

# OUTCOMES EVALUATION

IN-AFRICA AUSTRALIAN  
DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARSHIPS  
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

FINAL REPORT

June, 2012

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## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

AAA	: Australia Awards for Africa (successor to IAAMP)
ACR	: Activity Completion Report
ADS	: Australian Development Scholarships
Ag/FS	: Agriculture / Food Security
ALAFs	: Australian Leadership Award Fellowship
ALASs	: Australian Leadership Award Scholarship
AusAID	: Australian Agency for International Development
CSO	: Civil Society Organisation
DFAT	: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EU	: European Union
GoRK	: Government of the Republic of Kenya
GRM	: GRM International
HRD	: Human Resources Development
IAAMP	: In-Africa Australian Development Scholarships Management Programme
LTA	: Long Term Award (usually refers to a Masters, undergraduate or PhD Scholarship)
M&E	: Monitoring and Evaluation
MC	: Managing Contractor
MDGs	: Millenium Development Goals
MoH	: Ministry of Health
NCAs	: National Coordinating Authorities
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organisation
PDB	: Pre-departure Briefing
PGs	: Partner Governments
PM	: Programme Manager
SCA	: Short Course Award
SCOs	: Student Contact Officers
ToC	: Theory of Change

## Activity Summary

Head Office	Pretoria, South Africa, Program implementation in 17 countries.
Duration	April 2004 – January 2011
Goal	The goal of the Program was to “assist in reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development through contributing to human resource development in Africa.”
Purpose	The program purpose was: “through the provision of postgraduate (graduate diploma and masters degree) academic scholarships, to assist nationals of targeted countries to acquire relevant knowledge, skills and qualifications so that they can facilitate capacity building in priority development areas consistent with Australia’s Africa program strategy.”
Scholarships awarded	902
Geographic focus and scope of awards	Between 2005 and 2011 delivery of ADS expanded from ten countries and 80 candidates in Southern and East Africa, to 17 countries and 235 candidates in Southern, East and West Africa. Over this period the key areas in which scholarships were provided was for study in respect of governance-related topics (25.3% of long-term awards), health qualifications (25.1%), natural resources management (11.2%), agriculture / food security (11.1%) and education (10.4%).
Donor and PG Management/Contracting arrangements	AusAID liaised with PG Nominating Authorities, later changed to Coordinating Authorities, regarding the number of scholarships for each year, priority fields, categories of awards and other issues. The MC supported the negotiations and implementation of awards.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **goal** of the In-Africa Australian Development Scholarships\* Management Program (IAAMP) 2004-2011 was to “assist in reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development through contributing to human resource development in Africa.” The **program purpose** was: “through the provision of postgraduate (graduate diploma and masters degree) academic scholarships, to assist nationals of targeted countries to acquire relevant knowledge, skills and qualifications so that they can facilitate capacity building in priority development areas consistent with Australia’s Africa program strategy.”

The IAAMP commenced in 2004, was completed in January 2011, and was succeeded by the Australian Awards for Africa (AAA) Initiative. An Activity Completion Report (ACR) was submitted by the Managing Contractor (MC) in November 2011. The ACR provided adequate information on program outputs but was unable to provide outcome level data.

The objectives of this Outcomes Evaluation were to assess the relevance, effectiveness, impact and gender equity of the IAAMP by focusing on a series of key evaluation questions. Based upon its findings, the Evaluation Team was also tasked to identify lessons applicable to the strategic direction of the current Australia Awards for Africa (AAA) initiative, as well as the finalisation of the performance assessment systems on outcome level reporting.

The Outcomes Evaluation did not follow a normal Independent Completion Review format, but met AusAID quality standards in all other respects. Field work was limited to visits to two countries and a focus on two sectors where a significant number of Australian scholarships were awarded. The Review Team met with ADS alumni, supervisors and colleagues working in the health sector in Mozambique and in the agriculture sector in Kenya. Findings are as follows:

**Relevance:** The IAAMP met Australia’s development priorities during the period, including a substantial scale up consequent upon Australia’s decision to broaden and deepen the engagement with Africa post 2007. The awards were provided in priority sectors agreed upon with partner governments. Australia is highly regarded in terms of its willingness to take account of PG priorities and requirements.

The scale up of the scholarships program poses a challenge to the modality in attempting to *both* serve Australia’s foreign policy interest (by building a continent-wide ‘presence’) and be an effective instrument for a deeper strategic engagement with a smaller number of countries. In order to maximise the effectiveness of the modality it is necessary to clearly articulate Australia’s strategic choices regarding the extent of engagement desired in particular countries.

**Effectiveness:** The following factors were identified as positively influencing the acquisition of knowledge, skills and qualifications by awardees:

- Conditions and entitlements: Australia is regarded as providing good conditions and entitlements to awardees and stands alone in allowing families to accompany awardees.
- The level of support received in Australia is highly praised.
- The relevance of the study, professional practice and practical ‘know-how’ acquired in Australia is highly regarded by Alumni, their supervisors and colleagues.
- Alumni speak highly of the teaching and learning environment in Australia, open access to teachers and supervisors and the ready availability of educational and professional resources.

Factors influencing the capacity of Alumni to contribute to capacity building on return include:

- Pre-return preparation
- In Mozambique, the development of competency in the English language
- Work experience of alumni prior to undertaking post graduate studies in Australia
- Personality, personal motivation and perseverance of the individual.

However, some factors may be *less important* than previously thought, for example:

- Ensuring that alumni remain in government positions may be less important than their strategic positioning in the sector.
- The feared 'knowledge gap' between alumni and their colleagues when they return may be less important than the way in which the gap is handled.
- Alumni need not necessarily be constrained by the institutional environment upon return.

**Impact:** The lives of Alumni interviewed were personally and professionally transformed by undertaking post graduate qualifications in Australia.

Upon their return, the impact of Alumni in the workplace, and in the sectors focused upon by the evaluation, appears to have been substantial. Many Alumni occupy senior positions in government and non-government organisations. The level of knowledge transfer, mentoring, change/innovation, leadership and influence exerted by Alumni in the health sector in Mozambique and the agriculture sector in Kenya is highly impressive. Quite apart from their technical skills, Alumni are also valued for their newly acquired 'know how' and have become valuable assets to their organisations, attracting funds and international relationships.

There are key examples in both Kenya and Mozambique where the work of Alumni has had a direct impact on reducing the vulnerability of the poor, whether through improved health, food security or livelihoods.

Alumni have uniformly positive views of Australia but little contact has been maintained with mentors/professional networks in Australia. This would appear to represent a lost opportunity.

**Gender Equity:** Most Alumni interviewed expressed the view that the Australian experience had increased their gender awareness and willingness to advocate for gender equality in the workplace. This was verified by supervisors and colleagues. Female scholars are perceived as role models for others. Despite these positive outcomes, there are significant challenges for a scaled up AAA initiative in achieving numerical gender balance and in addressing the barriers women face in applying for, accepting and completing post graduate studies.

**Recommendations:** The Report presents a range of operational recommendations including the importance of pre-return counselling for awardees; a continued focus on the selection of experienced provincial and district level candidates; the need to encourage Australian universities to give greater attention to the maintenance of professional links/networks with Alumni and the need for a range of affirmative action measures to assist qualified women, as well as individuals from rural and disadvantaged groups, to apply for, accept and complete post graduate studies via ADS.

In addition, the Report highlights the need to develop a Theory of Change in respect of the AAA Initiative as the core element of a delivery strategy which identifies both the countries for priority engagement and desired outcomes in those countries. It is recommended that O-based staff maintain a regular presence in higher priority countries to protect the 'brand' and develop and maintain relationships. Finally, it is recommended that AusAID directly appoint an M&E Specialist with previous, relevant experience to revise the current M&E Framework to ensure that outcomes level data can be collected in higher priority countries.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

The current Australian Development Scholarships (ADS)<sup>1</sup> program is the successor of various iterations of scholarship programs, all stemming from the original Colombo Plan awards, which commenced in 1951. The Long Term Scholarships Program was one of four permanent Colombo Plan programs and was responsible for bringing several thousand students from developing countries to study in Australia.

From the outset, the objectives of the scholarship program involved a combination of foreign policy and development objectives. The Colombo Plan was “Deeply grounded in the faith that improved living standards would foster political stability and prove a counter to communism in the region.”<sup>2</sup> This dual focus on foreign policy and development objectives has remained.

The goal of the In-Africa Australian Development Scholarships Management Program (IAAMP) 2004-2011 was to “assist in reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development through contributing to human resource development in Africa.” The program purpose was: “through the provision of postgraduate (graduate diploma and masters degree) academic scholarships, to assist nationals of targeted countries to acquire relevant knowledge, skills and qualifications so that they can facilitate capacity building in priority development areas consistent with Australia’s Africa program strategy.”

Whilst not explicitly stated, there was also a clear expectation that scholarships would contribute to strengthening relationships with African countries through the development of long term personal relationships and the fostering of positive attitudes towards Australia.

The IAAMP received funding of approximately AUD55m during the period under review and supported 902 students to study in Australia. The number of countries where Australian scholarships were awarded expanded from ten in the 2005 intake to 17 in the 2011 intake.<sup>3</sup> This expansion reflected the desire of the Labor government (elected in 2007) to expand Australia’s presence in Africa.

The IAAMP was completed in January 2011 and was succeeded by the Australian Awards in Africa (AAA) Initiative. An Activity Completion Report (ACR) was submitted by the Managing Contractor (MC) in November 2011; the Executive Summary of the ACR is attached as Appendix A.

The ACR provided adequate information on program outputs. However, the lack of a formal program design linking outputs to outcomes, and the exclusive focus of the monitoring and evaluation system on the output level, made it difficult for the MC to report effectively against the Program Purpose. AusAID therefore decided that it was necessary to conduct an Outcomes Evaluation in respect of the IAAMP 2004-2011.

