program Coordinator, Ecology and Social Justice Program, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Southeast Asia
13/07	F	Primy Cane-Fuentes	2014	Australian Development Scholarship	Master of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney	Freelance Journalist and Photographer
15/07	M	Rey Danilo Lacson	2014	Australia Awards scholarship	Master of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney	Project Manager, EnPoID Bangsamoro, Institute for Autonomy and Governance
16/07	M	Crisanto Cayon	2012	Australian Development Scholarship	Master of International Crisis Management, Monash University	Program Manager, Peace Connect, The Asia Foundation, Cotabato City
22/07		Alum A		Australia Awards scholarship	Master of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney	Civil Servant, Philippines Civil Service
28/07	F	Nerissa Canguilan	2012	Australian Development Scholarship, Australian Leadership Award	Master of Social Change and Development, University of Newcastle	Regional Director (IV), Civil Service Commission Regional Office II, Philippines Civil Service

In addition to the seven alumni who participated in the Case Study, nine other people were interviewed to provide context, triangulate alumni perspectives and better understand the impact of the Australian scholarships on the outcomes for the Philippines and Australia. These additional interviews included stakeholders and colleagues of alumni.

The table below lists these participants. In total, 16 people were interviewed for the Philippines Case Study.

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

Interview context	Date (2020)	Name	Position
Alumni employers or colleagues	17/07	Ms Yvonne Chua	VERA Files, Philippines colleague and mentor of Mr Abunales
Australian Embassy, The Philippines	7/07	Ms Sheona McKenna	Counsellor—Economic, Australian Embassy in the Philippines
	7/07	Mr Chris Fulluck	Senior Program Officer, Economic Section
	8/07	DFAT Stakeholder	Program Officer, Australian Embassy in the Philippines
	8/07	Ms Jennifer Bennett	Second Secretary for Peace and Stability, Australian Embassy in the Philippines
	9/07	DFAT Stakeholder	Senior Program Officer, Australian Embassy in the Philippines
Other stakeholders	6/07	Ms Milalin Javellana	Program Director, Coffey International Development
	6/07	Mr Ramel Sanglang	Monitoring and Evaluation, Coffey International Development
	27/07	Partner Government Stakeholder	Philippines Civil Service



## Exclusions

As noted in the Sample section above, all Case Study alumni were selected from data supplied from the Australia Awards Office in Manila, the Year 3 Global Tracer Survey and the Global Alumni database. These sources only include those who have completed their degree. Accordingly, this study excludes anyone who did not complete their scholarship.

## Data collection

As part of the development of the interview questions for case studies, the GTF piloted all instruments with Australia Awards alumni who resided in Australia. Subsequently, questions have been reviewed annually and refined over the four years of the project. All interview guides can be downloaded from the GTF website: [www.australiaawardstracerfacility.org](http://www.australiaawardstracerfacility.org).

This Case Study was conducted by Ms Jo Doyle and Ms Amanda Haddow, Facility staff who bring relevant expertise in qualitative research and international development. These researchers worked together to undertake data collection and report writing; this enabled high-quality, reliable data to be gathered and analysed. At the conclusion of interviews, the researchers discussed and verified the data to ensure completeness and accuracy.

## Process

The Case Study research was undertaken for the Philippines from 9 to 28 July 2020. Interviews were conducted via an online videoconferencing platform and tailored to the needs of the individual being interviewed. Alumni 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 GTF, and all provided written informed consent to their participation and identification preference in reporting.

## Data management and reporting

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).

## Coding and review

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 GTF's Case Study Approach document.

Case Study participants were sent segments of the report where clarification or review and approval were necessary. Review by participants is not consistently used in qualitative research but was done so here to ensure the validity of the data and avoid errors.

## 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.

### 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 (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 (p.9).

Accordingly, it is likely that the alumni in the Philippines Case Study had a positive bias towards their experience, outcomes and views of Australia. The GTF 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.

## Nature of the research

Outcome 1 of the Global Strategy is: 'alumni are using the skills, knowledge and networks gained on award to contribute to achieving partner-country development goals.' However, some alumni 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.

Throughout the research conducted, the GTF has consistently 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. For ease of understanding and simplification to align with potential upcoming changes to the Australia Awards Global Strategy, this report generally focuses on exploring Outcome 2 rather than Outcome 3. 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'.

## Research process

The ability to code the interview transcripts effectively is dependent on understanding the partner-country development goals, at the time these alumni were awarded their scholarships. 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 2010 to 2014, the years of focus for when these alumni completed their scholarship.





## Annex 2: Case Study Propositions

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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 GTF, 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 goals<sup>10</sup>.
  - 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.
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.

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<sup>10</sup> 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.