

Responses to the 2011 ANCP Thematic Review

Following the release of the 2011 ANCP Thematic Review, *How do ANCP activities engage with the poorest and most marginalised people?*, in September 2012, AusAID invited NGOs involved in the ANCP program to provide comments against the recommendations for publication on the AusAID website. The purpose of the comments was to build on the Sydney and Melbourne face-to-face learning events held in August 2011 that helped to validate the findings, and help to progress sector-wide learning.

AusAID received the following responses. We thank the organisations that responded to our invitation to provide comments, and welcome further comments in order to enhance learning about the ANCP.

Recommendation a) Improved analysis of intra-household gender power disparities and barriers is required to both identify poor women and men, boys and girls and provide an improved enabling environment for their participation.

Burnet Institute

Agreed. Are there tools available to help with this? We would need to allow for additional time and budget at the design phase to do this well.

CBM Australia

CBM is a disability focused organisation which focuses on persons with disabilities who experience both poverty and marginalisation within their families and communities due to barriers in accessing health, education and livelihood services as well as deep levels of stigma. Our partners design rehabilitation services with a focus on individual empowerment which considers marginalisation due to gender.

Quaker Service Australia

QSA's experiences would concur with this recommendation, enabling the broadest of definitions of poverty to be incorporated in analysis and design, as identified in Annexure 3 of the Report and also in Recommendation (f).

World Vision Australia

Not really justified. The report indicates that women are often disadvantaged and uses the case study to illustrate different approaches to addressing gender. However, it fails to show what approach is effective. It also fails to prove that overall outcomes (at any level—household or community) are improved by a focus on gender. Moving in this direction, which could mean a lot of extra work if required broadly, would be heading in the wrong direction. The recommendation should be: 'Gender should be a more explicit focus within projects, so that programming interventions reflect the challenges and complexities of gender power relations and barriers to women's meaningful participation at all levels, and harness the benefits of educating women.'

AusAID

Supported. AusAID's guidelines for country strategy and activity design support both poverty and gender analyses and understand that both are critical to improved development outcomes.

Recommendation b) AusAID and ANGO reporting mechanisms that better capture the non-tangible development achievements of ANCP activities.

Burnet Institute

Yes, agree. AusAID and the ANGOs have been working on this over the last 18 months, but there is still scope to refine templates. Burnet is in the process of reviewing reporting mechanisms to try to improve the quality of information being reported—including the non-tangible development achievements.

CBM Australia

Qualitative reporting is important to show non-tangible development changes and provides a more complete picture of change in lives than quantitative data alone. CBM has mechanisms to collect qualitative data such as case studies and most significant change.

Leprosy Mission Australia

There is a need to focus on capturing information and using measures that are not quantitative.

Quaker Service Australia

In working with marginalised people, non-tangible development markers take on greater prominence.

TEAR Australia

Agree. This is an ongoing struggle for everyone in our sector. The new MELF and AusAID indicators need to ensure there is space for this. The current set of indicators tends more to very tangible, easily measurable results. Ongoing thematic reviews and meta-evaluations should provide some opportunities for deeper reflection on ANCP development activities. Resources must be made available within AusAID to ensure that this aspect of ANCP monitoring is implemented well.

World Vision Australia

Completely agree with this recommendation and hope that this will get some traction. AusAID could use a combination of MELF and Thematic Reviews to collect 'outcomes' from ANCP as per Linda Kelly's suggestion. The case study methodology employed in this review shows the value of this approach in revealing more 'detail' of the types of outcomes achieved via ANCP funding.

AusAID

Supported. The ANCP Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (MELF) is the first step in developing these reporting mechanisms. The development of an Agency-wide Civil Society Organisation Monitoring and Evaluation Framework in 2013 will be an opportunity to refine these mechanisms.

Recommendation c) AusAID to consider a variety of communications mediums such as documented, photographic or video stories of change for presenting the rich social empowerment related performance information in regards to ANCP activities.

Burnet Institute

Agree. Reports could be much richer if multi-media approaches could be used for some reporting.

CBM Australia

Currently there is no opportunity to present qualitative or different communication mediums in the ANCP reporting, and requests for images and case studies come sporadically and with restricted time lines from AusAID which would be good to be better prepared for. AusAID would need to be positioned to accept and analyse change stories in a variety of mediums, which may encourage persons with disabilities and persons with low levels of literacy to more easily participate and represent themselves, as long as confidentiality and usage of the materials is clear.