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<sup>1</sup> From 1 January 2015, the Australian Development Scholarships became the Australia Awards Scholarships

<sup>2</sup> See Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: 1937-1949 Series, Department of Foreign Affairs

<sup>3</sup> IAAMP Activity Completion Report Appendixed tables 14 - 17



## 1.2 Objectives

The detailed Terms of Reference for the IAAMP Outcomes Evaluation are attached as Appendix B. In order to facilitate conduct of the Outcomes Evaluation a retrospective ToC Workshop was commissioned by the Africa Strategy, Performance and Partnerships Section, AusAID and held on 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2012. This workshop provided staff with the opportunity to give expression to the (historically) expected outcomes of the program and facilitated the development of key evaluation questions.<sup>4</sup> The Workshop findings are attached as Appendix G.

AusAID staff identified the changes that might be expected at the individual level and the areas in which a returning scholar might be expected to have an impact on her/his home organisation. The staff also identified the enabling factors (assumptions/preconditions) which they felt would affect the realisation of the desired changes at the individual and organisational levels.

In addition to the anticipated development outcomes, it was recognised that one of the changes expected as a result of the provision of scholarships to Africa was that “The individual will have a positive view of Australia and develop strong linkages with Australians.”<sup>5</sup> This ‘unwritten objective’ has been referred to in previous evaluations of ADS Programs<sup>6</sup> and in recent years has been explicitly included as a goal of ADS Programs.<sup>7</sup> As such, it gives more formal expression to the dual foreign policy and development objectives of the scholarships programs.

Whilst the evaluation team reviewed the findings of the Activity Completion Report (ACR) as background information, it was decided by AusAID that the Outcomes Evaluation would not follow a standard Independent Completion Report (ICR) format. Instead, the evaluation attempted to determine the degree to which the anticipated enabling factors for individual and organisational change manifested and whether or not the expected outcomes were achieved. The evaluation focused on the following four core areas and addressed the following key questions:

i. **Relevance:**

Was the ADS program a relevant response to the long term human resource and capacity building needs in target countries, as well as meeting Australia’s development priorities and national interest?

ii. **Effectiveness**

What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the ADS Program purpose?

iii. **Impact**

What impact have returning scholars had on leadership, work practices and performance in their organisations/networks and what factors have influenced the capacity of individuals to have an impact?

How have Australian scholarships influenced perceptions of Australia and the strength of relationship between PGs and Australia?

iv. **Gender Equity**

In what ways have the attitudes of scholars to gender issues been influenced by their studies in Australia and how has this manifested in their work environment?

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<sup>4</sup> It has been of particular benefit to the Evaluation Team that a number of AusAID staff members involved in the development of the approach and methodology for the Outcomes Evaluation have been involved in management and implementation of the ADS program throughout the review period, 2004-2011.

<sup>5</sup> IAAMP Outcomes Study Plan March 2012 pg. 5

<sup>6</sup> Indonesia Australia Development Scholarships Phases II Review Final Report March 2006, pg. 20

<sup>7</sup> Refer Australia Africa Awards Program; the Cambodia ADS Program.

AusAID management and staff also decided that the Outcomes Evaluation should focus analysis on those countries and sectors where it was hypothesised that:

- (a) the greatest impact on capacity building may be identified and
- (b) Alumni are most readily available for collection and assessment of qualitative data reflecting on the effectiveness of the program.

Further, it was intended that the evaluation would provide lessons applicable to the strategic direction of the current Australia Awards for Africa (AAA) Initiative, as well as the finalisation of the performance assessment systems on outcome-level reporting.

### **1.3 Approach and Methodology**

The AusAID approved Evaluation Plan is attached as Appendix B. The evaluation involved three phases as follows:

- *Phase 1: Desk Review* to examine key program documents (listed in Appendix D). The review team analysed relevant documents from the perspective of the four overarching themes (outlined in sub-section 1.1 above). (See Review Instrument 1, Appendix C).
- *Phase 2: Consultations with Stakeholders.* It was agreed that the field work would focus on consultations with stakeholders in the health sector in Mozambique and the agriculture sector in Kenya.

The Review Team undertook field visits to Mozambique and Kenya from 10th to 22<sup>nd</sup> April. Consultations were carried out with the following:

- AusAID scholarships personnel
- PG nominating authorities in Mozambique and Kenya
- Senior PG officials in the health sector in Mozambique and agriculture sector in Kenya
- Selected sample of Alumni who have returned to work in the health sector in Mozambique and the agriculture sector in Kenya.
- Supervisors/colleagues of returned scholarships
- Other donor personnel working with scholarships programs.

The review mission schedules and lists of persons interviewed are attached as Appendix E.

- *Phase 3: Analysis, Feedback and Reporting*

Taking into account the results of the Desk Review, as well as analysis of the content of transcripts of interviews with stakeholders, the Review Team provided feedback to key stakeholders prior to departure from Mozambique and Kenya. Upon return to Australia the Review Team prepared an 'Aide Memoire' for AusAID, attached as Appendix F.

## 1.4 Limitations and Modifications to the Evaluation Plan

- *Poor contact data:* AusAID staff at the Post was severely hampered by the lack of up-to-date contact data for alumni. This fact, coupled with the short notice provided to staff to prepare for the Evaluation Team field visits, placed an enormous time burden on individuals attempting to track down alumni. It also meant that the Evaluation Team was literally ‘discovering’ alumni as we walked the corridors of various government departments. It is important to ensure that, in future: (i) the MC not only establishes the contact data for alumni, but also keeps it up to date (ii) officers at Post are given sufficient forward notice to be able to prepare adequately for field missions.
- *Constraints imposed by the limited review period.* The above difficulty, coupled with the relatively recent return of many alumni whose studies commenced post 2004, threatened to undermine our understanding of the true impact of the scholarships in the sectors/countries under review. It was therefore decided that alumni from any cohort would be interviewed. This increased the number of interviewees without tangibly undermining the integrity of the exercise.
- *Limited sample:* Despite the extraordinary efforts of staff at Post, the Evaluation Panel was only able to interview ten alumni in Mozambique and twenty in Kenya, as well as a lesser range of supervisors and colleagues. Whilst not undermining the value of the findings, care must be taken in the broad application of the findings.
- *Gender breakdown of the sample:* Field visits to Mozambique and Kenya revealed a predominance of women alumni working in the health sector with a predominance of men working in the agriculture sector. This reflects the overall breakdown of Masters Awards by gender and sector over the period under review where women were strongly represented in the health sector but poorly represented in agriculture/food security.<sup>8</sup>
- *Extrapolating from a focus on two countries:* Whilst the decision to focus the Outcomes Evaluation on Kenya and Mozambique was appropriate, care should be exercised in extrapolating from the results. Whilst it is reasonable to apply lessons learned to the likely outcomes of Australia’s relationships with higher priority
- countries, it would be inappropriate to assume that the lessons apply on a continent wide basis, particularly in countries where AusAID has limited relations with the PG.
- *Addition of Likert scale questionnaire of ADS alumni in-country:* After summarising the results of consultations with the supervisors and colleagues of alumni in Mozambique, it was decided to use the findings as a basis for developing a simple Likert scale questionnaire to be administered to the alumni. This questionnaire was also used during the field visits in Kenya.

Alumni completed the questionnaire on a confidential, gender disaggregated basis in Mozambique. In Kenya, the questionnaire was only completed by 12 of the 20 alumni interviewed (from KARI) and the completed questionnaires were not gender disaggregated; only 2 of the 12 alumni were female. The questionnaire for the remainder of MoA staff was administered after the Evaluation Team departed and only one further response had been received at the time of preparation of the Final Report.

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<sup>8</sup> Refer IAAMP Activity Completion Report Table 20: Masters Awards Gender Breakdown Summary by Intake Year and Priority Sector.

## 2. RELEVANCE OF THE SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM

In addressing the issue of relevance the Outcomes Evaluation considered the consistency of the initiative with Australian policy and priorities; consistency with PG views and long term HR and key capacity building challenges; and the relevance of the modality.

### 2.1 Strategic framework for the scholarships program

The rationale for the African ADS Program has been articulated in varying ways during the period under review with varying emphases according to the dominant strategic focus at the time. The 'Australia and Africa' 2003-2007 strategy emphasised the fact that "scholarship beneficiaries can influence *governance and reform* in their own countries".<sup>9</sup> [Italics added] An aid strategy review conducted in June 2007 emphasised the role of ADS in facilitating bilateral relations with African governments and in capacitation of the government sector.<sup>10</sup>

After the election of the Labor Government in October 2007, Australia sought to broaden and deepen the engagement with Africa. As part of this process the foreign policy objectives of the scholarships program received greater attention. During the period 2007 to 2010 AusAID developed an internal strategy for a significant scale up of the scholarships program.

In January 2009, the Minister for Foreign Affairs attended an African Union Executive Council Meeting and announced that "*Within four years, Australia will increase by up to ten-fold our scholarships and fellowships to students from across Africa – including in agriculture, mining, maternal and child healthcare, and water and sanitation. This will see up to 1,000 scholarships and fellowships available to young African students.*"<sup>11</sup> The Australian Awards for Africa scholarships design was completed in August 2009 and reflected the Ministerial commitment.

From a foreign policy perspective scholarships represent a relatively low-cost, low risk approach to ensuring that Australia builds and/or capitalises upon existing positive relationships with African countries. This was perceived as particularly important within a context of cut-backs on scholarships by traditional donors; the rapidly expanding scholarship commitments of 'emerging' donors (e.g. China and India) and the desire to expand Australia's 'presence' in Africa.

