
Australian NGOs as Strategic Delivery Partners: A Sector Review



AUSTRALIAN
COUNCIL
FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT



Executive Summary

This sector review was commissioned by the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) from August to December 2025. The overarching objective of this research was to answer the question: *‘How do Australian NGOs contribute to effective, inclusive and sustainable development outcomes through their delivery of Australian aid?’*

Seven key themes were chosen for analysing the effectiveness of Australian NGOs (ANGOs). These themes included: Value for Money; Locally led Action; the Strengthening of Civil Society; Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion; Climate Resilience; Risk Management and Agility and the Sustainability of Development Outcomes. Further analysis focused on ANGOs’ connections with the Australian public and the achievement of whole-of-government objectives, such as enhanced diplomatic relations.

This report was written by an external consultant, Dr Annabel Dulhunty. The research design involved a mixed-methods approach, primarily using: a thematic document review; a “follow the money” analysis; a case study approach and a network examination. Methods of data collection included a thematic review and quantitative analysis of publicly available data and internal reports from ANGOs, semi-structured interviews and the selection of relevant case studies.

Limitations of the review included the accessibility of data. Most publicly available data came from the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). The extensive use of ANCP data in this report does not reflect the breadth of ANGOs’ work and effectiveness, but data is lacking for non-ANCP projects. Even within ANCP reporting, there are data limitations, particularly in comparing ANCP indicators to wider reporting of the aid program in annual Performance of Australian Development Cooperation reports.

IMAGE: Ibu Rohanah, one of KOMIDA’s micro-entrepreneur women with disabilities, with her food stall. Credit: Opportunity International Australia.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

1. AUSTRALIAN NGOS DELIVER DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES DISPROPORTIONATE TO THEIR RELATIVE SHARE OF THE AID PROGRAM

ANGOs deliver development outcomes that exceed expectations given their share of the overall aid program. This is especially evident when ANCP performance is compared with results across the broader Australian aid program. Despite the relatively small proportion of total aid funding that ANGOs receive, their programs make a disproportionately strong contribution to priority areas such as gender equality, disability equity, education and climate resilience. Furthermore, ANCP reporting details only a sample of ANGO activity, with ANGOs’ work extending well beyond ANCP-funded programs.

2. AUSTRALIAN NGOS DEMONSTRATE VALUE FOR MONEY

With global aid budgets under increasing pressure, donor governments are placing greater emphasis on value for money. This review found that ANGOs demonstrate value for money in six crucial ways. First, ANGOs are not for profit. Aid funds therefore go to recipients, project costs or administration – there is no profit margin taken from aid dollars. Second, ANGOs have to follow strict accreditation and Code of Conduct standards if they wish to access funding such as through the ANCP. These standards mean that ANGOs have embedded systems for risk management and accountability which DFAT can rely on, limiting additional aid expenditure. Third, ANGOs leverage Australian government contributions, expanding the total flow of aid dollars. For example, through the ANCP, ANGOs are required to contribute private donations in addition to government funding. In 2023-24, for every \$1 the government spent, ANGOs through the ANCP contributed 29% extra in private donations¹. Fourth, ANGOs represent value beyond the aid program, increasing Australia’s diplomatic connections through ANGOs’ established Australian and international networks. Fifth, ANGOs lead innovation through investing in small-scale trial projects which cost very little and which can be rapidly upscaled if successful. Sixth, the agility of ANGOs and their local partnerships means

1 ANCP Snapshot 23-24.

WRITTEN BY: DR ANNABEL DULHUNTY, 2025.

Acknowledgements: ACFID gratefully acknowledges the financial support of The Fred Hollows Foundation, Oxfam Australia, WWF-Australia, ChildFund Australia and Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA in funding this review and report.

A special thanks to Dr Brad Watson for coordinating and co-hosting interviews with DFAT Post and partner staff. Many thanks also to the ACFID Development Practice Committee (DPC) for their guidance and inputs to this report and thanks to interviewees and to ACFID members that contributed case studies.

that they can quickly respond to changing dynamics and ensure that aid dollars are not wasted if priorities shift.

3. AUSTRALIAN NGOS ARE CURRENTLY UNDERUTILISED

This review found that there is greater potential for Australia to provide more direct funding to ANGOs to maximise the benefits of working through civil society. As noted in the DFAT commissioned Independent Evaluation of the ANCP²: *'Evidence suggests that Australia channels around 10 percent of development directly through NGOs and may be emerging as an outlier in its under-utilisation of NGOs in directly contracted aid delivery'*.

Australia is below average in funding to and through Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). CSOs encompass international, donor-country and local NGOs. Critically, CSOs have been identified as crucial for achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)³. Australia's funding share of CSOs is 12% compared to the OECD average of 13%. Various countries are much higher in their funding of CSOs: e.g. Belgium (23%), Sweden (28%) and Spain (53%)⁴. To better achieve the SDGs and development objectives, Australia should increase its direct financial support to both local NGOs and ANGOs.

4. AUSTRALIAN NGOS ACHIEVE WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT OBJECTIVES, ESPECIALLY IN ENHANCING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

The value of ANGOs goes beyond their role in Australia's aid program. This review found that the work of ANGOs results in significant benefits for Australia's diplomatic relationships and understanding of aid as part of Australia's overall 'statecraft'. For example, a number of DFAT Post interviewees commented that the work of ANGOs enhanced their diplomatic relationships in-country. ANGOs were able to boost diplomatic engagement through their strong relationships with local partners. In addition, examples of strong sustainable development work supported by ANGOs was seen to benefit Australia's diplomatic image.

5. AUSTRALIAN NGOS PROVIDE UNIQUE CONNECTIONS WITH THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC

ANGOs act as a bridge in many ways between the Australian public and overseas communities, providing unique people to people linkages. These connections also establish social license for the Australian aid program, which is increasingly important as there is much greater criticism of aid programs in donor countries, leading to the reduction of multiple donor aid programs. ANGOs are able to leverage Australian support through engaging significant numbers of Australians in volunteering, education, fundraising and via social media.

6. AUSTRALIAN NGOS HIGHLIGHT SEVERAL BEST PRACTICES IN LOCALLY LED ACTION

Locally led development is gaining increased traction as a priority for Australia's aid programming. ACFID has been at the forefront of leading these discussions and standards, with 'locally led action and inclusion' one of the quality principles in ACFID's Code of Conduct. A number of Australian NGOs have also demonstrated clear expertise in this area. Locally led development is not just about employing local staff but is also about local actors setting their own development agenda, being able to access direct funds and grow their own organisations. Several ANGOs have demonstrated significant shifts in programming modalities, with some adopting explicit decolonial frameworks and others using embedded accompaniment strategies to support local organisations' growth in fundraising and administrative functions. The latest ANCP⁵ statistics also indicate that 88% of ANGO partners are of local origin.

7. AUSTRALIAN NGOS DEMONSTRATE EXTENSIVE LOCAL REACH AND LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS

Many ANGOs have deep historical partnerships with local NGOs, sharing similar values and organisational missions. These relationships have resulted in ANGOs having vast geographical networks with local organisations, often in hard to reach, isolated and underserved areas.

In many locations, work undertaken by Australian NGOs in partnership with local actors is the only form of aid reaching local communities. These relationships and networks are extremely important for sustainable development outcomes, with project outcomes then able to be embedded within local systems.

8. AUSTRALIAN NGOS ARE PIVOTAL IN THE STRENGTHENING OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Globally, there is a significant threat to civil society and global aid cuts have recently targeted funding for civil society. ANGOs' longstanding history of supporting local civil society actors is more relevant now than ever. ANGO programming has consistently supported local civil society initiatives, working closely with highly local grassroots groups, such as Organisations of Persons with Disability, LGBTIQ+ rights groups, women's collectives and others working for effective local development outcomes.

9. AUSTRALIAN NGOS LEAD GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION RESULTS

Statistically, the work of ANGOs demonstrates far greater attention to Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) than across the overall aid program. ANGOs have also been essential in enhancing the capacity of DFAT staff on issues such as disability equity. ANGOs have demonstrated an overarching commitment to quality GEDSI programming, aware of the potential for backlash and hence taking holistic, whole-of-community approaches coupled with targeted support for marginalised groups. Numerous best practices are detailed in the case studies in this review, demonstrating significant ANGO investment into research and innovation as to 'what works' in this difficult area.

10. AUSTRALIAN NGOS ILLUSTRATE SIGNIFICANT INNOVATION IN CLIMATE RESILIENCE, MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

ANGOs have increasingly focused on climate resilience, mitigation and adaptation in their programming, with several ANGOs showcasing highly innovative and replicable strategies for climate resilience at low costs. Case studies demonstrate significant strategic partnerships with government, the private sector and civil society to trial unique ways of combatting climate degradation. They also illustrate how ANGOs are

leading the transformation of sectors such as Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) and food security to better adopt innovations in climate resilience.

11. AUSTRALIAN NGOS DEMONSTRATE BEST PRACTICES IN RISK MANAGEMENT AND AGILITY

ANGOs are held to some of the highest standards in the aid sector, relative to other types of partners. To receive funding through the ANCP, ANGOs must undergo rigorous, independent accreditation by DFAT - assessing governance, financial management, development effectiveness, and safeguarding. In addition, ANGOs voluntarily commit to upholding the ACFID Code of Conduct, a robust, sector-owned standard that they report against annually. This dual framework ensures that ANGOs consistently deliver high-impact, responsible aid.

Case studies further highlight the extensive agility and risk management capacity of ANGOs through their embedded local partnerships and focus on local recommendations for risk mitigation, meaning that ANGOs can shift programming resources quickly and effectively, prioritising the safety and dignity of communities.

12. AUSTRALIAN NGOS' PROGRAMS SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

ANGOs' programs have consistently demonstrated a focus on long-term effectiveness, going beyond short project cycle windows. ANGOs are well regarded for their collaboration with local governments and for sharing ideas across regions. Case studies demonstrate the way that small ANGO-supported programs have achieved results that have become embedded in local, state, national and regional governance structures with meaningful long-term changes for the most marginalised communities.

2 ANCP Evaluation 2022, Tetra Tech, p.4.
3 DAC Report on CSOs 2020.
4 OECD DAC Dashboard 2025.
5 ANCP Snapshot 23-24, p.3.

List of Acronyms

ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
AHP	Australian Humanitarian Partnership
ANGO	Australian NGO
ANCP	Australian NGO Cooperation Program
CGD	Center for Global Development
COP	Communities of Practice
CPP	Church Partnership Program
CRxN	Climate Resilient by Nature
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DPC	Development Practice Committee (ACFID)
HDI	Human Development Index
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IMPACT	Improving Accountability for Transformation
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPD	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities
PADC report	Performance of Australian Development Cooperation report
PERFORMS	Project Electronic Recording of Financial and Operational Reports Management System (DFAT)
POWER	Promoting Women's Empowerment and Rights
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WDC	Ward Development Committee

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ONE:

Introduction to the review

This sector review was conducted by an external consultant, Dr Annabel Dulhunty, between August and December 2025. It was commissioned by the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), initiated by its Development Practice Committee, who also acted as a Steering Group for this review. The review aims to address the question:

How do ANGOs contribute to effective, inclusive and sustainable development outcomes through their delivery of Australian aid?

The goal of this research was to demonstrate the impact of Australian aid delivered by Australian NGOs (ANGOs), and the unique value of ANGOs' ways of working, specifically as they relate to achieving development outcomes, as outlined in Australia's International Development Policy.

Evidence for this review was collected based on the identification of seven key themes: Value for Money; Locally led Action; the Strengthening of Civil Society; Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion; Climate Resilience; Risk Management and Agility and the Sustainability of Development Outcomes. Further analysis focused on ANGOs' connections with the Australian public and the achievement of whole of government objectives.

This review commenced with a thematic and quantitative analysis of publicly available data. The most readily available public data was for the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). ANCP Performance Snapshots were analysed and compared with DFAT Statistical Summaries and Performance of Australian Development Cooperation reports. All DFAT sponsored evaluations and mid-term reviews of ANGO programs for the past ten years were also analysed.

Annual reports from ANGOs were also assessed, along with evaluations of programs and significant strategies. ACFID internal data was also reviewed. Some ANGOs also provided financial reports and a 'follow the money' approach was used to track spending and the delivery of key outcomes in these projects.

ACFID members were then invited to submit case studies based on the seven core themes of analysis. Approximately two case studies were selected for each theme and ANGOs provided further detail for analysis.

This desk-based review was also supplemented by interviews with sector experts, staff from DFAT Post and partner staff. Dr Brad Watson arranged these interviews and interviewed key stakeholders with Dr Annabel Dulhunty. Representatives from Australian NGOs and development sector experts shared their views for this research. In addition, ten partner staff from six different organisations were interviewed and six DFAT Post staff from four different DFAT Posts were also interviewed for this report.

A draft version of this report was created and reviewed by ACFID staff and ACFID DPC who provided valuable feedback for further revision of this report.

This review commences with an overview of the key work of ANGOs working in international aid and development. It then highlights the varying challenges facing Australian NGOs and the aid sector today. It then systematically details the strengths of ANGOs with respect to the seven thematic areas, as well as ANGOs' connections with the Australian public and their delivery on whole of government objectives. Shortened case studies are highlighted throughout the report with longer case studies in Annex 1.

TWO:

Introduction: Australian NGOs demonstrate unique value

Australian NGOs working in international aid and development have a long history of contributing to Australia's international development assistance. Australian NGOs are by definition not for profit and are mission oriented.

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) was established in 1965 as the peak body representing ANGOs working in international aid and development. ACFID's members range from small community-based organisations to large multisectoral agencies. Some ANGOs are part of international federations and others were created to support a singular issue. ACFID's members include secular and faith based ANGOs. ACFID represents relatively newly formed ANGOs and others which are over 100 years old.

Australian NGOs raise finances through public donations and through grant funding. The main grant funder of ANGOs is the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Some ANGOs also receive funding through other bilateral and multilateral donors, philanthropies and other grant funders.

The largest current funding mechanism for ANGOs through DFAT is the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) which was established in 1974 to fund ANGOs. To receive this funding, ANGOs must raise their own supplementary funds and must commit to DFAT's accreditation process. In 2023-24, ANCP funded 59 Australian NGOs to deliver 382 projects in 51 countries. These 59 ANGOs worked with 2,200 implementing partners (89% of which were local and national actors) to deliver these projects⁶.

Other significant current DFAT funding mechanisms for a small group of Australian NGOs include the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP), which is a ten-year funding commitment (2017-2027) and the Papua New Guinea Church Partnership Program Phase 4 (2022-2029). There are other smaller sector and/or regional specific grants through which ANGOs are funded by DFAT. ANGOs also receive subcontracts from commercial providers and multilateral organisations.

REACH

The reach of Australian NGOs covers millions of people. For example, as of June 2025, the AHP reached 12,241,107 people⁷. Between 2015-22, the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) reached over 57 million people across 54 countries⁸. In 2023-24 alone, ANGOs delivered programs to 4.1 million people⁹ through the ANCP.

KEY DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

Most available statistical data on ANGO programming derive from the ANCP. There are many excellent examples outside of ANCP data, but ANCP data best demonstrate quantitative results.

This section provides an overview of key development results produced by ANGOs in the current period.

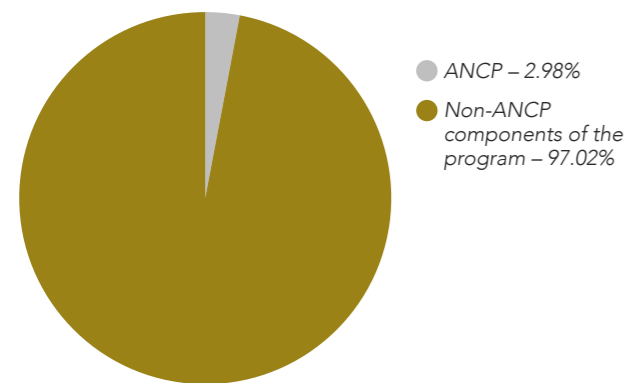
Using ANCP statistics, it is clear that ANGO programs consistently deliver outcomes disproportionate to their size and funding base. For example, in 2022-23, the ANCP resulted in over 58,000 additional girls and boys enrolled in school¹⁰. In 2022-23, overall aid statistics¹¹ indicated that 248,310 additional girls and boys had enrolled in school. This means that ANCP represents 23.36% of total schooling results achieved, yet cost only 2.98% of the aid program in 2022-23. The diagrams below illustrate this effectiveness.

Through ANCP:
Australian NGOs work with over **2200** partner organisations in 51 countries.
89% of Australian NGOs' partners are local or national actors.

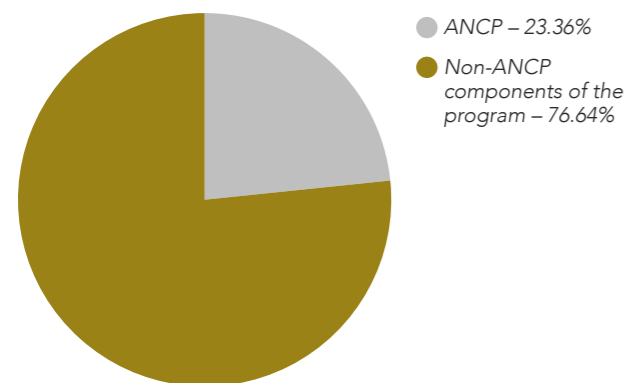
6 ANCP Performance Snapshot 2023-24.
7 AHP website 2025.
8 ANCP Evaluation 2022, Tetra Tech, p.2.
9 ANCP Performance Snapshot 2023-24.
10 ANCP Performance Snapshot 2022-23.
11 PADC 22-23.

Diagrams 1 & 2: ANCP as a share of the Australian aid program and additional boys and girls in school through ANCP as a percentage of the aid program

GRAPH 1: ANCP AS A SHARE OF THE AUSTRALIAN AID PROGRAM 22-23



GRAPH 2: ADDITIONAL BOYS AND GIRLS IN SCHOOL, ANCP AS A % OF THE AID PROGRAM



GENDER EQUALITY

Achieving global gender equality is a significant goal of the Australian aid program and ANGOs deliver on this outcome. ANCP projects have **over four times** a greater principal focus on gender equality than the overall Australian aid program.

In 2023-24, 18% of ANCP projects had a principal focus on gender equality (and 51% of ANCP projects had a significant focus), compared with only 4.18% of the overall Australian aid program¹².

ANCP projects are **4x** more likely to have a principal focus on gender equality than all projects across the Australian aid program.

DISABILITY INCLUSION

The Australian aid program also strives for the meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities, an area which the Australian government has indicated Australia needs to continue to improve on. ANCP projects have **over double the principal focus on disability equity** than the overall aid program. In 2023-24¹³, 5% of ANCP projects had a principal focus on disability equity, compared to 2.27% of the overall aid program. ANCP projects also have **over double the amount of projects with disability equity as a significant focus (70%)** when compared with the overall aid program (30%)¹⁴.

