



CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT EVALUATION

How well is AusAID helping civil society contribute to the development of effective states?

OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

1. Background

There are three main drivers for an evaluation of how effectively AusAID is engaging with civil society. First, there is varied understanding across the aid program of the role of civil society in development and the role of a bilateral donor in supporting civil society. Second, there has been relatively little focus internationally on how aid effectiveness principles apply to the work of bilateral donors with civil society. Third, as the Australian government has flagged increasing support to non-government organisations (NGOs) and a more people-centred approach to the aid program, an evaluation will help inform a strategy for engaging with civil society organisations.

The 2008 Annual Review of Development Effectiveness points to an enhanced recognition within the international community of the role of communities and civil society organisations in development. A vibrant civil society is important to the health of any society. Civil society can promote government accountability, strengthen the voice of and empower communities, and promote stronger linkages and transparency between states and their citizens. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) play a crucial service-delivery role in most countries; CSOs are often advocates for the most vulnerable members of society including the poor, women, children, the disabled, the elderly and minority groups. In addition, local groups of all kinds develop social cohesion by building identity and social capital beyond family groupings.

Donors, including AusAID, are striving to apply new and more effective aid approaches and modalities that support partner country strategies and plans. This includes how aid can be owned by partner countries and how to work within partner country systems more effectively rather than using a model of stand-alone projects. While the focus to date has been on partner *government* systems, little has been said about which approaches and modalities for working in partnership with civil society are the most effective, nor how engaging with civil society can help extend 'ownership' beyond central government. Similarly, there has been less focus on donor harmonisation with respect to working with civil society. Aid effectiveness principles are relatively silent on how work with non state players

fit in the context of more program based assistance and use of partner systems. While this evaluation will not address private sector engagement it will investigate AusAID's engagement with civil society in the context of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action.

Current AusAID approaches to engaging with civil society and communities have evolved country by country, or issue by issue, without an overarching strategy. A position paper on building demand for better governance¹ partly fills this gap, but is not comprehensive in its coverage or clear in the degree to which it is guiding practice on the ground. Current information systems do not allow AusAID to compile information easily on the nature or scope of its engagement with civil society. The natural first step is to characterise existing engagement, followed by an inquiry into what is working well or not so well (against international benchmarks if possible).

This evaluation will help country areas determine their strategic engagement with civil society as well as inform a framework for engaging with civil society organisations that AusAID is developing in 2009. Findings from this evaluation will also inform ODE's Annual Review of Development Effectiveness 2009 (themed around how well AusAID is supporting service delivery) and 2010 (themed around how well AusAID is helping partner countries to respond to the global recession).

2. Objectives

The objectives are to:

- a. improve understanding about the nature of AusAID's engagement with civil society in selected countries, and to identify what results (intended or unintended) have been achieved from various modes of engagement with civil society;
- b. improve understanding about the role of a donor in supporting civil society to contribute to development, including what success looks like; and
- c. support good practice in AusAID by making recommendations for factors to consider in designing a country approach to engaging with civil society and selecting modes of engagement.

3. Scope

3a. Evaluation Questions

Main evaluation question: How well is AusAID helping civil society contribute to the development of effective states?

1. What are the characteristics and extent of AusAID's engagement with civil society in selected countries (PNG, Vanuatu and the Philippines)?
2. What constitutes good practice for donor engagement with civil society?
3. Is AusAID's engagement with civil society relevant to the development context?

¹ AusAID, December 2007 *Building demand for better governance: new directions for the Australian Aid Program, Position Statement and Program Guidance*

4. What have been the intended or unintended results of AusAID's engagement with civil society?
5. To what degree does AusAID's approach to engaging with civil society represent good practice in advancing development in partner countries?

The evaluation team will develop sub-questions in the design of each phase, including questions on efficiency and gender equality.

3b. Methodology and Timeframe

The evaluation will be implemented in three phases, as follows.

Mapping (by July 2009):

- a. A literature review of civil society roles in development and international practice, including good practice in donor engagement with civil society.
- b. Design and conduct a mapping exercise of civil society engagement in three country programs within the Australian aid program. This will involve categorising different types of assistance that fall under civil society engagement.

Detailed methodology is contained in separate terms of reference for literature reviews and the mapping exercise.