When the 'Looking West' strategy was released in December 2010, the development rationale for the scholarships program strongly emphasised the importance of human resource development in meeting the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs).<sup>12</sup> The priority areas where Australia could provide support in achievement of the MDGs were food security (MDG1), mother and child health care (MDG4) and water and sanitation (MDG7).<sup>13</sup>

### 2.2 Sectoral Focus of Awards

In addition to identifying the strategic intent of the ADS Program in Africa, key sectors were identified within which Australia would provide support. The stated priorities for Long Term Awards in the time period from the 1990s to 2011 were:

- Health;

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<sup>9</sup> Australia and Africa: Facing the Challenges as Partners 2003-2007 pg 18.

<sup>10</sup> "Within the Africa program, ADS is the only vehicle remaining with obvious 'bilateral' colours. ADS is, more often than not, linked closely to recipient government priorities and aims to capacitate the government sector. It is a very high profile element of our engagement with any government on the continent." Africa Strategy Review June 2007 pg. 15

<sup>11</sup> Presentation to the Executive Council of the African Union by the Hon Stephen Smith MP Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade

<sup>12</sup> Looking West: Australia's Strategic Approach to Aid in Africa 2011-2015 ; AusAID; Published December 2010 pg. 12

<sup>13</sup> Ibid pg. 12

- Agriculture/Food Security;
- Natural Resources Management; and
- Public Sector Management/Governance.

The ACR reported that during implementation of the IAAMP governance-related topics absorbed 25.3% of long- term awards; health qualifications 25.1%; natural resources management absorbed 11.2%; agriculture and food security 11.1% and education accounted for 10.4%. Other areas of study accounted for 17% of scholarships.

This ADS Outcomes Evaluation focussed on two recipient countries, Mozambique and Kenya. In these two countries it was found that, as with the Africa-wide program, the scholarships were distributed in accordance with Australia's stipulated priorities.

**Table 1: Distribution of LTAs offered across sectors (2004-2011)**

<b>Sector \ Country</b>	<b>Mozambique</b>	<b>Kenya</b>
Rurdev and Food Security	22 (16%)	18 (17%)
Education	23 (16%)	25 (24%)
Environment and NRM	24 (17%)	12 (12%)
Health	35 (25%)	15 (14%)
Infrastructure	5 (3%)	2 (2%)
Governance	24 (17%)	14 (14%)
Other	8 (6%)	18 (17%)
<b>TOTAL 2004-2011</b>	<b>141 (100%)</b>	<b>104 (100%)</b>

Awards are provided in priority sectors agreed with partner governments and where Australia offers sectoral expertise. This is not simply a matter of defining the areas and awarding scholarships according to a quota. The selection process involves detailed discussions of the merits of applicants by a representative group of stakeholders. This means that Australian and PG priorities are addressed each time the committee meets during the selection process. At the conclusion of the process all members sign off on the final list of awards. This mechanism appears to be quite effective in ensuring committee members are fully aware of the need to meet development priorities whilst taking advantage of particular capabilities and specialisations in Australian institutions. This approach also enables the selection committee(s) to respond to particular emerging needs in each year that may not fit the overall agreed priority areas.

### **2.3 Meeting the HR and Capacity Building Needs of Recipient Countries**

Australia is highly regarded in terms of the willingness to take account of PG priorities and requirements. Indeed, this is what distinguishes our scholarships from those offered by other countries. Key government figures cited a number of examples of the highly constrained focus of other donor scholarship programs. A review of the literature also reveals examples where the 'supply driven' nature of scholarship provision comes under criticism.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> A Review of scholarships commissioned by the Austrian Development Agency, April 2007 noted that "Generally speaking, the scholarship programs.... are *supply driven*". An evaluation of the Norad Fellowship Program, June 2005, identified a similar weakness; as a consequence "a number of fellows interviewed expressed concerns about the lack of relevance to their home situation."

By contrast, the field visits to Mozambique and Kenya demonstrated that Australia has not simply responded to PG needs. AusAID staff at Post has had long term, strong and productive relationships with not only the National Coordinating Authorities in these countries, but with a range of other Ministries as well. This work provided a solid foundation upon which the MC could build in ensuring that the IAAMP responded to the HR and capacity building needs in priority sectors in these countries.

In **Mozambique**, the government prepared a strategic plan for Higher Education with the assistance of the World Bank covering the period 2000-2010. This provided projections of target overall enrolments and budget for each of the three key higher education institutions but made no projections for manpower needs in any specific subsectors. Public expenditure on education was reported as 2.4% of GDP in 2008 with 64-70% of this figure allocated to higher education.<sup>15</sup> However, in April 2011 the government announced cuts of up to 38% to the public funding of higher education as a result of fiscal constraints.<sup>16</sup>

Demand for places is extremely high. Overall, in 1999 there were almost 11,000 applications for approximately 2,300 places, though in the private universities applications were generally equal to the number of places.

Quite apart from the high demand for higher education, the scholarships to English speaking countries are highly sought after. The PG reiterated the critical nature of English language training to Mozambique, as the country cannot compete with neighbours due to the language constraints.

An estimated 260 post graduate scholars have received awards since 1990. This included 56 in the health sector<sup>17</sup>. Insofar as Mozambique has a critical shortage of human resources for health<sup>18</sup>, Australia's contribution to the development of professionals in this sector has been highly significant.

The specific, and continuing, need for post-graduate scholarships in the health sector is evidenced by the fact that Mozambique still has a long way to go in reducing infant, child and maternal mortality rates and that HIV/AIDs and TB remain a major threat<sup>19</sup>.

**Kenya** has had a strong historical commitment to higher education. Human resource development has been ranked as a high priority in successive national development plans. Despite this effort, and the establishment of 7 public and 17 private universities with an enrolment of about 50,000 students, HE enrolment still only constitutes 0.12% of the total population of 41m. Roughly 80% of the university population are enrolled in public universities, while 20% of the total university student population attends private universities.

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<sup>15</sup> South African Regional Universities Association, SARUA. See [www.sarua.org/?q=Mozambique](http://www.sarua.org/?q=Mozambique)

<sup>16</sup> Africa Avenir. <http://www.afriqueavenir.org/en/2011/04/12/poor-higher-education-quality-looms-as-mozambique-govt-cuts-budget/>

<sup>17</sup> AusAID database report for period 2000-2012

<sup>18</sup> WHO has not published a comparison of human resources for health (HRH) since 2006. At this time, based on a global comparison, Mozambique had an HRH density of 3 physicians and 21 nurses per 100,000 population and was classified as one of 57 countries facing a critical shortage of HRH.

<sup>19</sup> See the World Bank Group statistical report (2009 figures) indicating IMR 95/1,000; -5 MR 140/1,000; MMR 550/100,000; TB incidence 539/100,000; HIV prevalence 11.5% ages 15-49.

Further, students attempting to undertake postgraduate studies in Kenya face many challenges including “long, cumbersome and inefficient registration processes; lack of appropriate equipment; poor supervision; and inadequate funding.”<sup>20</sup> Consultations held by the Evaluation Team in Kenya confirmed this assessment; interviewees also noted that completion of a Masters or PhD in a Kenyan University takes much longer than outside due to strikes, resource constraints, pressure on supervisors, etc. A number of topics are not available for study, such as sustainable development, agribusiness, community development and environmental economics.

Australia has provided post-graduate scholarships to Kenya for more than sixty years with a strong focus on the agriculture sector. Currently the technical staffs of the Ministry of Agriculture include approximately 5,600 staff with 1,600 degree holders.<sup>21</sup> Within this context, Australia’s contribution is significant.

In both Kenya and Mozambique all scholars were initially nominated by a government body such as the Ministry of Education but after some years it was agreed between AusAID and Governments of Mozambique and Kenya to make scholarships publicly available. In Mozambique, the result was that there was not only a larger pool of potential applicants, but some who had not previously had access to scholarships were now able to apply. For example, the Ministry of Health (MoH) had previously nominated only medical doctors even though a wide range of other allied health staff were also interested in accessing the scholarships. One outcome of the shift to open advertisement was that several biologists from the food security and nutrition section of the Health Ministry in Mozambique gained scholarships and subsequently returned to the Ministry to serve with distinction. Candidates from the provinces and rural areas were also encouraged to apply and given greater weighting in the selection process because of the disadvantage they experienced by being in workplaces remote from the HQ of their Ministry.

## **2.4 Relevance of the modality**

The relevance of the modality has been addressed in two ways. First, this section considers the relevance of the modality in meeting Australia’s foreign policy and development objectives. Second, we consider the relevance of the modality in meeting the needs of scholars.

**2.4.1** The ‘Study of Australia’s approach to Aid in Africa’, commissioned as part of the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness, noted that “Despite the many benefits of the scholarship programs, it is clear that providing opportunities to study in Australia is not the most immediate way to reduce poverty.” And further, “The (ADS) program’s magnitude does not seem to be appropriate given other development needs and other areas where Australian aid could be more effective.”<sup>22</sup>

These comments highlight the obvious difficulty in attempting to trace a link between the provision of higher education scholarships and poverty reduction. As previously indicated, the IAAMP project design did not include a program logic which explained how the ADS program was intended to contribute to the achievement of the program goal – poverty reduction. In recognition of the difficulties inherent in this exercise the retrospective ToC Workshop, conducted in AusAID in preparation for this Outcomes Evaluation, only attempted to form links between outputs and the Program Purpose – the acquisition of knowledge and skills by awardees and flow-on effects in capacity building in the workplaces to which they return.

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<sup>20</sup> National Strategy for University education, Kenya 2007-2015

<sup>21</sup> Personal communication, senior government official.