70% ANCP projects have disability as a significant focus - compared to 30% of the overall aid program.

ANCP represents **23.36%** of additional girls and boys enrolled in school, yet costs only 2.97% of the aid program.

CLIMATE

Australian NGOs continue to deliver highly innovative work on climate resilience, mitigation and adaptation. In 2023-24, 60% of organisations ACFID surveyed were funding projects working on climate action¹⁵. This work on climate action is tied closely to food and water security, which ANGOs have continued to deliver on. For example, in 2023-24¹⁶ ANGOs delivered programs which resulted in:

- Over 600,000 people benefiting from household-level access to **improved drinking water** sources and/or sanitation facilities (60.8% women and girls and 5.1% people with disabilities).
- Over 200,000 people received increased access to **sufficient food** (51.7% women and girls and 1.8% people with disabilities).

OTHER KEY DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

In 2023-24¹⁷, through the ANCP, ANGOs further achieved the following development results:

- Over 3 million people received **improved health services** (65.7% women and girls, 1.2% people with disabilities).
- Over 50,000 people were reached with new or **improved social protection programs** (54.1% women and girls and 3.5% people with disabilities).
- More than 45,000 women were supported to assume **leadership roles** (3.2% women with disabilities).
- Over 30,000 additional girls and boys enrolled in school (48.6 per cent girls and 5.4 per cent people with disabilities).

SUPPORTING DFAT POSTS

Australian NGOs also play a crucial role in supporting DFAT Posts with the skills and experience that ANGOs offer. For example, the Partnership Evaluation of DFAT, CBM Australia and the Nossal Institute for Global Health (2024, p. viii) recognised the unique role of CBM Australia for DFAT Posts, stating: *'the cost-free availability of technical assistance is a deeply valued resource, particularly by Posts with little resourcing to access technical assistance through contracting'*.

12 Results are compared through ANCP's Performance Snapshot and DFAT's 23-24 Statistical Summaries.
 13 ANCP Performance Snapshot 23-24; DFAT Statistical Summary 23-24.
 14 ANCP Performance Snapshot 23-24; DFAT Statistical Summary 23-24.

15 ACFID NGO Aid Map.
 16 ANCP Performance Snapshot 23-24
 17 ANCP Performance Snapshot 23-24

THREE:

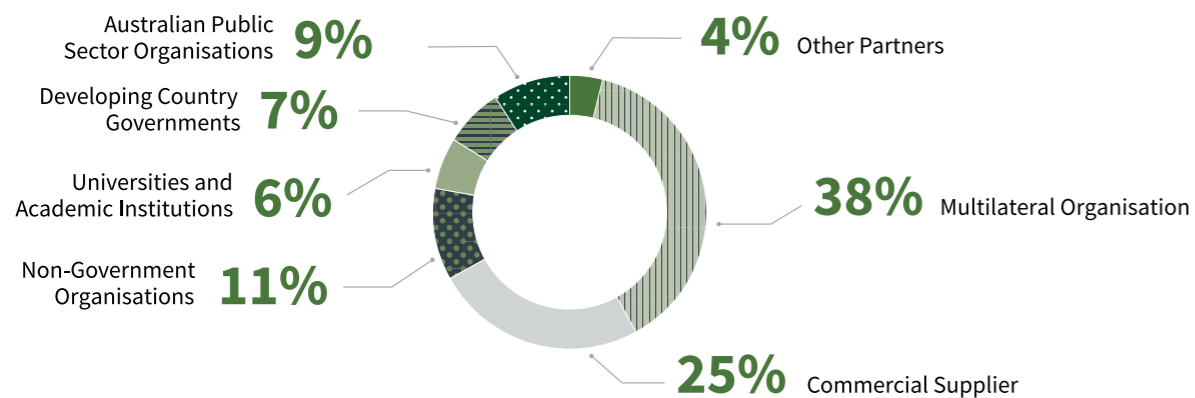
Australian NGOs are currently underutilised

Over the past two decades, the Australian aid program has undergone substantial change. With the merger of AusAID into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in 2013, the landscape for Australian aid and development was reshaped. The past decade has also seen a significant increase in aid channelled through the commercial sector. DFAT increasingly appears to demonstrate a preference for funding larger investments with fewer partners and programs.

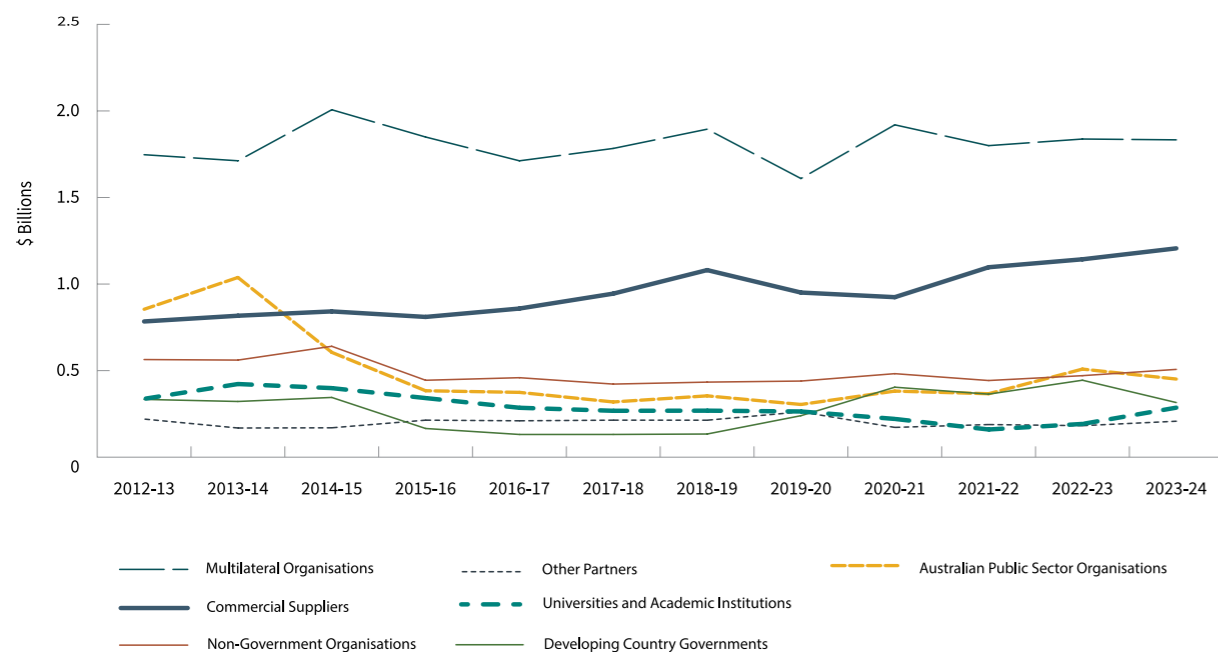
DFAT has also indicated a preference for open procurement processes that NGOs find difficult to apply for. Preparing a tender is costly and involves a significant investment of time and resources, something which NGOs do not have, as they run on lean budgets. With many NGOs operating with limited resources, they cannot afford to significantly invest in tender preparation.

The graphs below illustrate the current funding share for NGOs from DFAT (Graph 3) and the way that this has changed over time (Graph 4).

GRAPH 3 - AUSTRALIAN OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE BY TYPE OF PARTNER, 2023-24, DFAT STATISTICAL SUMMARY, PAGE 19



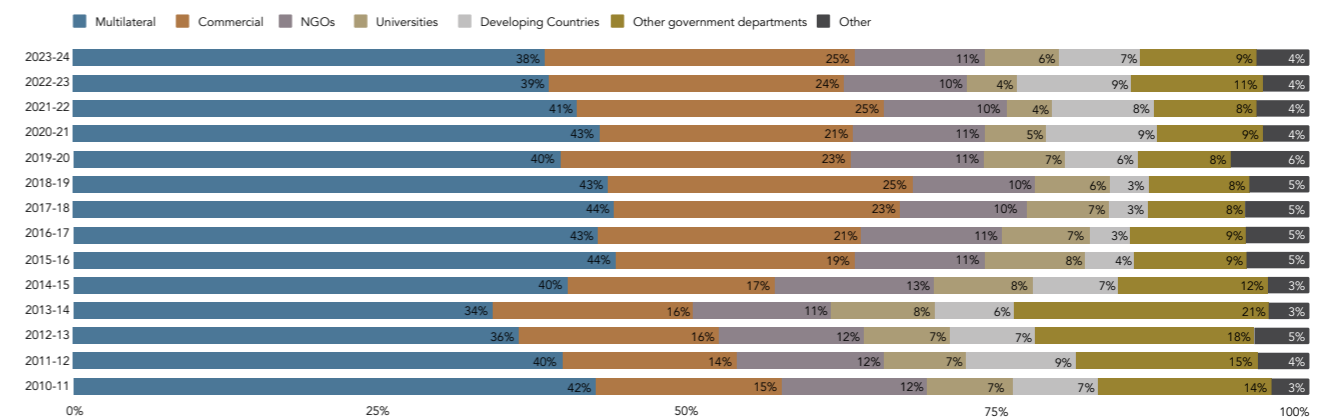
GRAPH 4 - AUSTRALIAN OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE BY TYPE OF PARTNER, 2012-13 TO 2023-24, DFAT STATISTICAL SUMMARY, PAGE 19



The Australian National University's Development Policy Centre tracks changes in aid by implementing partner from 2010-11, as detailed in Graph 5 below¹⁸. In 2010-11, funding to NGOs was 11.8% of the aid program, while in 2023-24 it stood at 10.6%. Adjusting for inflation at 2024-25 prices, one can see the substantive drop in funding for NGOs. In 2010-11, in 2024-25 prices, funding to NGOs was \$728,599,328 whereas in 2023-24 funding to NGOs was \$521,914,940 (also in 2024-25 prices). This is over a \$200 million dollar drop in funding. It must be noted,

however, that adjusting for inflation indicates that the overall aid budget has dropped in real terms from 2010-11 to 2023-24 also. Yet the real dollar figures have not dropped for all modalities of implementing partner. We can see that in 2010-11, funding to commercial partners was at 15%. In 2023-24 this increased to 25.1%. Adjusting for inflation at 2024-25 prices in 2010-11, commercial partners received \$926,185,586, whereas in 2023-24 (also adjusting for inflation) this increased to \$1,235,855,189. This represents a gain of over \$300 million in real terms.

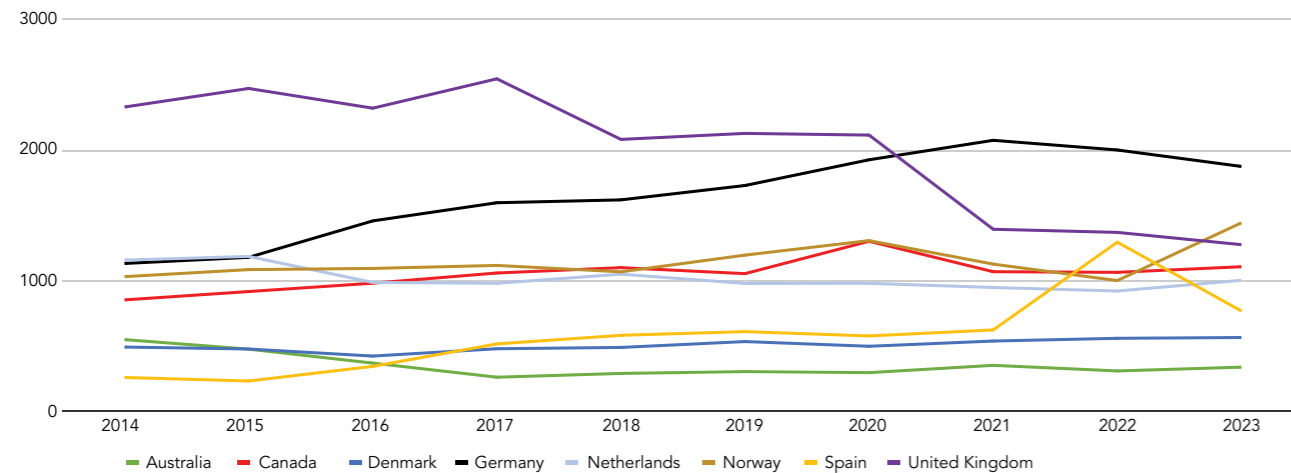
GRAPH 5 - AUSTRALIAN AID BY IMPLEMENTING PARTNER, DEVPOLICY AID TRACKER



Through a comparison with other similar donor countries that are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 'Development Assistance Committee' (OECD DAC), we can see that Australia is below average in its funding to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), as shown in Graph 6 and 7 below. CSOs encompass international, donor-country and local NGOs.

GRAPH 6 – TIMELINE OF AID TO AND THROUGH CSOS¹⁹

Total ODA to and through CSOs, 2014-23 (USD million, disbursements, constant 2022 prices)

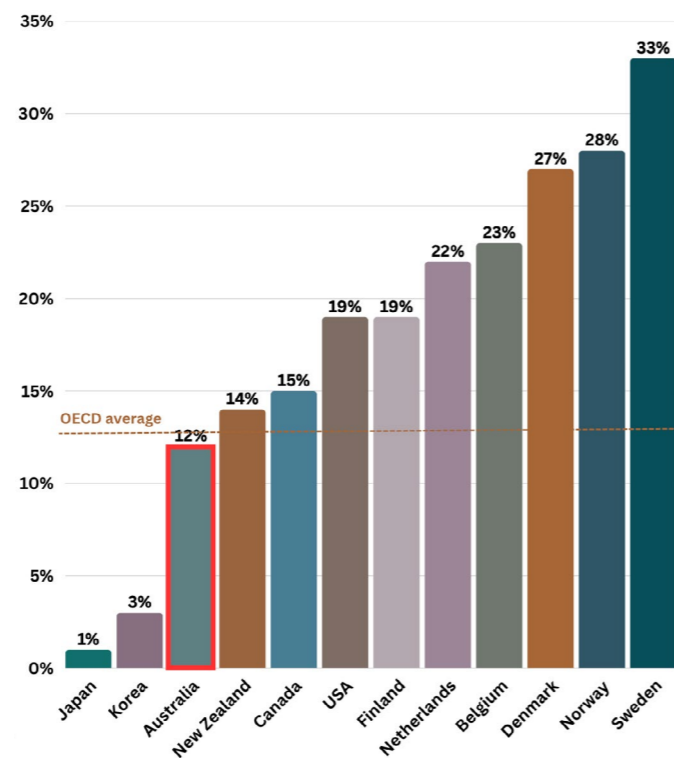


The recent DFAT commissioned evaluation of the ANCP also highlights this trend:

'Evidence suggests that Australia channels around 10 percent of development directly through NGOs and may be emerging as an outlier in its under-utilisation of NGOs in directly contracted aid delivery'²⁰.

In the last available data from 2023²¹, the percentage of Australia's bilateral aid to and through CSOs was 12%, compared to an average of 13%. Australia's funding to and through CSOs is also markedly lower than OECD DAC donors like Norway (28%), Sweden (33%) and Spain (53%).

GRAPH 7 – AUSTRALIA IS BELOW AVERAGE IN FUNDING TO AND THROUGH CSOS, OECD DAC DASHBOARD, 2025



19 OECD DAC Dashboard 2025.
20 ANCP Evaluation 2022, Tetra Tech, p.3.
21 OECD DAC Dashboard 2025.

Not only is there a slight downward trend in the dollar value of DFAT's funding to ANGOs, there are also fewer direct funding windows available to ANGOs than a decade ago. At present, ANGOs have the ANCP funding window as the main direct central funding window from DFAT. At times, ANGOs have been able to access funds through DFAT Posts but this is not consistent. DFAT PERFORMS data²² indicates that ANGOs received 28% of subcontracts from commercial suppliers, which is a source of revenue for ANGOs, but also indicates a shift away from direct relationships between ANGOs and DFAT, which arguably minimises ANGOs' opportunity to influence DFAT and the shape of the Australian development program. Funding modalities for ANGOs, such as the Australian Humanitarian Partnership and the Church Partnership Program are managed by commercial suppliers.

The value in funding CSOs is underscored by Australia's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals. This ambitious agenda requires significant investment and commitment to deliver its targets. Significantly, the 2020 DAC Report on Civil Society Organisations²³ highlights the unique role of CSOs (which includes Australian NGOs) to deliver these crucial development outcomes. The report states:

'Agenda 2030 is clear on the need to engage civil society organisations (CSOs) in implementing and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals. Given their capacity to bring the voices of those on the frontlines of poverty, inequality and vulnerability into development processes, CSOs have a particular role to play in ensuring no one is left behind'.

As further noted in the 2022 Evaluation of the ANCP:

'Investing in partnerships with NGOs for the delivery of development programs is critical to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda'²⁴.

There is hence scope for increasing direct funding to CSOs (including Australian NGOs) to further meet the demands of the 2030 Agenda.

22 DFAT PERFORMS data 2023-24.
23 DAC Report on CSOs 2020.
24 ANCP Evaluation 2022, Tetra Tech, p.2.

FOUR:

Australian NGOs are valuable in a contracting and unstable aid environment

In considering the value of ANGOs, we must also reflect on the rapidly changing geopolitics of the past two years and the shrinking aid environment. As global aid funding drops dramatically, development experts and donor agencies have increasingly been questioning ‘how can we make the limited aid we do have more effective?’ Geordie Fung²⁵, writing for the Lowy Institute, argues that *innovation* is now of utmost importance, as is examining existing aid modalities. The role of ANGOs in contributing to effective development outcomes thus becomes very important, particularly when considering the specific value add of ANGOs.

HOW IS AID SHRINKING?

Australia has so far diverged from the dominant trend of cutting overseas aid. We cannot know whether this will hold. Australia is currently grappling with how it positions itself as other key donors cut aid. The Lowy Institute Pacific Aid Map 2025²⁶ notes that in the Pacific, ‘Australia holds the line despite aid retreat by Western donors’. This puts an even greater pressure on Australian aid to be effective, value for money and highly strategic in delivering on development priorities.

The scale of global aid shrinkage is estimated to be vast. Development sector analysts such as Robin Davies²⁷, predict that by 2027, global aid will shrink by at least 25%, and this is a conservative estimate. The latest 2025 Human Development Report also indicates a grim outlook, stating that ‘gaps between very high and low HDI countries, which for decades had been shrinking, have been widening over the past four years...The dramatic slowdown in HDI progress cuts across all developing regions’²⁸.

The starkest change in the aid landscape has arisen from cuts to USAID, with some countries set to lose 100% of USAID funding²⁹. In June 2025, USAID was formally closed and its programs merged into the State Department. ICVA, a global network of NGOs, surveyed 246 NGOs, the majority of which were local or national NGOs, and found that 67% received a stop work order for US funding over twelve days in January-February 2025³⁰. In this rapidly changing environment, it is particularly worrying which sectors have been cut in USAID programming. Justin Sandefur and Charles Kenny, writing for the Center for Global Development³¹, estimate cuts of:

- 100% for civil society programming.
- 99% for basic education.
- 99% for conflict mitigation and reconciliation.
- 94% for family planning and reproductive health.
- 86% for water supply and sanitation.