Cluster evaluation (August to November 2009)

Evaluation of up to five selected activities that include civil society engagement, drawn from the selected country programs.

Detailed methodology will be designed by the evaluation team in August 2009.

Country Program Case studies (November 2009-July 2010):

Country program case studies to evaluate the overall approach in selected country programs to engaging with civil society. This will include a synthesis of existing evaluative material and a strategic evaluation.

The evaluation team will design detailed methodology in November 2009.

3d. Country Selection

The evaluation will focus on three country programs, selected based on:

- a mixture of large and small programs;
- a mixture of countries with strong and weak civil society;
- a mixture of countries with more and less fragile settings;
- country programs with significant civil society engagement programs, including examples of likely good practice; and
- country programs for which the timing of this evaluation is useful and practical to accommodate.

The selected countries are Papua New Guinea², Vanuatu and the Philippines. Other country programs, including Vietnam and Indonesia, will be included in the evaluation synthesis.

The activities for the cluster evaluation will be selected based on examples of engagement in the context of:

- supporting different civil society roles;
- different types of civil society organisations;
- a range of modalities and types of engagement (including direct and indirect engagement);
- activities offering potential for significant learning; and
- activities that will benefit and can practically accommodate the evaluation.

3d. Scope Exclusions

As the focus for this evaluation is on civil society in developing countries, it is not about evaluating Australian NGOs nor their role as agents of civil society in Australia. It may, however, evaluate the effectiveness of AusAID's engagement with Australian NGOs where they are a delivery intermediary for engaging with civil society in developing countries. Australian NGOs have been invited to participate as donors and development actors in their own right (see section 5).

The evaluation will not focus on humanitarian assistance.

The evaluation will not cover the Direct Assistance Program offered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

3e. Definitions

For the purposes of this evaluation:

Civil society is defined as activity located between the state, the private sector and the family or household, where society debates and negotiates matters of common concern and organises to regulate public affairs. Civil society is made up of institutions, organisations and individuals.³ The forms of civil society are many and varied, from formal institutions and private sector bodies, to informal associations and networks and faith based bodies such as churches.⁴ This may include:

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|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| ➤ advocacy groups | ➤ media organisations | ➤ NGOs, including women's NGOs |
| ➤ foundations | ➤ user groups | ➤ social movement organisations |
| ➤ community groups | ➤ religious organisations | ➤ self-help groups |
| ➤ corporate responsibility programmes | ➤ voluntary associations | ➤ non-profit service providers |
| ➤ charities | ➤ civic action groups | ➤ women's associations |
| ➤ informal groups | ➤ school committees/ parent-teacher associations | |
| ➤ coalitions and networks | ➤ ethnic/tribal/kin groups | |

Development activities by for-profit organisations are excluded from this definition, unless they are intermediaries for civil society engagement.

² Churches Partnership Program and the PNG-Australia HIV/AIDS Program are likely PNG case studies.

³ Derived from DFID definition and Anheier, Helmut K, "Civil Society: Measurement, Evaluation, Policy", 2004, pp. 21-25.

⁴ AusAID, *Building demand for better governance: new directions for the Australian aid program: position statement and program guidance*, December 2007.

Engagement is defined as both direct engagement and engagement through delivery intermediaries with any of the abovementioned civil society actors within development partner countries, and engagement with other actors with the purpose of enabling civil society, where there is a financial transaction of AUD 25,000 or more.⁵

Aid modality, type of assistance, delivery intermediary and instrument are defined in the document: *How donors engage with civil society* (available on request).

Civil Society Roles are defined as set out by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness⁶:

Promoting citizen participation – civil society complements the state and the private sector as pillars of any organised and well-functioning society. Civil society from this perspective is the social space in which citizens organize themselves on a voluntary basis to promote shared values and objectives. From this perspective, civil society is usually seen as essential to the proper functioning of a democratic society and to the growth of social capital. A related view is one that views civil society as one of five pillars of democracy, along with the executive, the legislature, the judiciary and the independent media. This view provides a good-governance perspective on the role of civil society. In this sense, civil society is a necessary component of an accountable and effective governance system.

Providing effective delivery of development programs and operations – Civil society organisations are actively engaged in development programs and operations. Civil society is a collection of actors with which donors, governments, citizens, and other CSOs may partner in the pursuit of development objectives and the public good.