<sup>22</sup> Study of Australia’s approach to Aid in Africa - Commissioned as part of the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness Final Report 21 Feb. 2011 <http://www.aidreview.gov.au/publications/study-africa.pdf> Authors: Joel Negin and Glenn Denning pg. 26

Similarly, the program goal for the successor, AAA, program is “A Study and Professional Development Award program contributing to achievement of MDGs in Africa while promoting Australia as an active partner in African development.”<sup>23</sup> Despite the more bounded nature of this program goal, it is difficult to demonstrate the relevance of the aid modality as a mechanism to *both* contribute to achievement of the MDGs *and* meet foreign policy objectives.

On the one hand the foreign policy interest aims to build a continent-wide ‘presence’; on the other hand the aid effectiveness agenda seeks to establish a strategic focus based upon deep engagement with, and support for, a smaller number of countries.

Both the ‘Study of Australia’s approach to Aid in Africa’, and subsequent AusAID management strategic analyses,<sup>24</sup> have emphasised that the way to resolve the tension between wide engagement and effective engagement is to categorise countries according to the levels of engagement which are desired and adjust the breadth and depth of development assistance accordingly.

The TOR for this Outcomes Evaluation tasked the consultants to identify “lessons applicable to the strategic direction of the current Australia Awards for Africa (AAA) Program.” A critical lesson, supported by the evidence presented under Sections 3 and 4 below, is that significant outcomes may be achieved where Australia has developed strong, long term relationships with PGs and where substantial staff time has been committed to maintaining these relationships. Where AusAID has not had the opportunity to develop these relationships, however, it may not be assumed that these outcomes can be achieved.

Given the scale up of the scholarships program in Africa, both in terms of the increased number of country recipients, and the number of awards being made available, neither AusAID Post staff, nor the MC of the program, will be able to devote the same degree of attention to the development and maintenance of PG relationships as has occurred in Mozambique and Kenya. This issue was discussed at the various concept stages for the current scholarships program and a ‘tiering’ approach is envisaged in the design of the AAA Initiative.

The results of this evaluation confirm the points made in the Aid Effectiveness Study and incorporated into the design of the current scholarships program. It is necessary to clearly articulate Australia’s strategic choices regarding the extent of engagement which is desired with particular PGs. This not only influences the level of resources committed to the development and maintenance of PG relationships, but also facilitates greater clarity about the type of outcomes expected and, as a consequence, the type of monitoring required.

In some cases, where Australia seeks to maintain a ‘presence’ in order to meet foreign policy objectives and the number and type of awards made available is small, the expected outcome may be simply the maintenance of ‘goodwill’ with a given PG. In such cases, output data supported by expressions of satisfaction by various PG representatives should meet M&E requirements.

In other cases, however, where Australia chooses to provide a larger number and broader range of awards to a given country/sector, the expected level of engagement with PGs will be far greater. In these circumstances, there may be a genuine expectation of significant development outcomes both for the individual awardees and the sectors/countries to which they return. The M&E Framework will, therefore, need to be able to provide both output and outcomes data in respect of the impact of the scholarships program in countries receiving a

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<sup>23</sup> Australian Scholarships for Africa Program 2010-2015, - Design Document pg. 2

<sup>24</sup> Study of Australia’s approach to Aid in Africa, Final Report 21 Feb. 2011, suggested a two tiered strategy; subsequently, the Africa Mining Framework suggested priority country strategy and this is being considered for broader application by the Executive.



higher degree of focus. [Refer Section 5. below for a detailed discussion of monitoring for outcomes.]

Whilst at an operational level AusAID is clearly making choices regarding the number and type of awards provided to different countries under the current scholarships program, this does not appear to be enshrined in either a clearly articulated delivery strategy, nor in the M&E framework for the AAA Initiative. The Evaluation Team is of the view that the lessons gleaned from this evaluation highlight the importance of AusAID clearly identifying a small number of countries where it is expected that the Agency will be able to commit sufficient resources to develop and maintain strong, long term relationships and where, consequently, it is expected that significant development outcomes may be achieved.

**Recommendation 1: THAT AusAID develop a Delivery Strategy for the scholarships program in Africa incorporating a Theory of Change which identifies the differences in desired/expected outcomes in higher priority countries and lower priority countries.**

**2.4.2** During conduct of the field mission, the Evaluation Team received a significant number of comments from alumni regarding the need for greater flexibility in facilitating work in their country of origin as part of an Australian degree.

In the past, the vast majority of study opportunities provided by the Australian Government to Africa were LTAs undertaken in Australia. The current ADS program provides for LTAs, short course awards (SCAs) and professional development awards (PDAs). These three award types are sufficiently flexible to allow for a number of appropriate delivery options in the African context, including in-Africa delivery of significant numbers of SCAs and LTAs or their components through partnership with Australian providers.

Despite these positive developments, the AAA design was cautious when it came to recommending the development of sandwich programs – degrees obtained by joint arrangement with a university in Australia and a university in their home country. The major reasons cited were the existing pressure on African universities and concerns about quality standards.

The Outcomes Evaluation field mission encountered examples where students had undertaken research, as part of their degree, in their home country, but this was paid for by the student. The January, 2012 AAA Six Monthly Report also notes that several scholars departed Australia prior to submitting their dissertations and that permission has been granted to submit from home.<sup>25</sup>

Further, this report discusses a range of factors which appear to negatively affect women in applying for, accepting and completing higher degrees [see sub-section 4.4 below]. A number of women commented that even if they were offered a scholarship to undertake a PhD they would not feel able to take it because it would take them away from home for too long.

The Evaluation Team is aware that ADS regulations already provide for award holders to take up their awards on a sandwich basis and a number of AusAID country programs have experimented with alternative delivery methods. These include distance learning in Mongolia and sandwich programs in Indonesia. Further, an international benchmarking exercise carried out on behalf of the Canadian International Development Agency indicates

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<sup>25</sup> AAA Six Monthly Report January 2012 Table 6: pg. 25

that: “In doctoral studies, the dominant trend is alternating work site or shared supervision.”<sup>26</sup>

Ultimately, these matters are driven by the Australian Universities. They will pursue the possibility of sandwich programs where they see a benefit in doing so. In this regard, it should be noted that an evaluation of the ADS program in Indonesia in 2006 found evidence at that time of increasing potential and interest in Australian universities to participate in sandwich programs.<sup>27</sup>

Recommendation 2: THAT consideration is given to engaging in dialogue with Australian Universities regarding the possibility of establishing sandwich programs for PhDs in order to recognise the importance of in-country research and to maximise opportunities for women and disadvantaged groups.

### 3. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM

In addressing the issue of effectiveness the Outcomes Evaluation considered the factors which enabled awardees to gain individual knowledge skills and qualification; and which enabled them to contribute to their sector/country upon return. The evaluation also considered the effectiveness of coordination and harmonisation with other AusAID programs and other donor programs.

Appendix G provides a detailed analysis of the results of interviews with alumni, their supervisors and colleagues. Key points are outlined below.

#### 3.1 Factors influencing the acquisition of knowledge, skills and qualifications

- The Evaluation Team received very strong feedback that the **conditions and entitlements** associated with Australian scholarships are more generous than scholarships to other countries, including allowing the families to accompany awardees. This allows scholars “to feel comfortable”.
- Similarly, alumni highly praised the **level of support received in Australia**.
- The **relevance of the study and professional practice** in Australia to the home country environment and work was an important factor contributing to the success of scholars in acquiring knowledge, skills and qualifications.
- A strong finding of the Outcomes Evaluation is that **students greatly value the ‘know how’ acquired in Australia**. This included practical knowledge gained in research techniques, how to analyse and interpret data, work methods, critical analysis and problem solving techniques, as well as proposal and report writing.
- For many students, simply experiencing **the teaching and learning environment in Australia** was a personally and professionally transformative experience. Lecturers encouraged students to think for themselves and to justify their approaches with evidence and analysis. This contrasted sharply with their educational experiences in their own countries.
- **Open access to teachers and supervisors** was often cited, not only as a key factor contributing to the acquisition of knowledge, but also as a factor encouraging a shift in ways of relating with others.

<sup>26</sup> Evaluation of the Canadian Francophonie Scholarships Program (CFSP) 1987-2005. ‘A Need for Reorientation’ by the Evaluation Division, Performance & Knowledge Management Branch, Dec 2005

<sup>27</sup> Indonesia Australia Development Scholarships Phase II Review Final Report March 2006 Examples included a sandwich masters developed at ANU, and taught doctoral programs at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT).

- Whereas Australian students may take for granted the availability of resources, many ADS awardees commented upon the **readily available education and professional resources**. Alumni appreciated the easy availability of high quality internet access in Australia, as well as access to a wide range of information, including professional subscription services, books and journals.

### 3.2 Factors influencing capacity of Alumni to contribute to capacity building

There was a strong link between key enabling factors for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and qualifications and factors influencing the capacity of alumni to contribute to capability building upon their return. The **relevance of the study and professional practice, the acquisition of 'know-how' and the impact of the teaching and learning environment in Australia** were all cited as key factors which not only motivated returning scholars to share their knowledge, but also taught them how to do so upon their return.

In addition, the following factors were strongly emphasised by alumni:

- **Pre-return preparation** was regarded as being highly valuable by those scholars who received it. This allowed scholars to reflect upon any cultural 'shocks' which they might experience upon return home; to reflect upon major issues that may have changed the environment to which they were returning; and to prepare themselves psychologically for fitting back into their work environment in a productive way.
- **In Mozambique, the development of competency in English language** was highly valued in facilitating an increase in the capacity of alumni to make a substantial contribution when they return. The lack of English language capacity was cited as a major factor inhibiting Mozambique's dealings with other African countries, participation in international fora and acquisition of knowledge from abroad.