Quaker Service Australia

This recommendation would seem to fit with the MELF concepts of an increased use of AusAID's website being used to demonstrate project and program effectiveness.

TEAR Australia

This would be helpful from a development education point of view and promoting the value of aid. Receiving information in this form and making it available under the transparency policy would help both AusAID staff and the public, who don't get to visit and talk with people, to understand some of the less easily measured outcomes of development projects. Some consideration would need to be given as to the most effective means of doing this, and there may be opportunity for collaboration between NGOs and AusAID to learn from one another. Space needs to be given to experiment in this area.

World Vision Australia

NGOs do well on this in marketing, community engagement, fundraising and advocacy work, so we are not sure of the usefulness of this.

AusAID

Supported. The Performance Reporting template developed under the ANCP MELF encourages the presentation of case studies to highlight achievements at an individual agency level. The Civil Society Portal, launched in October 2012, will also provide a platform for highlighting achievements in a wider range of mediums.

Recommendation d) Enhanced attention by ANGOs on influencing the structural barriers to development wherever possible, particularly in partnership with other development actors through advocacy and policy engagement.

Burnet Institute

Agree, but difficult in some environments such as Tibet and Burma (up until recently). Some Burnet partners would need training/capacity building in advocacy and policy engagement as these are not necessarily the strengths of our partners.

CBM Australia

CBM has recognised the importance of removing barriers facing people with a disability who are poor, which prevents their involvement in development activities. Advocacy and engagement with government about the rights of persons with disabilities is part of a rights based approach promoted and implemented by CBM. CBM also sees strength in working in partnership through consortiums and programs such as Vision2020.

TEAR Australia

This has been a significant component of the work of TEAR for a long time and is an increasing feature of the programs of our partner organisations. It requires careful analysis of the context, power and relationships and time must be taken at the initial stages of a project, or during a design stage, to do this properly. Engaging with these issues is one of the values of working through local partner organisations, as they understand the context and can work within it much more effectively than 'outsiders' who come in to complete an activity.

World Vision Australia

Once again, this is clearly indicated by the outcomes of the report. It might be more useful to provide guidance on best practice rather than across the board, as this is not a strength for all agencies and approaches vary. This was really only lightly touched on in the current thematic review. So perhaps this also might be a good topic for a thematic review to help inform the evidence base for future policy and investment of resources by NGOs.

AusAID

Noted.

Recommendation e) Further research and analysis into the actual cost of engaging over long periods of time with the poorest and marginalised to demonstrate value for money.

Burnet Institute

Agree, but this would require broadening the scope of ANCP to allow funds to be used for research. There would also need to be some consensus about how 'value for money' is defined.

CBM Australia

Could this be part of the meta-evaluations already planned under the MELF? It would be beneficial to consider the cost of investing in persons with disabilities to be educated and become community leaders as well as the burden on carers that this alleviates, as opposed to the cost of exclusion on communities.

Leprosy Mission Australia

There is recognition that engaging with the poorest of the poor is a long process and will not be 'solved' in one project. There is a need to think about how to educate donors about this, instead of promoting quick fix development messages. Needing to prove value for money may be detrimental to reaching the poorest of the poor.

Quaker Service Australia

This recommendation holds the key to the effectiveness of working with the poorest and most marginalised people. Development under these circumstances cannot be achieved within the narrow confines of the ANCP time frame of 1–3 years.

TEAR Australia

This would be something that would be interesting to understand better. At this point in time, TEAR takes into account a number of ideas about the value of work in an area or with a particular group. This includes value for money but also tries to hold in tension a desire to work with the very poorest in some of the world's more difficult locations (hence, for example, a commitment to work in Afghanistan or in remote parts of Laos or Nepal), many of which are more expensive to work in due to access or security issues or just factors of remoteness. As with the wider value for money discussion it is essential that broader issues are considered and that value for money does not get reduced to a simplistic formula.

World Vision Australia

Well-justified by the review, which shows that long-term engagement is crucial. However, there is a global trend from donors to provide restricted funding to support such engagement (as it's seen as 'administrative' or 'overhead' costs). Such a study would be useful as it could also provide further information on how this should be considered from a 'value for money' perspective (as per the AusAID effectiveness review), which is really only touched on lightly in the report.

AusAID

Noted. AusAID is considering the question of value for money broadly as an Agency, and specifically in relation to civil society. This is one possible topic for the next thematic review.