The UK is also delivering worrying cuts in 2025-2026. For example, its cuts to global health programs equate to 46% and cuts to global education, gender and equality is set at 42%³².

These global aid cuts are set to result in severe impacts on life expectancy and development outcomes. Medeiros Cavalcanti et al (2025)³³ published a study in The Lancet which predicts that the USAID cuts will result in over 14 million deaths due to disease, including over 4.5 million deaths of children under 5, by 2030.

With rising authoritarianism globally and higher risks of widespread conflict³⁴, these aid cuts are particularly concerning. There is a widely acknowledged shrinkage of the humanitarian space³⁵ and wider repressions of civil society across a multitude of countries³⁶. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace writes how funding for civil society has been greatly hampered by cuts to aid budgets, such as France’s cutting of aid funding in 2024, with a further reduction of 18% in 2025. Most notably, the Netherlands plans to reduce funding to CSOs by 70% or Euro 1 billion by 2026³⁷.

In 2023, Australia released its new International Development Policy. A key focus of the Policy is the achievement of a ‘peaceful, stable, and prosperous’ region³⁸. The Development Intelligence Lab³⁹, notes that this global turbulent period ‘will test the agility and relevance of Australia’s development program unless significant re-prioritisation or new resources are mobilised’.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR AUSTRALIAN NGOS?

These changing trends are significant for considering how exactly ANGOs provide significant value to Australian development programming. First, it is essential to consider which sectors these aid funding cuts impact the most. Significantly, funding cuts are impacting sectors where Australian NGOs have particularly strong skills and expertise. The 100% USAID cut for civil society programming, along with French and Dutch cuts to civil society will affect many local, essential grassroots NGOs locally in our region. Australian NGO expertise in working with and supporting civil society (as detailed in Section 10) will be increasingly important for the Australian aid program to leverage in filling this crucial programming gap. Australian NGO expertise in areas such as conflict mitigation, WASH, education and health will also be crucial to leverage. Important to note is that while Australian aid funding in the Pacific has mitigated some of the aid cuts, it is increasingly going to infrastructure funding and less so to health, education and human development⁴⁰. This highlights the necessity not just of maintaining Australian aid funding levels, but of critically evaluating the quality of Australian aid and the sectors it is funding. It will be even more important now, than ever, to also demonstrate cost effectiveness and value for money, an area which Australian NGOs consistently demonstrate success in, as described in Section 7.

25 Fung 2025. More than stability: Australia’s aid program needs hard decisions now | Lowy Institute

26 Lowy Institute Pacific Aid Map 2025, pxii.

27 Davies 2025. Burden-shedding: the unravelling of the OECD aid consensus - Devpolicy Blog from the Development Policy Centre

28 HDR 2025, p.5. <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2025reporten.pdf>

29 Sandefur and Kenny 2025. USAID Cuts: New Estimates at the Country Level | Center For Global Development

30 ICVA 2025. The Impacts of the US Funding Suspension: ICVA Survey Findings (18 February 2025) - World | ReliefWeb

31 Sandefur and Kenny 2025. USAID Cuts: New Estimates at the Country Level | Center For Global Development

32 FCDO 2025 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office – Annual Report and Accounts 2024–

2025 in August 2025 aid news - Devpolicy Blog from the Development Policy Centre

33 Medeiros Cavalcanti et al 2025. Evaluating the impact of two decades of USAID interventions and projecting the effects of defunding on mortality up to 2030: a retrospective impact evaluation and forecasting analysis - The Lancet

34 Cunningham and Healy 2025. Frontiers | Authoritarian practices on the rise? Reflections from a Médecins Sans

Frontières research programme on the engagement between international humanitarian non-governmental

organisations and states; Berberoglu 2020. The Global Rise of Authoritarianism in the 21st Century.

35 Nahikian and Emmanuel 2023. Humanitarian negotiation | 4 | Challenges and compromise in hard-to-reach-areas

36 Sesan 2025. Shrinking Civic Space, Digital Funding, and Legitimacy in a Post-Truth Era | Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

37 Youngs et al 2025. European Democracy Support Annual Review 2024 | Carnegie Endowment for International Peace page 21.

38 DFAT 2023, p.7. Australia’s International Development Policy

39 Development Intelligence Lab, 2025, p.6. Two Years On—Australia’s development policy in a disrupted world.pdf

40 Lowy Institute Pacific Aid Map 2025, pxii.

FIVE:

Australian NGOs achieve whole of government objectives, especially in diplomacy

The value of Australian NGOs and their strong in-country relationships goes beyond development programming and demonstrates important outcomes for Australia's security, diplomacy and trade relationships. This aligns with DFAT's approach to development, which sees aid programming as part of an ecosystem of Australian foreign policy. In this way, aid is part of the foreign policy apparatus of government. As DFAT states in relation to its 2023 International Development Policy:

'Our policy positions development assistance as a key pillar of Australia's statecraft – working alongside diplomacy, trade and defence to advance our interests in a fairer, safer and more secure world'⁴¹.

This idea of 'statecraft' is fundamental to the current Australian Government's conception of foreign policy. For example, Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs, frequently refers to 'statecraft' as a key aim. For example, she states⁴²:

'The Albanese Government is meeting the challenges Australia faces in our region and the world, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft. Because this is the only way to advance Australia's interests in shaping a region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous'.

The value of Australian NGOs in achieving broad outcomes for Australia's statecraft was consistently noted in interviews for this report with development experts from both within and outside DFAT. For example, Ulla Keech-Marx⁴³, international development expert, stated:

'ANGOs invest in long term partnerships, at all levels of society, which is crucial for Australia's bilateral interests. They have community reach in a way others in the international development ecosystem (e.g. managing contractors or DFAT) can never achieve. They form part of the tapestry of Australia's presence and reputation overseas, which goes beyond development outcomes'.

This sentiment was also expressed by a number of interviewees from DFAT Post who emphasised the important role of ANGOs in enhancing their diplomatic work in country.

The 2022 ANCP Evaluation⁴⁴ further noted that:

'the ANCP modality provides a system that allows ANGOs to 'complement and extend Australia's bilateral and regional programs and priorities' in addition to incentivising and leveraging public and other financial support for the development program. The ANCP extends the geographic reach of Australia's development program, is responsive to partner country priorities and provides important touch points for broader diplomatic engagement'.

SIX:

Australian NGOs provide unique connections with the Australian public

The value of ANGOs' connections with the Australian public should not be understated. ANGOs' relationships with the Australian public build social license for the aid program, which after all, is a commitment of Australian tax dollars. The government requires a social license from the Australian public for aid and for foreign policy more broadly. Public support for aid expenditure should not be taken for granted and there have been examples of broad coalitions lobbying for reductions in government aid funding in countries such as the UK and the US⁴⁵.

Australian NGOs build public support for the aid program through their extensive community connections, which are enhanced through: their recruitment of volunteers; their raising of funds and advertising which showcases the value of aid; their engagement of key members of the public on their Boards and Associations and the building of connections through churches and other community groups.

As stated by a DFAT staff member at Post⁴⁶ (2025):

'[Australian NGOs] are a really visible part of our development footprint in countries as well... the value add is that the Australian NGOs have the relationships. They connect the work that's happening in country back to the Australian community and also in terms of sharing best practices, as well across the sector and more broadly'.

In addition, as the 2022 DFAT commissioned evaluation of the ANCP⁴⁷ notes:

'The ANCP creates value for: the Australian development program by leveraging the grassroots connections and people to people linkages provided through the long-term relationships of ANGOs...the ANCP makes a significant potential contribution to public diplomacy by extending Australia's touchpoints in over 54 countries annually and providing a vital interface between the Australian public and the development program, including mobilising public contributions to the development program'.

Furthermore, latest statistics indicate that at least 790,000 Australians financially support ANGOs for international development assistance⁴⁸. Fundraising activities not only provide additional support to government funding of the aid program, but they also deliver a crucial connection with the Australian public – enhancing legitimacy for the aid program and creating meaningful linkages between communities in Australia and our region.

Australian NGOs are able to keep the Australian public engaged with the aid program and its tangible results. ANGOs are able to harness support and connection through the Australian public. For example, across four platforms (X/Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube), the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) has accumulated over 11,000 followers invested in updates on AHP programming. Furthermore, ACFID members are supported by more than 11,000 Australian volunteers⁴⁹. Australian NGOs also have considerable connections with schools, working with the next generation to shape Australia's aid and development program. For example, one ACFID member, Caritas Australia, involved 1,724 schools in fundraising and aid education last year, engaging more than 300,000 students and 1,205 churches in 2024⁵⁰.

ACFID members have engaged more than 300,000 school students in the past year on aid education and fundraising



41 DFAT, n.d. Australia's development program | Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
42 Senator the Hon Penny Wong, 9.4.24. Speech to the ANU National Security College - "Securing Our Future" - Canberra, ACT.
43 Interview for this report.
44 ANCP Evaluation 2022, Tetra Tech, p.2.

45 UK Government and Parliament Petitions. Stop spending a fixed 0.7 per cent slice of our national wealth on Foreign Aid - Petitions
46 Interview for this report.
47 ANCP Evaluation 2022, Tetra Tech, p.3.
48 ACFID Annual Report 2024-25.
49 ACFID Annual Report 2024-25.
50 Caritas Australia, 2024. annual-report-2023-24_digital-1.pdf



The following case study from Results International (Australia) highlights the way that ANGOs engage the Australian public for effective development outcomes.

ENGAGING THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC ON TUBERCULOSIS, RESULTS INTERNATIONAL (AUSTRALIA)

Tuberculosis (TB) is the biggest infectious disease killer in the world, killing more than a million people per year, a significant number of those deaths in our region. Results Australia has actively engaged the Australian public on TB, building awareness and political support for global TB efforts. A record 74 buildings across Australia were illuminated in red on 24 March 2025 to mark World TB Day, while over 100 grassroots volunteers were equipped with knowledge of TB, its regional burden, and advocacy skills—including meeting MPs, writing letters and blogs and using social media. In the lead-up to the most recent Global Fund to fight Aids Tuberculosis and Malaria replenishment, staff and advocates delivered hundreds of letters, calls and meetings with parliamentarians, helping secure Australia's \$266 million commitment. This mobilisation also strengthened the Australian Parliamentary TB Caucus, which reflects broad political representation driven by clear community interest. Together, these efforts show how informed and empowered citizens can raise the profile of TB and shape Australia's leadership on global health.

Read the full case study.

IMAGE: Sydney: 5 people gathered at the Manly Town Hall - Lili Koch (TB Survivor & Activist, Results Advocate), Anne Walter (Results), Peter McDonald (Former Mayor), John Kennewell, & Candy Bingham (Deputy Mayor). Credit: Results International (Australia)

SEVEN:

Australian NGOs demonstrate value for money

In a shrinking global aid landscape, value for money is particularly important as reduced aid dollars need to be leveraged for maximum impact. Every dollar counts, particularly as global aid financing becomes increasingly lean. As global cost of living crises impact aid budgets, there is increasing emphasis on value for money in many donor countries. For example, a number of enquiries have been commissioned in the UK as to whether the aid program is 'getting bang for its buck'⁵¹.

In Australia, DFAT has eight 'Value for Money' principles⁵² which are fairly broad – encompassing a focus on cost consciousness, accountability, transparency and results.

In evaluating the value for money of ANGOs, there are several unique ways that ANGOs provide value for money, as detailed below.

1. Not for profit model

Australian NGOs are not for profit. This means that tight aid dollars go towards participants, administration or project costs – they do not go to increasing the revenue of companies. While these facts may appear seem self-evident, it is particularly important in a landscape where global aid funding is shrinking.

As a DFAT staff member at Post stated in an interview for this report:

'At the end of the day the clue is in the name, right. NGOs are not for profit. So, the management fee that they're banking is not going to company profits or whatever. It's going into back of house things, in terms of future fundraising or some of the roles that project funding doesn't allow them to fund often or to a significant extent'.


2. Strict accreditation and professional standards

The accreditation and Code of Conduct standards which ANGOs must adhere to are unique and demonstrate an exceptionally high level of accountability and risk management. To receive funding through the ANCP, ANGOs must undergo rigorous, independent accreditation by DFAT – assessing governance, financial management, development effectiveness, and safeguarding. ANGOs seeking funding through the ANCP must apply for DFAT Accreditation up front, delivering a high degree of assurance to DFAT of the professional standards under which accredited ANGOs operate under. To gain accreditation, ANGOs must be a signatory to ACFID's Code of Conduct and be registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, amongst other requirements. Accreditation is a highly detailed process and is independently verified by an independent review team which conducts an extensive organisational review⁵³.

In addition, ACFID members voluntarily commit to upholding the ACFID Code of Conduct, a robust, sector-owned standard that they report against annually. The Code monitors quality principles and commitments to essential standards for practice related to: rights, justice and safeguarding; locally-led action and inclusion; systemic change, environmental sustainability and climate action; quality and effectiveness; collaboration; communication; governance; resource management and people and culture⁵⁴.

This dual framework ensures that Australian NGOs consistently deliver high-impact, responsible aid on behalf of the Australian Government. To be a signatory to ACFID's Code of Conduct and to be accredited by DFAT, ANGOs must demonstrate that they are effective and professional development partners who can be trusted with the management of aid funding.

51 UK Parliament, 2024. New Committee inquiry: is the FCDO getting bang for its buck? - Committees - UK Parliament
 52 DFAT, n.d. Value for Money principles | Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
 53 ACFID, n.d. ACFID Code and DFAT Accreditation—at a glance_V2.pdf
 54 ACFID, 2024. Revised-ACFID-Code-of-Conduct_October-2024.pdf

 In 2023-24, every \$1 the Australian government gave to the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) grew to \$1.29, through added private fundraising and donations.

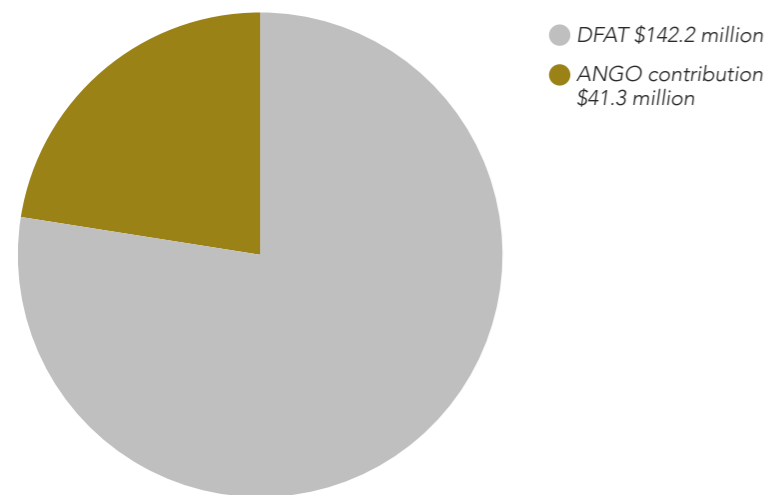
These processes indicate value for money as they illustrate effective risk management and systems of accountability on behalf of the ANGOs. As Dr Cameron Hill, Senior Research Officer at the Development Policy Centre, reflected in an interview for this report:

'The Code is value for money. For a relatively small cost, DFAT is buying a level of regulation and transparency that is self-reinforcing, well established and comes with a level of knowledge sharing in areas of mutual interest. This value for money case is evident in areas like locally-led development and safeguarding where ACFID's code committee and communities of practice have helped DFAT with its own guidance at low or no cost'.

3. Leveraged contributions

\$1 from the Australian government to Australian NGOs is leveraged in several ways, with ANGOs contributing from private donations and other fundraising. The ANCP, for example, requires an ANGO contribution, usually of at least 20%. In 2023-24⁵⁵, ANGOs contributed 29% from private donations, maximising the Australian government's funding. Graph 8 below demonstrates this leveraging effect of ANCP funds. In addition, 16% of total ANCP funded projects received additional support from other sources (in-country governments in-country, bilateral donors like Irish Aid, USAID, MFAT), other international NGOs and CSOs, private sector, multilateral organisations and faith-based organisations⁵⁶.

GRAPH 8 – TOTAL ANCP CORE FUNDING, EXCLUDING ADDITIONAL BILATERAL AND IN-COUNTRY SUPPORT – ANCP 23-24 PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT



By way of example, the case study from the Australian Himalayan Foundation below illustrates the way that Australian NGOs leverage government funding.

SOLUKHUMBU WOMEN'S HEALTH PROJECT INCLUDING A TELEHEALTH PILOT, AUSTRALIAN HIMALAYAN FOUNDATION (AHF), NEPAL

This project illustrates how ANGOs leverage Australian government funds for maximum impact. This vital health project implemented over four years in the remote Nepal province of Solukhumbu leveraged \$177,764 of ANCP funding for direct country project implementation by combining it with multiple other sources of funding to maximise development effectiveness.

- The Australian Himalayan Foundation was able to leverage the ANCP contribution with:
- \$241,907, including \$91,009 of private donations for the telehealth pilot
- \$5,986 annual contributions from local government and communities
- In-kind doctor support from the ASK Foundation
- In-kind student expertise from the University of Sydney
- In-kind training and mentoring on child safeguarding from AHF's pro bono advisor

In addition, support was extended to rebuild one of the health posts which was in a very poor condition with the following funding:

- \$82,190 from private donor funding
- \$50,000 from the local government
- \$37,500 from One Heart Worldwide

Read the full case study.

IMAGE: New mother Bhurana and her baby meet with nurse Mingmar. Credit: Allan Delaney.

55 ANCP 2023-24 Performance Snapshot.
56 ANCP 2023-24 Performance Snapshot.



The case study from ChildFund below illustrates ANGO innovation.

REGIONAL SWIPE SAFE, CHILDFUND AUSTRALIA, MULTIPLE COUNTRIES

The innovative “Swipe Safe” program directly targets children and their parents to build core online self-protective skills for young people and to build the digital literacy and protection skills of parents, equipping them to be key safety partners for their young people.

It is highly innovative and excellent value for money, with a self-directed, interactive, and educational Swipe Safe App to keep young people safe online, which has been contextualised and translated for various countries.

Commencing with a small pilot program in Vietnam, this program has now expanded to Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Indonesia as well as the Solomon Islands, the Philippines, Fiji, Ecuador, and Brazil. In each place it is locally contextualised, engaging front-line service workers, women’s rights movements, children with disabilities and law enforcement.

This project demonstrates how important funding is for ANGOs to trial innovative pilot projects at a small cost, which can then be replicated at scale.

Read the full case study.

IMAGE: Swipe Safe facilitator in Laos guiding primary school students through the online programme. ChildFund Laos (please note this office is no longer in operation)

4. Relationships with the Australian public and diplomatic influence

As noted, Australian NGOs have built extensive relationships with the Australian public and their programming overseas goes beyond development outcomes, boosting Australia’s diplomatic influence also. This means that money channelled through ANGOs results in multiple outcomes for Australia’s national interest. It also supports DFAT Posts with the skills and experience that specialist ANGOs offer.