Finally, the Evaluation Team observed the following:

- The **work experience of alumni prior to undertaking post graduate study in Australia** appears to be an important factor influencing the degree of influence that alumni may have upon their return. From the field interviews of returned scholars, peers and supervisors, it was clear that many alumni had considerable experience, including experience at the provincial level, before undertaking study in Australia. This enabled them to more effectively utilise their course studies to focus on existing problems in their countries of origin. The combination of previous experience, complemented by study in Australia, was also important in gaining respect in the workplace and community upon their return. This appeared to increase their level of influence.

Ironically, this factor may not be present to the same extent in the future as increasingly younger alumni are winning awards. The design of the current scholarships program specifies that applicants must have a minimum of two years relevant work experience in a relevant field. As a result, a new graduate with only two years experience, say, in the capital, has the same standing in the selection process as an applicant who has gained more experience in a more remote rural workplace.

Based upon the field visits, it is the view of the Evaluation Team that field experience in the provinces and districts should continue to be seen as a 'desirable' attribute in the selection process. This, of course, also reinforces the importance of ensuring that information about the availability of scholarships is delivered to the provinces and districts in a timely manner. Whilst the on-line application facility may appear to

improve the situation, poor internet connections in rural areas still places provincial and district candidates at a disadvantage.

- **Personality, personal motivation and perseverance of the individual** are significant variables affecting the degree to which alumni are able to contribute to capacity building in their workplace. This finding is confirmed by a reference in the 'Report on the Evaluation Workshop for the Beneficiaries of ADS in Kenya' which notes that alumni "need to cultivate good personal traits".<sup>28</sup>

In light of the findings the Evaluation Team recommends the following:

Recommendation 3: THAT AusAID re-emphasises to the AAA Initiative MC, and Australian Universities, the importance of pre-return counselling for awardees with a particular focus on mechanisms for dealing with the 'knowledge gap' and enabling institutional environment which alumni encounter upon return.

Recommendation 4: THAT encouragement to the selection of experienced provincial and district level candidates is emphasised, not only as a matter of equity, but also because of the potentially greater contribution that such scholars may make to capacity building upon their return. [Refer page 14]

As well as highlighting those factors which have enabled returning scholars to contribute to capacity building at home, it is important to discuss the factors which would appear to be *less important* than may have previously been thought. These factors include the following:

- **The maintenance of alumni in government positions may be less important than their strategic positioning in the sector.**

There is a tendency to describe the movement of alumni out of government departments as a 'brain drain'. The findings of this Outcomes Evaluation suggest that this may be a simplistic notion.

A high proportion of scholars selected for Master's programs in Australia were employed in the Ministry of Health at the time of their departure for Australia. Whilst the alumni returned to the Ministry on completion of their studies, some have subsequently taken up positions in large INGOs working in the health sector in Mozambique. All of the latter organisations have the goal of assisting Mozambique to address a range of serious health issues and assisting the Ministry of Health to develop greater capacity to respond effectively to these needs.

The ADS alumni in these INGOs all hold key positions, are responsible for working at a high level to address key problems and benefit from working with highly experienced colleagues with extensive international experience and qualifications.

Further, because of the close links between the INGOs and the Ministry and their shared goals, alumni are in regular contact with the Ministry and cooperate with staff of the Ministry as they carry out their work. The INGOs all have clear policies aimed at eventually handing over the work they are doing to the Ministry once it has become sustainable.

Given the critical health issues faced by Mozambique and the lack of human and financial resources, as well as organisational capacity, the MoH cannot meet the needs. Thus, the

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<sup>28</sup> Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of State for Public Service; Report on the Evaluation workshop for Beneficiaries of the ADS Program; 3-4<sup>th</sup> May, 2011 pg. 25

presence of these INGOs is not only necessary, but the way they operate is advantageous to the Ministry and the country and its people.

Further, if these INGOs were not operating in Mozambique, many alumni would be unable to find the level of challenge and purpose in their work that they desire which would undermine their motivation and capacity to contribute to the sector. Instead, the presence of INGOs all working towards the same goals as the Ministry allows the alumni to address the health problems faced by Mozambique and, often, to make a contribution to capacity building in the MoH which they would be unable to do from the inside.

- **The ‘knowledge gap’ with colleagues may be less important than the way in which it is handled.**

The ‘knowledge gap’ between alumni and their colleagues is often cited as a potential inhibiting factor to the capacity of alumni to contribute to capacity building upon return to their country of origin.

The findings of the Outcomes Evaluation suggests that it is not so much the ‘knowledge gap’ as the way in which that gap is handled that is important. Where the returning scholar has sufficient maturity and character to recognise the value of colleagues who may have less education, but substantial experience, the gap is a non-issue. Where returnees try to impose Australian standards, however, there may be misunderstandings with supervisors and colleagues.

This is an important issue to be discussed during pre-return preparation [see Recommendation 3. above].

- **Alumni need not necessarily be constrained by the institutional environment.**

The field visits confirm that the enabling environment is an important influence on the ability of alumni to facilitate capacity building. Alumni who have stayed in the institutions to which they returned cited the importance of “the openness of the institution to new ideas and proposals”; they appreciate the fact that “the institution creates space for returning alumni to make decisions and demonstrate leadership” and that the institution “provides a stimulating environment that encourages staff to apply their skills to problem solving.”

However, it would be wrong to assume that a constrained environment automatically leads to an inability to facilitate capacity building. The findings of the Outcomes Evaluation present a much more nuanced picture.

First, even where there are constraints in the enabling environment such as low levels of remuneration, poor facilities and inadequate support staff, the Evaluation Team encountered alumni who continue to work in this environment because they feel that it offers them opportunities to do the work they prefer (e.g. research).

Second, there are examples where the knowledge and skills obtained in Australia have allowed the alumni to directly address the constraints they faced in the workplace. In one such case, an alumnus working in an agriculture research institution in Kenya was able to directly address the deficiencies she encountered upon return. She carried out a stock take, identified the deficiencies and drew up a list of required equipment to facilitate professional performance. She was then able to convince her supervisors to invest in the purchase of the required equipment.

Finally, as mentioned above, some alumni choose to move outside the government sector in order to do the work which the government is unable to do, whilst collaborating with government to strengthen capacity.

These are important issues to be discussed during pre-return preparation [see Recommendation 3. above].

### 3.3 Effectiveness of coordination and harmonisation

**Internal:** As indicated in Section 2.1 above, health and agriculture/food security were two of Australia's sectoral priorities in Africa during the period under review. Scholarships were the largest component of the country programs in both Mozambique, where the health sector received the largest number of scholars, and in Kenya, where there was a strong focus on the agriculture sector. This should not imply, however, that there was significant internal coordination and harmonisation with other AusAID programs in these sectors/countries.

An AusAID staff member commented that: "Although broadly aimed at poverty reduction and within the key sectoral areas of need ... there was a tendency to vertical programming with minimal integration across them. Scholarships were one of the few mechanisms which could complement other programs and efforts were made to promote the scholarships in meetings with all stakeholders."

Some reinforcement of effort was achieved. For example, AusAID supported implementation by UNICEF of the 'Children and AIDS Initiative' 2007-2011; some ADS scholars, originally from the MoH, have worked with UNICEF on HIV-AIDS initiatives. All of the NGO programs funded under the Australian Partnerships with African Communities (APAC) program, 2003-2010, implemented in Mozambique have emphasised HIV-AIDS initiatives (as well as food security) and thus linked well with the focus of the ADS scholarships in this area. There have also been synergies between a number of agriculture programs funded by AusAID in Mozambique and the ADS award focus.

Beyond this, however, there were a range of other initiatives funded by AusAID in Mozambique where, not surprisingly, there was no real complementarity (e.g. humanitarian support, microfinance, sports development program). A similar situation prevailed in Kenya.

It is doubtful that any greater degree of internal coordination/harmonisation could be achieved between the scholarships program and Australian initiatives funded through multilateral agencies and bilateral donor partnerships. This represents a substantial proportion of the program. In 2009, 46% of Australian aid to Africa was channelled through multilateral organisations; in addition, AusAID's Africa program has delegated cooperation partnerships with DFID, GIZ and the World Bank.<sup>29</sup>

Within the context of the current AAA Initiative there is scope for coordination/collaboration in respect of the work of the other pan-African mechanism, the Australia Africa Partnerships Facility (AAPF). There is overlap between the current scholarships program and the work of the AAPF in the provision of short courses and professional development programs for African government staff.

The AAA Initiative design incorporates a commitment to better inform bilateral/multilateral program heads and to collaborate more with the AAPF. AusAID commenced efforts to clarify the strategic direction of the AAPF in a delivery strategy prepared in October 2011. Preparation of a delivery strategy for the AAA Initiative [Recommendation 1 above] would facilitate effective operational coordination/ collaboration between AusAID's pan-African mechanisms and, therefore, improve efficiency and effectiveness.

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<sup>29</sup> Study of Australia's approach to aid in Africa Op.cit pg. 28

**External:** At least 25 higher education scholarship programs were in operation across Africa at the time of this evaluation.<sup>30</sup> The vast majority of donors provide fewer than 100 scholarships per year in total, spread thinly over a range of countries and regions across Africa. A notable exception is the Chinese scholarship program which has recently announced a doubling of its yearly number of places for Africa from 2000 to 4000 awards<sup>31</sup>. While exact figures are difficult to obtain Cuban, Ford, Chevening, (both) Commonwealth scholarship programs and the Belgian program also appear to exceed the 100 scholarships per annum level across Africa.

Scholarship conditions usually include payment of fees, travel costs and living allowances, with the exception of the Chinese program which insists on partner governments contributing relevant airfares. The Australian scheme is regarded as comprehensive and fair in its payments, across the board.

