

Final report

Independent Strategic Review

Building Relationships through Intercultural Dialogue and Growing Engagement (BRIDGE) School Partnerships Program in Indonesia (2019-2025)

A review conducted for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,
Australian Government

Prepared for: Claudina Milawati, Unit Manager
Scholarships and Alumni, DFAT
Australian Embassy, Jakarta

Prepared by: Simon Henderson, Kirrilee Hughes

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Simon Henderson Research Ltd
Maesgwyn
Trefecca, Brecon
Powys LD3 0PW
UK

Tel: +44 (0) 1874 618395
Mob: +44 (0) 7889 393703
www.simonhendersonresearch.com

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The final content of this report reflects the opinions of the Review team.

Executive summary

This document presents the findings of an Independent Strategic Review (ISR) of the current phase of Building Relationships through Intercultural Dialogue and Growing Engagement (BRIDGE) schools partnership program in Indonesia (2019-2025). The ISR took place over January-March 2024, and involved extensive secondary data review and interviews with over 100 stakeholders across Australia and 5 provinces/regions of Indonesia, from schools, national and subnational governments and the private sector. The purpose of the ISR was twofold: assess BRIDGE's progress and constraints in the current phase; and identify options to enhance its relevance and sustainability in any possible future phase. Currently, BRIDGE Indonesia is due to finish in June 2025.

Summary description

	BRIDGE Indonesia (2019-25)
Implementation model:	Partner-led (AEF) initiative funded by ODA in the form of 3-yearly grant from DFAT
Support duration:	Divided into 2 parts: July 2019-August 2022 and October 2022-June 2025
Total allocation:	AUD 9.3 million
Scope of current phase:	Selected primary, junior and senior high / secondary schools from 18 Indonesian provinces and all Australian states and territories
Objectives:	<p><u>Current end of program outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating schools establish sustainable partnerships. • Participating educators expand and apply pedagogical competencies • BRIDGE stakeholders have increased global competence and positive attitudes towards their counterparts.

BRIDGE has been implemented in Indonesia since 2008 by the Asia Education Foundation (AEF), an initiative of Asialink at The University of Melbourne. AEF has implemented school partnerships in several other countries/regions but BRIDGE Indonesia is the oldest and unusual in being funded almost entirely through official development assistance (ODA) since its start.

The program was developed originally in 2008 by the Australia-Indonesia Institute and AEF as a bilateral, school-to-school digital partnership program as a response to Australian Government advisory restrictions on travel to Indonesia, which at that time had effectively put a stop to in-person visits by Australian teachers and students. Interest in the program was also catalysed by a drive in Australia for Asia literacy, notably at prime ministerial level. When travel restrictions eased in 2012 the program shifted to a hybrid model incorporating in-person visits by participating educators, but retained a strong focus on online methods and digital pedagogy. The program includes visits/homestays in Australia for new

Indonesian partners, funded by program (ODA) resources; reciprocal visits by Australian partners however have historically relied on additional, non-ODA grant funding.

The program concept, therefore, is fundamentally about building links between educators (and their schools) in the two countries, while ODA funding carries the expectation that the program will contribute to development in Indonesia.

From 2008 to December 2023, BRIDGE Indonesia has helped set up 243 school partnerships in total, involving schools from 18 provinces in Indonesia and all states and territories in Australia.

Relevance

In spite of its small size, BRIDGE is highly relevant to DFAT's public diplomacy objectives in Indonesia, promoting people-to-people ties and showcasing Australia as a modern, multicultural country to visiting Indonesian educators. BRIDGE also provides a willing network of partner schools in Indonesia to participate in or host Australian-sponsored events and visits, which attract publicity and demonstrate the links between the two countries.

In terms of DFAT's development objectives, BRIDGE is expected to remain reasonably well-aligned with the priorities set out in the forthcoming Australia-Indonesia Development Partnership. However, the program's small size – it amounted to less than 2% of DFAT's education ODA expenditure in Indonesia 2019-2023 – means BRIDGE is peripheral to the development program.

The program's small size of course also limits its scope to contribute to reforms in Indonesia's vast education sector. But in spite of this, it is viewed as valuable by senior Government officials and Indonesian teachers alike (with reportedly high levels of interest among Indonesian schools). Many of the educational concepts now being promoted in Indonesia are common practice in Australia. Although small, BRIDGE is unique in Indonesia in offering a window on such practices for Indonesian educators to learn about their implementation with their Australian partners.

In practice, BRIDGE's biggest challenge in terms of relevance is in Australia, where policy changes since 2019 have lessened the importance placed on Asia literacy by education officials and exacerbated the decline in Indonesian language teaching in Australian schools. While this is recognised nationally¹, leverage at the state and territory level is limited. Moreover, the post-pandemic environment in Australia, marked by teacher shortages, heavy 'catch-up' workloads and cost of living pressures, has significantly increased the challenge faced by BRIDGE in recruiting Australian schools.

Progress towards objectives

¹ DFAT's recent *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040* recommends (as a key enabling action) that National Cabinet consider developing a whole-of-nation plan to strengthen Southeast Asia literacy in Australia in business, government, education and training, and the community.

For a small program, both public diplomacy and development staff in the Embassy see BRIDGE as delivering very good ‘bang for buck’ in terms of its contribution to Australia’s engagement in Indonesia.

BRIDGE is valued for its contribution to Australia’s public diplomacy efforts. The program contributes directly to several of DFAT’s long-term public diplomacy aims by creating people-to-people links between the two countries and exposing ordinary Indonesians to facets of Australian society and lifestyle. BRIDGE also supports DFAT in the shorter-term, by providing a network of partner schools in Indonesia that are willing to participate in or host Australian-sponsored events and visits. BRIDGE schools represent a tangible (and visitable) expression of the positive relations between the two countries and enable DFAT to engage with ordinary Indonesians in ways that its much larger, policy-oriented investments often do not. Such events typically generate a good degree of publicity, providing opportunities to showcase Australian-Indonesian cooperation and help maintain awareness of and support for Australia’s development assistance program in the country and at home.

Measuring the effectiveness of BRIDGE’s contribution here however is challenging. Public diplomacy objectives have not been specified for the program, in spite of its importance and accordingly the program does not have a credible assessment approach. The program’s worth in this regard is therefore not formally acknowledged, which in turn increases the risk that, at some point, the program’s contribution is undervalued.

BRIDGE Indonesia’s development contribution is primarily through supporting participating Indonesian educators to learn and apply new pedagogical practice and enhance their (and subsequently their students’) global competency. The ISR is persuaded that the program does make a contribution in this manner – albeit tiny, in the scheme of things – partly facilitated by the more receptive environment created by Indonesia’s sectoral reform program, partly by the pandemic which radically altered willingness and capacity in Indonesia to make use of digital pedagogy, a historical focus of the program; and fundamentally by the intrinsic motivation of enthusiastic local educators, whose primary interest in participating is to improve their professional skills and better support their students.

However, the program cannot currently (credibly) demonstrate its success with respect to changing practice among participating educators. The weak evidence base puts achievement of its end-of-program objectives at risk.

The other main development objective of the program relates to the sustainability of the school partnerships established. Although success may only be measured fully in the next few years, the available evidence suggests performance is mixed. In practice, the main reasons why partnerships discontinue lie outside the control of the program and reflect more the challenges in Australia. Moreover, the merit of targeting a particular partnership duration as an objective in itself is not clear. The ISR questions whether sufficient thinking has gone into defining “sustainability, for what?”.

Progress towards Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) results

The program has applied a relatively ‘light-touch’ approach to advancing DFAT’s GEDSI priorities for most of the current phase. This has included development of a strategy (in 2021), provision of GEDSI-focused grants to assist existing partnerships to implement relevant measures, running GEDSI-focused workshops for participating educators and engaging 10 Indonesian schools as GEDSI model schools. Interviews with participants during the ISR suggest that small but real changes in practice are being implemented, at least nominally as a result of BRIDGE support. But it is also true that what progress has been made is primarily around gender equality rather than disability inclusion. The program needs to continue to strengthen its approach (and measurement) in this area.

Program sustainability

There is no doubt the economic and education policy environment in Australia poses challenges for BRIDGE. Does it threaten the continuation of the program? In all likelihood, BRIDGE can continue for another 5 years (at least) along current lines – establishing 5-10 new partnerships per year and supporting existing ones. Under this model and over that timeframe, BRIDGE might have 30-40 active partnerships in any year, which probably constitutes a critical mass in terms of delivering the program’s public diplomacy value and continuing its small development contribution. Over time, however, a dwindling flow of new partnerships coupled with the inevitable attrition of existing ones would likely render BRIDGE less relevant and certainly poor value for money given the overhead cost of administering the program.

In view of these challenges, the ISR was asked to consider ways to enhance program sustainability. Two main options are proposed for DFAT to consider/discuss with AEF in the remaining 15 months of the current phase: make the BRIDGE partnership model more robust; and make BRIDGE more attractive to Australian educators.

The existing BRIDGE model, based on a single school-to-school partnership dependent on just 1 or 2 Australian educators, is vulnerable in the current environment. Opportunities to consider include:

- Promote/support involvement by a greater number of educators in each participating school, to broaden and strengthen the relationship between partner schools;
- Develop a cluster- or network-based model to increase the connections per partnership, for example by linking participating schools in particular areas, or building in the involvement of feeder schools in both countries.
- Develop an explicit strategy to manage the high likelihood of participating educators departing on maternity leave; this should be an element of the program’s wider GEDSI strategy.

Improving BRIDGE’s attractiveness in Australia requires first a better understanding of the drivers of non-participation from Australian perspectives. But, subject to the results of that research, two tentative suggestions are offered:

- Strengthen recruitment efforts by targeting a particular state or territory each year.

- Provide secure funding for Australian educators in new partnerships to make reciprocal visits to their Indonesian partner schools via either the program's ODA budget (the ISR's preferred option) or through a multi-year commitment of (non-ODA) funding from the Australian-Indonesia Institute. The latter would require further discussion with the Institute and careful assessment of the opportunity cost given the Institute's small budget. A third option, to fund BRIDGE Indonesia fully from non-ODA funds (in line with previous BRIDGE programs in the region) may also be considered, though the ISR was told that resources for this did not exist.

Recommendations

In view of the relatively short time remaining in the current phase, the ISR proposes a limited set of actions for immediate response. Wider-reaching changes are proposed for consideration should a further phase be under consideration.

For immediate consideration:

- Strengthen the program's capability in GEDSI, both in-house and via access to external expertise. Currently, the program does not appear to be fully accessing the technical support available within DFAT, some of which is free-of-charge. Additional assistance is available at cost and can be covered by existing budget underspends.
- Strengthen, monitoring and evaluation capabilities in the program. There are opportunities to both streamline and improve current practice. As a matter of priority, the program should determine how it will credibly evidence performance against its current end-of-program outcomes over the next 12 months for inclusion in its end of phase report. This most likely will require mobilisation of in-house or external expertise in pedagogy and global competence assessment.
- Undertake focused research in Australia to investigate the incentives/disincentives for participation there. This should include the views of non-participating Australian educators who, on paper, would be good candidates for BRIDGE.