5. Leaders in innovation

Because there is no profit imperative, Australian NGOs can innovate in their development programming – trialling different initiatives at a small scale and then upscaling them if successful. As leading development

thinker, Duncan Green⁵⁷ has repeatedly argued, investment in innovative small-scale approaches, with fast feedback and rapid expansion if effective, is necessary for meaningful development – offering both value for money and positive development outcomes.

6. Agility

The deep local partnerships that ANGOs have with on-the-ground partners mean that ANGOs are highly responsive to on-the-ground realities and can shift their programming quickly to best meet the needs of the community. This results in excellent value for money as lean development dollars are not wasted when communities experience shifting priorities. Further details of ANGO strengths in this area are highlighted in Section 13.

57 Green 2015. Fit for the Future? Development trends and the role of international NGOs

EIGHT:

Australian NGOs highlight several best practices in locally led action

Locally led development is key to effective development programming. There has been growing recognition in the aid and development sector that locally led development is crucial for meaningful change and that practices need to shift within the sector. ACFID has been leading discussions and standards around locally led development, with ‘locally-led action and inclusion’⁵⁸ being one of the quality principles of ACFID’s Code of Conduct. The following definition has been included in the ACFID Code of Conduct:

‘Locally-led development and humanitarian action recognises, respects and strengthens the leadership and decision-making of local actors who are best placed to understand and respond to the needs of their communities. By its nature, this will look different in each country context, and even within countries or programs. Successful locally-led action recognises how power imbalances influence development and humanitarian initiatives. It is facilitated by strong and equal partnership, quality direct funding, transparency and mutual accountability, and diversity and empowerment in staffing and leadership’⁵⁹.

ANGOs vary in their focus on locally led development, with significant variations in programming. Certainly not all ANGOs demonstrate effectiveness in this area. It is encouraging to see, however, that ANGOs with better strategies and practices in locally led development have been sharing their insights with other Australian NGOs, in collaboration with ACFID. ACFID has also been taking a leading role in trying to influence change within the sector.

For example, in recent years, ACFID has delivered more resources and training for its members to better understand best practices in locally led development, for example, in the commissioning of the ‘Discussion Paper on Decolonisation and Locally Led Development’⁶⁰ and various reflection posts⁶¹. ACFID also hosts a Locally Led Action Community of Practice which continues to work on improved localisation within the sector.

For Australia, the importance of locally led action is embedded in Australia’s 2023 International Development Policy as well as Australia’s 2016 commitment to the ‘Grand Bargain’ which builds on the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda. There has been significant movement within the development and humanitarian sectors to increase a focus on locally led action over the past decade, including the 2016 Humanitarian Charter for Change⁶². ‘Supporting locally led change’ is one of five pillars in DFAT’s International Development Policy⁶³. In June 2024, DFAT further released a Guidance Note on Locally Led Development⁶⁴. DFAT’s latest Performance of Australian Development Cooperation Report⁶⁵ also emphasised the increased importance with which DFAT was placing on locally led action:

‘Our development cooperation uses local actors in design, delivery and evaluation. Australia’s International Development Policy commits us to enhancing locally led development through our development cooperation. Our support for locally led development enables more effective, impactful and sustainable programs, channels economic benefits to our local partners, and further builds genuine, respectful partnerships between our countries’.

58 Revised-ACFID-Code-of-Conduct_October-2024.pdf
 59 ACFID 2024 Locally-led Action Toolkit : 2.2 Defining Locally-Led Action | Learn with ACFID
 60 Tawake et al 2021 ACFID-Decolonisation-and-Locally-Led-Development-Discussion-Paper.pdf
 61 Self-reflection and Localisation, Co-Executive Officer, MSI Asia Pacific - ACFID
 62 Charter for Change – Localisation of Humanitarian Aid
 63 Australia’s International Development Policy 2023, p.11
 64 DFAT guidance note: Locally led development
 65 PADC 2023–24, pp. 28-29.

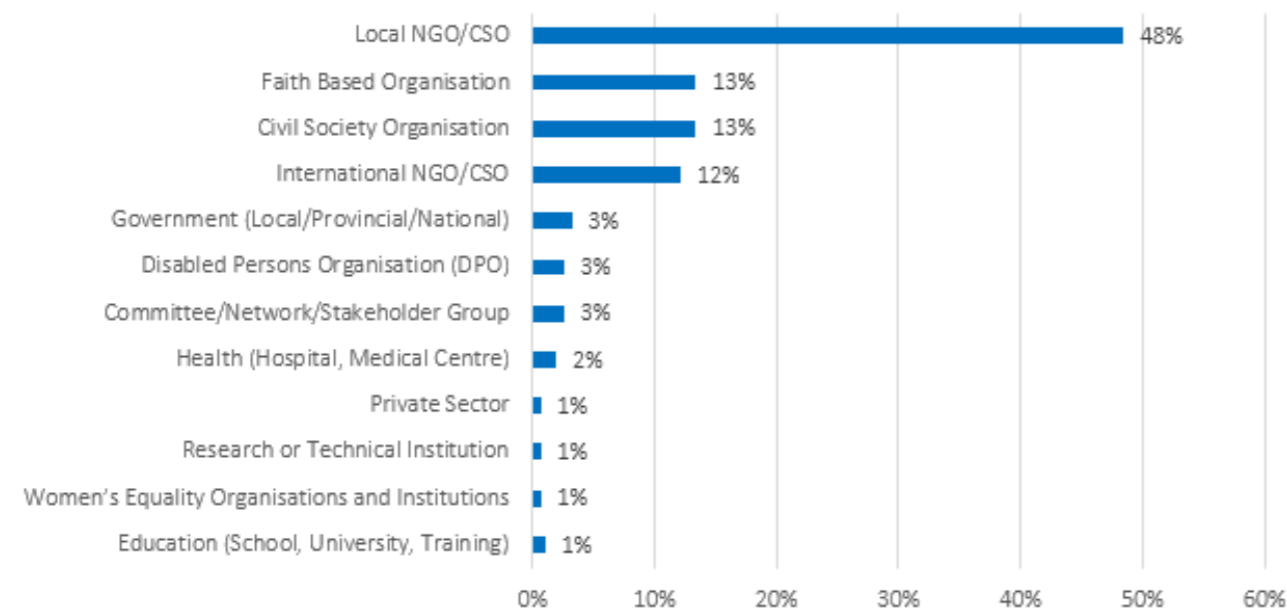
The Development Intelligence Lab's 2023 Pulse Check argued, however, that Australia was not doing well overall in achieving its localisation agenda. It stated that:

'Experts identified locally led development as a key indicator of development progress in the region — Australia can't be an effective partner without this... they saw it as critical to achieving the Government's commitment to genuine development partnerships. We'll lose credibility and goodwill by the day if we don't get this right. So are we doing this well? Our experts met this question with a resounding 'no': it was identified as one of our biggest weaknesses, and a top area for increased action'⁶⁶.

Arguably, Australia's lower than OECD DAC average of funding to and through CSOs does not effectively align with its localisation agenda. Committing additional resources to local NGOs is of primary importance. After local NGOs are adequately resourced, additional funding can be leveraged for ANGOs which can accompany local NGOs to strengthen their systems, fundraising capacity and networks for ongoing sustainability.

Australian NGOs have an overarching focus on working with local actors. In the latest ANCP 23-24 Performance Snapshot⁶⁷, it reveals ANGOs' extensive work with local actors, with **88% of implementing partners being of local origin**. The graph from this Snapshot illustrates this point:

Graph 2: 2023-24 Implementing Partner Type (%)



In addition, each ANCP partner delivered a minimum of \$10,000⁶⁸ of their annual grant to local implementing partners for the purposes of local administration and overheads. In 2023-24⁶⁹ over \$1.3 million across the ANCP went to local partners' administration and overheads.

In humanitarian programming, ANGOs have also included locally led humanitarian action as a key principle, such as in the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP), including for Disaster READY projects and humanitarian responses. Disaster READY country plans developed for Phase 2 (2022–2027) included specific localisation plans and locally led country committees, for example. All AHP partners report on progress towards locally led humanitarian action, supporting long-term local leadership. The 2024 AHP Evaluation in Ethiopia and Kenya⁷⁰ also highlighted the increasing move towards localisation, stating that:

'The...interventions achieved positive results thanks to the collaboration between Australian NGOs and local organisations. In Ethiopia, for instance, Oxfam allocated 88% of its project funds to local partners (APDA, We-Action, REST), and in Kenya, 75% went to local partners (ASAL, AHN, SND, PACIDA, TUPADO)...This approach is consistent with the Grand Bargain commitments, supporting localisation, increasing efficiency, and ensuring that aid is more suitable and responsive to local needs. By enabling local organisations, the interventions leveraged their contextual knowledge and long-term presence, ultimately leading to more sustainable and effective outcomes'.

The 2024 Evaluation of the partnership between DFAT, CBM Australia and the Nossal Institute for Global Health⁷¹ also highlighted the work of CBM's Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG) and its role connecting Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) with DFAT:

'(CBMA's) IAG's partnership approach is deeply valued by all OPDs interviewed for this review, for supporting their strategies while facilitating influential OPD engagement with DFAT's programming, strategy, and policy processes. IAG helps OPDs understand DFAT's environment and aids DFAT in understanding the role and context of OPDs and how to ensure accessible and meaningful engagement with them. For example, in response to a recent request from Port Moresby Post, IAG prepared a concise summary of lessons learned and recommendations of good practice engagement with OPDs, drawing from the experiences of DFAT and other donors, particularly in the Melanesian and Pacific context. This will inform Post's efforts to take a long-term strategic approach to support and expand the capacity of OPDs in PNG. This collaborative, principled approach builds trust and buy-in from OPDs'.

This evaluation also included an important quote⁷² from a member of a local OPD, stating:

'The support we've had from CBM has been immensely fruitful, empowering... CBM has been a great supporter, it's a role model of a partnership... we are usually engaged in a very tokenistic way – just grab someone with a psychosocial disability – but with CBM it has been a dignified collaboration''.

The following case studies from the International Women's Development Agency and Caritas Australia further illustrate best practices of ANGOs that demonstrate a commitment to locally-led action.

66 Pulse Check 2022 Development Strategy p.4.
67 ANCP Snapshot 23-24 p.3.

68 ANCP Snapshot 23-24.
69 ANCP Snapshot 23-24.
70 Policy Research Institute 2024, p.32. Australian Humanitarian Partnership's Activations on Food Security and Livelihoods in Ethiopia and Kenya: Final Report
71 Clear Horizon 2024, p.10. DFAT CBM Australia Nossal Institute Partnership Evaluation.
72 Clear Horizon 2024, p.10. DFAT CBM Australia Nossal Institute Partnership Evaluation.



The case study from the International Women's Development Agency further illustrates best practices of ANGOs that demonstrate a commitment to locally-led action.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND VOICE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA (WEAVERS), INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (IWDA), PNG

IWDA has committed to significant reflection in recent years on what exactly its role should be in the aid sector and how it can commit to decolonising its work, truly enabling locally-led development. IWDA's *Decolonial Framework and Strategy and Feminist Research Framework* have guided its actions on locally-led development. The Strategy includes IWDA's '4S Framework' which incorporates: **stepping up** and using IWDA's power to leverage resources for local feminist actors; **standing with** feminist movements in solidarity; **stepping back** when others are better placed to take the lead and **sitting with** uncertainty, deeply listening.

The WEAVERS project in PNG embodies this focus on locally led action and decolonising development. This project worked with local partners alongside 38 women's rights organisations to advocate for women's rights in PNG.

An independent evaluation found that the decolonial nature of the project was strongly enabled by both IWDA and the research leader's commitment to *'an inclusive power-with rather than power-over approach to collaboration throughout the project'* and *'humility in interactions and decision making'* as well as a *high degree of flexibility in terms of time, budget and human resources to enable locally-led decision making that was responsive to context. In this way, 'IWDA's role [was] one of listening, mentoring, and providing support where needed'* (Evaluation Report pp.5-6).

Read the full case study.

IMAGE: Dr Orovu Sepoe and the Research Steering Committee launch The WEAVERS Research Report. Credit: PNG WOMEN LEAD.



The case study from Caritas Australia further illustrates best practices of ANGOs that demonstrate a commitment to locally-led action.

CARITAS MYANMAR: A JOURNEY FROM LOCAL NGO TO NATIONAL LEADER IN MYANMAR'S CIVIL SOCIETY, CARITAS AUSTRALIA, MYANMAR

Caritas Australia followed an 'accompaniment' model with Caritas Myanmar, focusing not on short term project results, but on building up the organisation of Caritas Myanmar to be a sustainable and leading local organisation.

To do this, Caritas Australia embedded support through the long-term funding of Caritas Australia staff within Caritas Myanmar. Importantly, this was not short term, but over a period of 15 years. In addition, the Caritas Australia staff member in the Caritas Myanmar office acted with humility and support, not authority.

This long-term accompaniment has enabled Caritas Myanmar to be a leading local organisation and to 'pay it forward' by accompanying smaller local CSOs in Myanmar, supporting them with their systems and helping them to gain access to funding. As a leading local development agency in Myanmar, Caritas Myanmar now manages multi-million dollar grants and co-founded a network of national actors engaged in the localisation agenda of the Grand Bargain.:

Read the full case study.

NINE:

Australian NGOs showcase local reach and long-term partnerships

Another key strength of Australian NGOs is their deep historical partnerships with local in-country NGOs and the extent to which they demonstrate vast geographical connections and relationships across countries. Through the ANCP alone, ANGOs partnered with over 2000 local organisations⁷³. In many cases, it is only Australian NGOs who are partnering with remote local organisations which frequently miss out on in-country government and international funding. This enhances the delivery of aid for the most marginalised populations who may not otherwise access aid funding. These connections are a distinct value add of ANGOs and result in value for money and the sustainability of development outcomes, as in the best cases, programs are embedded within local networks and systems.

As the 2022 ANCP evaluation⁷⁴ notes (emphasis added):

'The ANCP enables DFAT to support ANGOs to implement activities where they represent the most effective, and in some cases, only effective, delivery mechanism. NGOs' partners have demonstrated that they can deliver development assistance to the most vulnerable populations, despite constraints created by geopolitical tensions, humanitarian, and protracted crises. This is particularly important where there is no or limited Australian bilateral investment; where ANCP funding is significant compared to bilateral investment as a proportion of total official development assistance and where there is limited access for DFAT Posts to visit field locations'.

The DFAT Mid-term review of the Australian Red Cross - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Partnership 2019-2024⁷⁵ also highlights the distinct reach of the network of Red Cross societies:

'The other distinct identities that National Societies have is their nation-wide reach and their volunteer network. These were both consistently mentioned as strengths, which National Societies can leverage to amplify their voice at national decision-making forums. IFRC respondents in the Pacific observed that the national reach and local presence of some of the Pacific National Societies meant that they were

able to provide invaluable support to their respective Ministries of Health in areas such as surveillance and contact tracing as well as providing real-time data during the COVID-19 pandemic, including getting public health messaging out to communities at a time when movement was severely restricted'.

For many Australian NGOs, they work not just on projects and programs with local partners, but they have a shared sense of mission, values and purpose. The deep connections of Australian NGOs working in partnership with local organisations are reflected well in this quote from Floyd Lalwet, National Development Officer of the Episcopal Community Action for Renewal and Empowerment ECARE Foundation in the Philippines which partners with Anglicans in Development (under the Anglican Board of Mission Australia):

'The uniqueness and enduring character of the ECP-ABM partnership lies in the shared commitment. Hence, the relationship is beyond projects and programs...responding to human needs, transforming unjust structures and safeguarding the integrity of creation. In this thrust, the participants stand in a parity of position and the work of one positively impacts the other and the world around us. The stories and the learnings that arose out of this shared vision and work are what made us grow together and what continues to motivate and energise us to pursue the common mission'.

ANGOs' significant deep and long-term partnerships also increase their ability to respond quickly and effectively. For example, the DFAT 2022 Evaluation Review of the Australian NGO Gender Action Platform revealed (emphasis added):

'GAP partners were well placed as ANGOs to leverage long-term existing relationships to influence policy change within the three-year timeframe'.

This Evaluation⁷⁶ then cited several examples of successful policy changes which were able to be leveraged off long term ANGO relationships:

'Act for Peace influenced the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and government stakeholders to be more gender sensitive in the practice of return and repatriation of refugees.

PNG's National Department of Education approved and endorsed a comprehensive sexual education guide, which includes an integrated approach to SRH and menstrual hygiene management (MHM) (MSI/WaterAid).

PNG's National Department of Education endorsed the respectful relationship learning resource materials for inclusion in its Citizenship and Christian Values curriculum (ChildFund).

The Myanmar Occupational Safety and Health Law approved by the Union Parliament incorporated changes advocated by CARE and its partner organisations.

Women and implementing partners created, validated and submitted a Climate Change Charter of Demands and contributed to the Baringo (Kenya) Country's Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 2018-2022 (ActionAid)'.

73 2023-24 ANCP Performance Snapshot.
74 ANCP Evaluation 2022, Tetra Tech, p.3.
75 Kenyon 2023, p.17. Mid-term review of the Australian Red Cross - DFAT Partnership 2019-2024.

76 DFAT 2022 Evaluation Review of the Australian NGO Gender Action Platform, p.7.

TEN:

Australian NGOs are pivotal in the strengthening of civil society

As noted, there are numerous global threats to civil society, with rising authoritarianism, shrinking global aid funding and a turn away from the funding of civil society by emergent populist governments. Yet a strong civil society is essential for stable and peaceful nations. It takes a long time to build, and yet it can be quickly impeded by authoritarian actions. As the 2020 DAC Report on Civil Society Organisations⁷⁷ states:

'More must be done to create and protect enabling environments for CSOs and civil society...Around the world, efforts by various governments to restrict the legal, regulatory and policy space (also called civic space) in which civil society operates have grown. Increasingly, governments are using laws, policies and practices to limit the possibilities for people to come together to improve their everyday lives'.

The development of civil society is also critical to achieving Australia's International Development Policy⁷⁸ which strives to 'build effective, accountable states that drive their own development'. As the Minister for International Development, the Hon Pat Conroy MP noted in his 2022 Speech to Election Policy Forum on Aid and Development⁷⁹:

'Aid NGOs are important partners with the Australian Government in delivering development projects and in supporting civil society in developing countries. Supporting civil society promotes better governance and institutions in developing countries'.

Australia is also an adherent to the OECD DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Humanitarian and Development Responses (2021) which calls on Australia to strengthen its policies and strategies for working with civil society, in conjunction with civil society.

Australian NGOs play a unique role in strengthening civil society globally.



The two case studies from Health Equity Matters and Oxfam Australia demonstrate best practices in ANGOs working for the strengthening of civil society.