In both Mozambique and Kenya, AusAID staff has sought to engage with other scholarships donors in an effort to achieve higher levels of coordination but found there is little interest. Some meetings have been convened between donors who specifically provide support to higher education but there was little interest in forming an on-going group. The lack of interest appears to arise from the fact that each scheme is quite different to the others and there is little perceived value in sharing experiences or information.

## **4. IMPACT**

In addressing the issue of impact the Outcomes Evaluation attempted to learn about the impact on individual awardees and to determine the degree to which Alumni have demonstrated improved work practices/performance, strengthened the work practices of colleagues, introduced change/innovation and demonstrated leadership. Further, the evaluation attempted to learn about the profile of the ADS program and the attitude to Australia amongst Alumni and their colleagues.

Appendix G provides a detailed analysis of the results of interviews with alumni, their supervisors and colleagues. Key points are outlined below.

### **4.1 Impact on the individual**

- **The lives of Alumni were personally and professionally transformed**

Approximately three-quarters of Kenyan alumni and more than half of alumni in Mozambique felt that their lives had been personally transformed as a result of studies in Australia. Quite apart from the acquisition of specialist and technical skills, Alumni referred to changes such as 'a changed way of looking at the world'; 'improved life skills'; greater self reliance, confidence and self esteem. Supervisors and colleagues confirmed the changes identified by alumni self assessments.

In some cases alumni described a change which represented an ethical transformation. For example: "When I left here I did not appreciate other people. I learned to appreciate other people and it has improved my work. I work with farmers and now I handle them better than before. The farmers prefer talking to me because I handle them with respect." (Male alumnus, Kenya)

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<sup>30</sup> See full list annexed as Appendix H

<sup>31</sup> However, it is difficult to confirm if even the existing number of places have been successfully filled (by-country numbers tend to cast doubt on this).

Further, a very high percentage of male alumni in both Kenya and Mozambique are of the opinion that they were professionally transformed by the post graduate studies in Australia. The results of interviews and questionnaires suggest that female alumni may have experienced less of a professional transformation.

## **4.2 Impact on the workplace**

- **Alumni have demonstrated improved work practices and strengthened the work of colleagues:**

A high percentage of Alumni in both Mozambique and Kenya felt that they had not only been able to improve their own work practices, but also contribute to the work practices of their colleagues. This self assessment was confirmed by discussions with colleagues and supervisors. Alumni from Australia were routinely referred to as having obtained good 'all round' knowledge that is able to be practically applied at home. They are regarded as having acquired good analytical skills and a capacity to transfer knowledge.

A significant number of alumni interviewed had applied the active learning pedagogy experienced in Australia and, via a cascading training methodology, had produced substantial multiplier effects.

- **Alumni have become 'change agents':**

The alumni interviewed in Mozambique and Kenya clearly see themselves as 'change agents' and the comments of colleagues and supervisors validate this self assessment. Numerous examples of change/innovation introduced by alumni were described to the Evaluation Team in the areas of research, education, policy development and public sector administration. The details appear in Appendix G.

- **Alumni are leaders and demonstrate leadership qualities:**

Many ADS Alumni from earlier intakes have now reached very senior positions in both the health sector in Mozambique and the agriculture sector in Kenya. Almost all alumni interviewed as part of this evaluation agreed that they had been able to demonstrate leadership in their work. This self assessment was validated by the comments of a range of supervisors in both countries.

Whilst the candidates selected for Australian awards may already have possessed leadership qualities, it would appear that the post-graduate studies in Australia developed and refined these tendencies. Numerous examples of both the performance of leadership functions and the exercise of leadership qualities were quoted to the Evaluation Team. Leadership functions are being performed by alumni in public administration, research, program and project management. Examples of the exercise of leadership qualities abound, not the least in inspiring others to lift both the level of their own skills and the standards to which they perform.

- **Alumni attract funds:**

There were numerous occasions when alumni were praised by their supervisors as having been very effective at writing successful proposals which have "brought a lot of money to the institution".

- **Some alumni attract international relationships:**

A small number of alumni were also identified as "key to the establishment of international relationships with other research institutions". Those reported to the Review Team were with research institutions in Brazil and some European countries.

- **Alumni are able to have a direct impact on poverty reduction:**

There are key examples in both Kenya and Mozambique where the work of alumni has had a direct impact on reducing the vulnerability of the poor, whether through improved health, food security or livelihoods.



Many of the above findings are consistent with the findings of a range of other Australian consultations and studies into the impacts of scholarship programs, including the Review of the Australian Awards Program, Cambodia, March 2012; the Report on the Evaluation Workshop for Beneficiaries of the ADS Program, Nairobi, May 2011 and the Review of Indonesia Australia Development Scholarships Phase II March, 2006.

#### **4.3 Impact on gender equity**

The Outcomes Evaluation was tasked to investigate the degree to which the 'Australian experience' had led alumni to become advocates for gender equity in the workplace and the extent to which female alumni have become role models for other women. Appendix G provides a detailed analysis of the results of interviews with alumni, their supervisors and colleagues. Key points are outlined below.

- **The Australian 'experience' increased gender awareness:**

Most alumni in Kenya and Mozambique were of the opinion that the Australian experience had increased their willingness to advocate for gender equality in the workplace. The greater impact appeared to be in Kenya, where alumni observed that attitudes in the Australian society provided a "more equal" environment for women and men; that women in Australian society appeared to have greater "freedoms" when compared to those in their home country. Kenyan alumni appreciated observing "a clear model of how gender equality can be worked out" at a time when their home country was introducing legislation to provide more opportunities for women and there was uncertainty as to how this legislation might impact on the status quo.

- **Female scholars become role models for women:**

Almost all female alumni in Mozambique agreed that they were perceived as role models for others. Many female alumni appear to have encouraged other women (and men) to study and apply for scholarships. However, a number of women mentioned that it is important to 'start young' and they provide assistance to young girls to go to school and stay in school.

In addition to these findings, however, the field visits and consultations revealed a range of significant gender issues which need to be addressed, as follows:

- **Achieving numerical gender balance:**

The ACR for IAAMP indicates that 47% of LTAs went to women during the period under review. Whilst this is an admirable achievement, aggregate (pan-African) numbers do not tell the whole story. There are substantial variances in gender participation between countries and sectors, as well as substantial differences in the experiences for men and women in applying for, accepting and completing a post-graduate degree in Australia. The experience of other donors suggests that, as the ADS program expands, the difficulties associated with the maintenance of the gender balance will increase.<sup>32</sup>

AusAID's commitment to affirmative action in Mozambique has clearly had an impact on the ADS gender balance in that country. When ADS were first offered to Mozambique through the National Coordinating Authority, few women were nominated for the 20 scholarships then available. Thereafter, AusAID indicated that instead of offering 20 "open" scholarships, there would be an equal number of scholarships offered to men and to women; in other words, if only five women were nominated, only five nominations would be available for males. Subsequently, there was a marked increase in the number of female candidates nominated.

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<sup>32</sup> Austrian evaluation Female participation is lowest in sub-Saharan Africa (24%) pg. 25

This lesson needs to be taken into account as the size and scope of the ADS program expands across Africa, particularly into countries where AusAID is unable to develop the depth of relationship which exists in higher priority countries.

- **Addressing barriers to application for scholarships:**

By definition, the Evaluation Panel was only able to interview those female alumni who: (a) applied for a scholarship; (b) were successful; (c) accepted the offer; and (d) went to Australia and completed their degrees. Based upon the responses of these individuals, together with the comments made by peers and colleagues, these women are not necessarily representative of the potential population of women who are capable, academically, of successfully completing a master's degree.

Typical comments in respect of female alumni included:

- "X is a highly motivated, driven staff member who, while clearly learning many new things during her scholarship, was going to advance in her career anyway and would have contributed a great deal to the organisation whether she received a scholarship or not."
- "Y was not going to let anything get in the way of her gaining the scholarship and being highly successful in her study program"
- "If Z hadn't got the ADS opportunity, she would have found another way of studying overseas and gaining a higher qualification."

Gender equity will not be truly achieved in the ADS program if it is only the female 'stars' who make it through the system. Efforts must be made to investigate the reasons why other, well qualified women have not applied for scholarships and to undertake the affirmative action required to encourage their participation.

- **Addressing barriers to acceptance of scholarship offers:**

Beyond the numbers, however, it was clear from the views expressed to the Evaluation Panel by both male and female alumni that many women face a far greater challenge than males in deciding whether or not they will accept a scholarship. Alumni in both Mozambique and Kenya reported that they knew of women who had refused scholarships because of pressure from the family. Women coming from rural areas reported significant opposition from the family. "The families, the in-laws did not want me to go." (Female alumnus, Kenya) Another alumnus reported: "There are many single mothers and it is difficult for them to pay someone to take care of the children. Even if there is a spouse he is not comfortable to stay behind to take care of the children." (Female alumnus, Kenya)

With adequate support, however, it is possible for women to overcome the challenges. One candidate in Mozambique, having been awarded a scholarship, found zero support from her husband for the idea that he might take a more significant role in caring for the children in her absence. She subsequently advised her work supervisor that she would not take up the opportunity. Her supervisor encouraged her to "push through" as the opportunity would bring benefits to her family in the future, including her husband. She persevered, found suitable alternate care within the wider family network, took up the scholarship and successfully completed her masters. On her return, she was able to share her experience and encourage other women not to give up on the possibility of going to Australia and her husband became an "advocate for the cause". She is also contributing in a very significant way to much needed changes in her country's health system.

- **Dealing with emotional trauma whilst on award:**

Many female alumni also reported experiencing significant emotional trauma after arrival in Australia and missing their families, particularly the children. They spoke of a range of measures that helped them through this, such as support staff in the university noticing their distress and arranging for counselling support and/or organising meetings with other women in a similar position with whom they could share their feelings.

