Australian Development Scholarships: Returns On Investment

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Abstract

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) Development Cooperation Program in China and Mongolia includes annual funding for Australian Development Scholarships (ADS). The objective of the China and Mongolia ADS program is to promote human and institutional capacity for long-term sustainable development through postgraduate education scholarships at Australian universities. Students are able to develop specialised management and leadership expertise and gain relevant qualifications in areas that are consistent with the governance focus of their countries. This includes public sector financial management, government administration, education and employment policy, social welfare, and the legal and judicial fields.

There is some recognition that ADS scholars return to their home countries and contribute the skills gained from study in Australia (Detto, 2005). However, despite fifteen country-level reviews of ADS and its precursor scholarship programs, and two overall reviews of the ADS program itself since 1991, there is criticism that they do not sufficiently review broader impacts and performance outcomes (Detto, 2005:vi, vii, 22).

This research study highlights the degree of success of the ADS program in meeting its stated objectives as perceived by those who are either facilitating or have participated in the program in China and Mongolia (1996–2006). In doing so, it identifies the contribution of the ADS program in line with its stated objectives and to the working lives of its scholars.

China and Mongolia presented two very different research settings. China represented one of the largest and most populous developing nations in the world experiencing a period of significant growth and modernisation. Conversely, Mongolia represented one of the least population dense nations in the world and markedly behind its immediate neighbour in terms of its modernisation, still grappling with basic development needs.
To assess what changes had occurred and to make plausible judgments about the nature and extent of those changes, Mayne’s (1999) Contribution Analysis was employed as a legitimate research method for assessing the contribution of the ADS program. New public management (NPM) and results-based management (RBM) practices provided the rationale for measuring progress and in satisfying public sector accountability.

In-depth interviews were the primary method of data collection to gain an understanding of ADS participant perceptions. Research was conducted in the natural settings of the participants, consistent with a qualitative approach in which individuals construct their own meanings of ‘social reality’ in their own contexts, and the researcher interprets those meanings within that context.

*Indicators of success* were used as a primary instrument for determining evidence of success of the ADS program. The *indicators of success* were drawn from literature which formed the theoretical investigation of the study. They were consolidated through interviews with ADS facilitators to form the first part of the empirical investigation of the study. Interviews with ADS facilitators and scholars formed the final part of the empirical investigation of the study. These aimed to identify evidence of success of the ADS program in meeting its stated objectives as well as other outcomes outside of the stated objectives.

A ‘traffic light’ (TL) approach was adopted as a complementary graphical presentation of data to identify the level of attribution (great, moderate or little) by respondents towards the *indicators of success* and their contribution to the success of the program. Colour classifications were judged by the researcher based on the qualitative assessment of responses from ADS facilitators and ADS scholars.

The study provides a unique snapshot of the success of the ADS program in meeting its stated objectives from the perspective of its participants – ADS facilitators and scholars – and illustrates the many returns on investment in providing education scholarships as a form of development assistance.
Declaration

This is to certify that:

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD except where indicated;

(ii) due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other material used;

(iii) the thesis is 99,500 words as approved by the RHD Committee.

Peter Gordon Nolan
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Thank you Kirsty for being my sounding-board, counterweight, therapist, assistant and whip cracker!

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Chapter 1
Introduction and Background

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify whether the Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) program, administered by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), was successful in terms of its stated objectives. That is, ‘to strengthen human resource capacity in priority sectors of partner countries consistent with country program strategies and Australia’s national interest’ (Detto, 2005:v).

The study traced a number of ADS scholars who had returned to the People’s Republic of China (China) and Mongolia between 1996 and 2006. The study was concerned with the contribution that the ADS program had made through the perceptions of ADS scholars and the value they placed on the program.

The study responds to the need for greater awareness of the outcomes of returned ADS scholars once they complete their tertiary studies in Australia and return to work in country. Whilst Detto (2005:v) maintains that ‘there is good evidence that ADS scholars return to their home countries and contribute the skills gained from study in Australia’, he is quick to point out that ‘it is not easy to demonstrate conclusively the strategic impact from Australia’s level of commitment to the ADS delivery mechanism’.

