# aUSTRALIAN NGO COOPERATION PROGRAM (Ancp) annual reflections 2019: outcomes document

The fifth annual Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) Reflections Workshop was held on 20 November 2019 in Canberra, with excellent attendance and participation by ANCP NGOs, ACFID and DFAT. The purpose of the workshop was to reflect on the highlights of 2018-19; discuss the recent evaluation of Australia’s development assistance for ending violence against women; receive updates and share learning from Gender Action Platform projects; discuss opportunities and challenges in targeting ANCP programming for children and young people; discuss the recent thematic review of Agriculture and Rural Development in the ANCP; receive an update on the Pacific Step-Up; and provide an opportunity to provide feedback on ANCP and discuss emerging issues.

## ANCP highlights

1. The ANCP is a remarkable program, and has made significant achievements in the last year. In 2018-19 it funded 57 Australian NGOs (ANGOs) to support 451 projects delivered in 57 countries, and reached over 19 million people (58 per cent female, 9 per cent people with a disability);
   * 56 per cent of projects addressed gender issues; 51 percent addressed disability inclusion; and 46 per cent engaged the private sector.
2. ANCP NGOs worked to build the capacity of over 1,200 in-country partners and contributed over $40 million of their own funds. This equals a 33 per cent match, which more than met the minimum 20 per cent match set for the program.
3. Two new NGOs have joined the program and we welcomed Mary McKillop Today, and the Kyeema Foundation.

## Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG): Office of Development Effectiveness Evaluation

1. DFAT provided an overview of ANCP EVAWG programming (2018-19 Performance Report data):
   * Eight NGOs selected the primary DAC Code: 15180 Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG): for 12 projects in PNG, Solomon Islands, Zambia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, India, Kenya and Uganda.
   * NGOs allocated 2.1 per cent ($2.6 million) expenditure against EVAWG DAC Code 15180.
   * Two of six Gender Action Platform (GAP) NGOs deliver EVAWG specific projects, the remaining incorporate women’s safety elements.
2. ANCP NGOs’ quantitative and qualitative data provides evidence that the majority of projects consider gender equality in programming and incorporate sound gender analysis. DFAT reiterated the understanding that social norm changes tackling EVAWG take time and long-term commitment.
3. The Office of Development Effectiveness presented findings from its evaluation of 10 years of Australia’s ending violence against women and girls development assistance.
4. The Evaluation found that Australia has provided strong and sustained leadership and backed advocacy with substantial funding during this period. We have a comprehensive approach to addressing EVAWG and have made a significant contribution in bringing about change. Australia has maintained and expanded long-term core funding to key civil society organisations (CSOs); this has been one of the most important and catalytic investments. CSOs have been crucial in advancing understanding of women’s rights, advocating strongly for an end to violence and providing much-needed services.
5. The ODE Evaluation highlighted areas for improvement including strengthening Australia’s leadership, better coordination of EVAWG efforts, more robust monitoring systems of partners, more rigorous evaluations of promising (preventing) programs and expanding private sector service provision. The report makes five recommendations:
   * Sustain and strengthen fragile gains
   * More support for development and implementation of EVAWG legislation
   * Continue to strengthen services for survivors
   * More focus on prevention
   * Continue to enhance evaluation and learning to improve EVAWG outcomes.

## Discussion

1. Panel members and gender-focused NGOs agreed to share good practice in progressing social norm change: Uniting World’s [Gender Equality Theology](https://www.unitingworld.org.au/gendertheology/) Resources, and Plan International Australia’s [Gender and WASH monitoring tool](https://www.plan.org.au/-/media/plan/documents/resources/2018/20181022gender-and-wash-monitoring-tool_oct-2018_lowres.pdf) and other [gender resources](https://www.plan.org.au/learn/publications). The [Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development](https://pacificwomen.org/key-pacific-women-resources/) program was another example of support in this sphere.
2. ODE found that many partner governments have formal commitments and therefore legislation on EVAWG. However, they lack a budget commitment to address EVAWG and to support implementation of EVAWG legislation. DFAT posts, including Ambassadors/High Commissioners, are continuing to work on this issue through representational work. ODE found it useful not to limit conversations to Ministries of Women’s Affairs, engaging with other Ministries (e.g. Ministries of Finance).
3. ODE noted that the management response was not yet published.
4. At morning tea, GAP NGOs shared lessons on their projects including highlighting challenges and successes through informal small group presentations to the broader ANCP NGO cohort.

## Opportunities and challenges in targeting ANCP programming for children & young people

1. DFAT provided the context of ANCP programming for children and young people. In 2019-20, 112 ANCP projects are addressing child, children, infants and youth, representing more than 25 per cent of projects. There are 17 child protection projects in 10 countries delivered by six NGOs, representing $4.8 million of ANCP funding.
2. The Unseen Unsafe Consortium (ChildFund Australia, Plan International Australia, Save the Children and World Vision Australia) presented findings from its report on the underinvestment in ending violence against children (EVAC) in the Pacific and Timor Leste. The report was commissioned in response to there being no evidence on the scale and impact of violence against children and no systems tracking spending targeting EVAC.
3. The report found 4 million children across the region experience violent discipline, 1 in 4 adolescent girls experience physical violence and 1 in 10 adolescent girls experience sexual violence. The Report found that EVAC specific programs in 2017 were $3.4 million or 0.1 per cent of ODA to the Pacific and Timor Leste. The report made the following key recommendations:
   * Development of child-centred policies and establishing dedicated resources to oversee the mainstreaming of child protection and child rights across all thematic areas.
   * Develop an ‘EVAC’ policy marker to enable the tracking and reporting of expenditure on EVAC initiatives.
   * Strengthen intersectionality between violence against women and children programming
   * Increased investment in EVAC-specific initiatives in the Pacific and Timor Leste to 1.5 per cent of ODA.
4. The consortium called for partnership in EVAC programing, considering a socio-ecological approach; collaboration to avoid duplication; and scaling existing models that tackle high levels of violence.
5. Reledev and Family Planning Australia presented challenges and learnings regarding their youth focused programming. Reledev is having success training young women in the tourism industry with a family approach which helps address negative attitudes towards young women and their economic empowerment. Family Planning Australia are collaborating with other NGOs to reach hard to access youth to provide sexual and reproductive health/family planning services. Family Planning specifically noted ethical limitations involved in engaging with youth.