For consideration in the design of a future phase:

- Elaborate clearly BRIDGE's public diplomacy priorities/contribution for inclusion in the program narrative and performance assessment reports.
- Assuming the program continues to be ODA-funded, clarify/revise expectations regarding the objective of 'sustainable partnerships'.
- Strengthen current GEDSI objectives with the inclusion of outcomes relating to the participation of schools with female principals, and schools with higher numbers of students with disabilities or for educators with disabilities.
- Utilise resources available at Post to develop an outcome relating to climate change: joint projects between BRIDGE school partners with strong environmental and climate change educational content appear to offer potential in this regard.
- Hold discussions with AEF regarding the options identified by the ISR to enhance program sustainability, informed by finding of the research recommended above.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AEF	Asia Education Foundation
BRIDGE	Building Relationships through Intercultural Dialogue and Growing Engagement
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EOPO	End-of-program outcome
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social inclusion
ISR	Independent Strategic Review
MoECRT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology
MoRA	Ministry of Religious Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

1. Introduction

1.1 ISR background and purpose

DFAT periodically reviews all major investments under Australian development assistance. These reviews fulfil necessary accountability requirements, but also contribute to improving individual programs and inform DFAT's thinking about what may be effective in the future. In 2024, DFAT commissioned an independent strategic review (ISR) of the current phase (2019-2025) of the BRIDGE School Partnerships Program in Indonesia².

The ISR took place over January-April 2024, including a two-week field visit to Indonesia during February 2024, and was conducted by Simon Henderson (Team Leader) and Dr Kirilee Hughes (education specialist).

The overall purpose of the ISR was twofold:

- Assess progress towards achievement of BRIDGE's end-of-program outcomes (EOPOs).
- Make recommendations, as necessary, for any future program, to enhance its relevance to stakeholders and sustainability.

With the current phase of BRIDGE due to complete in around 15 months, the ISR was a timely contribution to DFAT's planning process.

The ISR's primary audience is DFAT, particularly the Scholarships and Alumni Section of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta. The ISR's findings are also expected to be of interest to: Government of Indonesia³; the Australian Education Foundation (AEF) and the Australia-Indonesia Institute as implementers and funders of BRIDGE Indonesia; and participating educators in both Australia and Indonesia.

The ISR report and DFAT's management response is published on DFAT's website in accordance with the Transparency Charter and public accessibility requirements.

1.2 ISR approach and methodology

The ISR was conducted in 3 main phases:

- **15-31 January:** Planning and inception, comprising document review and initial consultations and culminating the submission of a design document for the ISR;
- **1-24 February:** Fieldwork planning and implementation, including a 2-week visit to Indonesia to conduct in-person interviews with stakeholders; and
- **26 February – 15 March:** Report drafting, including presentation of initial findings (aide memoire) to DFAT on 1 March and submission of a draft on 15 March.

² To give the program its full title: Building Relationships through Intercultural Dialogue and Growing Engagement (BRIDGE) School Partnerships program in Indonesia.

³ Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology; Ministry of Religious Affairs and education and religious affairs offices at the provincial and district level.

Comments on the draft report were then received in April and the finalised report submitted on 23 April 2024.

The ISR's overall approach was qualitative but within that, the team drew on a mix of both qualitative and quantitative data. The ISR collected primary data from some 40 semi-structured interviews (individually and group) involving over 100 stakeholders (figure 1). Interviews were conducted face-to-face and remotely (in the main with stakeholders based in Australia).

Figure 1: ISR interviews

School partners	Indonesian	Australian	Australian government and related stakeholders	Indonesian government	BRIDGE program team
Recent (current phase) - ACTIVE	Jateng: 2	VIC: 2	GEDSI Canberra: 1 Embassy Jakarta: 5 Con-Gen: 2 Advisory teams: 2	MoECRT: 1 MoRA: 1 Dinas Pendidikan: 3	Melbourne: 5 Jakarta: 3
	Jatim: 1	NSW: 1			
	DKI Jakarta: 1				
Older (current phase) - ACTIVE	Jateng: 1	QLD: 1			
	Jatim: 1	ACT: 1			
	NTT: 1	WA: 1			
Older - INACTIVE	Jateng: 1	ACT: 1			
	Jatim: 1				
	Kalbar: 1				
Older (pre-2019) - ACTIVE	Jatim: 2				
	Kalbar: 1				
Total	12⁺	6⁺	10	5	8

Note ⁺ 1 school represented in 2 categories

Consultations included participating educators from 12 Indonesian schools and 6 Australian counterparts. Indonesian schools were selected purposively, within limits imposed by logistical and timeframe constraints. In the first instance, provinces were selected where schools appeared to perform above, on and below average in terms of partnership sustainability; and then schools were selected to obtain a mix of active partnerships recently established, active and inactive partnerships established earlier in the current phase and active partnerships established prior to the current phase. The selection aimed to achieve a situationally (if not statistically) relevant spread of cases to capture any factors explaining variation in performance.

Notwithstanding this careful design, the sample is subject to selection bias, given that the ISR did not interview schools or educators that were unable to participate in BRIDGE. This limitation is most relevant in interpreting Australian educators' views about the incentives/disincentives affecting their participation in the program.

The ISR also drew on secondary data, in the main from BRIDGE's own records and progress reports and DFAT financial administrative data and monitoring reports.

It was beyond the scope of the ISR to assess directly the quality of and changes in pedagogical practice among BRIDGE educators.

Throughout, the ISR was guided by the key review questions, agreed during the inception phase. Appendix 1 presents the questions along with a summary of the ISR's approach and main data sources.

2. Program description

2.1 Background

BRIDGE Indonesia is implemented by the Asia Education Foundation (AEF), a long-standing initiative of Asialink at The University of Melbourne. Over the last 15+ years, AEF has implemented BRIDGE bilateral school partnership programs in China, India, Malaysia, South Korea, Thailand as well as across ASEAN and the Pacific. Of these, BRIDGE Indonesia is the oldest and unusual in being funded almost entirely through official development assistance (ODA) from its beginning⁴.

The program was originally established in 2008 by the Australia-Indonesia Institute and AEF as a bilateral school-to-school digital partnership program. It was developed to promote linkages between teachers and their schools, in response to Australian Government advisory restrictions on travel to Indonesia at that time, which had effectively put a stop to in-person visits by Australian teachers and students. At the same time, interest in the program was catalysed by a drive in Australia for Asia literacy, notably at prime ministerial level.

While BRIDGE is nominally a school partnerships program, its primary mechanism is the linkages established between educators. In addition to careful selection of teachers and schools, key activities include the development of partnership plans; providing professional development activities for participating educators and school visits / homestays for Indonesian teachers in Australia; delivery of in-person and online professional development workshops for participants; and provision of a limited number of competitive grants to support activities for established partnerships.

Initially BRIDGE used ed-tech to connect counterparts and funded Indonesian educators to spend 3 weeks in Australia for a professional development program and school visit. When travel restrictions were relaxed in 2012, the decision was taken not to fund reciprocal visits by Australian educators using core (ODA) funds. Instead, the program relied on grants first from the Myer Foundation and subsequently from the Australian Department of Education and Australia-Indonesia Institute (most recently in the form of competitive grants). Grants from the Institute were suspended during 2020-2022, during COVID-19 lockdowns and a subsequent DFAT review of the Institute's funding. In late 2023, AEF submitted a new grant application to re-start this activity in 2024. We understand that BRIDGE has been awarded 'out of session' funding to cover visits in 2024. BRIDGE has also used its own competitive grants program to support a limited number of existing partnerships implement joint projects; these often cover visits by Australian educators, but this ad hoc funding is not part of the core program for new partnerships.

⁴ The only other case was the BRIDGE Pacific Program which targeted high schools only. See <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-20-australian-aid-budget-summary.pdf>. However, it should also be noted that non-ODA funded BRIDGE programs have been relatively short in duration, compared to BRIDGE Indonesia.

From its start in 2008 to the end of 2023, BRIDGE Indonesia has helped set up 243 partnerships in total, involving schools from 18 provinces in Indonesia and all states and territories in Australia.

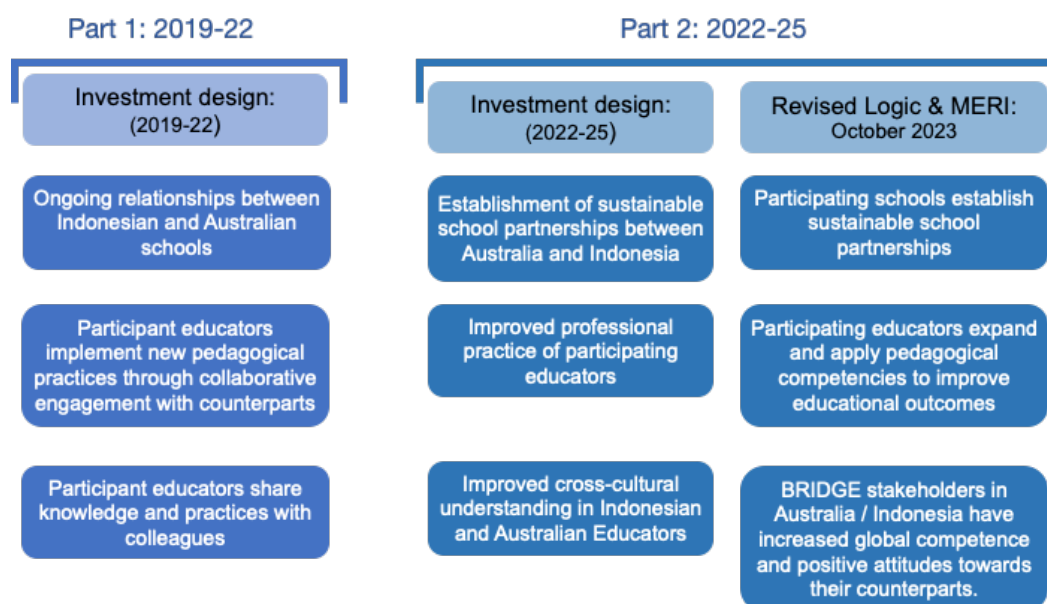
2.2 Objectives and approach 2019-25

The ISR was tasked with reviewing DFAT’s most recent support to the program, which began in July 2019 and ends in August 2025. DFAT funding was committed in two parts under a ‘3+3 year’ arrangement. Under this phase, BRIDGE has worked towards two overarching goals reflecting both the original motivation in designing the program and its development orientation required by ODA funding:

- strengthened relationship between Indonesia and Australia; and
- improved student learning outcomes.

Over the course of the phase, largely at DFAT’s instigation, BRIDGE’s end-of-program outcomes have been modified in an effort to better clarify the program’s different purposes and logic and meet DFAT standards for its development programs (figure 3).

Figure 2: BRIDGE Indonesia current phase objectives



The changes in outcomes point to some shifts in program emphasis over the period:

- the looser concept of ‘on-going relationships’ between schools has been tightened to refer to ‘sustainable partnerships’, reflecting better the greater emphasis in the current phase on sustaining existing partnerships than was previously the case;
- Cross-cultural understanding, omitted initially, was reintroduced during the light-touch design process for part 2 in 2022 but subsequently replaced by the concept of ‘global competence’; this has greater resonance in Indonesian education policy but arguably, BRIDGE’s value in promoting people-to-people links and mutual understanding is now

under-represented (save for the rather narrow reference to “positive attitudes to counterparts”).

- the intention that participants should share their learning more widely is no longer explicitly included in the EOPOs, though it is incorporated under the outcome relating to expanded pedagogical competencies.