ORGANISATIONS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY AND THE STRENGTHENING OF CIVIL SOCIETY, OPEN THE BOOKS PHASE 2, OXFAM AUSTRALIA, TIMOR-LESTE

In Timor-Leste, Oxfam Australia has dedicated extensive programming to the strengthening of civil society, in particular with the disability movement. In this project, Oxfam Australia and Oxfam in Timor Leste have supported Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and their representatives to monitor and advocate for disability equity in Timor-Leste's state budget. This project has also assisted OPDs to successfully advocate for the updating of the National Disability Action Plan and the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Supporting civil society has led to many long-term sustainable development outcomes. The advocacy of OPDs has been influential in numerous policy outcomes, such as the Ministry of Transport and Communication and Ministry of Public Works now including focal points from the disability community within their organisations to advocate for their rights. Other successes include the allocation of a 1-2% quota in state budgets from the Secretary of Training, Employment and Policy for economic empowerment programs specifically targeted for people with disabilities.

Read the full case study.

IMAGES ABOVE AND BOTTOM LEFT: Disability Inclusion Promoters Group members in Dili participate in Oxfam's Open the Books training to advocate for a more inclusive state budget. Credit: Aderito do Rosario da Cunha Mambares/Oxfam.

STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY-LED HIV RESPONSE IN PNG & FIJI, HEALTH EQUITY MATTERS, PNG AND FIJI

Health Equity Matters focuses extensively on strengthening civil society in their programming, rather than addressing only short-term project objectives. In this program in PNG and Fiji, Health Equity Matters supports community-led and peer-led organisations with organisational development, governance, financial management, safeguarding systems and monitoring and evaluation. Civil society partners are also supported to engage formally with government health structures, ensuring their voices influence policy and resource allocation. In Fiji, this has led to partners such as Rainbow Pride Foundation and FJN+ consolidating their leadership roles within the HIV response, working with national taskforce structures, and creating pathways for sustained collaboration with government.

Read the full case study.

IMAGE TOP LEFT: Staff and members of the Key Populations Advocacy Consortium in PNG together following capacity building workshops focused on resource mobilisation and funding diversification for small community-led organisations. Credit: Health Equity Matters.

77 DAC CSO report 2020, pp.16-17.
78 DFAT 2023, p.7. Australia's International Development Policy.
79 Pat Conroy 2022 'Speech to 2022 Election Policy Forum on Aid and Development'.

ELEVEN:

Australian NGOs lead Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion results

Australia has increasingly focused its development programming on the achievement of Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI). With respect to gender equality, in 2025, Australia released its *International Gender Equality Strategy* and it has also committed to including a gender equality objective in all aid investments over \$3 million AUD. Australia also released the *Disability Equity and Rights Strategy* in 2024 and DFAT has released *Good Practice Notes* such as the 2023 *Good Practice Note on Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Analysis* and the *Disability Equity in Investment Design Good Practice Note* in partnership with CBM Australia and the Nossal Institute. The Australian Government has repeatedly stated that it wishes to improve its GEDSI results, for example, in the 2022-23 Performance of Australian Development Cooperation Report⁸⁰, the Minister for International Development, the Hon Pat Conroy MP notes:

'We also need to lift our disability equity results. These are critical to ensuring our development efforts are effective and leave no one behind'.

Both qualitative and quantitative data indicate that ANGOs are ahead in leading Australia's gender equality and disability work. As the 2022 ANCP Evaluation⁸¹ states:

'The extent to which ANCP contributes to public diplomacy and positioning gender equality and disability inclusion should be celebrated... The ANCP's commitment to Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) through its accreditation process and the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) Framework is ensuring that GEDSI is embedded in partner systems and projects'.

Attentiveness to GEDSI is built into DFAT accreditation processes of ANCP funded partners. For example, the latest ANCP Performance Snapshot⁸² notes:

'Social inclusion is an integral part of ANCP's Program Logic. DFAT accreditation verifies that ANCP NGOs have appropriate policies, systems and capacity to promote gender equality and incorporate disability inclusive practices in development programming'.

Through the ANCP, ANGOs continue to deliver excellent results for gender equality. For example, in 2023-24:⁸³

- 376,292 people participated in sessions on gender issues and women's equal rights (64.3 per cent women and girls, 2.4 per cent people with disabilities), up from 368,421 people in 2022-23 and 354,680 people in 2021-22.
- 47,512 women were supported to assume leadership roles (3.2 per cent women with disabilities), up from 30,029 women in 2022-23 and 31,509 women in 2021-22.
- 44,766 female entrepreneurs were provided with financial and/or business development services (2.7 per cent women with disabilities), up from 14,043 in 2022-23 and 10,239 in 2021-22.
- 3,453 women's groups, organisations and coalitions were actively involved across projects, compared to 3,490 in 2022-23 and 3,213 in 2021-22.

Regarding ANGOs' expertise in disability equity, ANCP statistics⁸⁴ reveal that in 2023-24, 636 Organisations of Persons with Disabilities were engaged across all projects with a principal or significant disability focus.

In 2023-24⁸⁵, the ANCP also reported the following results for disability equity:

- '17,756 people received disability support services specific to their needs (51.4 per cent women and girls), up from 11,721 people in 2022-23.
- 138,509 people trained in disability awareness and inclusion, up from 105,891 people in 2022-23.
- 6,534 people were trained in delivery of disability support services (58.9 per cent women and girls), up from 4,667 people in 2022-23'.

Australian NGO projects have not only demonstrated significant innovations in GEDSI, they have also supported DFAT with its capacity. For example, the 2024 Partnership Evaluation was glowing in the way that CBM Australia and the Nossal Institute for Global Health had built DFAT's capacity on disability inclusiveness. The evaluation notes⁸⁶:

'The evaluation found broad evidence of improvements in awareness and commitment of DFAT staff to DID, noting that this is an ongoing agenda. Significant examples of changes in DFAT policy and practice were also identified. Partnership monitoring data and interviews with end-users, focal points and OPDs showed that the vast majority of those who received technical advice and support through the Partnership increased their knowledge and awareness of disability inclusion, including for both DFAT staff and implementing partners'.

The Evaluation also included an important quote from a DFAT staff member, demonstrating this change:

'What has been changing in DFAT is incremental, no revolution but an evolution... when I think back to engagement on disability inclusion 5-10 years ago it's now much better and more embedded in mainstream thinking around development policy but also more broadly as a result of partnership'.

80 22-23 PADC report p.3.

81 Evaluation 2022 Tetra Tech p.3.

82 2023-24 ANCP Performance Snapshot.

83 2023-24 ANCP Performance Snapshot.

84 ANCP Performance Snapshot 23-24.

85 ANCP Performance Snapshot 23-24.

86 Clear Horizon 2024, p.v. DFAT CBM Australia Nossal Institute Partnership Evaluation

87 Clear Horizon 2024, p.3. DFAT CBM Australia Nossal Institute Partnership Evaluation



The following case studies further highlight Australian NGOs' expertise in GEDSI, with examples from the POWER consortium of ANGOs and Opportunity International Australia.

PROMOTING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND RIGHTS (POWER): STRENGTHENING VOICES, CHOICES AND RIGHTS, AUSTRALIAN LUTHERAN WORLD SERVICE, ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF AGENCY, INTERNATIONAL NEPAL FELLOWSHIP, CARITAS AUSTRALIA, NEPAL

This unique consortium-led model draws on the expertise of each Australian NGO and in-country partners to deliver a highly comprehensive program covering 18 districts in Nepal.

The program empowers communities to create gender sensitive environments and to prevent sexual and gender-based violence. It is highly innovative, drawing on the skills of each partner - supporting Women Human Rights Defenders, integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in schools, strengthening GESI responses in government, enabling income generating opportunities for women and working with men for social norms change. By working in a consortium, partners were able to train each other and guide each other using their own individual expertise.

Read the full case study.

IMAGE ABOVE: Women from Pyuthan District march for women's rights during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. Credit: POWER Consortium.

ADVANCING DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE FINANCE IN INDONESIA, OPPORTUNITY INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA, INDONESIA

Opportunity International Australia works in a local partnership consortium model to dismantle systemic barriers that prevent women with disabilities, pregnant women and elderly people—particularly in rural areas—from accessing financial services.

Unlike many top-down programs, this program empowers local organisations and women entrepreneurs with disabilities to lead the design, implementation and advocacy for the program. This program resulted in a set of practical tools to support financial service providers in creating more inclusive products and services. The use of the Washington Group Short Set for impairment-disaggregated data collection is a unique feature of this program that enables tailored financial design. The program also embeds Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion principles into digital infrastructure, such as accessible mobile apps and inclusive communication tools.

Read the full case study.

TWELVE:

Australian NGOs illustrate significant innovation in climate resilience, mitigation and adaptation

With climate change a growing threat to communities in Australia and overseas, climate resilience has become a much sharper focus for Australian NGOs in the past decade. The Australian Government has also increased its commitment to climate resilience, including through Australia's development program. For example, in the 22-23 Performance of Australian Development Cooperation Report⁸⁸, DFAT notes that:

'From 2024–25, at least half of all new bilateral and regional investments that are valued at more than \$3 million will have a climate change objective, with a goal of this rising to 80 per cent in 2028–29'.

The 2023-24 ANCP Performance Snapshot further illustrates the role of Australian NGOs in this work, stating that:

'ANCP NGOs are playing an increasing role in climate change action in the Australian development program. This is reflected in increasing ANCP contribution to climate finance over time'.

Evaluations of the work of Australian NGOs highlights the innovations of ANGO in their work on climate resilience. For example, the 2024 AHP Evaluation in Ethiopia and Kenya⁸⁹ stated that:

'The interventions implemented have contributed to (or will contribute to) enhancing resilience in the face of climate change challenges in numerous ways...Diversifying livelihoods has been an important contributor to resilience building. By enabling communities to engage in income-generating activities beyond traditional agriculture and livestock rearing, the projects reduced their vulnerability to climate fluctuations'.

Clearly, a large part of climate resilience involves finding innovative strategies with scarce funding, in particular to respond to disasters. A DFAT staff member at Post, interviewed for this report, reflected on their observation of a program which was highly innovative:

'The one that stands out to me that I can remember quite clearly was an Oxfam Australia project in the Pacific. It was around social protection, so it was in the countries that didn't have a dedicated social protection framework and it was impressive because I think Oxfam were really innovative and also acutely aware of their value-add and their limitation in the space. So, they were great at actually engaging beyond the development sector, with the banking sector, with private investment firms. One part of it was a mobile app and it was backed up by blockchain technology, which was unheard of in the Pacific at the time. They had to get the government on board because there was no regulation and legislation and policy around it and then worked with an Australian company, I think which helped with the back end blockchain work. So, there's quite a few different elements that was outside Oxfam's comfort zone, so they had to pull in technical expertise at different points in time. It played to their strength that it was really community based and community focused so responsive to needs...'

88 PADC report 2022–23
89 Policy Research Institute 2024, p.33. Australian Humanitarian Partnership's Activations on Food Security and Livelihoods in Ethiopia and Kenya: Final Report

The following case studies from Water for Women, implemented by Plan Australia and Climate Resilient by Nature, implemented by WWF Australia further demonstrate the significant work of ANGOs in climate resilience.

WHEN NATURE THRIVES, SO DO WE, CLIMATE RESILIENT BY NATURE (CRXN), WWF AUSTRALIA, FIJI, VANUATU, TIMOR LESTE, PNG, VIETNAM, LAOS PDR, CAMBODIA, SOLOMON ISLANDS, SAMOA, KIRIBATI

This program supports communities to “work with nature” to build social and ecological resilience to climate change impacts. It is a highly unique program which has been much lauded for its innovation - diversifying livelihoods through floating rice farming, aquaculture and eco-tourism. Each local partner develops a localised resilience theory tailored to their context. This ensures that interventions are not only ecologically sound but also socially and economically relevant. The program has resulted in the improved management of over 152,000 hectares of land and seascapes, supporting almost 13,000 individuals.

This program further fosters inclusive partnerships with governments, civil society, and the private sector, to scale and sustain nature-based solutions. Another unique feature is CRN’s multi-layered financing strategy, which blends voluntary carbon markets, nature-positive value chains, and private sector partnerships to grow nature-based solutions.

Ready the full case study.

INCLUSIVE, CLIMATE-RESILIENT WASH IN ASIA-PACIFIC - LEARNING FROM PRACTICE, WATER FOR WOMEN, PLAN INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA, INDONESIA, PNG AND THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

Seeing that climate resilience was an ongoing challenge in the region, Water for Women pivoted to take a much greater focus on climate in its last stage of programming. This program demonstrates the unique nexus between climate, WASH and GEDSI - highlighting how all three are essential for climate resilience.

Plan International Australia’s program provided expert management and technical support to key government bodies at local and sub-national levels to strengthen WASH governance, planning and monitoring systems and to deliver improved, climate resilient WASH services in households, communities and institutions.

It resulted in improved access to inclusive and climate resilient WASH. In the Solomon Islands this served 12 communities and over 2,500 people. For some communities, this was the first time they had access to improved sources of water. This program also worked closely with local ministries to integrate the WASH action plans into their local governance structures.

Significantly, this program focused on supporting institutions to deliver and sustain inclusive and climate resilient WASH services, not just infrastructure, resulting in the sustainability of climate focused activities.

Read the full case study.

IMAGE: Pororan Primary School, Bougainville, PNG - WASH committee and hygiene teacher presenting their WASH improvement plan to other schools during ToT. Credit: Ishmael Palipal, Plan International PNG.



IMAGES LEFT: Nguyen Thi Thanh Phuong, CRxN Project Manager, WWF-Viet Nam holds a floating rice plant. Credit: WWF-Australia / Veronica Joseph.

Wilson Hazelman of Corals for Conservation, moves corals previously identified as ‘heat-adapted’ into a new nursery off in Moturiki, Fiji. Credit: WWF-Australia / Tom Vierus.

Then we saw it in action in a couple of tropical cyclones as well that came through and how cost efficient it was at the end of the day as well rather than having a big, you know, disaster response always can be costly and not particularly well targeted. So, it really showed the cost effectiveness and the impact of building these relationships, both the existing relationships with the community and then getting the private sector on board, getting the government on board. That showed the real value of an Australian NGO actually as well, that they had access to the Australian side of things that Oxfam Vanuatu wouldn't have. They can build the relationships with this blockchain company or whatever as well to link it all the way through. That was really best practice from what I've seen'.



THIRTEEN:

Australian NGOs demonstrate best practices in risk management and agility

Australian NGOs have tight risk management controls, including but not limited to:

- the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission regulations.
- the ACFID Code of Conduct.
- DFAT's rigorous ANCP accreditation processes.

An interview⁹⁰ with Alison Baker, Technical Director, International Development with GHD (the Staff Lead for the Managing Contractor responsible for Water for Women) shared her insights into the unique value of ANGOs and their processes of risk management:

'Australian NGOs play an important risk management role. To be eligible for funding, NGOs go through comprehensive accreditation processes for safeguarding, PSEAH and fraud, and then support local teams in the delivery of these processes, including further downstream partners. The systems of the ANGOs are very important. Portions of project funds often get directed to rights holder organisations at the local level – these are often very small poorly resourced groups who need support. ANGOs have mechanisms to deal with sexual harassment, domestic violence and child protection and can work with these local organisations to address these areas if they arise. A local representative in the country team wouldn't go to DFAT, but they can go to the ANGO because of the relationship, especially when things are sensitive. They know they will be treated with dignity and receive the necessary support to work through issues.'

Regarding the role of ANGOs in managing risk, ANGOs also play an important role in conveying DFAT expectations to partners. As Grace Heaoa⁹¹ from DT Global (managing the Church Partnership Program) stated:

'ANGOs are filling the gaps. ANGOs provide 1-1 support with churches and they have really long contact with those churches. With PNG partners, the relationship is so important. With them being churches their relationships with other churches is really important...We are coming in with DFAT expectations. ANGOs can translate that back to the church partner. There are a lot of requirements. ANGOs break that down for the churches.'

Through their deep connections with partners and on-the-ground realities, ANGOs demonstrate significant agility in their programming which means they can respond to risks effectively and efficiently. For example, the 2022 ANCP evaluation⁹² demonstrated this agility throughout the pandemic:

'Since March 2020, many of the ANCP-funded projects have pivoted to address the emerging health needs in their respective countries. Capacity to respond quickly was a necessity as healthcare systems in many developing and fragile countries began to be overwhelmed by the spread of the COVID-19 virus.'

This quick pivoting during the Covid-19 pandemic was also noted in the 2020-21 ANCP Performance Snapshot⁹³:

'ANGOs work directly with local partners to deliver programs that are responding to the social and economic impact of the pandemic... ANGOs' established relationships with local partners support adaptive programming to COVID-19. With restrictions to international travel and resource mobilisation ongoing in 2020-21, the long-standing partnerships between ANGOs and local partners allowed the program to react quickly to evolving local needs and contexts.'

90 Interview for this report.

91 Interview for this report.

92 Evaluation 2022 Tetra Tech p.22.

93 2020-21 ANCP Performance Snapshot p.1.



The following case studies from the Church Agencies Network – Disaster Operations and The Fred Hollows Foundation demonstrate the effective risk management and agility of ANGOs.

CAN DO RESPONSE TO ENGA LANDSLIDE IN PNG, CHURCH AGENCIES NETWORK- DISASTER OPERATIONS (CAN DO), PNG

This project responded to the Enga Landslide which occurred in May 2024 in the PNG Highlands. The project location was identified as highly volatile even prior to the landslide response. Regular tribal fighting, particularly along areas leading to the landslide area, were well known. This was further exacerbated by the landslide, particularly as this impacted road access to a local mine (another source of tension).

CAN DO was effectively able to manage the response through local partners, ADRA PNG and the Baptist Union of PNG, by gaining real-time local risk assessments from local groups and by working with trusted, culturally embedded structures such as churches, pastors, women's ministries and youth leaders for targeting, distribution, psychosocial support and real time feedback.

These deeply embedded local relations demonstrate best practice in agility and risk management, with CAN DO and their partners quickly able to pivot their response. For example, the response involved: the relocation of psychosocial support training to safer locations when one area became insecure; the leveraging of trusted church and community networks for last-mile delivery and feedback; shifts from direct distribution to government-led delivery (shelter kits handed) and the adjustment of distribution sites (to church compounds) based on community feedback for safety and access. Local partners also knew when it was unsafe to complete activities such as food distribution and they were able to complete this a short notice at a later date. This reliance on local advice and deep relationships with culturally embedded institutions enabled this agility and effective risk.

Read the full case study.

IMAGE: Volunteers and staff providing food and goods distribution to the community. Credit: Baptist Union PNG (BUPNG).

The DFAT Evaluation of the Australian Red Cross and DFAT Partnership⁹⁴ also highlighted this agility demonstrated during the pandemic:

'Perhaps unsurprisingly most of the country reports include commentary on the National Societies' COVID-19 prevention, preparedness, and response work. Without this work the situation with regards to COVID-19 in each country would have almost certainly been worse, and National Societies' leadership and staff, and their supporters including Australian Red Cross, should be proud. The ability to pivot to meet this new threat was an extraordinary demonstration of organisational ability, and consideration should be given to how this may be applied to other challenges.'