The most successful strategy was clearly being able to take their children (and often their partner) with them. While financial costs were higher, and issues such as arranging child care and/or schooling, posed problems, these were far outweighed by the benefits of having had a more 'normal' family lifestyle around them. In these cases, the alumni reported that it had been very worthwhile and their families benefitted immensely from the experience. The same responses were obtained from male scholars who took their families with them.

There are a range of affirmative action measures which AusAID may consider implementing to assist women in the process of accepting and completing their degrees without undue trauma. These may include:

Recommendation 5: THAT a range of affirmative action measures be undertaken to assist qualified women, as well as individuals from rural and disadvantaged groups to apply for, accept and complete post graduate studies. Affirmative action may include:

- Pro-active promotion of the ADS to qualified women in circumstances which may prevent them from applying (e.g. single mothers).
- Pro-active counselling to women who are offered scholarships; female ADS alumni may assist in this exercise.
- Provision of information packs to women, at the time of the offer, outlining:
  - The realistic costs of renting suitable accommodation and an understanding of "how far the stipend might go"
  - The options of initially travelling alone, then arranging for their family to come after they had settled in and arranged all the logistics
  - The experiences of spouses in obtaining work in Australia and level of income that might be generated.
- Placing women, where possible, in pairs or small groups at selected universities to facilitate sharing and emotional support.

Recommendation 6: THAT the upcoming Gender Study specifically considers this report with a view to further investigating the barriers for women in applying for, accepting and completing ADS scholarships.

#### 4.4 Attitudes to / alliances with Australia

As regards attitudes to Australia, the Evaluation Team investigations revealed the following:

- **Alumni have uniformly positive views of Australia but little contact has been maintained.**

When asked to rate the level of support received whilst in Australia (on a scale of 1-10 where 10 equals best practice), all alumni rated the support between 8 and 10. This has left a lasting, positive view of Australia and Australians.

Despite this, the vast majority had lost contact with mentors/professional networks in Australia, even when they had tried to maintain that contact. Many had established professional contacts/networks with other nations in the absence of on-going contact from Australia. This would appear to be a lost opportunity.

A small number of alumni who lived with Australian families, or were able to interact substantially with Australian families, have invariably still maintained the relationships with

them. This applied to alumni interviewed in both Mozambique and Kenya. It would appear that these relationships are stronger, and longer lasting than the professional relationships.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, in Mozambique, the Evaluation Team observed the uniformly high regard held by PG officials and alumni for AusAID's O-based staff. This has significantly influenced their positive perceptions of Australia.

- **Australia is currently perceived to lack interest in Mozambique:**

It was disturbing to note, therefore, that in Mozambique there appears to be a growing perception by senior management in the health sector that Australia "is no longer interested" in Mozambique. "I do not see active advocacy or dissemination of information on scholarships to Australia. It is a little bit passive."

This perception appears to coincide with the changed management arrangements under the new AAA Initiative which involves the shift of various ADS processes from Maputo to South Africa and the perceived detachment of AusAID from the process.

The perception of lack of interest needs to be countered if the substantial goodwill and capacity building impact of the program to date is not to be lost. Despite the outsourcing of program administration to an MC, the 'relationship building' function is, and must remain, the province of AusAID. Greater attention needs to be given to ensuring that AusAID staff directly engages at critical points in the promotion, mobilisation and return process to ensure that effective 'brand' and 'relationship' management is maintained with PGs.

- **Understanding of the ADS program is less than optimal:**

It was noticeable during the field mission how often AusAID staff, in both countries, were required to explain to government officials, even in the coordinating authorities, what the ADS program is currently offering. This was despite the fact that in both countries the NCA staff interviewed had been in the positions since before the commencement of the IAAMP. Again, this emphasises the need for Post staff to engage in face-to-face discussions with PGs on a regular basis in higher priority countries.

- **ADS promotion in Mozambique may be improved:**

Senior government officials commented that advertising scholarships in the newspapers (in English) is not an effective way to promote ADS in Mozambique. It is suggested that in order to increase awareness of Australia and Australian scholarships advertising should be done through the Ministries to the districts (thereby attracting experienced field operators), as well as through the local universities (which is practised by other donors).

Furthermore, it was suggested that AusAID should actively work with the alumni in senior positions to promote ADS with a focus on assisting MoH leadership to develop qualified middle management personnel who are capable of operationalising the vision for the sector being articulated by senior management. This suggestion has broader application.

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<sup>33</sup> It is interesting to note that a recent evaluation of the impact of Commonwealth Scholarships in the Pacific indicates that approx. 50% of alumni surveyed<sup>33</sup> reported keeping in contact with UK Universities post award, but did not report having any social links with the UK. In South East Asia 69% of South East Asia respondents reported maintaining links with UK universities. 41% had maintained links with professional associations, and half of these award holders had maintained links with UK work contacts. The results of this the ADS Outcomes Evaluation are contrary to this.

Recommendation 7: THAT Australian universities accepting ADS scholars be encouraged to give greater attention to the maintenance of professional links/networks with ADS alumni after their return to their home country. Mechanisms to achieve this could be discussed during the pre return preparation.

Recommendation 8: THAT O-based staff responsible for the ADS program in higher priority countries visit those countries for a minimum of one week every six months to ensure that effective 'brand' and 'relationship' management is maintained with PGs.

Recommendation 9: THAT the AAA Initiative pro-actively works with the alumni in senior positions in Mozambique, and other higher priority countries with a focus on assisting leadership to develop qualified middle management personnel who are capable of operationalising the vision being articulated by senior management.

## **5. MONITORING FOR OUTCOMES**

### **5.1 Limitations of the AAA Initiative M&E Framework**

The TOR for this Outcomes Evaluation included a request to the Evaluation Team to contribute to the development of the AAA Initiative's performance assessment systems on outcome-level reporting. The following comments are made in response to this request.

As a preliminary to any effective monitoring system, as noted in 1.4 above, it is important to ensure that the MC not only establishes the contact data for alumni, but also keeps it up to date. In addition, it is important to develop long term plans to establish an institutional 'home' for this data at one or more regional hubs so that it becomes a sustainable resource for the alumni themselves.

As regards the M&E Framework, a detailed matrix of indicators was developed as part of the design document for the AAA Initiative, and presented in August 2009. This matrix forms the core of the M&E Framework submitted in May 2011; it has been augmented by an Evaluation Plan designed to provide information contributing to improved management and recognition of Australia's efforts and contribution to progress on the MDGs via the scholarships program.

Whereas the matrix of indicators is predominantly quantitative in nature, the Evaluation Plan expresses an intention to investigate, among other things, the contribution of alumni to "broader sector results". This will be achieved by focusing on performance in implementing Re-integration Plans, narrative analysis of Reintegration Plan Reports (RPRs); and analysis of contributions to sector effectiveness through Most Significant Change (MSC) investigations and case studies. Some thematic studies are also mooted, for example, the exploration of outcomes for alumni studying in specific fields, for particular categories of alumni (e.g. women) and outcomes in agencies or workgroups that have received a substantial number of alumni.<sup>34</sup>

This appears to be eminently plausible. Nevertheless, there is a core difficulty. The AAA design was completed within a context of the over-ambitious goal and purpose of the IAAMP

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<sup>34</sup> Insofar as the objectives of this Outcomes Evaluation have addressed this target consideration may be given to adjusting this intention.

and in an environment focused on substantial expansion of the scholarships program as a key element of the government's strategy to re-engage with Africa. As a result, the AAA Initiative design, as well as the matrix of indicators based upon it, appear reductionist and mechanistic.

Achievements are largely defined in the terms that were of greatest concern at the time, namely:

- *Access and equity:* Australia will provide more scholarships and distribute them to more countries and better address gender/disabled equity issues.
- *Transparency:* The program will be efficiently and effectively managed.
- *'Branding':* Australia's scholarships program will contribute to recognition of our country as an active development partner in Africa.
- *Predefined Outcomes:* Specifically numbers and lists of policies and practices to which alumni contribute.

The matrix of indicators focuses primarily on the output level; there are 90 indicators at the output level and 17 for outcomes. Achievement is tightly bound, even in the Evaluation Plan, to the implementation, or otherwise, of the Reintegration Plans. Whilst this approach will undoubtedly produce useful information at the output level, a tightly bound approach which effectively predetermines what it will find is unlikely to tap the rich range of contributions that scholars are making at the outcomes level.

As such, it appears unlikely that the current M&E Framework will produce any more meaningful data on outcomes than was produced by the IAAMP M&E Framework.

A close reading of the M&E framework, and the design upon which it is built, implies that it is impossible to trace a link between the scholarships and meaningful development impact.

The M&E Plan demonstrates how the MC has struggled with the issue of outcomes and how they have tried to resolve it by "Clarifying that part of the value chain related to alumni as well as understanding where *'the tool'* fits in an overall capacity development approach."<sup>35</sup>

The results of the Outcomes Evaluation of the IAAMP suggest that AusAID may have significantly underestimated the development impact of the scholarships program. The results further suggest that it *is* possible to establish a link between alumni and development impact, but only if we move away from notions of value chains and 'tools' and embrace current international thinking around the application of 'complex adaptive systems' (CAS) theory to the identification and measurement of capacity.<sup>36</sup>

CAS sees outcomes not as predictable results chains but, rather, in terms of possibilities and probabilities. These outcomes are invariably wider, deeper and considerably more interesting and important than the cause/effect model can envisage. The CAS perspective is particularly relevant to the analysis of the impact of scholarships programs. For example, the approach recognises that:

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<sup>35</sup> AAA Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, May 2011 pg. 6

<sup>36</sup> The reader is referred to the 'Capacity Change and Performance Study Report' by Heather Baser and Peter Morgan, Discussion Paper No. 59B, April 2008, European Centre for Development Policy Management and to the vast amount of literature which has flowed on from this ground breaking study.