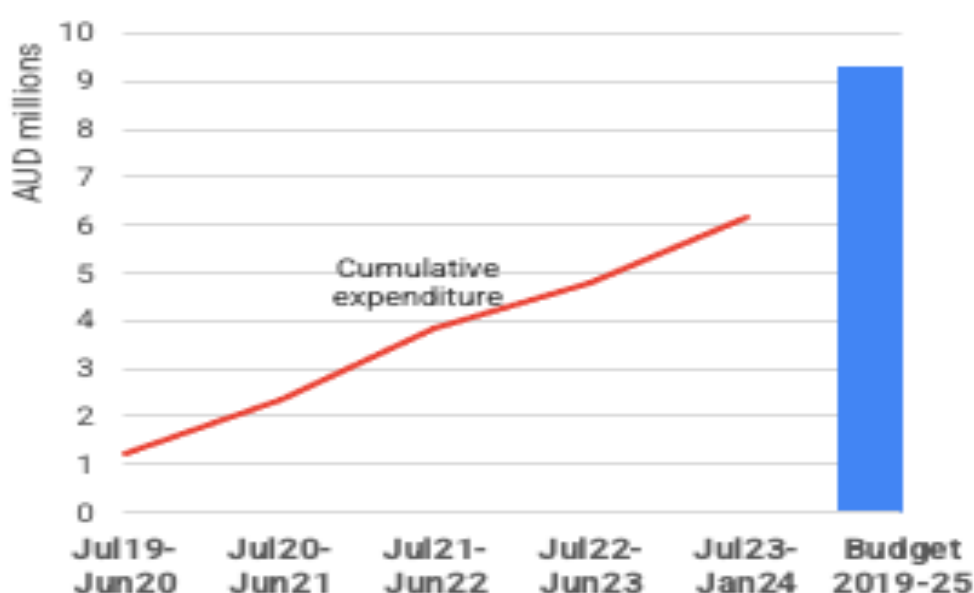
In spite of these modifications, the overall aims of the program have remained fairly constant over the period: that connections established between participating schools and educators should endure; that participating educators should learn and apply new pedagogical methods; and that the program should facilitate a more international perspective among participating educators and a positive disposition between Australian and Indonesian counterparts.

The program does not currently have GEDSI objectives at the end-of-program outcome level⁵. However, the most recent revision of the program logic targets GEDSI promotion at the intermediate outcome level, through fostering GEDSI-sensitive approaches among participants and through demonstration by selected ‘GEDSI model’ schools.

2.3 Australian support

DFAT committed AUD 9.3 million for the current 6 year phase. The program has in practice underspent against its budget annually to date. It is unlikely to fully expend DFAT’s commitment by the end of the phase in June 2025 (figure 3).

Figure 3: Cumulative expenditure to Jan 2024



⁵ The redesign of BRIDGE in 2022 occurred just prior to DFAT’s introduction of mandatory gender equality objective requirements. An intermediate outcome, however, is also acceptable.

3. Relevance

The following sections address Key Review Question 4:

- Has the program design remained relevant to changing priorities and context in Indonesia and Australia?

In summary, the ISR finds BRIDGE is unique in Indonesia and highly relevant conceptually to Government's current reforms, though its potential contribution to development in the sector is clearly miniscule. The program's relevance in Australia has suffered as a result of a changing policy and economic context. For DFAT in Indonesia, BRIDGE is highly relevant to its public diplomacy efforts, but largely peripheral to its development program in education, given BRIDGE's small size.

3.1 Education policy context in Indonesia and Australia

Since 2019, the Indonesian Ministry of Education (MoECRT) has been transforming the education sector in **Indonesia** through the *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn) policy, to improve quality of teaching and the learning experience for students and address the country's chronic underperformance by international standards in student achievement tests. The new curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*) reduces learning content by around a third to emphasise in-depth learning, promotes project-based learning, and provides flexibility for teachers to set the pace of the learning process according to the needs and abilities of students. Improved teacher competence is a priority, with greater emphasis on practice, over theory, and on the use of digital technology to enhance the quality of learning. As part of the reforms, the Ministry has specified 6 student competencies for schools to develop (*Profil Pelajar Pancasila*), including 'global citizenship', which emphasises respect and appreciation for diversity and intercultural communication skills, 'self-reliance/resilience' and 'critical reasoning'.

Many of the concepts being promoted are common practice in Australia. At a very small-scale, BRIDGE offers a window on their implementation in an Australian context and opportunities to apply them in Indonesia through either joint projects with partners or teachers' own initiative. Interviews with senior staff in MoECRT and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (responsible for public *madrasah* in Indonesia) confirmed the high perceived relevance of BRIDGE (notwithstanding its small-scale) and in particular the value placed on the opportunities provided for teachers to experience new practices first-hand, and for students to interact and cooperate with their Australian counterparts. Indeed, the value of observing new practices in use, as opposed to studying theory, was emphasised by Indonesian teachers interviewed who had recently visited Australia for BRIDGE.

The policy context in Australia is complicated given variation in education systems across eight states and territories, and across Government, Catholic and Independent schools. Australian school ecosystems have diverse stakeholders with often differing priorities. That context has become more difficult for BRIDGE during the current phase because of 2 main developments.

- **Continued decline of Asia literacy within Australian schools**, particularly in relation to Indonesian language education: In principle, ‘Engagement with Asia’ remains a cross-curriculum priority in Australia’s national curriculum. However, in practice, this has been weakened significantly by the 2019 Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration issued by all Australian Ministers for Education, which shifted the priority focus to Indigenous Australia and responding to the broader decline in achievement in Australian schools. This shift has exacerbated the on-going decline in Indonesian language education in Australian schools⁶.
- **Pressures on Australian teachers arising in the post-COVID environment:** There is a looming teacher shortage, particularly for public schools, and strong concerns for existing teachers’ workload and ‘burn out’. There has also been a renewed drive to bring back many pre-COVID school activities, of which BRIDGE is one amongst many. In a number of states and territories, teachers are being cautioned about taking on additional responsibilities, such as BRIDGE.

Consequently, BRIDGE has faced increasing challenges recruiting Australian educators over the course of the current phase.

3.2 Australian policy in Indonesia

For a small development program, BRIDGE contributes to Australia’s engagement in Indonesia in multiple ways. First, its value in terms of **public diplomacy** is highly appreciated by DFAT. BRIDGE contributes to several of DFAT’s long-term public diplomacy aims⁷: creating people-to-people links between the two countries and, through school visits, exposing ordinary Indonesians to facets of Australian life including its diversity, tolerance, commitment to gender equality and respect for minority populations including people with disabilities and indigenous cultures. BRIDGE also supports DFAT in the shorter-term, by providing a network of partner schools in Indonesia that are willing to participate in or host Australian-sponsored events and visits. Such events typically generate a good degree of publicity and provide opportunities to showcase the links between the two countries.

As an ODA-funded program, BRIDGE also sits within DFAT’s development policy objectives for Indonesia. BRIDGE appears likely to remain well-aligned with these objectives: education is expected to continue to be a priority sector in the new Australia-Indonesia Development Partnership Plan⁸, including support for improving the quality of teaching. BRIDGE may also align with intentions to build stronger institutional linkages between the two countries in pursuit of development objectives and potentially with the expected emphasis given to the localisation agenda, given the role played by Indonesian teachers in leading development in their schools. However, at less than 2% of DFAT’s education ODA

⁶ See for example: <https://asaa.asn.au/55224-2/> and <https://www.acicis.edu.au/data/>

⁷ Identified in DFAT’s Public Diplomacy Strategy (2014-16) under its Objective 5 “*Champion Australia as an open, innovative, democratic and diverse nation*”.

⁸ Not available for review at the time of the ISR

expenditure in Indonesia 2019-23, BRIDGE is largely peripheral to DFAT's development strategy in the sector.

Finally, the Australian Department of Education, working out of the Embassy in Jakarta, supports the aim of greater market access for Australian transnational education operations in Indonesia, given regulatory changes which now permit the opening of foreign branch campuses in Indonesia. Planned campuses in East and West Java will likely deliver undergraduate business degrees and bachelor degrees with a STEM-focus – and therefore not directly align with BRIDGE – but BRIDGE partner schools might in the future provide a ready point of contact for school and community outreach activity (required under Indonesian regulations) and potentially provide prospective students.

4. Progress towards key objectives

The following sections consider the program's performance against key objectives for DFAT: its value for DFAT's public diplomacy agenda; and its (development) end-of-program outcomes. Collectively these address Key Review Questions 1 and 2:

- What evidence is there of progress towards the achievement of outcomes?
- What are the strengths and challenges of the BRIDGE program?

In summary, DFAT Embassy staff interviewed expressed high levels of satisfaction with BRIDGE's contribution to public diplomacy engagement in Indonesia. Participating Indonesian educators expressed similarly high levels of satisfaction with their experiences in the program. The ISR found that the program plausibly contributes to the end-of-program outcomes and broader public diplomacy objectives. However, the evidence base to substantiate achievements is weak, relying on self-reporting, anecdote while the M&E system lacks clear design, has gaps and lacks a credible enquiry approach.

4.1 Public diplomacy value

BRIDGE is highly valued in DFAT for its contribution to Australia's public diplomacy efforts in Indonesia. BRIDGE schools represent a tangible (and visitable) expression of the relationship between the two countries, and enable DFAT to engage with 'ordinary' Indonesians in ways that its much larger, policy-oriented investments often do not.

Given its relatively small budget, Embassy staff interviewed see BRIDGE as delivering very good 'bang for buck' in terms of the opportunities it provides to showcase Australian-Indonesian cooperation, as demonstrated in figure 4 (COVID-related lockdowns notwithstanding). The program also has an active media presence, with currently nearly 15,000 followers on Instagram (nearly 90% of whom are based in Indonesia) and has featured in external Indonesian and Australian media over 90 times in 4.5 years (2019-2023). In 2020, BRIDGE was referenced directly in the joint statement between then Australian Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, and Indonesian President Mr Joko Widodo.

Figure 4: BRIDGE support for public diplomacy initiatives ^a

	2019-20 ^b	2020-21 ^b	2021-22 ^b	2022-23	Jul-Dec 23
Australian politician/media personality visit to Indonesian BRIDGE school				2	1
Indonesian BRIDGE schools attending Australian-sponsored event	1		1	6	3
Indonesian officials visit to Australian BRIDGE schools	1		1		1
Australian officials visit to Indonesian BRIDGE schools			4	4	1
Australian officials visit to Australian BRIDGE schools	1		2		

Notes a: Number of events listed, not participants. b: COVID-19 affected years. (Source: BRIDGE progress reports)

These benefits may be contrasted with or seen in some sense as less important than the development aims of the program, but for the ISR team either view is ill-founded. All development initiatives can potentially contribute to public diplomacy, even if in practice they are too technocratic to resonate widely with the public. For the most part, the two are not mutually exclusive. It is also true that development assistance programs ultimately depend on the continued support of domestic taxpayers and their political representatives. The ability to engage these constituencies effectively is a critical part of and maintaining ongoing support for Australia's development program.

Beyond the immediate benefits of the visibility provided by BRIDGE involvement in public events, DFAT's public diplomacy efforts over time aim to promote greater awareness and understanding (and ultimately appreciation) of Australia's values and its unique strengths and characteristics in the region. This includes⁹

- Promote Australia's culture of resourcefulness, entrepreneurship and ingenuity.
- Highlight Australia's high levels of ethnic diversity and social harmony and our commitment to democracy, rule of law, human rights and freedom of speech, cultural diversity, gender equality, respect for people with disabilities, and respect for Indigenous cultures.
- Underline the role played by Australia in championing women's economic empowerment and gender equality.
- Foster enduring people-to-people ties and institutional links across all levels of government and civil society.

Measuring the effectiveness of BRIDGE's contribution to (any of) these however is challenging. Public diplomacy objectives have not been specified for the program, in spite of its importance. Accordingly, the program does not have an approach to assessing these, save for a few simple questions in participant surveys (figure 5). Respondents in these

⁹ Taken from the most recent statement of public diplomacy priorities (2014-16 Public Diplomacy Strategy)

surveys are asked to provide examples to support their answers, though it is not clear if or how this information is used.

