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AMENDMENT HISTORY

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsible officer</th>
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<td>Fiona Pakoa</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASM</td>
<td>Artisanal and small-scale mining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFAT</td>
<td>Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMRS</td>
<td>Electronic Medical Records System</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOI</td>
<td>Expression of Interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOM</td>
<td>Head of Mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GESI</td>
<td>Gender Equality and Social Inclusion</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEF</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation Framework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSC</td>
<td>Most Significant Change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTR</td>
<td>Mid-Term Review</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>NSDP</td>
<td>National Skills Development Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PDB</td>
<td>Pre-Departure Briefing</td>
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<td>PhD</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWD</td>
<td>People with a Disability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAP</td>
<td>Reintegration Action Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCAs</td>
<td>Short Course Awards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ToC</td>
<td>Theory of Change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Executive Summary

Introduction

Australia Awards in Africa is the Australian Government’s flagship program in sub-Saharan Africa. Australia has committed approximately $100 million over four years (2016-20) to develop the leadership, skills and knowledge of 1,800 African professionals in areas of critical skills shortages, specifically in extractives, agricultural productivity and public policy, in which Australia has extensive experience and expertise.1 In doing so, the program also promotes and supports Australia’s objectives for development and public and economic diplomacy in sub-Saharan Africa.

Australia Awards are available to scholars from a select number of countries, consistent with the overall geographical and sectoral focus for Australian engagement in Africa. Australia Awards offers master’s level scholarships for study in Australia to high-calibre future leaders across the public, private and community sectors in priority areas for their countries. Short Course Awards (SCAs) offer more targeted study and training of up to two months, delivered by an Australian institution in Australia or Africa.2

Australia Awards has a strong focus on equality and inclusivity for women and people with disability. The program has an overall target of 50 per cent awards offered to women per year. There is also an aspirational target of three to five per cent, of awards offered, provided to people with a disability and people studying disability-related courses.

Australia Awards seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Alumni are using awards skills, knowledge and networks in key sectors relevant to their training to contribute to sustainable development in their workplace and/or community.
2. Targeted countries in Africa view Australia as a valued partner.
3. Alumni have positive ongoing links with Australia.

The program’s Theory of Change (ToC) outlines the process by which it expects to achieve these results, accompanied by the program’s expected impact pathways, from output to outcome to impact. The ToC asserts that if alumni gain relevant skills through the Australia Awards and return to work in sectors relevant to their training, then they will be able to use award-gained skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development and recognise Australia as an active partner in African development.

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The Outcomes Study

The Outcomes Study assesses the program’s contribution to outcomes defined in the Australia Awards Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF), including the global objectives. The study reviews alumni contributions and experiences, focusing on support from employers, linkages with Australia and engagement with Alumni associations.

This is the second time the study has been conducted (2017-18 and 2018-19). It focuses on alumni who have completed their program of study at least 12 months ago and draws on a number of data sources, including an online survey to alumni and in-person interviews encompassing alumni and supervisors, Most Significant Change (MSC) stories, as well as case studies covering alumni and small grants projects.


This Outcomes Study reflects on five of those questions to assess alumni contributions to program outcomes since returning from their award. The five evaluation questions are:

1. To what extent are alumni contributing to sustainable development in their home countries on return from the award?
2. To what extent have alumni strengthened recognition of Australia in Africa?
3. To what extent are alumni maintaining positive ongoing links with Australia?
4. To what extent are alumni implementing the activities in their Reintegration Action Plans (RAPs) or using them in contributing to development outcomes?
5. What factors in the workplace enable alumni to apply their skills, or prevent them from doing so?

Together, these evaluation questions provide a basis for assessing alumni contributions to Australia Awards outcomes. As such, these findings are presented by outcome rather than sequentially according to these evaluation questions.

Key Findings

The study findings suggest that alumni are contributing to sustainable development in their home country and have very positive perceptions of Australia, Australian expertise and universities. However, their enduring connections with Australia remain weak.

Outcome 1: Alumni are using awards skills, knowledge and networks in key sectors relevant to their training to contribute to sustainable development in their workplace and/or community.

A total of 98 per cent of the survey respondents, or 61 (male 34, female 28, including male PWD \(^3\) 2), reported using the skills and knowledge gained from the award to contribute to development outcomes.

---

\(^3\) People with a disability
Likewise, 98 per cent of the survey respondents, or 61 (male 33, female 28, including male PWD 2), alumni surveyed reported passing their skills and knowledge to colleagues or organisations, through organised training or mentoring. Examples provided included training of 2,000 artisanal miners in Mozambique on safety and environmental practices, and 72 health facility staff in Uganda on clinical standards.

All 14 employers who participated in the survey reported that they had supported alumni in making contributions to development and passing on skills in the workplace. Similarly, all the 61 alumni noted that their employers enabled them to use the skills and knowledge they had gained from the award. All 14 supervisors spoke positively about the achievements of the alumni and often noted that their approach to work was different compared to their colleagues in the workplace.

Outcome 2: Targeted countries in Africa view Australia as a valued partner.

The study assessed alumni perceptions of Australia, Australians, Australian expertise and Australian universities, in line with the Australia Awards Global MEF and the Global Tracer Facility. Alumni were asked to rate their experience using a four-point Likert scale.

- 97 per cent of the survey respondents, or 60 (male 34, female 26, including male PWD 2) were positive of their Australian expertise
- 94 per cent of the survey respondents, or 59 (male 33, female 26, including male PWD 1), positively rated Australian universities.4

The Heads of Mission (HOM) survey confirmed these results, showing alumni are likely to recommend Australia as an education destination of choice.

Alumni continue to be involved with Australia after their return. A total of 48 per cent of the survey respondents or 30 (male 14, female 16, including male PWD 2), participated in the public diplomacy events organised through the program or through Australia’s High Commissions and Embassies in Africa.

Recommendation: Measuring this outcome remains a challenge as the alumni results are an inadequate proxy for countries’ perceptions. Palladium recommends working with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to review the applicability of this outcome and the extent to which Australia Awards can reasonably report on the outcome. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) has recommended that the outcome is adjusted to align with the Australia Awards Global MEF. Palladium will adjust the program logic on advice from DFAT.

While the HOM survey supported the assessment this year, Australia Awards does not recommend conducting an annual HOM survey. The survey provides rich data on HOMs’ engagements with African counterparts; however, no significant year-on-year changes are anticipated.

Outcome 3: Alumni have ongoing links with Australia.