Recommendation f) Development of tools which collect baseline data on the multidimensional aspects of poverty, as a precursor to measuring change. (Refer to Literature Review at Annexure 3).

Burnet Institute

Agree—such tools would be useful.

CBM Australia

The cost of collecting this kind of baseline data makes it difficult to justify for small to medium sized projects. Given the level of sophistication required to gather this kind of data and the need to also monitor and report against it, caution is needed in avoiding burdening partners with extra project management requirements at the cost of good project implementation.

Quaker Service Australia

Poverty as defined in the literature review in Annexure 3 of the Report indicates the multidimensional aspects of poverty, yet it needs to be determined within a local context. As such, flexibility and latitude within the tools developed would ensure relevant and meaningfully appropriate data is collected rather than an element of uniformity. Equally, such attention will need to be provided for an exit strategy to be devised.

TEAR Australia

One of TEAR's partners, United Mission to Nepal, is currently utilising a baseline study format that they have developed based on a combination of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and other required information. This is providing them with some really interesting and useful information as they seek to plan work, helping them more confidently identify where the very poorest are and whether or not they are actually reaching them/working with them.

Certainly, multidimensional measurements of poverty provide for a more helpful and realistic understanding of poverty as it affects people's lives than traditional income based indicators. This allows for multi-sectoral approaches to responding to poverty and provides a greater analysis of where the drivers of poverty are in any given community.

World Education Australia

With regard to purchasing power (one dimension of poverty), a simple and effective tool developed by Grameen Foundation is the Progress out of Poverty Index (PPI). This 10-question survey is tailored for each country based on national household income and expenditure survey statistics. It can be completed in three minutes and identifies the likelihood of a household falling below a range of poverty lines (the \$1.25 and \$2.50 national poverty lines). It can be used to target poor households and to measure changes over time.

The UN MDGs, OECD and many others use and refer to the \$1.25 and \$2.50 poverty lines, and the PPI offers a practical means for NGOs to assess and track this data. World Education Australia is supporting its field partners to incorporate PPI assessments into their targeting and tracking processes. The use of the PPI is expanding rapidly among microfinance agencies, but it is applicable to all development agencies that use these poverty lines. The PPI can be complemented with tools that assess other dimensions of poverty.

World Education Australia would be happy to share its knowledge and experience of this tool with other NGOs.

World Vision Australia

A little unclear—what would be the purpose of this? Who would lead this and who would use them? In addition, it seems a little contrary to the review, which indicates that a HUGE amount of work is already being done in this area. It also shows that there is no 'one size fits all' approach.

AusAID

Noted. AusAID supports using existing assessment tools and modifying them where necessary prior to baseline data collection. In principle, AusAID would support this data collection if it led to more effective development programs.

Recommendation g) Further attention to developing explicit strategies to identify and facilitate the participation of those living with a disability, recognising their exacerbated experience of poverty.

Burnet Institute

Agree. This is an urgent need. Strategies would need to be accompanied by capacity building for staff in ANGOs and partner organisations.

CBM Australia

We are very supportive of this. It would encourage agencies to use community based services, disabled persons' organisations, et cetera to gather baseline information. Many governments put disability rates at 1.5–2.5%; the World Disability Report estimates 22% of people in poverty in developing countries to have a disability. To facilitate better disability inclusive programs, creating communities of practice would be helpful as well as sharing learnings. *Inclusion Made Easy* is a CBM resource for agencies to better address the needs of persons with disabilities.

Leprosy Mission Australia

Realising the intergenerational, family and community impacts of disability and poverty, there is a need to learn from organisations working with people with disabilities and in the discrimination space. There should be recognition that there are existing tools to measure the participation levels of people with disabilities.

Quaker Service Australia

QSA's experience is also of the itinerant nature of the families headed by an adult with a disability. In addition, the provision of training over several weeks duration, while tempting, for many project participants could not equate with the certainty of income from labouring work nearby. This required flexibility of project participant selection to include the whole family, to allow for substitution when circumstances dictated.

TEAR Australia

Agree—we need to do more here. There are partners working in-country, and ANGOs that have particular expertise in this area (e.g. CBM, Fred Hollows and others), who can provide guidance and experience to the sector. Perhaps AusAID could look at providing these organisations with funding to enable them to run sessions for ANGOs on strengthening the participation of those living with disabilities in their programs.

World Vision Australia

By whom? For what purpose? It would be more useful to undertake further case study analysis to prove the overall difference that such a focus can make. It would also need to address a focus on disability specifically, rather than all 'marginalised groups', including people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH), minority ethnic groups, women, et cetera.