Figure 5: Example questions in BRIDGE surveys

Question	Source	Response
I have increased my knowledge of my partner country	Annual survey 2023	88% agree (49/56)
How does your current view of Australia compare with your previous view before the homestay	Post-homestay survey 2023	73% much more positive 27% more positive
The Prof. Learning Program (PLP) increased my knowledge and understanding of my partner country	PLP survey 2023	100% agree (11 /11)
How would you best describe your knowledge of Australia?	PLP survey 2023	60% High 40% Medium

Interviews held with Indonesian educators confirmed the overall positive impressions gained during homestay visits to Australia¹⁰. Not surprisingly, more easily observable facets – cleanliness of streets/buildings, ability to walk places, time-keeping, efforts to accommodate people with disabilities – were most commonly cited. Less tangible concepts – democratic values, rule of law, human rights commitments – were not typically raised. However, discussions also suggested that learning can take place on a deeper level at times: some teachers reflected on the multicultural nature of Australian society and the levels of tolerance and mutual respect that underpin it; other teachers nuanced their views of Australian society, replacing previous assumptions about self-centredness with new understanding about Australian respect for personal privacy.

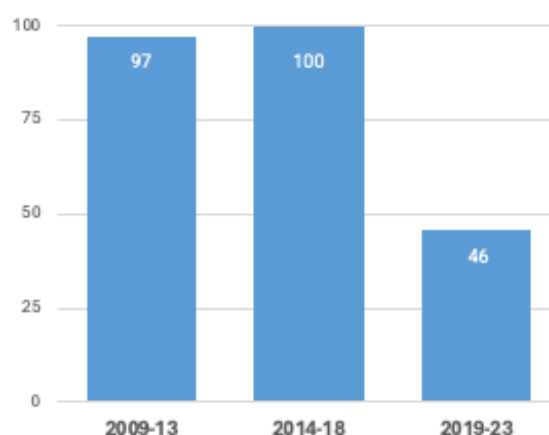
Such anecdotes coupled with positive feedback from surveys may be sufficient for DFAT purposes. Nevertheless, there is potential merit in articulating more clearly BRIDGE's public diplomacy objectives. Such a step would not only help focus and direct performance monitoring and reporting more productively but would also formally acknowledge the program's worth in this regard and help build understanding of the program's total value.

4.2 Sustainable school partnerships

Under the current phase, BRIDGE has seen a significant change in program strategy: devoting more effort and resources towards sustaining existing partnerships and less towards creation of new ones (figure 6). The change was driven initially by the recommendations of the 2018 program evaluation but in practice has also coincided with a much more challenging environment for recruiting Australian partner schools to the program (section 3.1). In that sense, the shift in strategy has probably been fortuitous.

¹⁰ Even aspects of Australian lifestyle viewed as quite different e.g. approach to alcohol and relationships, were generally recognised as acceptable in the Australian (though not Indonesian) context.

Figure 6: New BRIDGE school partnerships 2009-2023



However, although the program outcome was introduced in 2019, BRIDGE only defined what counts as a “sustainable partnership” recently i.e. partnerships that are 3 years old and still active.

The program has taken a number of steps to advance this objective:

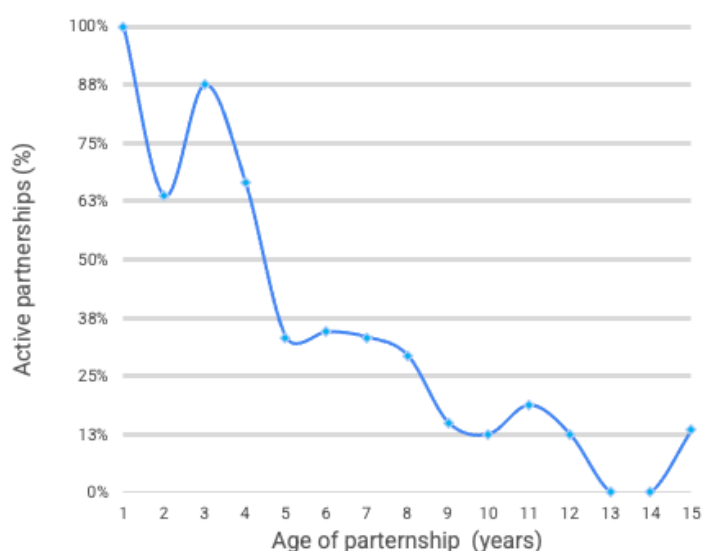
- Use of a rigorous, competitive selection process in Indonesia to identify the most promising partner schools from the start;
- Introduction of grants (competitive and awarded) to support existing partnerships both carry out joint activities and act as exemplars to share experiences and inspired other participating schools;
- Expansion of the annual program of educator workshops to both maintain on-going engagement by participating schools and help disseminate good (pedagogical) practice;
- ‘Revitalising’ existing (but previously dormant) partnerships by including new teachers in the annual program of activities for new partnerships (i.e. professional learning program, pre-departure training and school visit/homestay in Australia). Some 21 existing partnerships have been engaged in this manner during the current phase.

It is difficult to assess definitively the effectiveness of program efforts to date – a sustainable partnership by definition can only be confirmed after some years. The available evidence is, however, mixed:

- Nearly 80% of new partnerships established in the last 3-4 years are still judged active. However, the active rate for all partnerships supported during the current phase – i.e. newly established partnerships and existing ones revitalised and/or awarded grants – is 64%.
- The data (figure 7) for BRIDGE partnerships overall points to the strong effect of time on the life of partnerships¹¹, indicating that most partnerships become inactive after 4 years.

¹¹ Pearson correlation coefficient: -0.9. R² statistic indicates 81% of the variation in the data can be attributed to age of partnerships.

Figure 7: Share of active partnerships by age group



- Whether BRIDGE’s efforts in the current phase will buck the trend and avoid the post-4-year drop off is hard to say but the program’s ability to shift the curve appears relatively limited:
 - Partnerships established in 2020 and 2019 have a current ‘active’ rate of just 67% and 33% respectively.
 - The main reasons for partnerships falling inactive lie outside the control of the program: changing priorities in partner (particularly Australian) schools, in part influenced by government policies; counterpart educators moving jobs or retiring with no suitable/willing replacement; counterpart educators going on maternity leave with no suitable substitute arrangements; competing/ additional demands on educators’ time post-COVID.
 - BRIDGE’s grants may provide some support in sustaining partnerships but given they are awarded to reasonably active partnerships they are unlikely to make a difference to those on the verge of inactivity.
 - Revitalising efforts in contrast are directed at existing, typically older partnerships that appear inactive. However, less than half of the partnerships revitalised in the current phase appear to be active currently.

The logic of targeting ‘sustainable partnerships’ is based on the view that they underpin the benefits provided by the program. While the ISR can see the reasoning here, discussions during the review raise two related questions:

- Whether sufficient thinking has gone into defining “what for?” and therefore what duration and type of sustainability is both required and realistic. Beyond its value for measurement, the definition of ‘3 years old and active in the last 12 months’ does not appear based on any assessment of, for example, the minimum duration needed to ensure capacity building objectives are realised. At the same time, BRIDGE’s public

diplomacy value depends largely on having active partnerships and not their age specifically¹².

- The ISR also found the concept of “active” problematic. The current definition is framed in terms of the school partnerships and last 12 months. But in practice, partnerships can and do fluctuate in terms of activity from year to year. Furthermore, although nominally a 'schools' partnership program, BRIDGE is more accurately viewed as an educators' partnership program. The ISR found that a number of Indonesian educators interviewed in “inactive” partnerships were still regularly in touch with their BRIDGE counterparts in Australia; in one case, they had continued to provide assistance to one another even though the counterpart was no longer at the partner school. While the ISR only spoke with a small sample of BRIDGE educators, there is no particular reason to consider these cases unrepresentative.

4.3 New pedagogical practices learnt and applied

Uptake and use of new pedagogy has been a consistent objective of BRIDGE since (at least) 2017. Currently, the end-of-program outcome targets: *80% of participating educators applying new strategies in their schools*, and *60% of members of BRIDGE's professional learning network improving their competencies* (through access to the BRIDGE network or resources).

Interviews¹³ conducted during the ISR confirmed the findings of BRIDGE's own monitoring surveys – that Indonesian teachers do report *learning* new pedagogical practices from their interactions with the program, including during visits to and from their Australian counterparts. Similarly, responses also aligned with existing BRIDGE survey data indicating that participating educators do generally report sharing learning with colleagues in their own school and in others, either informally through their networks or more formally via MoECRT-enabled working groups or BRIDGE-sponsored events.

But determining if the program is meaningfully influencing teaching practice is more problematic. The 2018 BRIDGE evaluation expressed doubts as to the extent to which new practices were being *applied*.

“...translation of knowledge to practice is not necessarily straightforward and is also heavily dependent upon other contextual factors that encourage or discourage new behavior... BRIDGE is not an intensive teacher capacity development program, and as such it may not be realistic to expect widespread behavior change in teaching practice as a result of the program.” (p.24)

Since that report, changes to the program itself and to the operating context have in principle improved the prospects for application of BRIDGE-related learning:

¹² Obviously, people-to-people links are likely to be strengthened in longer partnerships, but even relatively short, formal relationships may create longer-lasting links.

¹³ Note: it was beyond the scope of the ISR to conduct any direct assessment of pedagogical competence or practice among BRIDGE's educators. Instead, the ISR had to rely on interviews, careful questioning and, where possible separate corroboration with school principals, to explore this aspect.

- As part of the current phase’s efforts to sustain existing partnerships, the program has added components that have increased interactions between educators and thus the opportunity for learning:
 - BRIDGE has supported interactions through award of some 31 competitive grants and 15 Lighthouse Partnership grants, along with establishing around 10 GEDSI model schools.
 - From 2017 to 2023, BRIDGE has held over 60 educator workshops designed to bolster learning and support partnership continuation.
- The COVID-19 pandemic significantly enhanced the relevance/utility of digital literacy and teaching methods promoted by BRIDGE. Teachers from older partnerships referred to feeling much better prepared thanks to BRIDGE training, as schools went into lock-down, while those joining the program during the pandemic referred to the value and use of various online tools introduced by BRIDGE¹⁴.
- Since 2019, MoECRT has embarked on a significant program of reforms under its *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn) policy. Many aspects of the policy promote teaching practices that are common in Australian schools but which represent a significant departure for Indonesian educators. This more favourable policy environment has opened up the space (and increased expectations/encouragement) for interested/capable teachers to introduce new practice in their classrooms.

Most recently, BRIDGE’s own monitoring found that over 80% of Indonesian respondents reported that they had applied new pedagogical practices (figure 8). Thus, the program could be considered largely on-track to achieve this end-of-program outcome¹⁵.