A low proportion of alumni maintain connections with Australia. The commonly observed linkages are with Australia Awards alumni in the home country, amounting to 69 per cent of the survey respondents or 34 (male 20, female 14, including male PWD 2), and with other

---

4 The questions had different responses, hence the varied total numbers.
international students, amounting to 65 per cent of the survey respondents, or 32 (male 17, female 15, including male PWD 1). At least 80 per cent of the survey respondents, or 39 (male 21, female 18, including male PWD 1) were a member of an Australia Awards Alumni Association and reported frequent social communication with their fellow alumni, including across award types. Peer-to-Peer mentorships, Pre-Departure Briefings (PDBs) and program events aim to support the formation of these positive networks. Alumni reported that they had collaborated on research activities and implementing development projects together. Two of the four small grants reviewed were implemented by two or more alumni.

However, alumni linkages with Australian individuals and institutions are relatively weak. Nine alumni surveyed (male 5, female 4) reported maintaining a partnership with Australian organisations or networks, mainly between academic institutions in Africa and Australia for research collaborations. Australia Awards uses PDBs and reintegration workshops to encourage alumni to form these linkages while they are on award. The recent suite of interventions to support linkages, including Stay Connected events, mentorships and internships, were not offered to the target population who had returned from the scholarship between 12 and 30 months ago.

The linkages reported were strong. This includes exchange visits between staff of an Australian extractives company establishing branches in Uganda. Similarly, a partnership between Zambian and Australian environmental health institutions was voted the best example of organisational twinning at the 2018 International Federation of Environmental Health World Congress.

**Recommendation:** Palladium recommends that the program utilise existing data from previous reviews to examine the on-award enrichment activities that scholars are accessing. The data will provide a basis for developing and delivering interventions to improve linkages. This approach should align with the DFAT Global Links Framework which has a focus on establishing a coherent approach to help scholars establish personal and professional linkages with Australia.

**Achieving Australia Awards Alumni Global Objectives**

The study also reviewed the extent to which the program was contributing to the Australia Global Alumni Engagement Strategy 2016-20. The program is on track to achieve two of the four global objectives: Strengthening diplomatic access and influence, and Promoting education, science research and innovation in your home country. Overall, 81 per cent of the survey respondents, or 47 (male 23, female 24, including male PWD 1) of those who responded to the survey are promoting Australian education, science, research and innovation in their home countries, and 62 per cent of the survey respondents or 39 (male 19, female 19, including male PWD 1) are strengthening diplomatic access and influence. However, only nine respondents are showcasing Australia as a contemporary innovative open society and four are growing trade investment and business linkages.

**Recommendation:** Palladium recommends a review of the program’s strategic communication activities to improve the messaging on business linkages and trade. This may include repackaging case studies to showcase successful Australia-Africa business linkages and share the case studies more broadly with program participants and beyond.

**Promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion**

In addition to reviewing the contribution to program outcomes, the study explored Australia Awards' alumni role in contributing to Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in the workplace or at community level. A total of 76 per cent of the survey respondents, or 48
(male 25, female 23, including male PWD 1) reported using knowledge gained from the studies to promote GESI in the workplace or at the community level. Alumni contributions in GESI include consciously hiring women and people with disability in their organisations and amending policy to consider the unique needs of GESI groups.
Methods

Data was collected primarily through an alumni survey administered online and in-person. Survey findings were complemented by five other mixed-methods data sources (Table 1). The detailed study methodology is presented in Annex 4.

Overview of Data Sources

Table 1: Data Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collection method</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Targeted participants</th>
<th>Total number targeted</th>
<th>Total responses</th>
<th>Response rate</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary data source</td>
<td>Alumni survey (online and in-person)</td>
<td>Alumni with 12-18 and 24-30 months following award completion</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>63 completed responses (42 online, 21 in-person)</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>Provide information on alumni experiences, achievements and perspectives related to outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting data sources</td>
<td>Supervisor interviews</td>
<td>Alumni supervisors for alumni who were targeted for face-to-face interviews</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>Triangulate alumni responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-depth alumni interviews (case studies)</td>
<td>Alumni with more than 24 months following award completion</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Deepen understanding of alumni achievements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small grants reviews</td>
<td>Four completed small grants from round one (2017) valued at $39,539</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Contribution of small grants to outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alumni review workshops</td>
<td>Alumni with 24 or more months following award completion</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>48 alumni consulted at three alumni review workshops</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>To gather more qualitative data to supplement survey and quantitative data</td>
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</table>
A. Survey

The survey targeted alumni who had returned from scholarship between 12 and 30 months following their program of study. There were 401 alumni under this category. Of these, 247 participated in the 2017 study and were excluded from the sample to avoid survey fatigue. The survey was administered to 154 alumni. Separate questionnaires were administered for two cohorts to track alumni that had completed their studies between 12 to 18 months and 24 to 30 months ago. Throughout the study, these groups are denoted as the 12-months and 24-months cohorts, respectively. The samples allowed for comparative analysis of the findings from the two cohorts. A total of 62 per cent of the survey respondents or 95 of the total population, were from the 12-months cohort (Table 2).

All returned alumni in these cohorts were invited to participate in an online self-administered survey through an initial email explaining the purpose of the study. The survey was open for seven weeks in August and October 2018 and the study team sent four reminder emails.

Table 2: Total Survey Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Type</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>PWD Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fellowship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Course</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>154</td>
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</table>

Survey Response Rate

A total of 63 alumni responded to the survey, resulting in 40 per cent of all alumni eligible to participate (Table 3). Women accounted for 44 per cent of the survey respondents or 28. Of the survey respondents, 70 per cent, or 44, were master’s alumni.

Table 3: Respondents by Award Type

---

5 This does not include the 247 alumni at 24 months who were excluded from the survey.

6 There were no PWDs from the 24-months cohort.
### Methods

#### Completed Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Award</th>
<th>Completed Responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% within category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12-18 months</td>
<td>24-30 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>PWD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellowships</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Course</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Coding and Analysis of Survey Data

The review team analysed data for descriptive statistics and statistical significance. However, no statistical significance was observed, given the small sample. Despite this, the mixed methodology allowed for data triangulation across different sources and results presented in this study can be used to understand how the program is tracking against the outcomes.