AusAID

Supported. AusAID's policy *Development for All* sets out practical approaches to guide the Australian aid program in meeting the needs and priorities of people with disability.

Recommendation h) ANGOs to develop clearer theory of change analysis which explicitly links improved confidence, esteem and skills to sustainable poverty reduction outcomes.

Burnet Institute

This is starting to happen in Burnet but needs more attention.

CBM Australia

This could be useful at an evaluation stage for a small sample of individuals and projects to consider, but it would be difficult to do this well on a wider scale with accuracy.

Quaker Service Australia

Links to Recommendation (b).

TEAR Australia

It is interesting to read this recommendation. TEAR's theory of change thinking is still in a relatively early stage, but a lot of our thinking is along this kind of line. It will be good for us to continue to develop this line of thinking about change and also see how other organisations are approaching this. It would be helpful for AusAID also to begin to think about a theory of change that links these kinds of 'intangibles' with sustainable poverty reduction; this could help AusAID explain the value of such 'intangibles' to whom AusAID is accountable.

Theories of change assist in design and also in the evaluation of projects and programs which can improve their effectiveness in reducing poverty. There may be links between identifying a theory of change and the drivers or prerequisites of effective development and value for money. If we can show the impact of improved confidence, esteem and skills to poverty reduction then this goes some way to defining the intangible value of these development objectives.

ACFID, through its Development Practice Committee, is running a workshop for ANGOs at the 2012 ACFID Council on effectiveness frameworks, some of which start from identifying a theory of change.

World Vision Australia

Who would follow this up? Clearly this is alluded to in the report, but it's a lesson learned for each agency to accept/reject as fits their practice—in particular as ToC is not used universally.

AusAID

Noted.

Recommendation i) ANGOs and AusAID to increase efforts towards developing performance indicators for outcomes such as increased confidence and self-esteem.

Burnet Institute

Agree. Need indicators plus methods for assessing progress against any indicators developed.

CBM Australia

As identified in the final thematic report, it is difficult to do this systematically. CBM uses case studies which have the advantage of enabling beneficiaries to articulate the most positive outcome of their participation without pre-empting or confining their response.

Leprosy Mission Australia

And recognise that outcome and indicator driven development often does not result in significant changes for the poorest of the poor. Improving confidence and self-esteem occurs through community empowerment, planning and ownership of their own changes.

TEAR Australia

Relates to (b) above. AusAID needs to ensure that it makes space for these kinds of outcomes. This is an ongoing discussion for us as an organisation as well as with our partners. It should be possible to develop such indicators, and we do have examples of partners beginning to do this.

The indicators may be linked to the achievement of the prerequisites for development identified in the theory of change rather than discrete performance indicators. Also the outcome of increased confidence may be different in each context and possibly unexpected. It is critical to know from the local communities about the importance of these attributes to themselves as well. In these less tangible areas it may be more helpful or appropriate to have communities identify their own indicators, which will more clearly and accurately express the value of development than indicators developed by donors. This could make comparison more difficult but will more truly reflect the importance of improved confidence, self-esteem, decision making ability, et cetera to the local people who should be the centre of our efforts.

World Vision Australia

Such work has been done by others and potentially funding a literature review may be a worthy first step, rather than taking this on with the risk of duplication.

AusAID

Noted. The development of these indicators can be considered in the context of the MELF Review to be undertaken in late 2012.

Recommendation j) Provide training for local partners on identifying the barriers to reach the poorest, particularly where barriers are ingrained in cultural norms.

Burnet Institute

Agree.

CBM Australia

CBM agrees this is important and has trained ANCP partners in reaching persons with disabilities who are highly marginalised, using a rights based approach. Attitudinal barriers are considered by CBM to be a major challenge in overcoming the exclusion experienced by persons with disabilities.

Quaker Service Australia

Plus the inclusion of training in a revised baseline and establishment of non-tangible criteria.

TEAR Australia

Agree. This is a good idea where such an understanding is lacking. Care and effort need to be used, as donor agencies, to understand the cultures in which we or our partners are working. As the recommendation seems to suggest, our role must be more in helping local organisations and staff gain the skills to identify the barriers than in identifying them ourselves.

World Vision Australia

Most agencies are already undertaking such activities.

AusAID
Noted.

Recommendation k) Improved recognition of the gender dimensions of poverty and explicit strategies to address these within programming.

