

Review of Kiribati Australia Nursing Initiative

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Initiative Summary

Initiative Name			
AidWorks initiative number	ING466		
Commencement date	21 March 2006	Completion date	30 June 2016
Total Australian \$	\$20,751,293		
Total other \$	-		
Delivery organisation(s)	Griffith University		
Implementing partner(s)			
Country/Region	Kiribati		
Primary sector	Medical Education / Training – Saving Lives		
Initiative objective/s	<p>Goal To contribute to Government of Kiribati's efforts to address a rapidly growing population and urbanisation, reduce youth unemployment, and diversify the country's remittance base.</p> <p>Objective To educate and skill I-Kiribati youth to gain Australian and international employment in the nursing sector</p>		

Evaluation Summary

Evaluation Objective:

The purpose of the review was to provide (the then) AusAID and the Government of Kiribati (GoK) with an assessment of whether the Kiribati Australia Nursing Initiative (KANI) remains relevant to the needs of Kiribati, whether the objectives are on track to being achieved, and whether the benefits of the activity justify the costs. In particular, this review was to inform a decision on whether or not to continue KANI. If a future phase is warranted, the review was to provide advice on key areas of the initiative that should be remodelled.

Evaluation Completion Date: 17 May 2013

Evaluation Team: Lea Shaw (Team Leader), Murray Edwards (Economist) and Akka Rimon (GoK)

AusAID's response to the evaluation report

The report provides a fair assessment of the initiative's strengths and weaknesses, and a robust cost-benefit analysis. It provides a constructive and useful, if not limited, analysis of KANI and its achievements.

AusAID considers the review ratings across all evaluation criteria to be generous, and notes they are higher than the ratings given by AusAID in a recent self-assessment of the initiative (Quality at Implementation).

In particular, the review provides a narrow assessment of relevance. The assessment notes the relevance of KANI's *goal and objective* to GoK priorities and the Australia-Kiribati Partnership for Development, but the report fails to consider whether KANI is the most appropriate means to achieve the broader goal and objective. The review does not consider whether there are more appropriate and cost effective options.

Importantly, the review concluded KANI will have limited effectiveness, particularly when measured in terms of reducing youth unemployment and diversifying Kiribati's remittance base. The review found the initiative would need to continue over many years before remittance from nurses trained under the program would have any significant economic or social impact on Kiribati.

The review also concluded that KANI will have low cost-benefits. The review reported only marginally positive net benefits would accrue over KANI's life based on realistic scenarios, and would have shown a negative net benefit had private salaries of individuals not been counted as 'benefits'.

The review did not make any recommendation on whether KANI should be continued, adjusted or terminated. They indicated this was a decision for AusAID. Based on the above conclusions, and the lack of compelling evidence indicating it should be continued, AusAID will not extend KANI in its current form beyond the current phase (allowing students in the current cohorts to complete their studies). This decision is consistent with the Australian Government's commitment to make Australian aid more effective (outlined in *An Effective Aid Program for Australia, Making a Real Difference – Delivering Real Results* and AusAID's *Comprehensive Aid Policy Framework*).

However, AusAID recognises that KANI's goal and objective are appropriate, and because of this the initiative is highly regarded in Kiribati. It seeks to address key challenges for the country, namely a rapidly growing population and urbanisation and high rates of youth unemployment. As such, while AusAID does not intend to continue KANI, AusAID will work closely with the GoK to identify more targeted, cost-effective delivery mechanisms to achieve KANI's goals.

AusAID's response to the specific recommendations made in the report

While most recommendations assume continuation or re-design of KANI, these recommendations are nevertheless useful to the extent that they will inform discussions with the GoK on future options to address KANI's goals. In this context, AusAID agrees in principle with all but two recommendations (1 and 4). As part of discussions with the GoK on options for future support, consideration will be given to:

- how best to facilitate graduates' transition to work, including in off-shore labour markets (see recommendations 2, 14 and 15);
- a range of regional institutions that can deliver courses (see recommendations 3 and 6);
- a whole-of-government approach to migration issues, which will involve discussions with the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship in particular (see recommendations 5 and 15);
- how to ensure gender equality is mainstreamed into any future programs and gender strategies are developed as appropriate (see recommendation 7);
- how to maintain a focus on employment for youth (see recommendation 9);
- how to improve English literacy skills to improve student readiness for post-secondary training (see recommendation 8), and ensure that any English-language testing protocols used will be fit-for-purpose (see recommendation 11);
- whether KIT (and other local or regional institutions, such as USP) should be engaged for English testing services (see recommendation 12);
- prioritising the creation of viable graduate pathways and implementing stronger and stricter academic achievement benchmarks at student exit points (see recommendation 13);
- AusAID's broader workforce skills and scholarships programs, including options to mainstream any future support with the Australia Awards Scholarships program (see recommendation 16); and
- how to address social issues faced by students – including through improved pre-departure briefing for students and improved support networks in the relevant institutions – and how to improve transparency of selection processes, including through the Australia Awards Scholarships program (see recommendations 10, 17 and 18).

There are two recommendations AusAID disagrees with.

For recommendation 1 (*consideration be given to expanding the KANI concept to other environmentally fragile PIC with adolescent populations more than 40%*), evidence suggests that KANI has not performed sufficiently well to justify any expansion of the initiative at this stage.

In response to recommendation 4 (*consideration be given to the feasibility and cost effectiveness of contracting any post-KANI program through an Australian commercial managing contractor rather than through an educational institution so that all activities across all sectors can be subcontracted, supported, managed, monitored and reported*), any future procurement of services must be open to the entire market. Being an educational institution should not exclude organisations from bidding.