#### Employment Profile

Of the survey respondents, 98 per cent, or 61 (male 33, female 28, including male PWD 2), had returned to work in sectors relevant to their training. Respondents had mostly returned to work with their previous employer, 83 per cent, or 52 (male 28, female 24, including male PWD 2). This is expected, as 75 per cent of the survey respondents, or 47 (Table 4), were working for the public sector and are generally tied to their workplace. The high level of alumni returning to work provides a sound basis for the validity of the underlying ToC for the program.
Methods

Table 4: Respondents by Employer Category and Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Private Sector (8)</th>
<th>Public Sector (51)</th>
<th>Civil Society (4)</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cote d'Ivoire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
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<td>Seychelles</td>
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<td>South Africa</td>
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<td>South Sudan</td>
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<td>Tanzania</td>
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<td>Uganda</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment Status

At the time of the study, 97 per cent of the survey respondents, or 61 (male 33, female 28, including male PWD 2) were employed. Of these, 86 per cent of the survey respondents, or 53 (male 27, female 26, including male PWD 1), confirmed that their skills were ‘highly relevant’ to their current field of work. Of the nine (male 7, female 2, including male PWD 1) alumni surveyed who had cited some relevance, seven were from the 12-months cohort. The two respondents who cited no relevance were both unemployed at the time of the study.

12/39
Employment Changes Post-Award

Skills gained while in Australia appear to support alumni in obtaining a promotion or changing employment. At the time of the survey, nine respondents had changed employment. Eight of these respondents, (male 6, female 2) were from the 12-18 months cohort.

Consistent with the 2017 Outcomes Study, master’s alumni are more likely to change employment. The reasons for changing employment were organisational transfer, promotion, or having resigned before the award.

Alumni were asked to rate their present position compared to before the scholarship. A total of 60 per cent of the survey respondents, or 37 (male 21, female 16),\(^7\) indicated that their present position was more senior after receiving the award. Of these respondents, 95 per cent of the survey respondents, or 35 (male 21, female 14) attributed their promotion or higher rank to the skills and knowledge gained on-award.

B. Alumni Review Workshops

The Palladium M&E team facilitated three alumni review workshops in May/June 2018 in Pretoria in South Africa, Abuja in Nigeria and Port Louis in Mauritius, using the MSC technique. MSC, a qualitative approach often used to evaluate complex interventions, uses facilitated storytelling regarding crucial changes in the lives of alumni and the contribution of the Australia Awards to these changes.

The M&E team circulated an Expression of Interest (EOI) to 975 alumni to provide a written description of significant changes they had experienced since returning home. The written stories were rated to identify alumni eligible to participate in the workshops, based on their ability to clearly articulate the described change. A total of 48 alumni, all of whom had returned from the award for at least 24 months, were selected to participate.

This report provides summaries (Box 4) of selected stories and high-level results emerging from the workshops. A key lesson is that calls for an EOI were made in a manner which prompted alumni to only submit positive stories. In future, we will consider how to allow negative experiences to be included in this process. A suggestion has been provided in the recommendations section on how to capture negative outcomes.

C. Semi-structured Interview and Case Studies

The study team conducted semi-structured interviews between August and September 2018 in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia. These face-to-face and phone interviews included 21 alumni and 14 supervisors of the same alumni interviewed within the targeted cohorts and were conducted with alumni in the capital cities. Interviews used the same questionnaire as for the online survey.\(^8\)

Online and semi-structured interviews are useful in gaining quantitative data. However, these may lack in-depth information on how and why changes occurred. Using a different in-depth data collection tool, the M&E team relied on the case study approach to complement survey data and obtain more information on some changes. The team prepared case studies targeting alumni with a return period of at least 24 months. All case studies were shared with the respective alumni for validation before they were finalised. Key findings from these case studies are included in this report and full case studies are included in Annex 1.

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\(^7\) 40 per cent (27) indicated that their position was the same as previously; the remainder did not answer the question.

\(^8\) Those who were interviewed did not complete the online survey.
The study team also interviewed supervisors to triangulate alumni responses and capture employer perceptions.

**D. Review of the Small Grants Scheme**

Through the Australia Awards in Africa small grants scheme, alumni can apply for funding to implement a development project or to support Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The study prepared case studies for four agriculture projects which were validated by the alumni (Annex 1). In total, the projects included in this study received funding of $39,539. Assessment of the small grants projects included a review of the progress and final reports, as well as interviews with alumni and project beneficiaries where the project was visited in the field. The study team used these case studies as an additional data source to explore alumni contribution to program outcomes. Summary results from the case studies are presented throughout the report with detailed results for each project presented in a case study.

Annex 3 provides the list of people consulted.

**Research Limitations and Bias**

The study used a mixed methodology to improve the validity of the data with quantitative and qualitative approaches complementing each other. While the survey response rate was low, the MSC, case studies and qualitative interviews were useful to provide robust qualitative information. The study had the following limitations and bias:

1. **Online survey completion**: The survey was open for seven weeks and reminders were sent four times. However, the response rate remained low. The target population was small, given that intakes in the early years of the program were low, and those who participated in the 2017 survey were excluded to avoid survey fatigue. The total surveyed population was 154 alumni who had completed their studies between 12 to 30 months. One challenge for alumni completing the survey, which was confirmed during field visits, was intermittent internet connectivity. The low response rate means it was difficult to run some of the statistical analyses to determine any correlations by cohort, award-type and disaggregation. Qualitative data from alumni review workshops and interviews was used to supplement the survey.

2. **Self-reporting bias**: The self-reporting nature of the online survey introduces bias, the risk of which is balanced by the cost-and-time efficiency of this type of data collection. Self-reporting bias has been mitigated through the interviews with supervisors, and through analysis and triangulation of responses to more in-depth approaches, such as MSC and case studies, to verify findings. The method is therefore deemed appropriate.

3. **Positive reporting bias**: There is some likelihood that participants who enjoyed a positive award experience were most likely to have participated in the study. Conversely, busy alumni and those who had a less positive award experience or reintegration were possibly less likely to participate. Further, the selection process and criteria for alumni to attend the alumni review workshops meant that no negative outcomes were described as part of the MSC process. Trying to achieve

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9 The remaining four projects were still being implemented at the time of the study and will be followed up during the 2019 Outcomes Study.
this would be very difficult as people with negative results may choose not to respond to the call for EOIs.

4. Although responses have been similarly coded as with the 2017 Outcomes Study, the underlying methods of data collection (instruments) and analysis were adjusted to align with the Global MEF, meaning that longitudinal analysis for the questions that were added in 2018 may not be possible. The development contribution results were also assessed against other variables, for example sector of study, to identify any trends against the contributions by a specific group.
Findings

Outcome 1: Alumni are using awards skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development in their workplace and/or community.