Burnet Institute

Agree. NGOs have done a lot of talking about this but results on the ground are still minimal for many agencies, including Burnet. We need to get better at this.

CBM Australia

That there are gender dimensions of poverty is well recognised by CBM Australia, and we are working to train partners and promote understanding of gender disparities. This is a process which involves challenging traditional cultural views and takes time.

Quaker Service Australia

This recommendation is particularly relevant to address within a project design the immediate and intense needs of marginalised people.

TEAR Australia

We believe we do this at an organisational level, and this is an ongoing discussion with partners, who are at a range of levels of thinking about this. There is a general and increasing understanding across our international program of the importance of dealing with gender dimensions of poverty. At times this is linked with (j) above in that local staff may be immersed in their culture and less able to see the barriers that issues like gender construct.

World Vision Australia

This is well accepted by most agencies. Moreover, AusAID has clear expectations that gender should be addressed in any work they fund. Once again, a more helpful piece of work might be creating a literature review or training or some other document that reflects accepted best practice for adoption, particularly by smaller agencies that may not have scope /capacity/experience.

AusAID

Supported. AusAID's Gender Thematic Strategy (November 2011) notes the centrality of gender equality to economic and human development. It identifies areas where Australian aid will be focused to address barriers and constraints to gender equality. There are also guidelines on integrating gender equality into aid activity designs to ensure gender considerations are considered upfront rather than 'retro-fitted' to programs.

Recommendation l) Expanded definition of welfare in the ANCP guidelines which recognizes that some individuals in communities may require some immediate assistance, especially in the early stages of engagement with a community. Such assistance should be provided only on a temporary basis and as an entry point for a broader process of engagement for sustainable change.

Burnet Institute

Strongly support this recommendation. It is difficult to provide any 'development' support to communities where immediate assistance is needed.

CBM Australia

Having an expanded definition of welfare would be helpful in very poor or post-conflict settings and where marginalised persons need assistance to enable them to participate in activities which will enhance their capacities and lead to development. Short-term welfare can help to remove the barriers of the most vulnerable from participation in development activities by addressing their immediate survival needs.

Leprosy Mission Australia

A balance of welfare type interventions and building the capacity of the poorest to be able to meet their own needs in the future. This approach has its own challenges—that is, moving from a welfare to empowerment approach is often an awkward transition.

Quaker Service Australia

Such a revised definition of welfare and discussion around its appropriateness would be most welcome. This was a most interesting discussion topic as part of the Thematic Review and is worthy of a wider audience.

TEAR Australia

However AusAID defines welfare, programs need to make space for some of these more direct inputs into people who are very poor.

At times it is important to provide essential basics to enable the very poorest to at least approach the first step on the development journey. For the very poorest, engaging in development activities is a significant risk as it takes time away from their day to day survival activities. If we are to encourage their participation in longer programs then this risk must be mitigated through the provision of temporary assistance. It may also be a way of demonstrating some 'small wins' that encourage further participation in longer term development work.

In the context of a developmental approach with the very poor, inputs such as meals, grants or free childcare should not be understood as welfare or a handout, as they are clearly in the context of moving people forward in some way. It would be helpful for ANCP to make space for this if it does not already.

World Vision Australia

This is clearly recognised in the document and it lends itself to further reflection and consideration of how this should be reflected including in AusAID policy.

AusAID

Noted. The Civil Society Engagement Framework foreshadows changes to ANCP to build on and reform the existing accreditation system.

General Comments

Burnet Institute

Overall, Burnet strongly supports these recommendations and looks forward to working with other NGOs to help action them.

CBM Australia

The thematic review process and topic has been useful, although timing for disseminating the draft and final reports has to maximise engagement and agency analysis.

Leprosy Mission Australia

There needs to be further research and evidence into what are the most successful approaches for the poorest of the poor. For example, partnering with microfinance institutions is often not an effective approach because the loan repayments are too high. Recognition of this and recommendations towards other strategies needs to occur.

Quaker Service Australia

For QSA, involvement in this review has been very rewarding and thought-provoking. It also has had the advantages of peer support and discussion, and the benefit of opinions from professional and experienced consultants who have themselves a high degree of fieldwork expertise and comprehension of the issues NGOs, and particularly smaller NGOs, are facing in their management of development projects. For most NGOs, rarely do we hear of the complexities of other agencies' projects, let alone see their paperwork and reports, so this was a very useful process to share around new ideas and approaches in a non-competitive arena.