94 Kenyon 2023, p.17. Mid-term review of the Australian Red Cross - DFAT Partnership 2019-2024.p.6.



SHARING RISK, ENABLING AGILITY AND CENTERING LOCAL DECISION MAKING, MULTIPLE EYE HEALTH PROJECTS, THE FRED HOLLOWES FOUNDATION, WEST BANK, GAZA AND OCCUPIED EAST JERUSALEM

These eye health projects demonstrate significant agility when working in a high-risk environment. These projects enabled 3,541 people to receive FHF supported eye surgeries and clinical training in Palestine and 41,000 patients to receive eye screening in a highly risky environment. It shows the strengths of Australian NGOs in partnering with local organisations to effectively manage risks. In a volatile context, the need to defer to local voices to manage risk and find rapid solutions to challenges is critical to ensure bespoke adaptation and the safe stewardship of funding.

FHF was able to manage risk by deferring to local partners for advice and by quickly pivoting during periods of active conflict to repurpose staff to work in trauma teams which resulted in more eye surgeries and screening because other health services were closed. In periods of increased militarisation in the West Bank, FHF and its partners were also able to quickly pivot to formal partnerships with women’s organisations, disabled persons organisations and schools to conduct eye health screening in non-clinical settings. These measures, along with annual budgeting in the local currency, a daily review of socio-political changes, the building of regional partnerships and a focus on local partners’ advice, demonstrate best practice in agility and risk management.

Read the full case study.

IMAGE: Suhad Abu Diab, an optometrist at St. John Eye Hospital Group, administering a vision test at St. John Eye Hospital Group Ophthalmology Station, Deir Al Balah. Credit/Provider: St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group. Copyright: ©St. John Eye Hospital Group.

FOURTEEN:

Australian NGOs’ programs result in the sustainability of development outcomes

One of the key ways that ANGOs demonstrate effectiveness is through a strong focus on trying to ensure that development outcomes are sustainable. This is enhanced through ANGOs’ emphasis on development effectiveness, long and enduring relationships with local partners and their ability to monitor longitudinal progress. ANGOs also have a strong reputation for working with local governments and for sharing lessons learned regionally, particularly when it comes to advocacy campaigns.

The 2022 DFAT Evaluation of the Australian NGO Gender Action Program⁹⁵ was emphatic about the extent to which ANGOs could achieve successful development outcomes:

‘ANGOs are well positioned to influence policies. Like norms change, all partners found that influencing policy is a long-term process. However, GAP partners were well placed as ANGOs to leverage long-term existing relationships with the private sector (CARE), government agencies (ChildFund, MSI/WaterAid, Act for Peace), and in-country NGO partners (Act for Peace and ActionAid) to effectively influence changes in policy within a three-year timeframe’.

The Evaluation⁹⁶ further stated:

‘All six projects were successful in changing policies, practices, and curricula within national government systems and the private sector’.

ANGOs’ work for sustainable development outcomes was also emphasised in the AHP 2024 Evaluation, which notes:

‘The... interventions have taken a two-pronged approach: addressing the immediate emergency needs, while also promoting sustainable strategies to build resilience’.

The work of Australian NGOs to ensure sustainable development outcomes is highlighted in four highly unique case studies below from Union Aid Abroad (APHEDA), the Salvation Army International Development, CARE Australia and The Leprosy Mission Australia.

The work of Australian NGOs to ensure sustainable development outcomes is highlighted in four highly unique case studies below from Union Aid Abroad (APHEDA), the Salvation Army International Development, CARE Australia and The Leprosy Mission Australia.

IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR TRANSFORMATION (IMPACT), CARE AUSTRALIA, PNG

CARE Australia has worked closely with local government partners to improve the sustainability of development outcomes in health and in reducing gender-based violence (GBV) and sorcery-accusation related violence in PNG.

This project improves the sustainability of outcomes through strengthening existing government systems, rather than bypassing them and through developing embedded social accountability mechanisms. For example, health facilities and local government use tools like the Citizen Charter and Complaint Feedback Mechanism which has been replicated in other communities not funded through the project. Communities have been active participants, developing clan-based GBV action plans and engaging with local government to reopen closed health posts.

Read the full case study.

IMAGE: Feedback Mechanism Box presented by CARE staff to Family Support Centre staff at Goroka Provincial Hospital, Eastern Highlands Province. Credit: Benson Wanguare, CARE PNG.



95 DFAT 2022 Evaluation Review of the Australian NGO Gender Action Platform, page 26.
96 DFAT 2022 Evaluation Review of the Australian NGO Gender Action Platform, page 7.



ASBESTOS. NOT HERE. NOT ANYWHERE, UNION AID ABROAD, APHEDA, SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

This innovative project focuses on promoting the ban of asbestos in countries in Southeast Asia, the transition from asbestos to safer materials and the reduction of further asbestos related diseases (ARDs). Focus countries include Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Vietnam and Malaysia.

The project takes a campaigning and movement building approach, combined with direct technical assistance to governments, with the aim of effecting regulatory change which will benefit millions of workers by decreasing exposure to asbestos. This model builds sustainable development outcomes by combining localisation (support to ban networks in each country) with global evidence and research.

Policy change has been documented in each country. For example, Cambodia announced a plan to ban asbestos in 2023, regional bans have been instituted in Indonesia and the Asian Development Bank announced a prohibition on asbestos materials in all new investments from January 2026. APHEDA has continued to work with local partners to ensure the integration of asbestos related issues into ongoing occupational health and safety campaigns of participating trade unions and partners.

Read the full case study.

IMAGES: Left – Campaign to ban asbestos in Cambodia by members of the Building and Woodworkers Trade Union Confederation 2023. Credit: Thy Yann. Right – Campaign at the Conference of the Parties, Geneva Switzerland 2025, to reform voting procedure for Rotterdam Convention to defeat a 20-year block by industry and producer countries on listing chrysotile asbestos and other blocked chemicals. Credit: RC Secretariat.



IMAGE: Sule Fatima showing off her Permanent Voters Card. Credit: Chukwu Jeffrey Chinwendu The Leprosy Mission Nigeria.

COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT THROUGH WARD DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: THE SALVATION ARMY INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT'S CHURCH PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA, THE SALVATION ARMY, PNG

This project is part of the Church Partnership Program which is a collaboration between the Australian Government (via DFAT), seven mainline churches in PNG and their Australian NGO counterparts.

This project focuses on building sustainable development outcomes through working with local ward development committees (WDC) to produce their own ward development plans which are constitutionally recognised documents. These plans involve local communities setting their own priorities and development agenda for their communities.

Unlike many localisation efforts that focus solely on empowering communities, this program also engages duty bearers (government actors) in the accountability process. The Salvation Army International Development facilitates structured dialogue between communities and government. This dual approach helps prevent misalignment and builds mutual trust. The Salvation Army International Development also involves government officials as active collaborators, including reviewing tools, endorsing the training manuals and supporting implementation (e.g. facilitating bank account set up for WDCs). This approach strengthens connections and the sustainability of the model.

Read the full case study.

IMAGES: Ward Development Planning training with participants in Gulf Province. Credit: The Salvation Army. Cover of completed Ward Development Plan, Ward 22, Kerema District, Gulf Province.



ELECTORAL REFORM FOR DISABILITY/LEPROSY, THE LEPROSY MISSION AUSTRALIA, NIGERIA

The Leprosy Mission Australia delivered this program with the Leprosy Mission Nigeria, building on previous advocacy efforts with local disability agencies and the work of the National Human Rights Commission in Nigeria.

Up to the beginning of 2023, the Independent Nigerian Electoral Commission required all citizens who wished to vote to provide fingerprints. People with disabilities, especially those affected by leprosy, often do not have fingers and were therefore disenfranchised. In addition, Electoral Officers discriminated against people with leprosy as they feared catching the disease due to a lack of knowledge.

As a result of a series of lobbying activities, the Electoral Commission implemented a range of improvements including an additional biometric: facial recognition and Electoral Officers no longer feared registering people affected by leprosy. About 50% of the leprosy population voted in 2023, compared to 30% of the general population. In addition, the Electoral Commission included a braille ballot guide for people with sight loss and posters using visual arts to enable people with hearing impairments to understand the voting procedure.

People with disabilities are also now allowed to be accompanied into the polling unit.

These transformational reforms will have important sustainable effects for people with leprosy and disabilities in Nigeria.

Read the full case study.

FIFTEEN:

Conclusion

This review aimed to answer the question: *'How do ANGOs contribute to effective, inclusive and sustainable development outcomes through their delivery of Australian aid?'*

Through both qualitative and quantitative analysis, this review found that ANGOs contributed to effective, inclusive and sustainable development via Australian aid through several key areas, as detailed below.

ANGOs were found to deliver development outcomes disproportionate to their relative share of the aid program. This was evident in particular through comparing ANCP results with overall Australian aid program results. It was clear that ANGOs through the ANCP contribute significantly above their relative size to Australian aid priorities such as gender equality, disability equity, education and climate resilience. Furthermore, ANCP data only captures part of the work of ANGOs. The work of ANGOs is far more expansive than the ANCP.

This review also found that in this difficult global environment where global aid dollars are rapidly shrinking, the social license for aid is increasingly important, as is value for money. ANGOs were shown to enhance public support for the aid program, increasing the social license for aid spending through connecting Australian communities via volunteering, community to community linkages, fundraising and education. ANGO programming also represents significant value for money, with ANGOs leveraging government contributions with private donations and demonstrating significant innovation and agility. Direct funding for ANGOs was also found to be underutilised in Australia, with significant potential to upscale direct funding to NGOs.

In these difficult global times, ANGOs' contributions to strengthening civil society in local contexts and focus on sustainable development outcomes, beyond short program cycles, was also highly significant. Enhancing locally led action and development was also critical and a number of ANGOs are leading best practices in changing their approaches to be more locally driven. This work was also enriched by ANGOs' extensive local reach and long-term partnerships which were better able to embed development outcomes in local systems and meet the needs of highly vulnerable and isolated communities.

This review also found that ANGOs have highly robust risk management processes and embedded agility through their deep connections and responsiveness to local partner priorities and information sharing. This was evident throughout both development and humanitarian programming. It is important to note also that ANGOs were found to achieve whole of government objectives beyond the aid program, especially in enhancing diplomatic relations.

To highlight these results, this review showcases only a small percentage of relevant case studies. Future research could certainly collect more examples of ANGOs' contributions to the Australian aid program and due to space limitations, many excellent examples were not able to be included in this report. In addition, if more statistical data is available from non-ANCP projects, it would be helpful to analyse these examples and to see how they compare with overall results in the Australian aid program. At present, the most detailed publicly available data is from the ANCP. There is scope to further expand analysis as more data becomes available. In addition, there is scope for ANCP data reporting to better align with Performance of Australian Development Cooperation reports. Future research could further focus on particular country case studies, analysing the experiences of local partners and communities and also geographically, thematically and financially mapping ANGO work in each country.

IMAGE: Ibu Rohanah, one of KOMIDA's women micro-entrepreneurs with disabilities that has a food stall. Credit: Opportunity International Australia.

ANNEX ONE:

Extended Case Studies

"ENGAGING THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC ON TUBERCULOSIS", RESULTS INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA

LOCATIONS: AUSTRALIA (NATIONAL), WITH REGIONAL LINKS TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND THE INDO-PACIFIC.

PARTNERS: GRASSROOTS VOLUNTEERS AND TB ADVOCATES; AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP GROUP FOR TUBERCULOSIS; GLOBAL TB CAUCUS; PAPUA NEW GUINEA TB CAUCUS; DFAT; GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA.

DESCRIPTION:

Tuberculosis (TB) remains the world's leading infectious disease killer, causing more than one million deaths each year, with a significant burden in the Indo-Pacific region. Results International Australia engages and mobilises the Australian public to raise awareness of TB, build political will, and strengthen Australia's leadership in the global TB response.

Through grassroots advocacy, Results Australia equips community members with knowledge of TB, its regional impact, and practical advocacy skills. Volunteers are supported to engage decision-makers through meetings with Members of Parliament, letter-writing, media engagement, and digital advocacy, ensuring that community voices inform Australia's global health priorities.

On World TB Day, 24 March 2025, Results Australia coordinated a nationwide awareness action, with a record 74 buildings and landmarks illuminated in red across Australia. This highly visible campaign raised national awareness of the ongoing fight to end tuberculosis and reinforced the message that TB remains preventable and curable with sustained investment.

Advocates and staff gathered in Canberra, Melbourne, and Sydney to participate in community engagement activities and document the campaign at prominent civic landmarks. These actions combined public visibility with advocacy grounded in lived experience, including the leadership of TB survivors and long-term community advocates.

Results Australia also plays a central role in strengthening parliamentary engagement on TB. With the commencement of a new parliamentary term and with support from Results Australia, the Australian Parliamentary Friendship Group for Tuberculosis has been re-formed, with bipartisan Co-Chairs from Labor, the Liberal Party, and the crossbench- Hon Kate Thwaites, Ms Mary Aldred and Dr Sophie Scamps.

Results Australia further supports the Papua New Guinea TB Caucus and works closely with the Global TB Caucus, linking domestic advocacy with regional and global leadership.

Jennifer Peake Global Health Manager and Lead on Parliamentary friends of Australian Tuberculosis Caucus notes the benefit of raising public awareness of Tuberculosis to drive political action:

"Public engagement gives parliamentarians the mandate to act. When Australians understand the scale and impact of tuberculosis across the Indo-Pacific, they help generate the political momentum required for strong, bipartisan leadership and lasting change."

KEY RESULTS:

- 74 buildings illuminated nationwide on World TB Day 2025, generating unprecedented public visibility for TB.
- Over 100 grassroots volunteers mobilised and trained, strengthening community-led advocacy on TB.
- Hundreds of advocacy actions (letters, calls, and meetings) delivered to parliamentarians ahead of the Global Fund replenishment.
- Bipartisan parliamentary leadership strengthened through the re-formation of the Australian Parliamentary Friendship Group for Tuberculosis.
- High-level parliamentary engagement with advocates and staff highlighting the need for continued investment in Tuberculosis.
- Event organised by Results Australia at parliament house with Minister Aly announcing a \$266 million commitment to the Global Fund, reinforcing Australia's role in the global TB response.



“SOLUKHUMBU WOMEN’S HEALTH PROJECT INCLUDING TELEHEALTH”, AUSTRALIAN HIMALAYAN FOUNDATION

LOCATIONS: NEPAL: FOUR WARDS OF SOLUKHUMBU.

PARTNERS: MULTIPLE, INCLUDING ACTION FOR NEPAL.

The project aimed to improve the sexual and reproductive health of women living in the remote communities of Solukhumbu. It focuseed on improving the sexual and reproductive health of women living in four remote communities of Solukhumbu. By strengthening health facilities, workforce capacity, and service accessibility, the project improved women’s healthcare, enhanced governance, and promoted disability equity in these underserved areas. It includes many innovative components, including a telehealth pilot.

Dr. Jangmoo Sherpa, Program Director of Action for Nepal, described the benefits of the project as follows:

‘The Telehealth project was a need identified during SWHP implementation. For many, this meant avoiding costly and time-consuming travel to district hospitals. One woman from Waku, for example, was able to receive timely advice for pregnancy-related complications through telehealth, which previously would have required a day’s walk and transport costs her family could not easily afford.

Seventy percent of referrals were avoided, meaning fewer families faced the financial and logistical burden of referral, as health posts could resolve cases locally. This not only reduced out-of-pocket costs but also eased pressure on higher-level facilities. At the same time, local health workers gained confidence in managing cases through remote guidance, a capacity that will continue to generate benefits even without ongoing project funding’.

The Solukhumbu Women’s Health Project paved the way for:

- the Australian Himalayan Foundation to receive an **Australian Awards Fellowship** funded by DFAT to host 12 Nepali health Fellows with the University of Sydney in early 2025.
- the development of a **new telehealth initiative** partially funded through ANCP and currently implemented across four districts through the combined partnership of the Australian Himalayan Foundation, Action for Nepal, One Heart Worldwide, Green Tara Nepal and the ASK Foundation.

IMAGE: New mother Bhurana and her baby meet with nurse Mingmar. Credit: Allan Delaney.



“REGIONAL SWIPE SAFE”, CHILDFUND AUSTRALIA

LOCATIONS: CAMBODIA, TIMOR-LESTE, INDONESIA, VIETNAM.

PARTNERS: SOUTHEAST ASIA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AFFAIRS, GOVERNMENT PARTNERS IN VIETNAM.

Emerging evidence confirms indicates the growing harm, sexually exploitation and abuse of children online. Today, rapid access to mobile-led online connection and children’s technology-facilitated interactions are rapidly increasing. ChildFund’s innovative “Swipe Safe” program directly targets children and their parents to build core online self-protective skills for young people and to build the digital literacy and protection skills of parents, equipping them to be key safety partners for their young people. Building from the pilot phase, this regional project engages law enforcement and frontline service workers.

KEY RESULTS:

- The Swipe Safe program demonstrates **value for money** as the pilot program in Vietnam has now expanded to Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Indonesia (in this current project) as well as Solomon Islands, Philippines, Fiji, Ecuador, and Brazil through other funding.
- To expand reach, ChildFund also developed a **self-directed, interactive, and educational Swipe Safe App** (<https://swipesafe.org/>) to keep young people safe online, which has been contextualised and translated for various countries. The program involved Women’s Rights Movements and consultation with children with disabilities to contextualise the Swipe safe app.
- The **app and curriculum** empowers girls and boys to confront harmful attitudes and behaviours such as sexism and gender-based violence, with specific activities on power and a focus on being responsible online and respecting others. The app has a chapter on harmful and offensive content such as ableism, sexism, misogyny and hate speech with tips for supporting others and speaking up against inequality when safe to do so.

IMAGE: Swipe Safe facilitator in Laos guiding primary school students through the online programme. ChildFund Laos (please note this office is no longer in operation)



IMAGE: Dr Orovu Sepoe and the Research Steering Committee launch The WEAVERS Research Report. Credit: PNG WOMEN LEAD.

“WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT AND VOICE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA (WEAVERS)”, INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

LOCATIONS: PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

PARTNERS: IMPLEMENTED BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (IWDA), VOICE FOR CHANGE (VFC) AND WIDE BAY CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION (WBCA). THIS PROGRAM ALSO ENGAGED 38 WOMEN’S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS ACROSS FIVE RESEARCH SITES.

The WEAVERS project was instrumental in addressing systemic challenges faced by women and girls in PNG, by supporting women’s rights organisations’ core work, building their organisational capacity, and supporting them to advocate for gender equality and women’s rights.

Additionally, the project funded a significant, locally led research project implemented by respected PNG researcher Dr Orovu Sepoe, with a local Steering Committee and research team. Recognising the importance and transformative role that women’s rights organisations (WROs) and rights actors play in addressing gender inequality and women’s empowerment, the WEAVERS research set out to unravel and understand the ecosystem of rights actors, individuals, groups and networks that comprise the women’s movement in Papua New Guinea.