*Nearly all alumni are making development contributions. Most contributions are practice-related. Alumni overwhelmingly attributed these contributions to the skills and knowledge gained in Australia.*

**Evaluation Question 1: To what extent are alumni contributing to sustainable development in their home countries on return from the award?**

The Australia Awards ToC for Africa posits that the program contributes to sustainable development outcomes through three primary categories of contribution:

i) Alumni may use new or enhanced skills to effect change through practice or work carried out by the employing organisations (outputs or products);

ii) Alumni may better grasp alternative policy scenarios or introduce or promote new policies that support inclusive development (at various levels); and

iii) Alumni may share skills and knowledge from the award with colleagues and peers.

Overall, 98 per cent of the survey respondents, or 61 (male 33, female 28, including male PWD 2), reported making development contributions. Of this group, 54 per cent of the survey respondents, i.e. 33 (male 14, female 19), cited making development contributions that relate to practice (Figure 1). Both male and female respondents were more likely to make practice related contributions than policy and skills transfer; however, more female than male respondents reported making practice contributions.
Findings

A total of 19 female alumni made contributions to practice, compared to only 14 men.10 In contrast, two female alumni reported making policy contributions, as compared to 13 male alumni. While the numbers here were too low, this may be an area of interest for trend data analysis to assess if female are more inclined to make certain contributions.

Respondents in the 24-months cohort were more likely to make policy contributions than those in the 12-months cohort. Seven respondents in the 24-months cohort reported making policy contributions, as compared to eight respondents in the 12-months cohort.11 This result is expected, as practice- and skills-related changes can be realised soon after returning home, whereas policy changes, which generally require research, coalition building and drafting, take longer.

Box 1: Development Contributions – Practice

‘As an explosives inspector I conducted sensitisation on how to minimise dust pollution using nets and sheds to cover mineral crushers. There has been an increase in the promotion and use of environmentally friendly explosives; these reduce noise, vibration and dust, which can damage health and buildings. Companies were at first reluctant to use these explosives because of their higher costs, but I managed to convince them that it is cheaper than facing shutdowns and expensive compensation claims.’ – Master’s alumni (2015): Senior Inspector of Explosives- Ministry of Petroleum and Mining, Kenya

‘My initiative was to integrate mental health into maternal health care. I led a community-based mental health project with the aim of increasing access to mental health in rural areas.’ – Master’s alumni (2016): Team leader - Saint John of God Hospitaler services, Malawi

‘I helped execute mandates for human resources restructuring by the government and have encouraged staff to instil timelines in their work. My district was ranked top out of 156 districts for human resources management.’ – Master’s alumni (2016): Principal Human Resource Officer - Butambala District Local Government, Uganda

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10 A total of 27 women and 34 men responded to this question.

11 A total of 22 alumni were from the 24-months cohort and 39 from the 12-months cohort.
Respondents across all sectors of study were commonly making practice-related contributions. Alumni who studied public policy and governance were the exception, as no respondents in this category made skills transfer contributions. However, four respondents who studied public policy/governance made policy contributions, which is the highest in any sector study. Alumni from other sectors of study also contributed to policy in lower proportions. Respondents provided some examples of the policy contributions they had led or in which they had participated in their development.

**Box 2: Case Study**

The technical knowledge Leena gained through a Short Course on Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Australia and South Africa gave her the skills necessary to address Mauritius’ growing youth unemployment. Since completing the course in 2013, she has led the design of the National Skills Development Program (NSDP), which aims to improve the employability of Mauritian youth through skills training. Since the implementation of the NSDP in 2016, at least 3,500 youth have received training and 1,200 have gained employment because of the program.

See full Case Study: *Empowering youth through skills development in Mauritius.*

**Figure 2: Development Contribution Category, by Sector of Study**

Note that education sector and ‘other’ have been omitted from this chart, as they had only 1 and 3 respondents, respectively.
Box 3: Development Contributions – Policy

'I carried out a review of Nigeria’s National Policy on Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, now known as the National Disability Policy. The old policy conceptualisation of disability was narrow. Now we have included the concept of human rights-based policy; also, the social model where disability is conceived as a social problem and the society is the contribution factor to the conceptualisation of disability.’ – Master’s alumni (2016): Principal Community Development Officer – Federation Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Nigeria

'I was in charge of coordinating the Madagascar Fisheries Observer Program and also as a legal adviser. I made amendments to the Fishery Law tabled in parliament, which will align with the international Law of the Sea.’ – Master’s alumni (2016): Fishery Observer Program Coordinator– Madagascar Fisheries Monitoring Centre, Madagascar

'I am the chairman of a committee that has formulated 13 mining regulations that have passed through parliament and that aim to formalise artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) in Kenya. I have also established committees in ten counties responsible for regulating ASM.’ – Master’s alumni (2015): Chief Superintending Inspector of Mines– Ministry of Petroleum and Mining, Kenya

'I was tasked to establish the Quality Management Department within the Ministry of Health. This was established, along with a Policy for Quality, a National Strategy for Quality, and an Implementation Plan.’ – Master’s alumni (2015): Director of Quality Management – Ministry of Health, Malawi

I have been tasked to conduct a stakeholder analysis for biodiversity finance and Policy and Institutional Review of the Biodiversity Expenditure Review in 2018– Master’s alumni (2016), Environmental Finance Expert – United Nations Development Program, Mozambique

Altogether 98 per cent of the survey respondents, or 61 (male 33, female 28, including male PWD 2), passed on skills gained during their scholarship, including technical, networking, leadership, communication and critical-thinking skills.

Alumni often transfer skills and knowledge to colleagues as part of their everyday work. Of the survey respondents, 94 per cent or 59 (male 33, female 26, including male PWD 2), reported transferring skills through organising formal, sometimes large-scale and providing informal feedback and support on technical or soft skills. Examples included supporting colleagues to better negotiate and work in teams, which touches on skills related to leadership, networking and communication with others.
All respondents indicated that their workplaces were conducive to applying the skills they had gained in Australia.

Survey respondents believed that their workplace was conducive to applying skills either ‘to a certain extent’ or ‘to a great extent’. (Figure 3)

A higher proportion of individuals in the 24-months cohort or 12 (male 6, female 6), alumni surveyed described their workplace as conducive ‘to a great extent’, as compared to members of the 12-months cohort, amounting to 49 per cent of the survey respondents, or 20 (male 10, female 10).

Alumni most commonly cited ‘management support’ as enabling them to apply skills in the workplace.