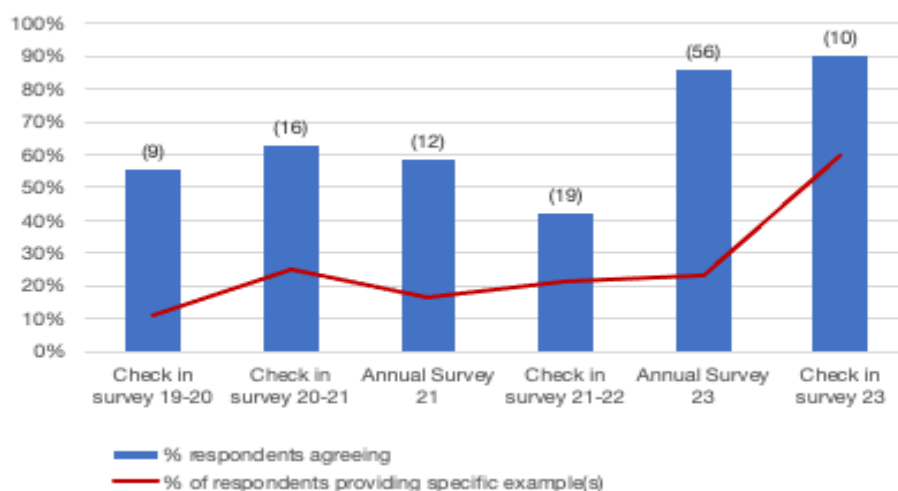
But the ISR notes that the number respondents is quite variable and the reliability of sampling unclear. The reliability of the answers to simple survey questions relating to complicated topics is also contestable: the ISR found notable differences between the number of respondents agreeing that they are applying new pedagogy and the number providing reasonably specific examples to support their statement. Even if the apparent up-tick in specificity recorded in the 2023 check-in survey (figure 8) is a reliable guide, it still falls below the program’s 80% target.

It is also the case that the BRIDGE monitoring and evaluation framework appears to target all participating educators but in practice has little data on Australian teachers’ views. What exists, however, suggests gains in pedagogical practice are likely to be limited for them, beyond some interest in digital teaching aids.

¹⁴ At the same time, mobilisation/ upgrading of GOI’s IT support for schools in response to the pandemic also expanded the range of options available teachers, reducing BRIDGE’s comparative advantage in this space. Given the pace of change, knowledge in the digital space typically depreciates quite rapidly.

¹⁵ Note the improvement in 2023 may reflect a (reasonable) change in the question format: prior to 2023, both surveys asked a time-bound question - “in the last 6 months” or “in the last 2 years”. The 2023 surveys referenced the full duration of their participation in BRIDGE, which appears more relevant for reporting on the end-of-program outcome.

Figure 8: Have Indonesian educators applied new pedagogical practices?
(number of respondents in parentheses)



Notwithstanding data limitations, the ISR concludes that it is reasonable to assume Indonesian teachers are adopting new pedagogical practices. The limited number of interviews conducted by ISR suggested that participating teachers have applied new approaches, albeit to varying degrees.¹⁶ And nor should this be a surprise. The BRIDGE program is fundamentally built on the intrinsic motivation of enthusiastic local educators whose primary interest in participating is to improve their professional skills and better support their students.

The issue for the program, however, is the weak evidence base to judge the significance of any changes. During the review, the ISR heard arguments that these measurement challenges reflect the fact that the BRIDGE was never conceived as a development program and has therefore struggled to meet the performance requirements of ODA-funding. The ISR does not find this a credible argument:

- If BRIDGE was required to demonstrate impact on Indonesia's education system (at scale), then clearly it would fail. But this is not the expectation – BRIDGE's end-of-program outcomes simply refer to improvements in capacity among participating educators.
- BRIDGE has been operating for more than 15 years and could reasonably have adapted to the reality of ODA-funding over that time.

For the ISR, the problem with the evidence base appears two-fold:

- There are definitional challenges in determining whether new pedagogical practices have been adopted. Recent steps by the program to define categories of pedagogy represents an improvement. But in reality, learning may be applied to differing degrees and to varying levels of quality. It would, indeed, be surprising if teachers did

¹⁶ In particular, relating to digital pedagogy, classroom management, student-centred teaching approaches and project-based learning. Teachers were also interested in more complicated changes such as Australia's approach to differential learning in the classroom.

nothing different as a result of the program, so the challenge for the program is to clarify what degree of change constitutes “successful adoption”.

- The ISR acknowledges that BRIDGE is small-scale and its monitoring and evaluation efforts must be proportionate: more intensive assessment methods (such as classroom observation) may be unrealistic for the program; but uptake of new pedagogy is a key objective of the program and simply asking teachers if they have employed new methods is not credible. There would be merit in taking a more systematic enquiry approach to this aspect (through, for example, the annual check-ins) supported by greater pedagogical assessment expertise.

4.4 Global competence and positive attitudes to counterparts

Prior to the current phase (2017), BRIDGE included the objective that ‘*Indonesian and Australian teachers have improved cross-cultural understanding*’. When the current phase commenced in 2019, this was dropped but subsequently re-introduced during the light-touch design review in 2022 (figure 2). No specific targets were established for this and the program typically reported on ‘cross cultural understanding’ outcomes at very high levels (figure 9). Perhaps not surprisingly, very high rates of satisfaction have been recorded among the mostly Indonesian respondents.

Figure 9: Example responses in BRIDGE surveys

Question	Source	Response
“My intercultural understanding has increased”	Annual survey 2023	100% agree
"My students' intercultural understanding has increased"	Annual survey 2023	92% agree
"My knowledge/skills related to Australia and cultural understanding have increased after the Homestay activity"	Post-homestay survey 2023	100% agree/totally agree
The professional learning program (PLP) increased my intercultural understanding	PLP survey 2023	93% agree (14/15)
Has your participation in the PLP improved your intercultural understanding and understanding of your partner country and people?	PLP survey 2023	100% agree (14/14)

In October 2023, the objective was modified again to the current end-of-program outcome: ‘*BRIDGE stakeholders in Australia/Indonesia have increased global competence and positive attitudes towards their counterparts*’. ‘Global competence’ has clear relevance in current Australian, Indonesian and global education contexts. The concept was developed by the OECD, and its global competence framework is now widely used in Indonesia and across Asia (figure 10).

Figure 10: OECD Global Competency Framework



It is in many respects a more ambitious objective for a bilateral partnership program, implying a broader set of skills, knowledge, values and attitudes than cross-cultural understanding.

However, notwithstanding its broader relevance, the concept has yet to be defined by BRIDGE. Echoing concerns above, there is clear risk that reliance on self-assessment in response to simplistic questions (such as “has your global competence increased?”) will render the concept largely meaningless. There is also scope for confusion given that global competence is also one of the four competency areas recently defined under a different outcome relating to pedagogical practice.

The first step is to develop a credible, workable definition. OECD’s definition, which is currently adopted in the Indonesian Curriculum, may offer a practical way forward, particularly as both Australia and Indonesia participated in the PISA Global Competence Assessment in 2018. The approach to measurement could also be usefully informed by experience elsewhere with external standardised assessment tools such as the Intercultural Development Inventory or the Intercultural Effectiveness Survey. The latter is currently used as a pre- and post- assessment tool by participants of DFAT’s Australia-Indonesia Youth Exchange Program. The financial cost of these tools is not onerous and can significantly strengthen evidence and inform areas for improvement.

In addition to global competence, the program’s revised end-of-program outcome refers to increased positive attitudes to counterparts. In advance of any further, detailed definition, it is difficult to see the value of this part of the objective. Positive attitudes are up to a point a pre-requisite for the realisation of other benefits, but as an end in themselves they seem rather weak. Nor is it clear that they meet DFAT’s own standards, which require end-of-program outcomes to represent...

a meaningful benefit or value to intended beneficiaries. The outcomes are defined as an end-state (not as a way of getting there) The type of change could be change in knowledge, behaviour, or condition. e.g., Boys and girls in primary school in East Bogor improve their literacy and numeracy by 2025.

5. Progress toward other Australian development policy priorities

The following sections address Key Review Questions 5 and 6:

- How appropriate is BRIDGE’s definition and approach to gender, disability and social inclusion in its partnerships?
- To what extent is the program aligned with Australia’s new development policy priorities for GEDSI and climate change resilience?

In summary, improvements have been made to strengthen BRIDGE’s approach to gender equality in the current phase. Treatment of disability and social inclusion remain relatively weak. Looking forward, as an ODA-funded program, BRIDGE needs to continue improving its approach to GEDSI given current Australian Government development policy. The design of a new phase, post-June 2025, will be required to include a climate change objective but the program is well placed to meet this requirement.

5.1 Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)

GEDSI (and gender equality in particular) has been an important priority of the Australian aid program in Indonesia since before the current phase of BRIDGE. The program’s approach was relatively light-touch at the start of the current phase:

- committing to reporting gender disaggregated data;
- targeting a majority of female educators as program participants (not overly challenging given the gender profile of teachers in Indonesia);
- including as criteria in the school selection process information about diversity of students and status/interest of the school in addressing disability inclusion (though the effect this has had on school selection is not reported); and
- including as a ‘stretch target’ the option for BRIDGE to demonstrate at least 2 examples and evidence of the application of knowledge and skills across practice related to gender, disability and/or social inclusion

In 2021, AEF working with external consultants developed a GEDSI Strategy for BRIDGE. Still light-touch, the strategy is centred on six principles: women’s empowerment; collaboration; diversity; equity; accessibility; and cultural competence. In the 2021 Indonesia Program Quality Awards, BRIDGE was given an Honourable Mention for Most Improved Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion by DFAT. However, in the first progress report for the 2022-25 contract period (Oct to Dec 2022), relevant outcomes were

not reported on, as GEDSI Progress Markers for the current 2022-2025 phase had not yet been set.

The need for an effective approach to GEDSI was given renewed emphasis by publication of Australia's new International Development Policy in August 2023, which reinstated a target for 80% of all new investments to address gender equality effectively and required new investments of more than AUD 3 million to include gender equality outcomes. The Policy also continued the practice annually of monitoring and rating the performance of all investments over AUD 3 million for disability equity.

In October 2023, BRIDGE's program logic was updated to include the following intermediate outcomes:

- Indonesian school partners¹⁷ effectively promote GEDSI in their work: measured by the number of GEDSI-focused Competitive Grants (CGS) awarded (target 2 p.a.).
- Participating educators develop and implement GEDSI strategies and plans in their schools: measured by the number of participating educators (men, women and people with disabilities) implementing GEDSI strategies through the GEDSI Model Schools program as well as through specific examples of GEDSI strategies.

This is a marked improvement and in line with DFAT's advice to move at a pace AEF could manage. Any future design, however, will require these process-focused intermediate objectives to be reframed as outcome-based objectives.

Given the recent nature of these changes, the dataset for the new framework is incomplete and will require a full project cycle under the revised program logic to demonstrate the achievement.

The primary delivery mechanism for GEDSI content to participating Indonesian educators is through Educator Workshops, GEDSI Model Schools and the Competitive Grants Scheme. These initiatives have been well received by participating educators and there is evidence of changes being introduced following exposure to these activities:

- The majority of Indonesian teachers we interviewed spoke very positively about BRIDGE's work on GEDSI, particularly those in East Java who attended a GEDSI Educator Workshop in November 2023 and those in GEDSI Model Schools.
- We heard examples from Indonesian BRIDGE teachers of changes they have made to the language and communications used in their classrooms: dropping references to 'boys' and 'girls' (preferring now 'students');
- We also heard examples of English-language teachers in Indonesia changing gender-stereotyped teaching content: for example, when discussing household tasks, they no longer assign these to solely to females and instead, may refer to "Dad is cooking" and "Mum is going to the office".

¹⁷ In the updated program logic and MERI framework, it is unclear whether this applies to Indonesian school partners or 'Australian and Indonesian school partners'.

One Indonesian GEDSI Model School also provided examples of securing budget from their local Dinas Pendidikan to install a toilet for students/visitors with disabilities. Throughout our interviews however, particularly with Indonesian BRIDGE teachers, there was a stronger focus on the gender equality over disability or social inclusion. Some interviewees did not feel disability inclusion was particularly relevant to their school as they had few (if any) students with disabilities and were not a nominated inclusive school. Others recognised its importance and referred to improving their understanding what disability inclusion requires, but acknowledged they lacked resources and expertise to implement the learning extensively.