- No single factor or constituent element – policy development, individual practice changes or collaboration with other agencies – will *by itself* be an explanation for the development of capacity – nor do we need to demonstrate that it is.
- Change is emergent rather than predetermined; the issue then becomes how we identify the tipping points or leverages that lead to change in a given development context and the role of the alumni in inducing or encouraging the emergence of change in that context.
- Changes in human cognition and understanding – helping people to think differently - play a key role in capacity development. The alumni interviewed as part of this Outcomes Evaluation gave substantial attention to the fact that, in Australia, learning arose out of experimentation, dialogue and discovery. The transformative nature of this approach has clearly had a major impact on the alumni and the organisations and networks to which they have returned. This is a critical area for further research.
- Small initial changes can have huge effects and vice versa. Nonlinear patterns of behaviour can escalate micro interventions up into large system-wide changes. It is possible to plot some of these changes.
- It is not simply changes that take place in a given organisation which are relevant, but rather, the changes that occur in combinations of organisations and networks which represent significant change. It is, therefore, the *strategic positioning* of alumni in networks which cross government/civil society/ private sector agencies which leads to significant impact. The Outcomes Evaluation encountered numerous examples of this which undermines any simplistic notion that the impact of alumni is in some way diminished if they move out of the government sector.

The predominant focus in the current M&E Framework on the RRP and the proposed splitting of data by government, civil society and private sectors would be in danger of missing impact of cross-sectoral influence entirely.

- Values, commitment and a ‘sense of higher purpose’ are hugely important in promoting development. These qualities are the province of individuals; they can neither be demanded, nor controlled. However, they may be *augmented* and this appears to be a particular contribution that the ADS program has made to the lives of the individuals encountered in the course of this Outcomes Evaluation.

To be clear, this is a *unique*, and potentially profoundly influential, contribution which the scholarships program can make to Australia’s development effort in Africa and elsewhere. This needs to be the subject of creative monitoring and research.

- Where CAS analysis has been applied to the measurement of capacity change to date, it appears that a key factor influencing the reasons why some groups and organisations shift to strategic thinking and others did not revolves around the influence of particular individuals. We know this. The task now is to demonstrate that at least some of these individuals are alumni.

## 5.2 Identifying the real contribution of the scholarships program

None of the above comments ought to be taken to suggest that the gathering of quantitative data is unimportant; it is very important. Nor should they be taken to suggest that the currently defined objectives of the AAA Initiative should be modified; that would be a complex and difficult task and the costs would no doubt outweigh the benefits.

However, there is a need for AusAID to develop a delivery strategy for the AAA Initiative and for this to incorporate a Theory of Change (ToC). [Refer Recommendation 1 page 10] This ToC will, presumably, differentiate between the desired/expected outcomes in higher priority and lower priority countries. When these differential expectations are clear, it is then

possible to revise the Outcome level indicators in the Indicator Matrix and the Evaluation Plan (as well as the methodologies underpinning these instruments) to ensure that they are capable of providing information relating to the differential outcome level expectations in higher and lower priority countries.

There is also potential to adopt a better approach to monitoring and evaluation of the scholarships program, at least in higher priority countries, by being more inclusive and less extractive. Given that the knowledge and insight into change mechanisms in organisations, sectors and societies is best known by the alumni, AusAID may find it beneficial to instruct the MC to involve the alumni more in the M&E process. This is not dependent upon a fully blown alumni association being in existence; on the contrary, it is precisely this type of exercise which can encourage alumni to strengthen their networking.

The Outcomes Evaluation found ample evidence of individual alumni assisting others to deal with key issues around re-integration, to pro-actively improve the enabling environment in their organisations and/or make the move out of those organisations if improvements were not possible; and finally, to think and act strategically to the impact of their work. Involving them in monitoring activities would, undoubtedly, not only facilitate the capture of richer data, but also provide opportunities for them to pass on knowledge and skills. In summary, therefore, the Evaluation Team recommends the following:

Recommendation 10: THAT AusAID ensure that the MC's contract includes a duty to update the alumni contact data base and to keep it up to date, as well as a task to investigate and make recommendations regarding long term plans to establish an institutional 'home' for the data base at one or more regional hubs.

Recommendation 11: THAT AusAID direct appoint an M&E specialist (with previous experience developing M&E Frameworks for Australian scholarships programs) to revise the current M&E Framework to facilitate the capture of information related to desired/expected outcomes in higher priority countries vis-a-vis lower priority countries as outlined in the Delivery Strategy and ToC.

Recommendation 12: THAT AusAID and the MC explore mechanisms for involving existing alumni in M&E activities as both a mechanism for obtaining 'rich' data and to facilitate greater levels of networking between earlier and later alumni.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Conclusions**

This Outcomes Evaluation has attempted to learn more about the individual benefits gained from ADS scholarships and to cast greater light on the relationship between this outcome and potential downstream benefits for the organisations to which ADS scholars return.

AusAID personnel at Post have developed strong and productive relationships with the PGs in Mozambique and Kenya over a long period of time. As a consequence, the scholarships



program has been able to provide a relevant response to the long term HR and capacity building needs in these countries and is highly regarded.

Most alumni feel that their lives have been personally and professionally transformed as a result of their studies in Australia. However, the level of professional transformation for female alumni appears to have been less than for males in the sample interviewed.

The 'know-how' acquired as part of the scholarship experience (e.g. in problem solving, planning, report and proposal writing) is particularly highly valued and has strengthened the degree to which the alumni can contribute to capacity building in the work place.

Whilst alumni valued the Australian experience and have a positive attitude towards Australia, few have been able to maintain contact with mentors and professional networks in Australia. This would appear to be a lost opportunity for Australia to capitalise on the goodwill generated by the scholarship experience.

The impact of alumni in the workplace and sector has been substantial in Kenya and Mozambique. The level of knowledge transfer, mentoring, change/innovation, leadership and influence exerted by alumni is highly impressive. Recipients of ADS scholarships have also had a direct impact on poverty reduction and contributed to the achievement of MDGs in their sectors/countries.

The experience of study in Australia appears to have increased the willingness of alumni to advocate for gender equity in the workplace. Nevertheless, there are significant 'barriers to entry' for women in applying for, accepting and completing post graduate study in Australia. Greater support is required to improve the opportunities and experience for a broader range of women.

Overall, this Outcomes Evaluation concludes that, although ADS awards are given to individuals, these individuals have a demonstrable impact on the organisations and institutions to which they return. In addition, alumni have reached out beyond the boundaries of their own institutions and impacted upon policymakers at various levels of government, engaged in collaborative projects involving multiple stakeholders and, arguably, influenced wider society.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

Recommendation 1: THAT AusAID develops a Delivery Strategy for the scholarships program in Africa incorporating a Theory of Change which identifies the differences in desired/expected outcomes in higher priority countries and lower priority countries. [Refer page 10]

Recommendation 2: THAT consideration is given to engaging in dialogue with Australian Universities regarding the possibility of establishing sandwich programs for PhDs in order to recognise the importance of in-country research and to maximise opportunities for women and disadvantaged groups. [Refer page 11]

Recommendation 3: THAT AusAID re-emphasises to the AAA Initiative MC, and Australian Universities, the importance of pre-return counselling for awardees with a particular focus on mechanisms for dealing with the 'knowledge gap' and enabling institutional environment which alumni encounter upon return. [Refer page 14]

Recommendation 4: THAT encouragement to the selection of experienced provincial and district level candidates is emphasised, not only as a matter of equity, but also because of the potentially greater contribution that such scholars may make to capacity building upon their return. [Refer page 14]

Recommendation 5: THAT a range of affirmative action measures be undertaken to assist qualified women, as well as individuals from rural and disadvantaged groups to apply for, accept and complete post graduate studies. Affirmative action may include:

- Pro-active promotion of the ADS to qualified women in circumstances which may prevent them from applying (e.g. single mothers).
- Pro-active counselling to women who are offered scholarships; female ADS alumni may assist in this exercise.
- Provision of information packs to women, at the time of the offer, outlining:
  - The realistic costs of renting suitable accommodation and an understanding of “how far the stipend might go”.
  - The options of initially travelling alone, then arranging for their family to come after they had settled in.
  - The experiences of spouses in obtaining work in Australia and level of income that might be generated.
- Placing women, where possible, in pairs or small groups at selected universities to facilitate sharing and emotional support. [Refer page 21]

Recommendation 6: THAT the upcoming Gender Study specifically considers this report with a view to further investigating the barriers for women in applying for, accepting and completing ADS scholarships. [Refer page 21]

Recommendation 7: THAT Australian universities accepting ADS scholars be encouraged to give greater attention to the maintenance of professional links/networks with ADS alumni after their return to their home country. Mechanisms to achieve this could be discussed during the pre return preparation. [Refer page 23]

Recommendation 8: THAT O-based staff responsible for the ADS program in higher priority countries visit those countries for a minimum of one week every six months to ensure that effective ‘brand’ and ‘relationship’ management is maintained with PGs. [Refer page 23]

Recommendation 9: THAT the AAA Initiative pro-actively works with the alumni in senior positions in Mozambique, and other higher priority countries with a focus on assisting leadership to develop qualified middle management personnel who are capable of operationalising the vision being articulated by senior management. [Refer page 23]

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Recommendation 12: THAT AusAID and the MC explore mechanisms for involving existing alumni in M&E activities as both a mechanism for obtaining 'rich' data and to facilitate greater levels of networking between earlier and later alumni. [Refer page 27]