KEY RESULTS:

- An independent evaluation of the WEAVERS Research ‘found that the project’s lead actors and the research methodology embodied decolonial approaches to a very high extent. In addition, it found that the research process and findings have meaningfully strengthened the PNG women’s movement. Critically, the evaluation determined that the research has catalysed local energies and processes that look set to further deepen movement strengthening in the months and years to come’ (Evaluation p. 5).
- The research process contributed to **strengthening the PNG women’s rights movement**, by ‘celebrating, recognising and validating the PNG women’s movement; describing a collective consciousness

amongst PNG women’s rights actors; constituting a call to collective action; catalysing support from government; and opening space for movement-informed action by other stakeholders’ (Evaluation, p.5).

- The WEAVERS Project demonstrates **best practice in locally-led action** through its accompaniment model, which ‘went beyond the typical donor-funded support to small NGOs’ by offering mentoring, financial and administrative training, and infrastructure aligned with partners’ priorities. Its success was underpinned by the ‘standing of Vfc and WBCA as known and trusted local organisations, widely recognised for their work’ (Evaluation p.5).
- Vfc and WBCA reported significant **organisational strengthening in governance, finance, and administration**, enabling them to operate more sustainably and attract other donors.
- Locally led programs also achieved tangible community impact: Vfc supported over 1,100 survivors of GBV with legal and counselling services, safe houses, and referrals, while WBCA’s training increased women’s participation in ward committees and decision-making on land.
- The **Young Women’s Leadership Program** enabled alumnae to contest elections and take on civic roles, directly expanding women’s leadership. These outcomes demonstrate that investing in trusted local organisations delivered both organisational resilience and cultural change, improving women’s safety, rights, and representation.



“CARITAS MYANMAR: A JOURNEY FROM LOCAL NGO TO NATIONAL LEADER IN MYANMAR’S CIVIL SOCIETY”, CARITAS AUSTRALIA

LOCATIONS: ALL 14 STATES AND REGIONS OF MYANMAR, THROUGH A NATIONAL OFFICE IN YANGON AND 16 DIOCESAN OFFICES.

PARTNERS: CARITAS MYANMAR.

This project exemplifies best practice by transforming a small NGO into a national leader through sustained, embedded accompaniment. Key best practices include:

- **Embedded accompaniment:** CA seconded staff inside Caritas Myanmar for 15 years, mentoring leaders directly.
- **Systems first:** Focus on strengthening finance, HR, MEAL and governance before scaling programming.
- **Locally led reforms:** Caritas Myanmar set its own priorities; partners supported rather than dictated.
- **Networked support:** Collaboration with CAFOD, CRS, and Trócaire maximised resources.
- **Accountability focus:** Adoption of Caritas Internationalis Management Standards and robust MEAL systems.

KEY RESULTS:

- These actions positioned Caritas Myanmar to secure **institutional funding, influence policy, and support other CSOs**—creating a resilient, credible local leader.
- Caritas Myanmar now trains other Myanmar CSOs in leadership, governance, and systems through the SPaCE project, **demonstrating “pay-it-forward” sustainability**. Caritas Myanmar co-founded a network of national actors active around the Grand Bargain, Localisation and Intermediary, holds seats on the Myanmar Humanitarian Country Team and Myanmar Humanitarian Fund Advisory Board, and contributes to global advocacy through NEAR, ICVA, and Caritas Internationalis. These positions allow Caritas Myanmar to influence policy and channel funding to other CSOs, ensuring sector-wide impact. Its reforms have proven durable, with Caritas Myanmar now operating independently of external secondees and managing multi-million-dollar grants.



IMAGE: Staff and members of the Key Populations Advocacy Consortium in PNG together following capacity building workshops focused on resource mobilisation and funding diversification for small community-led organisations. Credit: Health Equity Matters.

“STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY-LED HIV RESPONSE IN PNG & FIJI”, HEALTH EQUITY MATTERS

LOCATIONS: PNG AND FIJI.

PARTNERS: PNG: KPAC PNG, THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE NATIONAL AIDS COUNCIL SECRETARIAT. FIJI: RAINBOW PRIDE FOUNDATION, FJN+ AND PSGDN.

This project demonstrates best practice by investing directly in community-led and peer-led organisations, recognising them as leaders of the HIV response rather than as delivery agents. Health Equity Matters supports organisational development, strengthening governance, financial management, safeguarding systems, and monitoring and evaluation, so partners can sustain and expand their work beyond individual projects.

KEY RESULTS:

- This programming model differs from other projects because it is built around **civil society leadership** rather than outsourced service delivery. Large-scale managing contractors often focus on technical implementation, but Health Equity Matters invests in strengthening the capacity and agency of community-led organisations so that they can design, deliver, and sustain responses themselves. The model is unique in the way it aligns peer-led prevention and lived experience with government systems, ensuring services are trusted by communities while also recognised in national policy.
- This programming places equal weight on **organisational development and service delivery**, building long-term resilience and accountability within local partners. This approach also ensures that issues of safeguarding, GEDSI and inclusion are embedded from the ground up, not treated as compliance add-ons. The result is a more adaptive, community-owned response that endures beyond funding cycles and contributes to a stronger, more independent civil society.

- In Papua New Guinea, partners such as KPAC PNG have **expanded their organisational capacity**, including improvements in governance, safeguarding, and financial systems that position them to manage future funding independently. This strengthened capacity is already producing tangible results, with KPAC able to rapidly scale up community-led, peer-led outreach and establish the Sunset Hub on a very short timeline.
- In Fiji, early investment in organisational development and peer-led prevention is enabling groups such as Rainbow Pride Foundation and FJN+ to consolidate their **leadership roles within the HIV response**. Partners are building capacity to coordinate through national taskforce structures, creating pathways for sustained collaboration with government.
- Across both countries, community partners report stronger **confidence** in managing compliance requirements, safeguarding practices, and advocacy strategies.



IMAGES: Disability Inclusion Promoters Group members in Dili participate in Oxfam’s Open the Books training to advocate for a more inclusive state budget. Credit: Aderito do Rosario da Cunha Mambares/Oxfam.

“ORGANISATIONS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY AND THE STRENGTHENING OF CIVIL SOCIETY, OPEN THE BOOKS PHASE 2”, OXFAM AUSTRALIA

LOCATIONS: TIMOR-LESTE.

PARTNERS: MULTIPLE, INCLUDING OXFAM IN TIMOR LESTE (OITL) WITH RA’ES HADOMI TIMOR OAN (RHTO), ASOSIASAUN DEFISIENSIA TIMOR-LESTE (ADTL), AND CORE GROUP TRANSPARENCY (CGT).

Open the Books Phase 2 builds on the work of the first phase which supported the disability movement to engage with Timor-Leste’s state budget process for the first time. This project further supports civil society from the disability movement to analyse and influence the state budget, National Disability Action Plan (DNAP) and government projects and policies, to better meet persons with disabilities’ needs and uphold disability rights.

This project facilitated the formation of an Inclusive Disability Promoters Group (DPG), comprising of seven individuals representing various disability groups. The DPG members receive training and mentoring to prepare them to analyse and influence Timor-Leste’s state budget to address the needs and rights of people with a disability. Group members then pass this knowledge on to other people in their organisations.



KEY RESULTS:

- The project’s influencing efforts resulted in **increased budget allocation for disability inclusion** by the Ministry of Social, Solidarity, and Inclusion.
- Advocacy efforts from civil society project partners resulted in several significant milestones. First, the Timor Leste government approved an **updated DNAP for 2021–2030**. Another major milestone was reached in 2022 when the government **ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD)**.
- The work of the Organisations of Persons (OPDs) in this project helped result in the **establishment of a National Council for people with disabilities** to monitor the DNAP implementation, promote the rights of people with disabilities and support rehabilitation services for people with psychological disabilities.
- The Ministry of Transport and Communication and Ministry of Public Works now have **focal points from the disability community** to advocate for their rights.
- The Secretary of Training, Employment and Policy has also allocated a **1-2% quota in state budgets** for economic empowerment programs specifically targeted for people with disabilities.

“PROMOTING WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT AND RIGHTS (POWER): STRENGTHENING VOICES, CHOICES AND RIGHTS”, AUSTRALIAN LUTHERAN WORLD SERVICE, ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF AGENCY (ADRA), INTERNATIONAL NEPAL FELLOWSHIP (INF), CARITAS AUSTRALIA (CA)

LOCATIONS: NEPAL: PYUTHAN, ROLPA, JUMLA, KAPILVASTU, BAJURA, MUGU, KAILALI, DAILEKH, JHAPA, BARDIYA, BANKE, SURKHET, NAWALPARASI, KANCHANPUR, JAJARKOT, KASKI, ILLAM AND LALITPUR.

PARTNERS: LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION, CARITAS NEPAL, INF NEPAL, ADRA NEPAL

Promotion of Women’s Empowerment and Rights (POWER III) is a multi-year initiative incorporating the learnings and best practices from POWER (2018-2024) with the goals of: empowering communities to create gender sensitive environments and prevent sexual and gender based violence (SGBV); ensuring duty bearers enable the realisation of rights for all, especially women and survivors of SGBV; and ensuring robust mechanisms in institutions to promote gender equality and address SGBV. For 2024-2025, POWER covers 18 districts.

POWER adopted a unique consortium model, uniting four Australian NGOs—ALWS, INF Australia, Caritas Australia, and ADRA Australia. Each of these organisations partnered with local NGOs in Nepal, creating a strong network that combined global expertise with deep local knowledge. This collaborative structure enabled efficient knowledge sharing, resource pooling, and alignment with existing community programs. The consortium model amplified impact by leveraging each partner’s expertise—from Women Human Rights Defenders-led GBV prevention, to LWF’s empowerment of people with disabilities, to ADRA’s GESI curriculum in schools—ensuring that GEDSI was mainstreamed across all interventions. Collectively, these efforts fostered more inclusive, equitable, and resilient communities.

KEY RESULTS:

- **Increased GESI Investment:** Local governments boosted budget allocations for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, showing commitment to sustained action.
- **Replicable Consortium Model:** The consortium approach proved effective in resource-sharing, creating synergy through their expertise e.g. LWF in Disability, INF on health and Self-Help Groups, Caritas on cooperatives and ADRA in gender audit and Institutional linkages and collaboration, offering a cost effective model for future projects.
- **Institutionalising Gender Equity:** Annual gender audits across all four organisations strengthened accountability and continuous improvement in promoting equality.

- **Transforming Masculinities:** this project recognised the importance of engaging men and boys particularly in patriarchal societies. Collaboration occurred with community/faith leaders to reduce/prevent discriminatory social norms such as Chhaupadi and early marriage.
- **Financial inclusion:** through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) with savings and credit schemes, ensuring women and marginalized groups can access and control financial resources.
- **Skills development and income generation:** (e.g., agriculture, tailoring, micro enterprises) to strengthen women’s economic empowerment, control over income and household resilience.
- **Strengthen Human Rights Defenders and Activists:** to capacitate them for community-based GBV prevention and protection mechanisms.
- **Advance GEDSI in education:** by partnering with schools to integrate gender equality and inclusion concepts into curricula and learning environments.
- **Advocate with government and cooperatives:** to secure resources such as GBV funds, inputs for enterprises, formulate and reinforce supportive policies and increased market access that sustain and scale GEDSI outcomes.

KEY QUOTES:

In the traditional communities of Anantapur, the Transformative Education Program has sparked remarkable changes in individual confidence and community attitudes. R.D., a young woman who once couldn’t speak in public, now facilitates community discussions on sensitive social issues.

‘I used to hide behind others during meetings. Now I can introduce myself anywhere and share my thoughts without fear.’



“ADVANCING DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE FINANCE IN INDONESIA”, OPPORTUNITY INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA

LOCATIONS: INDONESIA.

PARTNERS: KOMIDA, MICROSAVE INDONESIA AND TERALA.

IMAGE: Ibu Rohanah, one of KOMIDA’s micro-entrepreneur women with disabilities, with her food stall. Credit: Opportunity International Australia.

Opportunity International Australia actively promotes gender equality, disability equity, and rights in the finance sector. Opportunity International Australia, in partnership with KOMIDA, MicroSave Indonesia and Terala is leading a transformative initiative to advance gender equality, disability equity and rights in Indonesia’s financial sector. This locally-led consortium focuses on dismantling systemic barriers that prevent women with disability—particularly in rural areas—from accessing financial services. Opportunity International focuses on making digital financial services inclusive and accessible, not only for people with disability, but also for older persons and women during pregnancy.

KEY RESULTS:

- Opportunity International Australia recently hosted a Spotlight Webinar on Disability Inclusion and developed a set of **practical tools to support financial service providers** in creating more inclusive products and services.
- In Indonesia, Opportunity International Australia’s partner KOMIDA, a women-led cooperative, has produced a powerful video on Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) with support from DFAT (ANCP): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alaj9d3Wxv4>
- Opportunity International and MSC Indonesia published in The Jakarta Post on disability equity in the finance sector: “How can inclusion work if it leaves people out?” <https://www.thejakartapost.com/opinion/2025/07/18/how-can-inclusion-work-if-it-leaves-people-out.html>
- This inclusive finance model stands out from other GEDSI projects due to its locally led consortium approach and systemic integration of disability inclusion in the finance sector. Unlike many top-down initiatives, it **empowers local organisations and women entrepreneurs with disability to lead design**, implementation, and advocacy efforts. The use of the Washington Group Short Set for impairment-disaggregated data collection is a unique feature that enables tailored financial services. The model also embeds GEDSI principles into digital infrastructure, such as accessible mobile apps and inclusive communication tools.



“INCLUSIVE, CLIMATE-RESILIENT WASH IN ASIA-PACIFIC – LEARNING FROM PRACTICE”, WATER FOR WOMEN, PLAN INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA

LOCATIONS: INDONESIA: NTB PROVINCE, NTT PROVINCE. PAPUA NEW GUINEA: NEW IRELAND PROVINCE, AUTONOMOUS REGION OF BOUGAINVILLE. SOLOMON ISLANDS: GUADALCANAL PROVINCE.

PARTNERS: LIVE&LEARN, EDGE EFFECT AND LOCAL NGOS (INDONESIA).

Projects in each country provided expert management and technical support to key government bodies at local and sub-national levels to strengthen WASH governance, planning and monitoring systems and to deliver improved, climate resilient WASH services in households, communities and institutions.

There is a persistent gap between climate-resilient WASH principles and institutional understanding and application of these principles in WASH service delivery. Addressing this gap requires a fundamental shift in program design and capacity-building approaches. Future climate resilient programming should move towards embedded institutional support that addresses systemic barriers, allocates resources specifically for institutional strengthening (not just infrastructure). This should incorporate longer engagement timelines that accommodate the reality of slow-moving institutional change in resource-constrained environments and prioritise interventions that build durable institutional capacity for climate resilience.

KEY RESULTS:

- In the Solomon Islands, 12 communities were supported with improved access to inclusive and climate-resilient WASH, serving over 2,500 people. This included improving multiple water sources (e.g. rainwater catchment, groundwater and spring capture). For some households and communities, this is the first time they have had access to an improved source of water, with profound impacts on their daily lives.
- In Indonesia, following lobbying by Plan, the Ministry of Health is to integrate climate resilience into its Climate Healthy Village National Program, meaning

that the Ministry will continue to support the climate resilient WASH action plans developed by Water for Women project villages. Similarly, in both of the districts supported through the project, climate resilient and GEDSI components developed by the project have been incorporated into local policies for delivery of the national sanitation and hygiene program.

- In PNG one of the most significant WASH systems changes supported by the project in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville was the establishment of the multi-stakeholder Northern Region WASH Committee, responsible for planning, monitoring and oversight of WASH developments in the region. Through the Water for Women project this committee was supported to develop an understanding of climate risks in the region and climate resilient WASH responses and to integrate this into a 5 Year WASH Plan for the region that is to be launched in 2025.

KEY QUOTES:

‘We were inspired by Plan Indonesia, which has been assisting us since 2022 for our climate-resilient water and sanitation programme. From the mentoring, we developed the programme and integrated it with the school curriculum’ Headmaster of SD Negeri Batudulang, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

‘I am proud of the influence the Project has had on the lives of people. The ripple effect is seen when people from non-target communities are coming into the office requesting information and support on their community WASH circumstances’ Live & Learn Solomon Islands Senior WASH Officer.

IMAGE: Pororan Primary School, Bougainville, PNG - WASH committee and hygiene teacher presenting their WASH improvement plan to other schools during ToT. Credit: Ishmael Palipal, Plan International PNG.

“WHEN NATURE THRIVES, SO DO WE”, CLIMATE RESILIENT BY NATURE (CRxN), WWF AUSTRALIA

LOCATIONS: FIJI, VANUATU, TIMOR LESTE, PNG, VIETNAM, LAOS PDR, CAMBODIA, SOLOMON ISLANDS, SAMOA, KIRIBATI.

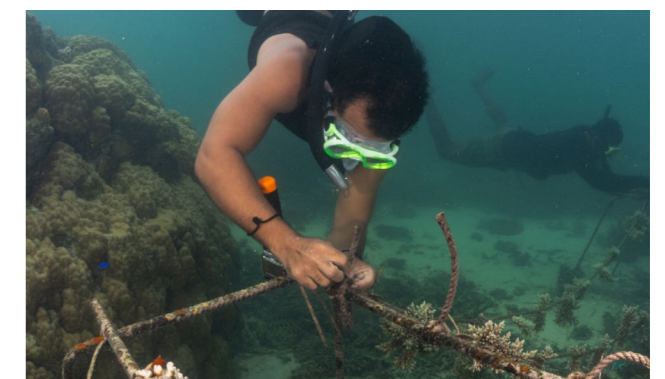
PARTNERS: ACTIONAID, CARITAS AUSTRALIA, WORLD VISION, LIVE & LEARN, KYEEMA FOUNDATION, WWF PACIFIC, WWF MEKONG.

Climate Resilient by Nature aims to enhance the resilience of Pacific and Southeast Asian communities through high-integrity, equitable nature-based solutions to climate change. The program aims to support communities to “work with nature” to build social and ecological resilience to climate change impacts. It aligns with DFAT’s Climate Change Action Strategy, emphasising local capacity, social inclusion, gender equality, and maximising investment impacts.