Looking forward, the program needs to continue improving its approach to GEDSI given Australian Government policy, including robust GEDSI analysis and identification of gender equality and disability issues and development of outcome-based measures of achievement. AEF leadership has previously argued that it is specialist education rather than GEDSI organisation and so lacks the in-house experience required to expand efforts beyond current levels. However, interviews conducted by the ISR point to general shortfalls among BRIDGE staff in terms of wider knowledge of GEDSI principles and specific skills to implement fully their GEDSI strategy.

It is not clear if this reflects wider organisational impediments, (including team culture and prevailing attitudes) though the recent turnover in staffing provides an opportunity to address if so. It also appears that AEF are not fully accessing GEDSI technical support available within DFAT, such as SURGE and CBM. Some of this assistance is available free-of-charge, with additional assistance available at cost and which could be covered through budget underspends. From our discussions, it seems that Indonesia-based BRIDGE program staff would be highly receptive to additional GEDSI-focused assistance.

We also note that there is further scope to implement GEDSI principles into BRIDGE's program design and not just the content BRIDGE delivers. For example:

- Modification of the selection process for partner schools and BRIDGE educators in both Indonesia and Australia. There is potential scope to introduce an additional stream, or additional weighting, for schools with female principals and with higher numbers of students with disabilities or for educators with disabilities. Considering that identification of disability is not yet 'normalised' in Indonesia, there is also scope to focus on 'hidden disabilities' or the selection/inclusion of a '*sekolah luar biasa*' (special school).
- Developing specific strategies for maternity/carer's leave taken by BRIDGE educators in both Indonesia and Australia, given the likelihood to its occurrence, to support sustainability of school partnerships.

5.2 Climate change

Under Australia's new International Development Policy, climate change is central to development cooperation. To date, BRIDGE has engaged the topics of sustainability and climate change through modules in its workshops (for example "Sustainability and Climate

change in the classroom”) but any new phase post June 2025 will be required to address Australia’s policy ambition more explicitly:

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 ISR was asked to consider what was needed for BRIDGE to be able to meet this new priority in any possible future phase. Discussions with the advisers¹⁸ supporting the Embassy in Jakarta confirm that BRIDGE is reasonably well-placed to do so. Beyond the content of BRIDGE workshops, a number of joint projects between partner schools already have a strong environmental and sustainability focus, on for example, water use/conservation and school gardens.

There is no expectation that the program itself would make a demonstrable contribution to carbon mitigation. As such, there does not appear any pressure to move BRIDGE entirely online, though its existing use of online technology to deliver much of the program is potentially noteworthy in the future. Rather, education is considered a fundamental pathway to building greater awareness and resilience and aligns well with Indonesia’s own longer-term goals on climate education¹⁹. Targeting an outcome in terms of children receiving / participating in projects with a strong environmental and climate change dimension is an obvious option to explore in more detail.

Assistance is available to help BRIDGE develop/refine its approach: technical advice through the Embassy and good practice examples of climate change integration in education programs (available from DFAT’s advisory support). Such assistance however is most effectively engaged during the design of any future phase, rather than as a ‘retro-fit’ exercise.

6. Program efficiency

The following sections address Key Review Question 3:

- What evidence is there that program arrangements support efficient achievement of outcomes?

In summary, the ISR identified a number of strengths in BRIDGE’s current delivery modality and design that enhances program efficiency but these have somewhat been offset by staffing, management and communication issues. Nevertheless, the program efficiency overall is adequate. Narrow cost efficiency could be enhanced by switching to an entirely on-line partnership. However, potentially adverse effects on development and public diplomacy benefits and attractiveness to Australian educators could reduce the program’s overall value for money.

¹⁸ IKLIMSS

¹⁹ Reflected in the national curriculum, Ministry of Environment and Forestry’s Adiwiyata Program and multiple instances in subnational (province and district) education policies, typically around conservation.

6.1 Strengths and weaknesses

Over the period of the review, DFAT has typically rated the efficiency of program delivery as “good”. The ISR found several strengths in this regard:

- BRIDGE has consistently completed a high percentage of its planned activities each year. Interviews with participants during the ISR confirmed high levels of satisfaction with the program, with BRIDGE activities viewed as well-run and relevant to their requirements. During the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, BRIDGE responded well to the implementation challenges imposed, handling the transition to on-line activities and rescheduling of visits/exchanges smoothly.
- AEF has brought additional value to BRIDGE through use of its wider network: at times to support educator professional development activities (e.g. Australian Council for Educational Research, Great Barrier Reef Foundation, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia) and enhance experience for BRIDGE students (e.g. through participation in international forums run by Victorian Department of Education, Queensland Department of Education and William Buckland Foundation).
- Participating schools and wider stakeholders are in some instances contributing their own resources (both in-kind and cash) to support program implementation, a reflection of the value they place on BRIDGE. This has taken the form of Indonesian local government providing facilities for use, and BRIDGE schools (both Australian and Indonesian) self-funding visits to their partner schools (at times with students). Indeed, the ISR met an Australian teacher who funded their own visit to their Indonesian partner.
- The program’s significant contribution to DFAT’s public diplomacy effort in Indonesia is also noteworthy, not simply in terms of content for social media but also as a network of school contacts, able and willing to participate in DFAT sponsored events.

Nevertheless, the ISR also identified limitations in program management arrangements which suggest a rating of “adequate” may be a more balanced assessment.

On a small program like BRIDGE, such limitations are interrelated, but appear traceable at least in part to **staffing issues**. High turnover of key program staff in AEF Melbourne, combined with the absence of a Program Coordinator in Jakarta for nearly a year, have affected management and communication arrangements between DFAT and BRIDGE and between BRIDGE Jakarta and Melbourne.

Consequently, important **skills gaps**, notably in GEDSI expertise but also in M&E system design and management²⁰, have not been fully identified and/or addressed.

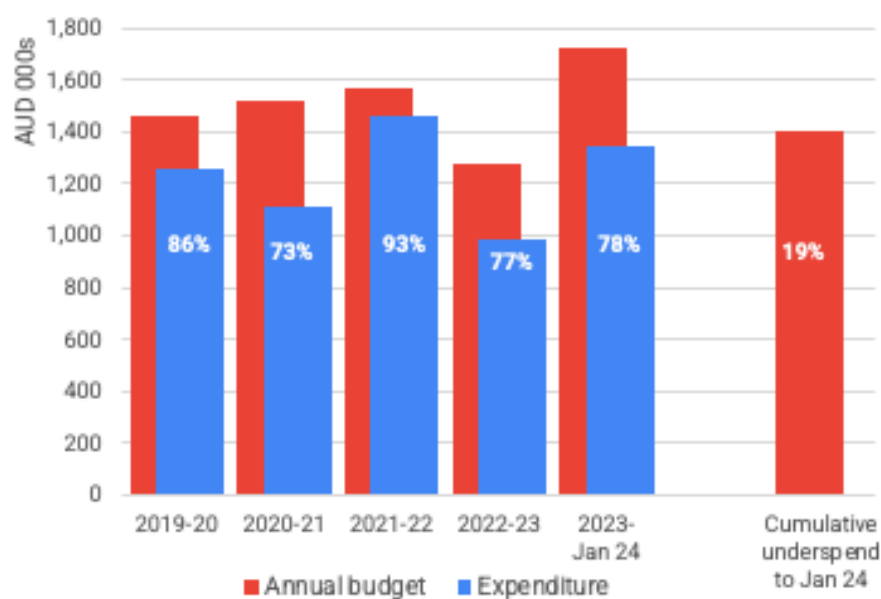
Communication weaknesses seem to have been a factor also in the confusion at the halfway point in 2022, when BRIDGE was transitioning to the second half of the phase (under DFAT’s “3+3” funding arrangement). In the run up to the transition, AEF believed the

²⁰ The program does undertake quite a lot of data collection. However, the overall M&E system lacks clear purpose and objectives. Consequently, lots of information is collected but this is relatively low utility in terms of management insights and relatively weak in evidencing the end-of-program outcomes. In addition, data management is not systematic and retrieving historical performance data for the ISR has proved difficult.

program contract would be extended, allowing underspend accumulated during the pandemic to be carried over. In practice, DFAT informed AEF late in the day that a new contract was required and any unspent money would have to be returned under the grant agreement.

This resulted in a 7-week hiatus on program implementation as a new design was developed and required AEF to cancel planned activities, self-fund the cost of the Jakarta office and staff during the period, and undoubtedly contributed to **budget variation** problems. Nevertheless, given that BRIDGE has underspent against budget every year during the review period (figure 11), the gaps in management capacity (discussed above) appear to have been a general factor also.

Figure 11: BRIDGE budget and expenditure



Discussions during some interviews also pointed to sub-optimal scheduling of school visits to Australia, coinciding with exam periods and to some degree limiting the nature and depth of engagement possible.

6.2 Is there a more efficient modality?

It is beyond the scope of the current ISR to conduct a full assessment of the efficiency of BRIDGE's 'modality', compared with alternatives. But it is a valid question.

To date under the current phase, BRIDGE has established, revitalised or in other ways actively engaged around 90 school partnerships, of which around 52 are classed as currently 'active'. The total (nominal) expenditure of the current phase to date is around AUD 6.2 million, suggesting, therefore, a (very) crude, indicative spend per active partnership of about AUD120,000 so far this phase. In practice this figure is not very reliable, given significant cost differences between existing partnerships (engaged through activities and grants) and new ones (with associated establishment costs, which are far greater). But interestingly, DFAT's own Investment Monitoring Report for 2020 concluded that during the pandemic BRIDGE successfully designed and delivered...

“an innovative and engaging online delivery model which is relatively low cost compared with the face-to-face model”.

BRIDGE’s original conception as a fully online modality was a matter of necessity, rather than an optimal choice. Today the argument for face-to-face activities, in principle, is less clear cut, given the increase in online learning that has happened generally, the confidence gained with online technologies during the pandemic and mounting concerns over climate change. Certainly, AEF believes that fully online partnerships can work effectively.²¹

Much depends on exactly what savings are achievable by replacing face-to-face elements with fully online experience, but there are counter arguments to such a change. As a small program, any savings will not be large in absolute terms and would have to be offset against potential disbenefits:

- Indonesian teachers interviewed during the ISR acknowledged that a fully online partnership could still be useful but all believed face-to-face interaction was instrumental in building their relationships with their Australian counterparts and facilitating subsequent partnership operation and development. Certainly, the relationships established face-to-face appear important in explaining the instances we encountered of continued contact between counterparts, even when the school partnership was no longer active.
- Recruiting sufficient Australian school partners is a significant challenge for the program. While this issue could only be explored to a limited degree, those Australian teachers interviewed strongly indicated that a purely online partnership would be less attractive. Of course, we only interviewed participating teachers, who by definition were happy and able to host their Indonesian counterparts; we did not interview Australian teachers who would have liked to but could not. But the evidence at least suggests that any incentive provided by reducing the cost/burden of participation could be offset by the lack of in-person experience.
- It is harder to assess whether a fully online program would impact BRIDGE’s public diplomacy value to DFAT. Certainly, in-person visits provide direct experience and appreciation of Australian society and lifestyle and most likely help build a sense of connection. Most likely, BRIDGE schools would continue to participate in events and host visits, given the prestige associated with being a BRIDGE school. However, the intensity of online interactions required to build the sense of connection would need consideration.

7. Program sustainability

These sections of the report address Key Review Question 3.2:

- What are more sustainable ways to support participation on Australian educators’ PLP, including through use of ODA funds?

²¹ Australian Education Foundation (2023) What works: School partnerships in a digital age.