Overall, 47 per cent of the survey respondents, or 29 (male 16, female 13, including male PWD 2), cited ‘management support’ as the primary factor enabling them to apply the
knowledge and skills gained in Australia in the workplace, followed by 32 per cent of the
survey respondents, or 20 (male 12, female 8), cited ‘having relevant skills’ (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Enablers to Skills Application n=61**

There were no significant differences between enablers cited by male and female respondents.

A higher proportion of individuals in the 12-months cohort cited ‘relevant skills’ as the most
crucial enabler, or 17 (male 11, female 6), as compared to the 24-months cohort, or six
(male 4, female 2). However, a higher proportion of alumni in the 24-months cohort cited
‘management support’ as the most important enabler, amounting to 55 per cent of the
survey respondents, or 12 (male 8, female 4), as compared to the 12-months cohort,
amounting to 34 per cent of the survey respondents, or 13 (male 5, female 8). These
differences suggest that alumni are likely to use their new skills soon after their return and
may draw on management support to apply these skills after some time had passed.
Further, policy-related contributions may require more buy-in from management.
Despite the high proportion of respondents who applied their skills in the workplace, 72 per cent of the survey respondents, or 45 (male 23, female 22) encountered a challenge when doing so. Although there were no significant differences in these results by gender, views on these challenges did vary by cohort (Figure 5).

The highest proportion of alumni in the 24-months cohort cited 'lack of resources' as a challenge to applying skills in the workplace, amounting to 61 per cent of the survey respondents, or 11 (males 5, females 6), a higher proportion than in the 12-months cohort, amounting to 23 per cent or 11 (males 6, females 5). Although alumni in the 12-months cohort most commonly cited 'lack of resources' as the main challenge, a significantly higher proportion of individuals cited 'lack of support from supervisor', as compared to the 24-months cohort. The result suggests that, upon return, alumni may struggle to gain supervisor support for a new initiative. Once alumni have gained support from supervisors, they may later struggle with the practicalities of implementing their idea and obtaining funding.

**Alumni also used small grants projects to contribute to sustainable development by building skills in their communities.**

Three of the four small grants studies reviewed included a skills development component. Over 260 people have directly benefited from the projects through training in agribusiness, goat management and post-harvest management.
Box 5: Small grant project contribution to skills development

- The Cameroon project reported a 66 per cent increase in participants’ knowledge of post-harvest management.
- The Uganda project reported improved market linkages with supermarkets for their products and increased income of approximately $1,200 for the women’s group.
- The Nigeria project reported that approximately 60 per cent of training participants (66 individuals) have adopted more productive approaches to animal feeding and management as a result.

Consistent with the Australia Awards ToC for Africa, 96 per cent of the survey respondents, or 59 (males 33, females 26) reported using the skills and knowledge gained to make development contributions.12 (Figure 6)

Only three alumni surveyed did not feel that these skills enabled them to contribute at all. Two of these respondents had studied a Short Course on Macroeconomic Management in Resource-rich Countries and were working for the same organisation (the country’s central bank).

Box 6: Case Study Example

The knowledge and technical skills that Mumba developed while pursuing a Master’s of Public Health degree allowed him to contribute to the passage of Zambia’s first National Health Financing Policy. This policy is expected to increase health insurance coverage from 3-4 per cent to between 35 and 40 per cent.

See full Case Study Improving health policy and services in Zambia.

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12 This refers to respondents who reported using skills ‘to a great extent’ or ‘to a certain extent’.
Promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

An essential element of the Australia Awards is promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) by showcasing good practice, increasing awareness of GESI, and encouraging equal opportunities for everyone.

Seventy-six per cent of the survey respondents, or 48 (male 25, female 23, including male PWD 1) reported that the skills and knowledge gained in Australia helped them promote GESI. These responses were balanced equally across male and female respondents. The contributions ranged from directly hiring women and people with disability in their organisations to amending policies to consider the needs of women and other social groups. Several respondents linked their GESI contributions to the nature of their work, noting that their improved ability to do their job makes them more effective in supporting these populations through direct service delivery, policy or projects.

Other respondents also cited more consciously promoting equitable hiring and training practices and including individuals of both genders when forming teams and committees.

Box 7: Examples: Promotion of GESI

‘I implement specific activities that target women and young vulnerable girls to promote access to HIV testing, treatment and support’ – Master’s alumni (2017): Senior Technical Advisor, Program Quality, University of Maryland Baltimore, Tanzania

‘At my work place, I participated in recruitment of students for an undergraduate program where we made sure that more females are enrolled in different programs. We also ensure that there’s equity between males and females in terms of awarding of scholarships.’ – Master’s alumni (2015): – Lecturer, Daeyang University, Malawi

Most Significant Change Stories

Alumni with a return period of more than 24 months tend to contribute to practice and policies with wider reach. Soft skills, internships and on-award enrichment opportunities are intended to further build the ability of alumni to introduce practical changes at organisational or national level.

The program collected MSC stories during alumni review workshops that provided rich qualitative data and complemented self-reported survey data. For alumni, their significant contributions are those where they influenced others or implemented sustainable projects with a national or regional impact. Groups of peers selected stories they viewed as most significant (see Box 8/9). The themes emerging from these stories were consistent with those from 2017 and include:

- Community or national development – this includes alumni participating in policy development, and leading program implementation.
- Personal development – this includes promotion, self-confidence and career growth. Examples are serving on advisory boards or performing peer review of journal articles.
- Soft skills development – alumni reported improved research, leadership and analytical skills.
- Organisational change and practices – alumni introduced new methods in the workplace and trained staff members on the newly acquired skills.
The 48 alumni attending the workshops indicated that the internships, soft skills and Australia's advanced approach to work supported them in contributing to the described change.

**Box 8: MSC Stories**

**Community or national development**

An alumnus from Cameroon supported the rehabilitation of abandoned mining sites in the country’s Eastern Region. He used the knowledge gained from attending the *Short Course in Mining Management and Regulation (2012)* on the socio-environmental aspects of mining to convert an abandoned mine site into a fish pond. Two abandoned pits are now fully utilised, and one year after the conversion, the supported farmer had harvested fish worth $1,300.

While studying for her *Master's of International Public Health*, a Cameroonian (2012) scholar recommended to the Director of the School of Public Health at the University of Queensland to consider the inclusion of practical examples in the university’s Health Education and Community Needs course. As part of her project, she identified a district in Cameroon, Mbalmayo with 18 secondary schools for delivering health education talks through health clubs. To date, she has created 10 school-based health clubs in the Mbalmayo district, resulting in increased awareness of contraceptives among adolescents. Pregnancies have consequently been reduced from six students per year per school to two to three per year.