The social empowerment of particular groups and the realization of human rights – Civil society functions as a mechanism for the realisation of human rights and the social empowerment of particular classes of society, such as the of society, such as the poor and dispossessed, women, ethnic groups, or other groups.

5. Stakeholders and Coordination

External collaboration is currently focused on the Australian NGO community through the Australian Council for International Development - Development Practice Committee (ACFID DPC). The committee is enthusiastically supportive of the evaluation and discussion is underway as to the further involvement of Australian NGOs in the evaluation.

ODE will seek opportunities to coordinate with other donors, partner governments and civil society organisation representatives as is suitable based on the countries and cases selected for the evaluation.

⁵ This amount may be adjusted during the initial stages of the mapping exercise.

⁶ The Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, consisting of 12 members, including three members each from developing country partner governments, donors, and civil society organizations from developed and developing countries, was established by the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness. See Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness *Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness: Concept Paper, September 2007*. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/59/10/39499103.pdf>

Internal coordination, within AusAID, is actively sought to ensure a high degree of relevance and ownership for the evaluation and its findings, and to maximise efficiencies across different functional areas, including:

PNG Program - an Independent Completion Report (ICR) of the Churches Partnership Program is due, but PNG program would also like to review their whole program of civil society engagement. The PNG-Australia HIV/AIDS Program offers an example of substantial engagement with CSOs within a sector program.

Vanuatu Program offers an interesting range of modalities in working with civil society and as a smaller program would be ideal to test the mapping design and potentially highlight some examples of good practice.

Indonesia Program is currently designing an evaluation of Community-Driven Development (CDD) programs in partnership with ASEAN as well as reviewing their sub national engagement strategy. There are many interesting examples of modalities in the Indonesia program, many with recent ICRs.

Vietnam Program has recently led a study on multi-donor support to civil society organisations in Vietnam, undertaken a review of its Vietnam-Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement and is considering its future relationship with NGOs.

Philippines Program has expressed interest in including the long standing Philippines Australia Community Assistance Program as a case study. They are also planning complementary analysis (for example, with the World Bank on Community Driven Development).

Fragile States Unit is carrying out an investigation into AusAID's use of Community-Based Approaches in fragile states.

Demand for Better Governance Unit has responsibility for the Civil Society Network and AusAID's thinking around engaging with civil society.

Operations Policy and Support Branch is advising on the mapping design in terms of the modalities of engagement with civil society and the types of instruments used.

Development Partnerships Branch is responsible for developing the new framework for engaging with civil society.

6. Advisory Group

An advisory group comprising two members of ACFID DPC, senior AusAID staff, academics and other aid practitioners will:

- a. provide input to the evaluation Terms of Reference;
- b. review the initial results of the civil society engagement mapping; and
- c. review draft reports.

7. Main Outputs and Timeline

Major outputs – for peer review and publishing	Other outputs	Indicative timing	Primary author
	Report based on literature reviews	June 2009	Jo Hall
	Mapping report for each selected country	July 2009	Rebecca Lyngdoh Reye
	Report on mapping methods	July 2009	Rebecca Lyngdoh Reye
Mapping and literature review report		August 2009	Jo Hall, Emily Rudland
	Cluster Evaluation design	August 2009	Jess Dart
	Country Reports x 3	September, October, November 2009	Jess Dart
Synthesis Report of Cluster Evaluation		November 2009	Jude Howell
	Country Case Study Evaluation design	November/December 2009	Jude Howell
	Synthesis of existing evaluative material	February 2009	Jude Howell
Main evaluation report	Country Reports x 3	June 2010	Jude Howell

Detailed outputs are outlined in each of the methodology phase terms of reference.

8. Evaluation Team

The mapping exercise and literature review will be led by ODE (Jo Hall, Emily Rudland) and employ an Australian-based consultant (Rebecca Lyngdoh Reye). The evaluation team for the cluster evaluation will be designed and led by an external evaluator (Jess Dart) with input from an international civil society specialist (Jude Howell) and under ODE management. The evaluation team for the country program case studies will be led by Jude Howell with ODE. Local consultants may also be needed depending on the evaluation design.

The full roles and skills for the evaluation team are identified in specific TORs developed for each phase.