In summary, the program has taken steps in this phase to strengthen the sustainability of partnerships, but the main challenges are outside of its control. The program can likely continue as is in the short-term (next 5 years) but over time, relevance and efficiency are likely to decline. The ISR suggests ways to improve the attrition rate among partnerships and increase participation by Australian educators, including changing funding arrangements. However, these are tentative suggestions offered for consideration and require further research and consultation.

BRIDGE faces 2 main (and related) challenges in this regard:

- Attrition among existing partnerships;
- Difficulty attracting new Australian partners.

7.1 Attrition among existing partnerships

As noted in section 4.2, BRIDGE's ability to influence the longevity of partnerships appears limited, given that the key drivers lie outside its control. But accepting that, the ISR also notes the current partnership model is particularly vulnerable. Although nominally a 'school partnerships' program, BRIDGE partnerships rely on the link between individual educators, and at times a single educator in a school. Given this reality, discussions during the ISR suggested some possible options to consider:

- Within partner schools, support a broadening of the engagement to involve more educators and potentially the school executive: this is something that is happening organically in a couple of Australian schools we spoke with, but a more systematic approach to promoting and supporting efforts within schools could be useful.
- Given the profile of many BRIDGE educators, there is high likelihood that partnership arrangements may be disrupted by maternity leave. Developing an explicit strategy to manage this risk would be advisable, as an element of the program's GEDSI strategy.
- Evolve the current BRIDGE model (of single school-to-school relationships) to a more clustered or network-based model to increase robustness. This might involve linking participating schools in particular areas, or connecting feeder schools in both countries or incorporating a hub-and-spoke arrangement in Indonesia (to address in part the high demand for involvement among schools there). Clearly, any change along these lines would need careful consideration and design – not least to avoid the risk of inadvertently increasing the burden on participating educators, through excessive coordination demands, for example. But there would be merit in exploring this option with a view to adapting the model in line with current realities.

7.2 Incentivising participation by Australian educators

As outlined in section 3.1, teachers in Australia currently face a range of challenges, that are unlikely to diminish in the short term and appear to be impacting BRIDGE's ability to recruit partners in Australia. In order to explore this issue, the ISR examined a number of purported constraints/disincentives believed to be affecting Australian teachers' interest in the program (figure 12). It is important to bear in mind 2 caveats, however:

- We did not visit Australia and a detailed review of AEF’s approach to recruitment there was outside the scope of the ISR. Nevertheless, from discussions with AEF, we did not identify any significant weaknesses in the approach.
- Importantly, we did not interview Australian teachers who were not able to participate in BRIDGE in spite of interest. As such, it is possible they have different views on the constraints considered here, and indeed experience other constraints entirely.

Figure 12: Constraints on Australian participation

Constraints/ disincentives	ISR comments
State/territory policies on international activity and child safety	Nothing the program can do beyond sharing learning from existing partnerships about what is (and is not) acceptable. This does not appear to be an insurmountable problem. While we spoke with independent schools in Victoria and ACT (for whom policy is less of a constraint), we also spoke with a public school in NSW (considered to be one of most challenging policies)
Limited awareness of BRIDGE	Some of the interviewees suggested BRIDGE may not be widely known among Australian teachers. The ISR stresses this is not a conclusion – the few teachers we spoke with are not a reliable sample. But gaps in awareness are plausible, given BRIDGE is trying to work nationally and teachers are so time pressured (with limited time available to seek out information /opportunities).
CPD accreditation for participation on BRIDGE	This appears to be a red herring. All the teachers interviewed believed they could already count BRIDGE toward their Continuous Professional Development (CPD) (even though a number had not done so). All felt they already had sufficient options to meet annual CPD requirements and so this would offer little or no incentive.
Reducing cost/burden by shortening or removing homestay.	Australian teachers we spoke to were able to host their Indonesian counterparts and so are a biased sample. Nevertheless, none felt that replacing the homestay with an online engagement would improve the attractiveness of BRIDGE. In fact, for this group, the opposite was generally true: having teachers visit appeared to be a highlight of the partnership. The most common complaint was that the (already foreshortened) visit was brief and it was difficult to fit everything in.
Providing funding for Australian teachers to visit Indonesian counterparts	All the teachers felt this would be the single biggest draw for Australian educators. We heard that while teachers are indeed under great pressure with workload and consequently very time poor, they are still motivated to devote time to activities believed to generate real value for their teaching and students. Visiting a BRIDGE partner school could be considered one such activity.

The findings in figure 12 suggest two areas in particular for further consideration:

- An option suggested by AEF itself is to focus recruitment efforts in a particular state or territory (or perhaps 2 in the less populous ones) each year or for two years. Such a strategy could facilitate more concentrated information dissemination, improve

awareness and enable AEF potentially to build more relationships and provide more tailored advice in terms of navigating state or territory policy requirements.

- Provide secure funding for new Australian educators to make a reciprocal visit to their Indonesian partners. This appears potentially the most significant incentive (subject to the research) and is discussed further below.

7.3 Funding visits by Australian educators

Currently, funding of reciprocal visits by Australian educators as part of the core program for new partners is highly uncertain. It is dependent on success in an annual, competitive grants program, managed by the Australia-Indonesia Institute, whose own resources are limited and subject to competing demands. To underline the point, the Institute awarded BRIDGE funds this year (after a COVID-related gap of 4 years) from ‘out of session’ funds²² for visits in 2024. In these circumstances, BRIDGE can neither fully rely on funding by the Institute, nor promote ‘guaranteed’ reciprocal visits when seeking to recruit Australian educators.

The ISR suggests 3 potential solutions for DFAT to consider:

- Fund initial reciprocal visits via the program’s ODA budget: This is the ISR’s preferred option.

For the ISR, the rationale for excluding a core visit by Australian educators on ‘development’ grounds seems weak: an initial (scoping) visit provides Australian educators with a first-hand understanding of their counterparts’ working practices and conditions, and a much firmer basis on which to provide advice, assistance and develop joint projects. It should be noted that visits by *existing* Australian educators to implement those joint projects are ODA-funded (on a competitive basis). While it is true those visits are more ‘projectised’, with expected benefits specified etc., the distinction seems a rather bureaucratic representation of the development process²³.

- Secure a multi-year commitment of (non-ODA) funding from the Australian-Indonesia Institute.

The Institute clearly values BRIDGE Indonesia but its resources are highly constrained. A multi-year commitment to BRIDGE would impact the Institute’s support for other initiatives. The opportunity cost of this option therefore would require careful consideration and further discussion by DFAT and the Institute.

- Fund BRIDGE Indonesia entirely from non-ODA funds, in line with most other BRIDGE programs in the region.

This option resolves the whole ‘ODA / non-ODA debate’ in one go. While the program would still potentially help build capacity among Indonesian educators, it would be released from the obligations to monitor and report on development outcomes and priorities. The feasibility of this option, however, seems low given

²² These arose from special ‘top up’ funding because of the ASEAN forum hosted in Australia in March 2024.

²³ Initial visits by Indonesian teachers to Australia, under the same expectations, are ODA-funded.

that the ISR was told that there were no available, non-ODA funds for BRIDGE Indonesia.

DFAT's interpretation of the OECD-DAC criteria on ODA and its application to the funding arrangements for BRIDGE is long-standing. Any change to the approach proposed under option 1 would no doubt require clear justification. For example, there may be risks around the optics of funding visits from private Australian education institutions, given they have grown as a proportion in new partnerships in recent years^{24, 25}. But this does not seem overly problematic, for example:

- It is true that currently the initial core visit is less projectised, with greater emphasis on cultural exchange; however, light-touch 'initial objectives' linked to longer-term capacity development ambitions could be easily added without inadvertently affecting the partnership process.
- More generally, the development 'credentials' of BRIDGE Indonesia could be strengthened through some relatively simple design adjustments: for example, increase engagement in eastern Indonesia and potentially schools in more remote areas, which represent priorities for both Governments; strengthen the links to the Ministry of Education's national program of 'mover' schools and teachers (*sekolah penggarak* and *guru penggarak*) and/or its policy on inclusive schools (tying in potentially with other DFAT support in this area).

Regardless, continued use of ODA funds for BRIDGE Indonesia will require improvements in its definition and assessment of intended development benefits.

8 Recommendations

Recommendations are provided for DFAT in the first instance. In view of the short time left in the current phase, the ISR proposes a limited set of actions for immediate response. Wider-reaching changes are proposed for consideration over the next 6-12 months should DFAT decide to fund a further phase after June 2025. It should be noted that these assume the program will continue to rely on ODA-funds (either mostly or entirely). Obviously, a decision to fund BRIDGE fully with non-ODA funds would obviate the need for a number of the recommendations.

8.1 For immediate consideration

- Strengthen the program's capability in GEDSI, both in-house and via access to external expertise. Currently, the program does not appear to be fully accessing the

²⁴ From 2011-2020, 'ordinary' public schools in Australia averaged over 75% of new partnerships each year. From 2021-2023, the rate has fallen to 55%

²⁵ The ISR is aware of instances of independent schools self-funding visits by their teachers and students, and an instance where this self-funding would have occurred, had their application for a BRIDGE grant not been successful.

technical support available within DFAT, some of which is free-of-charge. Additional assistance is available at cost and can be covered by existing budget underspends.

- Strengthen, monitoring and evaluation capabilities in the program. There are opportunities to both streamline and improve current approach. In particular, as a matter of priority, the program should determine how it will credibly evidence performance against its current end-of-program objectives over the next 12 months for inclusion in its end of phase report. This most likely will require mobilisation of in-house or external expertise in pedagogical and global competence assessment.
- Undertake focused research in Australia to validate/modify the ISR findings regarding incentives/disincentives for participation there. This should include the views of non-participating Australian educators who, on paper, are good candidates for BRIDGE.

8.2 For consideration in the design of a future phase (over next 6-12 months):

- Elaborate clearly BRIDGE's public diplomacy priorities/contribution: these should be part of the program logic and monitoring system, and ideally included in annual performance narrative and ratings. This would provide greater recognition and oversight for an important area of program value.
- Clarify/revise expectations regarding 'sustainable partnerships': the value of partnership longevity for its own sake is not clear in the current logic; ideally, any target partnership length should be based on an understanding of the minimum period required to achieve intended capacity building benefits.
- In terms of GEDSI, consider strengthening current objectives with the inclusion of outcomes relating to participation of schools with female principals and with higher numbers of students with disabilities or for educators with disabilities.
- Going forward, BRIDGE will need to include an outcome relating to climate change. The program should make use of resources available at Post to do this. Joint projects between BRIDGE school partners with strong environmental and climate change educational content appear to offer potential in this regard but it would be useful for AEF to initiate conversations with stakeholders to socialise these ideas.
- If research suggests a reciprocal visit to Indonesia for new Australian partners would increase participation in the program – particularly among public schools in Australia – explore the risks of using ODA-funding for this activity and the modifications needed to program design to provide adequate justification.
- Hold discussions with AEF regarding the options identified by the ISR to enhance program sustainability, informed by finding of the research referred to above. This should include (but not be limited to):
 - ways to increase the robustness of existing BRIDGE partnerships, by broadening participation, developing a strategy for maternity leave and altering the single school-to-school partnership model;
 - the merit of a more concentrated recruitment drive, focussed on 1 or 2 states and territories each year;

- (if necessary) options to increase BRIDGE's development orientation.