## ANCP Thematic Review: Agriculture and Rural Development in the ANCP

1. 2018-19 was the first year a thematic area in DFAT was given ANCP funds to conduct M&E visits (similar to DFAT Posts conducting ANCP M&E visits). With the funds provided, DFAT’s Agriculture Development and Food Security Section visited ANCP projects in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR and Timor-Leste.
2. The Thematic Review focused on linking smallholders to market in the agriculture sector and was undertaken to provide insights into how NGOs are addressing development issues in this broad sector through ANCP-supported projects. The review also identified opportunities for shared learning with a view to further strengthening development outcomes.
3. Key findings of the review were threefold. 1) Agriculture and food security sector matters for the poor and the ANCP: poverty cannot be eradicated without improving rural livelihoods; 2) scale and sustainability: even the smallest projects are making a difference; and 3) market interface: the extent and nature of market focus can be typified and considered more deliberately.
4. Three recommendations conclude the ANCP Thematic Review, 1) focus on smallholders, 2) engage with markets and 3) help improve nutrition.

## Discussion

1. Similarities between ANCP projects and larger bilateral projects do exist. However, in most cases the different models of projects are looking at different aspects. For example, [PRISMA](https://aip-prisma.or.id/en) in Indonesia engages with a larger range of private sector stakeholders, who in turn work with smallholders, whereas ANCP projects typically work directly with smallholders.
2. Development results aren’t achieved quickly and are exacerbated when working in very rural/remote areas. The ANCP recognises this and does not require fast results.
3. Risk remains an important element to consider as smallholders won’t invest in options unless they know it will work. The review considered this throughout.
4. When addressing nutrition, limitations (particularly in the Pacific region) must be acknowledged.

## Pacific Step-Up

1. The Government’s Pacific Step-up is based on a shared histories and connected cultures between Australia and Pacific Island nations. It is working for a region of peace, harmony and prosperity.
2. Three pillars of Pacific Step-Up:
   * Economic prosperity
   * Security & defence
   * Connections between institutions & people to people links
3. Step-up has involved significant increase in leader to leader and ministerial engagement between Australia and our Pacific neighbours. Increased engagement goes beyond political with a huge increase in visits between a range of stakeholders including church groups.
4. Office of the Pacific was established in DFAT to support Australia’s deepening engagement with the Pacific, to enhance whole-of-government coordination and to drive implementation of our regional activities, consistent with the priorities of Pacific countries. The Office is a whole of Government approach and staff are drawn from other Government agencies and Departments including Defence, Home Affairs, Environment, Finance, AFP, Agriculture and Water Resources.

## Discussion

1. Challenge to balance the role of program delivery with an advocacy and leveraging role.
2. Discussion on the role of China. There is room for trilateral cooperation as evidenced by the Australia-China-PNG Trilateral Malaria Project.

## You can’t ask that!

1. As the Reflections Day neared its close, ANCP (DFAT) staff took the opportunity to provide brief updates. They provided an overview of the Program’s progress against the outcomes of the 2018 ANCP Annual Reflections. DFAT also noted the accreditation and reaccreditation activities currently under way, and explained the role of the Committee for Development Cooperation (CDC). DFAT reminded ANGOs of the 10 December 2019 deadline for downstream partners to be compliant with DFAT’s Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy.
2. The panel noted that the recently announced aid policy review was a good opportunity for ANGOs to develop and share their views, recalling that others will be advocating hard. The ANCP Manual provides guidance on balancing ANGO’s independence to advocate within the reputational value of being respectful of particular contexts and issues.
3. The facilitator and the panel answered a number of questions on ANCP processes, agreeing that today’s attendee list would be circulated, that a list of ANCP projects is available online, that reaccreditation looks at an entire organisation not just its ANCP projects, the rationale behind collecting indigenous-specific data, and that the ANCP funding policy review was continuing. On the latter, the RDE threshold and the size of the base grant were key issues. The panel also confirmed that ANCP funds could be used for capacity building of staff in developing countries.
4. The panel highlighted the value of collaboration with and between ANCP ANGOs focused on gender issues, not just seeking guidance and advice from DFAT. The panel also noted that ending violence against women and girls will be an enduring but achievable challenge, particularly in the Pacific.
5. Survey results from 18 respondents confirmed NGOs find Annual Reflections ‘extremely worthwhile’ or ‘very worthwhile’ (88 per cent) with 11 per cent deeming it ‘somewhat worthwhile’. November 2020 was the clear preference for next year’s event (72 per cent) but slightly lower results for holding it in Canberra again (66 per cent) largely due to cost and time associated with travel to Canberra. Overall positive feedback about the logistics, agenda and facilities with some recommendations for improvements next year.

## Next Steps

1. DFAT will:
   * engage ANCP NGOs to refresh terms of reference for the MEL Reference Group and develop a work plan for 2020, including finalising the refreshed ANCP MELF and refining the SSC process;
   * deliberate on the results of the MEL priority topics in conjunction with plans to focus next year’s learning event on findings from the GAP evaluations.