KEY RESULTS:

- The program promotes diversified livelihoods—such as floating rice farming, aquaculture, and eco-tourism—that reduce reliance on fragile ecosystems while enhancing food security and income. Ecosystem restoration efforts, including mangrove replanting and coral gardening, have led to observable improvements in biodiversity and ecosystem health. The program fosters multi-sectoral engagement, including partnerships with governments, civil society, and the private sector, to scale and sustain nature-based solutions.
- The CRxN program presents a distinctive model of climate resilience programming that sets it apart from similar initiatives. Unlike many top-down approaches, CRxN is grounded in community-led nature-based solutions (NbS), with each partner developing a localised resilience theory tailored to their context. This ensures that interventions are not only ecologically sound but also socially and economically relevant. The program emphasises inclusive participation, with strong engagement from women, youth, and people with disabilities, and integrates GEDSI standards into all partner contracts and reporting frameworks.
- Another unique feature is CRxN’s multi-layered financing strategy, which blends voluntary carbon markets, nature-positive value chains, and private sector partnerships to sustain and scale NbS efforts. The program also prioritises adaptive management, using proxy indicators and participatory assessments to monitor ecosystem health and community resilience. Importantly, CRxN fosters cross-sector collaboration, engaging governments, civil society, and private enterprises to build enabling environments for NbS. This holistic, locally driven, and inclusive model positions CRxN as a leader in demonstrating high-integrity climate resilience programming.

- The CRxN program has enabled almost 13,000 individuals across 160 communities to participate in nature-based solutions (NbS). The program has led to the conservation or restoration of more than 43,000 hectares and improved management of over 152,000 hectares of land and seascapes, supporting ecosystem health and biodiversity. Communities have reported increased fish stocks, improved soil fertility, and greater food security through diversified, climate-resilient livelihoods such as agroforestry, aquaculture, and floating rice farming
- Women’s empowerment and the inclusion of marginalised groups in decision-making have been notable, with women leading restoration, business, and governance activities in several countries.



IMAGES LEFT: Nguyen Thi Thanh Phuong, CRxN Project Manager, WWF-Viet Nam holds a floating rice plant. Credit: WWF-Australia / Veronica Joseph.

Wilson Hazelman of Corals for Conservation, moves corals previously identified as ‘heat-adapted’ into a new nursery off in Moturiki, Fiji. Credit: WWF-Australia / Tom Vierus.



“CAN DO RESPONSE TO THE ENGA LANDSLIDE IN PNG”, CHURCH AGENCIES NETWORK – DISASTER OPERATIONS (CAN DO)

LOCATIONS: PAPUA NEW GUINEA: ENGA PROVINCE.

PARTNERS: ADRA PNG AND THE BAPTIST UNION OF PNG

This project focused on responding to the Enga Landslide, which occurred in May 2024 in the PNG highlands. The project location was identified as a highly volatile location even prior to the landslide response. Regular tribal fighting, particularly along areas leading to the landslide area, were well known. This was further exacerbated by the landslide, particularly as this impacted road access to a local mine (another source of tension). As such, there were several different groups experiencing conflict.

By utilising local church networks (ADRA PNG and the Baptist Union of PNG), CAN DO was able to connect with and provide much needed resources to displaced communities and their host communities. Many of these communities remained unable to access provisions due to high levels of risk in accessing the areas.

The partners responded by provided NFIs, food distributions and psychosocial support training and provision. Shelter kits were provided to the local government for distribution once the anticipated relocation of communities occurred.

KEY WAYS THIS PROJECT DEMONSTRATES EFFECTIVE RISK MANAGEMENT AND AGILITY:

- By working with **local partners** which weren't just familiar with the national context, but had contacts (including community leaders and local governments) within the specific location, local partners were able to get real time information about peaks and peace in the local tensions, allowing a dynamic risk assessment and decision making to be made. For example, partners knew that it was not safe to complete the food distribution in late 2024, however were able to complete this at short notice at a later date. While this led to delays in undertaking activities, it allowed a safer process for all involved. Similarly, working with local governments meant that project activities were able to be adapted, rather than not being completed at all. Regular updates to DFAT allowed inclusion of all stakeholders in this process.
- Multiple activities demonstrated **highly agile programming**, including: the rapid reallocation

of funds (from food to shelter and PSS) to match evolving needs; the relocation of PSS training to safer locations (Wabag) when Mulitaka became insecure; the leveraging of trusted church and community networks for last-mile delivery and feedback; shifts from direct distribution to government-led delivery (shelter kits handed to EPG/IOM) and the adjustment of distribution sites (to church compounds) based on community feedback for safety and access.

- **Risk Management** was also ensued through mitigating security risks through PNG Defence Force support, alternate venues, and local focal points; the protection of vulnerable groups via women's networks, OPDs, and inclusive targeting; political and coordination risks were managed through strong engagement with EPG and IOM; safeguarding ensured with codes of conduct, PSEAH briefings, and gender-sensitive design (Using CARE's rapid gender analysis).
- By utilising the connections that were already established and trusted, partners were able to mitigate the specific risks presented by the dynamics of this local hotspot. In other programs, risk assessments may be derived at a national level or with a slight delay, whereas **utilising local networks as a real-time source of risk assessment** proved to be useful in ensuring the safety of staff and participants. In particular, using faith-based and community-led networks proved effective: Relied heavily on churches, pastors, women's ministries, and youth leaders for targeting, distribution, psychosocial support, and feedback—building on trusted, culturally embedded structures.
- The program was designed with **flexible modalities** (e.g. shifting to government-led shelter distribution, relocating trainings) to adapt to volatile conflict conditions.
- The program aligned with **government systems**: Handover of shelter kits to Enga Provincial Government and active participation in provincial disaster coordination meetings strengthened legitimacy and sustainability.

IMAGES: Volunteers and staff providing food and goods distribution to the community. Credit: Baptist Union PNG (BUPNG).



“SHARING RISK, ENABLING AGILITY AND CENTERING LOCAL DECISION MAKING”, MULTIPLE EYE HEALTH PROJECTS, THE FRED HOLLOWES FOUNDATION

LOCATIONS: WEST BANK, GAZA AND OCCUPIED EAST JERUSALEM.

PARTNERS: ST JOHN EYE HOSPITAL GROUP

These projects support St John Eye Hospital Group as the largest eye health care provider in Palestine to strengthen surgical services in hospitals in occupied East Jerusalem, Hebron, Nablus, Qufu Aqab and Gaza. Mobile outreach teams and local partnerships train primary health care workers focus. This project focuses on increasing equity of access to eye health care for marginalised Palestinian populations including refugees, people living in isolated areas, Bedouins and farming communities. Through this project, 3,541 direct participants received FHF supported eye surgeries and clinical training and a total of 41,000 patients received eye screening in St John Eye Hospitals and via mobile screening teams across Palestine supported by FHF.

KEY WAYS THIS PROJECT DEMONSTRATES EFFECTIVE RISK MANAGEMENT AND AGILITY:

- **Daily review of socio-political changes** considering the impact on project activities. During periods of active conflict or other disruption such as COVID-19, project funding for long term development initiatives is repurposed towards service delivery that allows clinical staff to participate in the national emergency response as part of trauma teams. To date, this flexibility has resulted in increased beneficiary numbers and overachievements in eye surgery and screening targets because the demand for services increases during a crisis when people no longer have access to private practice and governmental health services experience resource scarcity.
- **Respectful, quality communication** that defers to local partner advice as the expert in their own context to respond to challenges. Honest and transparent engagement that builds a culture of trust and *shared risk* to openly address under performance and celebrate successes.
- **Annual budgeting in local currency** and reinvestment of any currency gains at a global level into project activities to mitigate the risk of reduced local purchasing power.

- Investment in clinical training of a Palestinian eye health workforce to **support cost effective, sustainable health systems**.
- Brokering local NGO alliances that support **regional resilience**. St John Eye Hospital is working with FHF's partner in Jordan, the Institute for Family Health (IFH) to build their clinical skills in primary eye care. In return IFH are providing training and policy support to build trauma informed eye care services needed during a conflict that has created disproportionately high rates of disability and mental health presentations of patients and staff in Gaza and the West Bank.
- The unique point of difference with this program is the approach to partnership that is **locally owned and led**. In a high-risk context, the need to defer to local voices to manage risk and find rapid solutions to challenges is critical to ensure bespoke adaptation and safe stewardship of funding.
- **Data analysis** of decreasing patient flows aligned to partner reports of increasing militarisation in the West Bank prompted the pivot to formal partnerships with women's organisations, disabled persons organisations and schools to conduct eye health screening in non-clinical settings. FHF resourcing and programmatic support for mobile eye health teams has dramatically increased the number of women, children and persons with disabilities accessing eye health services.

KEY QUOTES:

'The joint project management style builds on local ownership in the first place, as interviews revealed that FHF are not a traditional partner but rather a thought partner' St John Eye Hospital Team member.

IMAGE: Suhad Abu Diab, an optometrist at St. John Eye Hospital Group, administering a vision test at St. John Eye Hospital Group Ophthalmology Station, Deir Al Balah. Credit/Provider: St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group. Copyright: ©St. John Eye Hospital Group.

“ASBESTOS. NOT HERE. NOT ANYWHERE”, UNION AID ABROAD, APHEDA

LOCATIONS: SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

PARTNERS: MULTIPLE, INCLUDING LION INDONESIA.

The Asbestos. Not Here. Not Anywhere. campaign is a priority campaign of Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA. The goal of the campaign for 2020-2026 is to promote the banning of asbestos in countries in Southeast Asia, the transition of asbestos to safer materials and the reduction of further asbestos related diseases (ARDs). Focus countries include Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Vietnam and Malaysia.

The project takes a campaigning and movement building approach, combined with direct technical assistance to governments, with the aim of effecting regulatory change which will benefit millions of workers by decreasing exposure to asbestos. The model combines localisation (support to ban networks in each country) with evidence and research globally.

KEY RESULTS:

Policy change announced and or initiated

- Cambodian ban announcement in 2023.
- Asian Development Bank prohibition of asbestos materials from all new investments from January 2026.
- Cooperation on asbestos transition agreed by 14 countries in Indo Pacific Economic Framework trade Agreement.
- Indonesian Supreme Court mandating health warning labelling on all asbestos containing materials.
- Regional bans in Indonesia.
- Integration of asbestos related issues into on-going occupational health and safety campaigns of participating trade unions and partners.
- Local bans on asbestos use in new buildings and emergency housing after disasters in Indonesia.
- National Asbestos Action plans and/or Profiles by governments in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.



IMAGES: Top – Campaign to ban asbestos in Cambodia by members of the Building and Woodworkers Trade Union Confederation 2023. Credit: Thy Yann. Bottom – Campaign at the Conference of the Parties, Geneva Switzerland 2025, to reform voting procedure for Rotterdam Convention to defeat a 20-year block by industry and producer countries on listing chrysotile asbestos and other blocked chemicals. Credit: RC Secretariat.



IMAGE: Ward Development Planning training with participants in Gulf Province. Credit: The Salvation Army.

“COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT THROUGH WARD DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: THE SALVATION ARMY’S CHURCH PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA”, THE SALVATION ARMY INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

LOCATIONS: PAPUA NEW GUINEA: GULF AND EASTERN HIGHLANDS PROVINCES.

PARTNERS: SALVATION ARMY PNG.

The Church Partnership Program (CPP) is a collaboration between the Australian Government (through the PNGAus Partnership), seven mainline churches in PNG and their Australian NGO counterparts. Since its inception in 2004, the CPP has evolved from a service delivery model to one focused on organisational strengthening, community engagement, and collaboration with government and civil society. In Phase 4 (2023–2025), the CPP prioritises sustainability and local ownership, with social accountability as a key pillar.

Wards in PNG consist of multiple villages, each with unique needs and priorities. A Ward Development Plan is a formal document created by a Ward Development Committee (WDC) to outline the community’s current situation, future aspirations, and the resources required to achieve them. It also identifies what the community can contribute and what support is needed from government and development partners. As Ward Development Plans are constitutionally recognised documents, they provide a legitimate vehicle to drive social accountability. Historically, Ward Design Planning efforts in PNG have struggled due to lack of community ownership and limited government recognition. The Salvation Army International Development’s (TSA) approach addresses these challenges by building the capacity of WDCs and facilitating inclusive, participatory planning processes.

KEY RESULTS:

- The Ward Development Planning process is led by local Ward Development Committees (WDCs), who are trained and empowered to identify their own needs, set priorities, and develop plans. This ensures that development is not externally imposed but arises from the community’s own vision and context. The process deliberately includes women and other marginalised groups such as people with disabilities, ensuring that diverse voices shape the development agenda.

- TSA acts as a facilitator, helping communities navigate government processes and fostering direct relationships between citizens and duty bearers. Investing in training community members in needs assessment, planning and advocacy will build lasting capacity and reduce dependency on external actors.
- Unlike many localisation efforts that focus solely on empowering communities, TSA’s model also engages duty bearers (government actors) in the accountability process. TSA facilitates structured dialogue between communities and government, ensuring both sides understand their roles and responsibilities. This dual approach helps prevent misalignment and builds mutual trust. TSA also involved government officials as active collaborators, through reviewing tools, endorsing the training manuals and supporting implementation (e.g. facilitating bank account set up for WDCs). This approach strengthens connections and sustainability of the model.
- TSA also leverages its church networks to reach remote and underserved communities. These networks are trusted and deeply embedded in local contexts, allowing TSA to mobilize communities more effectively than external NGOs might.
- As Ward Development Plans are constitutionally recognised documents, they provide a legitimate vehicle to drive social accountability. Progress is tracked, and both community and government actors are clear on their roles and responsibilities. In Gulf Province, TSA’s engagement has led the Gulf Provincial LLG Advisor to support WDCs with the setup of bank accounts and practical support from the provincial government in scaling up WDP. Meetings are underway to explore province-wide rollout, highlighting the model’s potential for systemic impact.

“IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR TRANSFORMATION (IMPACT)”, CARE AUSTRALIA

LOCATIONS: PNG: MOROBE PROVINCE AND EASTERN HIGHLANDS PROVINCE.

PARTNERS: PROVINCIAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES, DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, CSOS, WROS, AND CHURCHES.

Building on the success and learnings of previous phases, *Improving Accountability for Transformation (IMPACT III)* continues to strengthen service delivery through locally driven social accountability (SA) approaches that foster collaboration between communities, government actors, church-based providers, and civil society. The project specifically targets improved access to health services for women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalised groups, while deepening its focus on tackling gender-based violence (GBV) and sorcery accusation-related violence (SARV).

This model of programming is distinct from many traditional development approaches in several key ways. Unlike top-down or service-delivery-focused models, the IMPACT project prioritises strengthening existing government systems rather than bypassing them, and it embeds social accountability mechanisms that foster community-government dialogue and long-term institutional change.



IMAGE: Feedback Mechanism Box presented by CARE staff to Family Support Centre staff at Goroka Provincial Hospital, Eastern Highlands Province. Credit: Benson Wanguare, CARE PNG.

KEY RESULTS:

- **Institutional Adoption of Social Accountability Tools:** Health facilities and local governments are not only using tools like the Citizen Charter and Complaint Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs) but are also re-socialising them with new staff, updating them, and using the feedback to influence resource allocation. For example, a community level health facility secured a direct drug supply line after community feedback was formally presented to the Provincial Health Authority, demonstrating institutional responsiveness driven by locally owned processes.
- **Formalised Structures and Partnerships:** The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CARE and the Unggai Bena District Development Authority (DDA) ensures continued collaboration.
- **Mindset and Behaviour Change Among Public Servants:** Health workers and district officers reported a renewed sense of responsibility and understanding of accountability. For example, a health worker at the Family Support Centre independently conducted staff awareness and improved referral pathways, showing personal initiative beyond project directives.
- **Government-Led Implementation of GESDI:** The project helped the Eastern Highlands Provincial Health Authority initiate development of its own GESI policy after CARE-supported training. This indicates mainstreaming of equity and inclusion values into formal government policies, critical for sustaining inclusive service delivery.
- **Replicable and Scaled Actions by Government:** District officials, such as the EHPHA coordinator, were inspired to replicate the project's social accountability model in other communities. This is a strong indicator of local ownership and institutional buy-in, which is essential for scaling and sustaining impact.

“ELECTORAL REFORM FOR DISABILITY/LEPROSY”, THE LEPROSY MISSION AUSTRALIA

LOCATIONS: NIGERIA (THE EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT ARE NATIONWIDE BUT MOST ACTIVITY WAS IN ABUJA, THE NATIONAL CAPITAL).

PARTNERS: THE LEPROSY MISSION NIGERIA

Up to the beginning of 2023, the Independent Nigerian Electoral Commission required all citizens who wished to vote to provide fingerprints. People with disability, especially leprosy, often do not have fingers and were therefore disenfranchised. In addition, Electoral Officers discriminated against people with leprosy as they feared catching the disease due to a lack of knowledge.

The Leprosy Mission Australia worked with the Leprosy Mission Nigeria, building on past work that the Leprosy Mission Nigeria had undertaken previously in conjunction with disability agencies under the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities. This project also builds on work that had been done by the National Human Rights Commission with the leprosy colony on the edge of Abuja.

KEY RESULTS:

- As a result of a series of lobbying activities, the Electoral Commission implemented a range of improvements including an **additional biometric:** facial recognition and Electoral Officers no longer feared registering people affected by leprosy. About 50% of the leprosy population voted in 2023, compared to 30% of the general population.
- This project made strong use of contacts. The **relationship with the Australian High Commission**, due to funding coming from ANCP, was very strong and The Leprosy Mission Nigeria felt they were able to invite the Australian High Commissioner to endorse a letter to the Independent Nigerian Electoral Commissioner, supporting changes being asked for.
- In many ways this project was opportunistic in that the main ANCP project did not have national implications. An **opportunity** arose as a result of lobbying, occupation of the INEC offices by the leprosy community and the support of the AHC.
- The Leprosy Mission Nigeria's **relationships with the national Human Rights Commission** meant that NHRC participated in meetings with the leprosy colony which eventually meant they took unilateral action to occupy the INEC premises, advocating for their right to vote.

- Organised attempts were made to **educate media** about disability, leprosy and how these communities were disenfranchised. This led to articles and voices that could become part of national public discourse.
- Following the lobbying efforts, the Commission launched a **data dashboard** that captured all registered voters with disability in all polling units across the country, with aggregation by disability type.
- A **Bimodal Voter Accreditation System** was implemented. This means there are two biometrics for identifying voter identities: facial recognition and fingerprints.
- A **braille ballot guide** was made available to persons with sight loss. INEC has developed posters using visual art to enable persons with hearing impairments to understand the voting procedure. Persons with disability are now allowed to be accompanied into the polling unit.
- For the first time in the nation's electoral history, polling stations will have **sign language interpreters**. Assistive devices were made available at the polling stations, including magnifying glasses and chairs set aside for people who might struggle to stand for long periods. Another first, is that polling stations were present in communities of persons affected by leprosy.



IMAGE: Women in Yangoji queuing up for registration. Credit: Chukwu Jeffrey Chinwendu The Leprosy Mission Nigeria.



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Cover photo: Nerolyn selling sustainably harvested sea grapes at a local market in Western Province, Solomon Islands. Credit: WWF-Pacific / Andrew Buoro.

Authors: Dr Annabel Dulhunty

Designer: Kate Bensen

 <https://acfid.asn.au>

 main@acfid.asn.au

 +61 2 6285 1816

 @ACFID

 /ACFID

 /ACFID

@ACFID.AUS

ACFID, 14 Napier Close, Deakin, ACT 2600