Appendix 1: Evaluation Matrix

Key evaluation questions	Summary approach	Secondary data	Primary data
KRQ1: What evidence is there of progress towards the achievement of outcomes?			
<p>1.1a: How effective has the program been in facilitating sustainable school partnerships?</p> <p>1.1b: What factors have contributed to effective and sustainable partnerships?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Document review ● Quantitative analysis of BRIDGE data relating to partnership establishment and on-going status ● Qual/quant analysis of BRIDGE partnership grants reports and performance reports (stakeholder engagement activities, media engagement records) ● Quantitative analysis of data to identify factors associated with partnership sustainability. ● Qualitative interviews with BRIDGE AEF team and Indonesian and Australian teachers and principals to deepen understanding of the reasons behind data. ● As far as possible, ISR will examine the balance of effort between establishing and maintaining school partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Program strategies, design, planning and performance reports ● Independent program evaluation report (2018) ● Existing program datasets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annual survey ○ Annual check-in ○ School Partnership Plans progress reports ○ LPP and CSG progress reports ○ Case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Semi-structured interviews with Program team ● Semi-structured interviews with GOI (sub-national) ● Semi-structured interviews with BRIDGE participants (Indonesian and Australian)
<p>1.2a: How effective has the program been in facilitating sharing and application of new pedagogical competencies?</p> <p>1.2b: What factors have contributed to uptake and application of new pedagogical competences?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enquiry will be guided by the 4 teacher competencies identified in Indonesian education policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Global Competence ○ Digital Pedagogy ○ Collaborative Teaching ○ Student centred teaching ● Qual/quant analysis of relevant program performance data (including whole-of-school development initiatives) ● Interviews with participating educators (Indonesian and Australian) to validate data and deepen understanding of factors ● Corroborating discussions with BRIDGE program team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Homestay/school visit touch point survey and reflection exercise ● PLP survey ● Educator Workshop touch point survey ● Annual check-in ● Case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Semi-structured interviews with Program team ● Semi-structured interviews with GOI (sub-national) ● Semi-structured interviews with BRIDGE participants (Indonesian and Australian)

<p>1.3a: Has the program contributed to participants' global competence and positive attitudes towards their counterparts?</p> <p>1.3b: Are the adjustments planned for BRIDGE to promote increased global competence and positive attitudes towards counterparts likely to be sufficient?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document reviews • Consultations with AEF team. • Criteria-based assessment using AEF / international definitions/standards for "Global Competence". • Assess 'positive attitude towards counterparts' through analysis of existing datasets and interviews with educators. • Focus on pre- post-changes (as far as possible). • If possible, interview Australian BRIDGE teachers who are not Indonesian language educators as a benchmark and control for selection bias. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated logic and MERI Framework (October 2023) • BRIDGE program monitoring reports • Global Competence frameworks (e.g., OECD's framework) • Annual surveys • Annual check-ins • Homestay/school visit touch point survey and reflection exercise • Relevant case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews with DFAT staff in Australian Embassy Jakarta (DFAT Education Unit staff) • Semi-structured interviews with AEF Program team in Australia and Indonesia • Semi-structured interviews with BRIDGE participants (including, where possible, Australian BRIDGE participants who are non-Indonesian language educators)
<p>KRQ2: For participating stakeholders, what are the strengths and challenges of the BRIDGE program?</p>			
<p>2.1: What do stakeholders in Indonesia and Australia see as the key benefits of the BRIDGE program and what incentivises schools to participate?</p> <p>2.2 What do stakeholders in Indonesia and Australia see as the key challenges to participating in the BRIDGE program?</p> <p>2.3 For BRIDGE stakeholders, in what ways could the program be adjusted to improve its overall effectiveness?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These KRQs will be addressed primarily in discussion with all stakeholders interviewed by the ISR team including DFAT and GOI stakeholders; AEF teams in Australia and Indonesia; and BRIDGE participants. • Previous review findings/ recommendations will be used as a quasi-baseline for the period and the degree of subsequent adoption and effectiveness will be assessed. • Potential program adjustments to improve future overall effectiveness, especially in relation to newly articulated EOPOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent program evaluation report (2018) • Program strategies, design, planning, monitoring and performance reports • DFAT corporate performance reports (AQC's, IMRs,) • Annual surveys • Annual check-ins • PLP survey and School Partnership Plans progress reports • Homestay/school visit touch point survey and reflection exercise • Educator Workshop touch point survey (• LPP and CSG progress reports • Case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews with DFAT program staff in Australian Embassy Jakarta and Canberra • Semi-structured interviews with All Board Members • Semi-structured interviews with Program team • Semi-structured interviews with GOI stakeholders (national) • Semi-structured interviews with GOI (sub-national) • Semi-structured interviews with BRIDGE participants (both Australian and Indonesian)
<p>KRQ3: What evidence is there that program arrangements support efficient achievement of outcomes?</p>			
<p>3.1a: To what extent are the program's modality and management arrangements efficient and promote effective participation in the program?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative analysis of BRIDGE Indonesia with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BRIDGE programs in other countries/ regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant management information data (financial, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews with BRIDGE AEF Program team

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Other DFAT people-to-people linkage programs ○ Other DFAT development programs in the education sector in Indonesia ● Issues will be largely respondent-driven but ISR will consider ease of communications, timeliness/responsiveness, efficacy of reporting, cost-efficiency 	<p>operational and administrative) held by DFAT and the program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DFAT corporate performance reports (AQC, IMRs,) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Semi-structured, group interviews with DFAT program staff in Australian Embassy Jakarta
3.1b: How has the evolving program logic impacted the management of the program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Document review ● Discussions with BRIDGE AEF program staff ● Corroborative interviews with DFAT program staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BRIDGE program design documents (2019, 2022) ● BRIDGE program logic M&E frameworks (2019-24) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Semi-structured interviews with BRIDGE AEF Program team ● Semi-structured interviews with DFAT program staff in Australian Embassy Jakarta
3.2: What are more sustainable ways to support participation on Australian educators' PLP, including through use of ODA funds?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Comparative analysis of BRIDGE Indonesia with funding arrangements for other BRIDGE programs ● Discussions with BRIDGE AEF program staff, relevant All staff, and DFAT program staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Semi-structured interviews with BRIDGE AEF Program team ● Semi-structured interviews with relevant All staff ● Semi-structured interviews with DFAT program staff in Australian Embassy Jakarta
KRQ4: Has the program design remained relevant to changing priorities and context in Indonesia and Australia?			
4.1: Have changes in the Australian and Indonesian education systems and context since 2018 required adjustments to the program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Document review ● Discussions with AEF to identify any significant constraints imposed by changing Indonesian or Australian State and Territory education policies. This might include steps to meet Child Safety requirements; policies on treatment of out of hours work by teachers; as well as broader cost-of-living concerns. ● Impact of COVID-19 will also be considered and related issues such as online education 'fatigue', teacher shortages, learning. ● The ISR Team will also explore the current context for 'Asia literacy' in Australia and for 'global competence' in both Australia and Indonesia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Independent program evaluation report (2018) ● Relevant research and analysis of the education sectors in Indonesia and Australia ● Program strategies, design, planning, monitoring and performance reports ● Annual check-ins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Semi-structured interviews with DFAT staff in Australian Embassy Jakarta (including the Scholarships and Alumni Team and the team of the Counsellor for Education and Research) ● Semi-structured interviews with Program team in both Australia and Indonesia. ● Semi-structured interviews with GOI stakeholders (national) ● Semi-structured interviews with GOI (sub-national) ● Semi-structured interviews with BRIDGE participants (both Australian and Indonesian)
4.2: To what extent does the program align with Australia's current public diplomacy and educational priorities in Indonesia, the new development policy and the emerging priorities for the Indonesia Development Partnership Plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Congruence analysis between BRIDGE objectives and Australia's current educational priorities in Indonesia, the new development policy and emerging priorities for the Indonesian Development Partnership Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relevant DFAT policies and strategies ● Program strategies, design, planning, monitoring and performance reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Semi-structured interviews with DFAT staff in Australian Embassy Jakarta (including the Scholarships and Alumni Team and the team of the Counsellor for Education and Research) ● Semi-structured interviews with GOI stakeholders (national)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent program evaluation report (as a baseline) • Annual check-ins • Case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews with GOI (sub-national)
4.3: In what ways does the program contribute to other stakeholders' objectives (strategic value)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISR will consider the program's perceived value beyond what is captured in the program EOPOs. Including spill over benefits for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ public diplomacy (beyond 'positive attitudes to counterparts') ○ DFAT support to the education sector (INOVASI) ○ Wider benefits for GOI education objectives – including Merdeka belajar reforms e.g. 'Mover Schools' (Sekolah Penggerak), and 'Mover Teachers' (Guru Penggerak) • To situate the findings, the ISR will estimate approx. level of program effort devoted to these benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFAT corporate performance reports (AQC's, IMR's.) • Program performance reports • Program datasets on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ High level visits ○ Social media engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews with AEF program team • Semi-structured interviews with DFAT program staff in Australian Embassy Jakarta and Canberra • Semi-structured interviews with GOI (national) • Semi-structured interviews with GOI (sub-national)
KRQ5: How appropriate is BRIDGE's definition and approach to gender, disability and social inclusion in its partnerships?			
5.1 To what extent has BRIDGE been successful in achieving the GEDSI intermediate outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the current commitment, BRIDGE identified the need for a more structured approach to GEDSI. AEF has developed a GEDSI strategy and intermediate outcomes in response. • This will be the first time BRIDGE's definition and approach to GEDSI will be explored in a formal ISR. • The ISR will assess BRIDGE's performance in a two stage process: how well the program is performing against its own GEDSI objectives; and how well the program meets DFAT's expectations for GEDSI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFAT GEDSI policies and strategies • BRIDGE's GEDSI Strategy • Program design, planning, monitoring and performance reports • 2021 and 2023 MERI Plans • DFAT corporate performance reports (AQC's, IMR's.) • Annual surveys • Annual check-in • PLP survey and School Partnership Plans progress reports • Educator Workshop touch point surveys • LPP and CSG progress reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews with DFAT staff in Australian Embassy Jakarta • Semi-structured interviews with DFAT in Canberra (Gender Equality Branch) • Semi-structured interviews with Program team in both Australia and Indonesia • Semi-structured interviews with GOI (sub-national) • Semi-structured interviews with BRIDGE participants both Australian and Indonesian and GEDSI model schools and non-GEDSI model schools
5.2 What challenges does BRIDGE face in building support and capacity for gender equality and disability inclusion?			
5.3 How could BRIDGE be more effective in promoting understanding and decision making on gender equality and disability inclusion?			

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant case studies (particularly relating to GEDSI schools / initiatives). 	
KRQ6: To what extent is the program aligned with Australia's new development policy priorities for GEDSI and climate change resilience?			
<p>6.1: What is needed for the BRIDGE program to be able to meet new mandatory GEDSI objectives in a possible future phase?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This KRQ will also build from KRQ5. Document review Discussion with DFAT advisers and BRIDGE AEF program staff Insights from other relevant programs that have introduced changes in response to the new priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFAT GEDSI policies and strategies BRIDGE's GEDSI Strategy Program design, planning, monitoring and performance reports Relevant case studies (particularly in which relate to GEDSI schools / initiatives). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-structured interviews with DFAT staff in Australian Embassy Jakarta Semi-structured interviews with DFAT in Canberra (Gender Equality Branch) Semi-structured interviews with Program team in both Australia and Indonesia Semi-structured interviews with educators in GEDSI model schools
<p>6.2: What is needed for the BRIDGE program to be able to meet new priority focus on climate change resilience objectives in a possible future phase?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Discussion with DFAT advisers and BRIDGE AEF program staff Insights from other relevant programs that have introduced changes in response to the new priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia's international development policy Program design documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-structured interviews with AEF program team Semi-structured interviews with DFAT program staff in Australian Embassy Jakarta Semi-structured interview with DFAT climate change adviser in Canberra