An alumna from Comoros has overcome the challenges of training English language in a French-speaking country. She attended the *Fellowship in Good Practice in Curriculum Development for Secondary School English (2012)*. Even with several years of experience, the fellowship enhanced the ability of the alumna to understand curriculum design. On return from the award, the alumna, together with another Australia Awards alumna, was part of the panel to design the country’s English language curriculum, at a time when Comoros’ new language policy included English as the first foreign language. As the project coordinator, the alumna successfully advocated for the introduction of the first bachelor’s degree in English in the country. At least 30 students have annually enrolled for the course since 2015.

An alumnus from Mauritius used the skills and knowledge gained from the seminars and workshops he attended while studying for a *Master's of Sustainable Urban and Regional Planning (2014)* to make substantial contributions to the Planning Policy Guidance on climate and sustainable construction practice for the Mauritius Ministry of Housing and Lands. Despite challenges faced, the alumnus successfully incorporated sustainable planning aspects he had learnt in Australia.

An alumna from Mauritius utilised the skills obtained during her *Master's of Public Administration (2012)* to contribute extensively to the development of a Performance Management System for the Mauritius Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms.
Findings

Box 9: MSC Stories ctd

Personal development

Overcoming the barriers in a male-dominated sector, an alumna from Niger participated in an Australia Awards Short Course in Mining Resources: Regulation and Management (2012). The course gave her the necessary entry-level requirements to enrol for a Mining Engineer Diploma in Niger and she was later accepted to pursue an Engineering Degree. She completed the studies and received a promotion to Head of Project Evaluations at the Ministry of Mines.

Soft skills development

Equipped with both soft and technical skills in development from his Master’s of Development Studies (2014), an alumus from Seychelles demonstrated that one can succeed if you understand and acknowledge the role of operational staff. As the chairperson of the National Arts Council, he influenced the Chief Executive Officer to change the overall management of the organisation through improved management of artists, including transparent financial reporting.

A Master’s of Reproductive Health (2015) alumus used the new skills and knowledge in research to conduct a situational analysis at the University Teaching Hospital in Bauchi, Nigeria to gain evidence on the low utilisation of hospital services. Results showed irregular operation times, poor patient records, and basic pharmaceutical and out-patient clinic services. This evidence assisted the alumus to introduce clinical presentations for staff training in reproductive health services provision, regular surgical operation sessions, registration of the out-patient clinic with the National Health Insurance Scheme, and other services. Within six months of introducing these services, clinic attendance and family planning utilisation had more than doubled.

Organisational change and practices

An alumna from Botswana contributed to the foot and mouth disease control in the Ngamiland district of Botswana. With technical skills from the Master’s of Veterinary Studies (2013), the alumna raised awareness among farmers on how to control the spread of the foot and mouth disease outbreak. She also used her facilitation skills to encourage farmers to incorporate their indigenous language in managing the disease. These activities resulted in a reduction of disease frequency from once every three months to once every six months the following year. Because of these contributions she was elected for a three-year term in the executive of the Botswana Agricultural Marketing Board with the responsibility of setting up the veterinary department and providing strategic direction for the department. As the Head of Veterinary, she grew the veterinary revenue contribution of the organisation from eight per cent in the first year to 20 per cent the following year. She was also offered a short-term professional placement with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation, Southern Africa.

The exposure to Australian public health facilities gained during his Master’s of Public Health (2013) inspired an alumus from Nigeria to introduce an electronic medical records system (EMRS) at Bwari General Hospital, in Abuja. The EMRS allowed for efficient hospital management, and, as a result, hospital income has increased 100-fold and patient attendance has risen four times.
**Status of RAP Implementation**

At least 84 per cent of respondents have implemented more than half of their RAP activities within 12 to 30 months after award completion. Most of the development contributions cited in this study are part of the RAP activities.

**Evaluation Question 4: To what extent are alumni implementing the activities in their RAPs or using them in contributing to development outcomes?**

The RAP continues to be an essential tool supporting alumni in contributing to African development. Overall, 84 per cent of the respondents, or 41 (male 24, female 17, including male PWD 1) noted that the development contribution they cited in the survey was part of their RAP activities. All these respondents had implemented at least 50 per cent of the activities in their plan (Figure 7).

Eighteen alumni (male 11, female 7) had implemented at least 80 per cent of their RAP activities. Of this group, 10 were from the 24-months cohort and eight from the 12-months cohort.

The majority, amounting to 61 per cent of the respondents, or 25, who had implemented more than half of the RAP activities were male.

The eight (male 2, female 5, including male PWD 1) who have not implemented any of the activities from their RAP were from the 12-months cohort. In the next Outcomes Study, the program may track these alumni to assess their progress.

Consistent with previous studies, the main challenges to RAP implementation included insufficient time and lack of funds. Political instability was an issue in some instances.

**Effecting Organisational Change**

Supervisor support can be an enabler or barrier to alumni in using the new skills in the workplace. Further, an alumni’s proactiveness is important. Some alumni with different supervisors before award had briefed their supervisors on return and were familiar with the RAP, while there were some alumni who did not change supervisors and were not familiar with the RAP. Lack of time and resources continues to be highlighted as the main barriers to RAP implementation.

**Evaluation Question 5: What factors in the workplace enable alumni to apply their skills, or prevent them from doing so?**

**Challenges to Implementing RAPs**

As reported, the majority of the alumni are implementing their RAP. However, the study assessed some of the challenges faced. Like the previous studies, resources and time were again the main barriers identified to RAP implementation (Figure 8).
Findings

Of the 41 alumni who responded to this question, 59 per cent of the respondents, or 24 (male 16, female 8), cited ‘lack of resources’ as the primary challenge to RAP implementation, followed by ‘time’, i.e. eight (male 6, female 2, including male PWD 1), and ‘lack of support from supervisors’ (male 5). Alumni have cited these same challenges in all program reviews.

Enablers of RAP Implementation

Of the 31 alumni who responded to the question, 81 per cent, or 25 respondents (male 15, female 10) cited ‘supportive workplace or supervisor’ as the key enabler to RAP implementation. These enablers are consistent with other Australia Awards reviews for Africa, which have highlighted the role of a supportive workplace in post-study contributions.

Other enablers included ‘relevant acquired skills and knowledge’, alumni ‘self-motivation’, alumni being in a ‘more senior position’ and ‘enabling policies and strategies’.