Initially I think there was some negativity over the small number of NGOs involved, but that did enable an effective and helpful sharing of ideas which may not have occurred to such an extent within a larger group. I think the only negative comment I could make, and again I am aware of some of the circumstances impacting, is the time it has taken for the process to come to a conclusion. This, I am sure, has added to the frustration of those involved in the compilation and dissemination of the Report, and does not detract from its content.

TEAR Australia

This is a really helpful report. It is important for AusAID to understand, and for us to understand as a sector, that working with the very poorest is hard work and not a straight path to success. It will be helpful if AusAID can continue to make space for NGOs under ANCP to have the flexibility to do work that is slow and apparently has limited success.

The reflection workshop after the release of the draft review report and initial findings was very useful. The delay in releasing the final report after the workshop was unfortunate. Nevertheless, we appreciate the aim of the biennial Thematic Reviews and would encourage AusAID to continue investing in future Reviews to be able to contribute to discussion, debate and learning from experience within the sector.

Uniting World

UnitingWorld was involved in the Learning Events and so is comfortable with the review and its recommendations.

As a small agency, our only comments relate to:

- The way in which ANGOs will be able to adequately resource the recommendations.
- Tools and reporting templates that can capture information without being highly administratively burdensome, especially for smaller ANGOs.
- We note that the new ACFID Code of Conduct was highly aspirational and needed to be modified to allow progressive compliance. A similar, progressive implementation of appropriate recommendations may be worth exploring.

Thanks for the opportunity to participate.

World Education Australia

The literature review and discussion of poverty assessment tools did not mention the Progress Out of Poverty Index, which is growing rapidly in application amongst microfinance agencies. There exists significant potential for this tool to be used by the broader NGO and development sector to target poor households and track poverty levels. It can be complemented with tools that assess other dimensions of poverty. (See further details in response to Recommendation (f) above).

World Vision Australia

Generally, the report is excellent; it provides a good overview of work undertaken and draws on the learning events to provide clear lessons learned and guidance for future practice. The methodology is useful and it would be good to know what further reviews will be undertaken and the topics/agencies that might be involved. It would be important to ensure appropriate representation of ANCP Partner Agencies in any subsequent review.

- Section 3.1.2 is a great overview of approaches, strengths and weaknesses. However, it would be good to have a clearer conclusion and/or linkage to the recommendations that conclude the report. The 'lessons learned' are not very clear in this section.
- Section 3.1.3. As noted above. Most agencies are agreed on the need to address gender, and AusAID is a strong advocate. To advance this cause, it would have been useful to document any evidence of broader reaching outcomes achieved as a result of gender focus. Such data would genuinely influence policy and practice.
- Section 3.2.2. In this section it would be really useful if there was some sort of comment on the success of alternative approaches to using welfare/support basic needs to achieve initial community engagement—also on the need for policy change, which is a recommendation but isn't really included in the report.
- Section 3.2.3. This section is also missing a clear conclusion or overarching lesson learnt.
- Section 3.3.3. As noted above, the issue of creating an 'enabling environment' or 'policy change' to support sustainability is an important one. It would be good to understand more about approaches that have or have not worked that have been funded via ANCP and this could be another topic for a thematic review.
- Section 3.4.1. The last part of this section reflects the comments of WVA and many other partner agencies in the development of the MELF. There was some discussion of how to 'team up' the MELF with thematic reviews, to ensure a 'holistic approach' to the assessment of ANCP outcomes and ensure that it isn't just number crunching. The case studies included in this review show the strength of this approach. So it would be interesting to know how this information will be considered in the future reporting requirements of AusAID for ANCP funding.

- Section 3.4.3. Some interesting points are made about the importance of long-term engagement in the paper and the potential clash of this effective approach with a 'value for money' analysis is clear. The discussion here on numeric indicators for improved self-esteem and confidence is concerning. Some benefits can really only be documented qualitatively and this seems to clash with the recommendations elsewhere that the performance analysis should include both case study analysis and number performance measures.
- Section 4. It is unclear what is intended by these recommendations—who are they intended for? Who will pursue them? It would be good to ensure each recommendation is integrated, or at least alluded to in the body text of the report.

AusAID

AusAID welcomes the learning provided through the Thematic Review, both the substance of the findings and the process itself. We look forward to working with ANGOs to implement some of the recommendations, refine topics for future Thematic Reviews, and identify future learning opportunities between AusAID and the sector.

October 2012