Employer Feedback

Consulting with supervisors and colleagues allows the program to validate and triangulate self-reported alumni information. This section summarises supervisor feedback, including the extent to which alumni are transferring the skills and knowledge gained in the workplaces.

Time of Supervision

On average, the 14 supervisors who participated in the study had managed the alumni for an average of two years, ranging from four months to over 10 years. In many cases, this supervision began before the Australia Awards and resumed upon the return of the alumni.

Irrespective of the number of years of working with the alumni, supervisors spoke positively about the achievements of the alumni and often noted that their approach to work was different compared to their colleagues. The feedback confirmed the changes and

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13 Some alumni provided more than one challenge, and these were all counted; therefore, the total number will not add up to 41.
Findings

contributions alumni had self-reported and usually suggested that alumni may have underreported their achievements.

Skills Gained on Scholarship

A total of eight supervisors believed that the alumni had gained technical skills, while four stated that the alumni had learnt both soft and technical skills through the Australia Awards. While a high proportion of supervisors believed alumni had gained more technical skills, they nonetheless cited examples in soft skills as the most significant area of improvement. This finding confirms the importance of formal and informal experiences gained during their course of study.

Supervisors commented that, since returning from Australia, alumni were more focused, informed, made valuable contributions in meetings and demonstrated advanced critical thinking ability, and improved leadership skills.

Further, 12 supervisors stated that alumni had transferred skills and knowledge to others in the organisation to a ‘great extent’, through both formal and informal mentoring. All employers except one indicated that alumni had contributed to organisational change since their return, mainly through improved processes and the application of current skills in the workplace.

All except one supervisor believed their organisation provided alumni with a platform to use the skills and knowledge ‘to a great extent.’ When considering factors that enabled the alumni to apply their skills, supervisors cited alumni being in a relevant position (including availing themselves of the opportunities to lead projects or participate in activity taskforces), receiving support from senior management and benefiting from enabling organisational strategies.

Challenges to Skills Application

When reflecting on challenges that alumni face, supervisors commonly noted colleagues’ resistance to change, staff shortages and insufficient financial resources.

Outcome 2: Targeted countries in Africa view Australia as a valued partner.

The HOM survey, which is the principal data source for this outcome, reported that the extent to which Australia is recognised as a valued partner varied across countries and depended on the country size and other donors. All HOMs believed the alumni are valuable in supporting Australia’s achievement of economic and public diplomacy in Africa.

14 The remaining four thought alumni had gained soft skills.
15 This individual believed the organisation had given the alumni a platform to apply their skills ‘to a certain extent.’
Findings

Most alumni view Australian expertise and universities extremely positively. Alumni continue to engage with Australia Awards on various levels.

**Evaluation Question 2: To what extent have alumni strengthened recognition of Australia in Africa?**

The Outcomes Study assessed the extent to which alumni strengthened recognition of Australia in Africa, through alumni’s perception of i) Australia, ii) Australians, iii) Australian expertise, and iv) Australian universities.16

Nearly all alumni who responded perceive Australian expertise positively, amounting to 97 per cent of the respondents, or 60 (male 34, female 26, including male PWD 2), and 94 per cent of the respondents, or 59 (male 33, female 26, including male PWD 1) have positive views of Australian universities.17 (Figure 9).

![Figure 9: Alumni Ratings of the Different Australian Experiences n=63](image)

Male respondents were more positive about Australian expertise as compared to female counterparts (26 compared to 19). Slightly more male alumni (24 compared to 18) rated the Australia experience extremely positively.

The survey also assessed alumni’s continued engagement with Australia Awards through their participation in the program’s events. Nearly half of the respondents had participated in Australia Awards alumni activities, such as post-organised events, PDBs (7), information sessions (4), High Commission cocktails (7) and continuing professional development activities (6). These alumni represented six posts (Abuja, Accra, Harare, Nairobi, Pretoria and Port Louis).

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17 The questions had different responses, hence the varied total numbers.
Small grants projects also contributed to building Australia’s image as a valued partner in Africa. All projects reviewed acknowledged Australia’s funding, by creating signposts, T-shirts, and other materials with the Australian aid logo. They also used the statement, “Supported by the Australian Government Aid Program” and communicated Australia’s support during community visits and public events.

Outcome 3: Alumni have ongoing links with Australia.

A relatively low proportion of alumni maintain connections with Australia. The commonly observed linkages are with other Australia Awards alumni in the home country and with other international students. Less than a quarter are in contact with Australian organisations/networks or professionals.

**Evaluation Question 3:** To what extent are Alumni maintaining positive ongoing linkages with Australia?

### Linkages with Australia

Most alumni do not maintain linkages with Australian professionals. Nine respondents (male 5, female 4) were occasionally or regularly in contact with Australian organisations/networks, and 22 alumni surveyed (male 12, female 10, including male PWD 1) were not in contact at all. There was no statistically significant difference across award type or gender. The 2017 Outcomes Study also highlighted the weakness of alumni linkages with Australia.

The study showed that 13 alumni surveyed (male 5, female 8) were aware of a connection between their home institution and Australia. Most of these linkages are with Australian universities and related to knowledge exchange or research collaborations in Kenya, Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia. Of these alumni, seven (male 2, female 5) reported that the relationship between the two institutions had resulted because of attending the Australia Awards. Despite the low level of professional networks, when alumni form linkages with Australian organisations, mutual benefits can be observed for both Australia and the African country (Box 10).

The other connection with Australia is with former institution lecturers, amounting to 23 alumni surveyed (male 8, female 15), and other Australian students met on scholarship, amounting to 27 alumni surveyed (male 14, female 13, including male PWD 1) (Figure 9).

### Linkages with Other Australia Awards Alumni

Program participants most frequently maintain linkages with fellow alumni from their home country. Of the alumni respondents, 69 per cent, or 34 (male 20, female 14, including male PWD 2), maintained contact with other alumni. Alumni associations and Australia Awards have done well to support and promote easy access to fellow alumni, for example through the mentorship, PDB and SCA events. Such partnerships result in alumni collaborating on projects, including small grants, research activities or community development projects.

In addition, 65 per cent of the respondents, or 32 (male 17, female 15, including male PWD 1) are also in contact with other international students. However, these linkages are mostly social, and communication is through social media platforms. Alumni identified the Africa Connect facebook page set up by the program and WhatsApp groups as the communication mediums used for such networks.
Findings

Box 10: Case Studies

The connections that Master’s alumna Martha established while in Australia allowed her to build enduring partnerships between Australian and Zambian environmental health institutions, one of which was voted the best example of organisational twinning at the 2018 International Federation of Environmental Health World Congress. See full Case Study: Building links with Australia through Environmental Health.

While in Australia, Master’s alumna Catherine supported an Australian Stock Exchange-listed company, Sipa Resources Limited, to establish mining operations in Uganda. See full Case Study: Contributing to Sustainable Management of Uganda's Minerals.

Alumni also worked with other Australia Awards recipients to implement two of the four small grants projects reviewed (Box 11). However, beyond these partnerships, no Australia-Africa linkages were reported when implementing small grants projects.

Box 11: Contribution of small grants projects to alumni linkages

- Using small grants funding, three Ugandan Master’s alumni worked together to build the capacity of women’s cooperatives and youth groups to increase their meat production. One alumnus led the project, while others coordinated the trainings and helped to access facilities and resources from Makerere University. As a result, the groups now supply meat to commercial grocery stores in Kampala.
- Two PhD alumni in Kenya used small grants funding to identify nutrient-rich legumes and breeding approaches that can be used to address Kenya’s food security challenges. The alumni implemented the project together and established collections of high-nutrient legumes at institutes in Kenya and Ethiopia.

Membership in Alumni Associations

Of the 49 alumni who responded to this question, 80 per cent of the survey respondents or 39 (male 21, female 18, including male PWD 1) are members of an Australia Awards Alumni association. Only four alumni who responded to this question do not belong to an association (Figure 10). Because of the small sample, no further statistical inferences could be drawn.
PhD alumni who responded to the survey were more likely to be in some contact with all forms of Australian connections. Master’s alumni respondents also reported being in frequent contact with nearly all types of Australian connections, although it is lowest for professional contacts. SCA alumni surveyed, on the other hand, are less likely to maintain linkages with Australia, which is expected, given their lower levels of contact with Australia while on scholarship.

**Achieving Australia Awards Global Objectives**

*Overall, alumni contribution to Australia Awards global objectives is mixed. Nearly all alumni are promoting education, science research and innovation and strengthening diplomatic access and influence. However, respondents rarely noted contributing to growing trade investment and business linkages or are showcasing Australia as a contemporary, innovative open society.*

The Outcomes Study assessed alumni’s role in contributing to the four global Australia Awards objectives:

I. Strengthening diplomatic access and influence

II. Growing trade investment and business links

III. Promoting education, science research and innovation in their home countries

IV. Showcasing Australia as a contemporary, innovative open society.

The alumni surveyed most commonly support objective III, education, science research and innovation, amounting to 81 per cent of the survey respondents, or 47 (male 23, female 24, including male PWD 1), and objective I, strengthening diplomatic access and influence, amounting to 62 per cent of the survey respondents, or 39 (male 20, female 19, including male PWD 1) (Figure 11). This result corresponds to the HOMs survey where HOM also
believed that alumni had a significant role in Australia’s diplomatic access in the African countries.

**Figure 11: Contributions to Global Objectives n=63**

Examples of strengthening diplomatic access and influence provided include identifying ways for Australia and the African country to collaborate and incorporating lessons from Australian law and policies into policy at home. Alumni also noted raising Australia’s role in African development at a higher level. The Malawi alumni ambassador recounted meeting this objective by briefing Malawi’s President twice on the available opportunities for Africa from the Australian Government.

Alumni also promote education, science and research by encouraging colleagues to apply for the Australia Awards and by incorporating skills and knowledge acquired into the college/university curriculum (Botswana, Zambia) in their daily work and as lecturers. However, many alumni who responded to the survey were not contributing to two of the global Australia Awards objectives on trade and showcasing Australia as a contemporary innovative open society. Most of the alumni are in the public sector, making it difficult to engage in trade and investment initiatives.
Recommendations

The following include program and process recommendations to inform follow-up action as approved by DFAT. Process recommendations relate to future enhancements to the Outcomes Study methodology by the M&E team.

Program Recommendations

1. Palladium recommends a review of the existing data from the reintegration review and other program surveys conducted to examine the available on-award enrichment activities. The data will provide a basis for delivering interventions to improve linkages. This approach will align with the Global Linkages Framework which has a focus on establishing a coherent approach to help scholars establish personal and professional linkages with Australia. As a result, Palladium may have to review the available on-award resources. The study recommends that Australia Awards document stories/case studies showcasing successful business linkages established. These stories will be shared at Australia Awards events and beyond to stimulate conversations on how and where scholars are likely to form linkages.

2. Measuring the second outcome on Australia’s positive recognition in Africa remains a challenge, as alumni views are an inadequate proxy for countries’ perceptions. Consistent with the findings of the global review, Palladium recommends working with DFAT to review the applicability of this outcome and the extent to which Australia Awards can reasonably report on it. Though the HOM survey supported this reporting, Australia Awards does not recommend repeating it annually as no significant changes are anticipated yearly. The MTR has recommended that the outcome is revised and aligned to the Global MEF. Palladium will wait for finalisation of the MTR and recommendation on whether to adjust the program logic accordingly.

Process Recommendations

1. The 2017 and 2018 studies have both noted the challenges of capturing unintended negative outcomes. Australia Awards will consider how to capture the experiences of alumni who are unemployed, or who graduate with a downgraded qualification. An in-depth case study approach that seeks to understand the experiences of individuals in this group may be a useful way to gather these insights.

2. Field visits can help reach supervisors and improve response rates, but should be done in conjunction with other visits, where possible. To date, visits have concentrated on alumni in the cities due to ease of logistics. This study recommends conducting telephone interviews with alumni outside large cities to include this group in the study. Adding a question to the survey tool related to the location where alumni are based will help test the assumption that online surveys favour respondents in urban areas, due to better connectivity. Where possible, questions from the tracer study should be used to ensure continuity of data across the program.

3. Response rates for this survey were low and 25 per cent of the alumni who received the survey (39 individuals) did not access it. Australia Awards will consider a strategy to improve survey response rates, including calling the alumni who will not have accessed the survey link within three weeks of receiving it and those with partial
completions. Incentives, such as possible participation in CPDs, may also be considered.

4. To further improve the response rate, the survey recommends a more proactive gathering of alumni views when the overall survey population is small. This may include ensuring that survey administration is mainstreamed across all alumni events, including alumni debriefs.
Annexes

Annex 1 Case Studies
Annex 2 Data Table Survey Responses by Cohort
Annex 3 List of Persons Consulted
Annex 4 Study Methodology
Annex 5 Videos
Annex 6 Alumni Survey Tool
Annex 7 Anonymised Outcomes Survey Data