This study aimed to identify the contribution that the ADS program has made in line with its stated objectives. In doing so, the study utilises results-based management (RBM) theories for measuring progress and satisfying public sector accountability. The study aimed at identifying the immediate outcomes of the ADS program, and tried to confirm other more intermediate and ultimate outcomes to which the program has been perceived as having contributed.

Perrin (2006:7) articulates the various reasons for effective evaluation of government programs, which underlies the purpose and design of this study:
Evaluation is required to assess the continuing relevance and appropriateness of strategies and programs, and to provide information about all types of impacts, including unintended or unexpected consequences. Evaluation also can identify the continued appropriateness of objectives and of indicators used for monitoring. Evaluation is needed to demonstrate causality or attribution, to determine if the program intervention was indeed responsible for any documented results. Perhaps most importantly, evaluation can provide ‘why’ and ‘how’ information that is needed for an understanding of how and in what circumstances a program approach ‘works’ or does not, and what would be needed to be able to learn from what has happened and to make informed decisions on future actions.

Attention to the value of measuring the actual results of AusAID programs was supported as far back as 1997 when the Simons Review of the Australian Overseas Aid Program (Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program, 1997:7) suggested:

AusAID must refocus on results. Perhaps the single biggest shortcoming in the administration of the aid program is the lack of priority afforded to evaluation. Development assistance is an inherently risky business. It should not be made riskier still by insufficient rigour in appraising proposals and evaluating results. A more rigorous assessment of results would enable the organisation to learn from its experiences. Evaluation is also the basis of accountability.

The 2005 ADS Issues Paper (Detto, 2005:17) identified the importance and need for such post-award monitoring:

Without post award monitoring quality in aid delivery and outcomes can’t be assured. Knowledge gained from post award monitoring should serve to influence the type of training to be provided and optimise the benefits that graduates and their employers derive from the training received.

Detto (2005:vi–1) also noted that the Australian National Audit Office, in its 1999 performance audit of the global ADS program, had found that ‘inadequate attention had been given to reviewing the development outcomes of ADS’ and ‘one issue this review suggests … is to monitor post award outcomes’ as ‘few quality impact studies are currently available’.

More specifically, Detto (2005:22) suggested that previous studies:

… have a universally narrow focus. They do not address issues … such as the impact of Australian scholarship support on people-to-people
connections and on the formation and role of national reform leaders. Future impact studies should give attention to broader issues of this kind.

This study aimed to fulfil such recommendations by providing further insights into post-award outcomes of ADS scholars in China and Mongolia. The study addressed these by responding to a primary research question and two subordinate research questions:

1. Is the ADS program in China and Mongolia successful in terms of its stated objectives (1996–2006)?
   a. Has the experience of being an ADS recipient positively influenced the recipient’s work life?
   b. Is there evidence of other positive outcomes as a result of the ADS program?

Through the application of Mayne’s (1999) Contribution Analysis this study identified various performance measures, so-called ‘indicators of success’, from which the contribution of the ADS program could be sensibly measured. These indicators of success were identified from two main sources:

i. ADS program literature – including official websites, program design documents, reviews, issues papers, surveys, impact and tracer studies; and, perhaps more importantly

ii. ADS program facilitators – utilising the empirical awareness of those involved in the program to ascertain credible indicators from which to measure the success of the program.

Therefore, the study identified the degree of success of the ADS program in meeting its stated objectives as perceived by those who are either facilitating or have participated in the program. In doing so, it identifies the contribution to which the program is perceived to have made a difference in the working lives and countries it targets. It provides a unique perspective from ADS facilitators and scholars who have returned to country, and illustrates the many returns on investment in providing education scholarships as a form of development assistance.
Background of the Study

In 1991 at the age of 15, I was on a mini-bus with a group of Papua New Guinea postgraduate students on a tour of schools around North-West New South Wales. The tour was arranged by my father, Associate Professor Brendan Nolan, and a number of other senior lecturers from the University of New England. For the Papua New Guinean students it was a chance to learn about education in rural Australia. For me, it was an opportunity to meet a group of people with which friendships were forged and which still remain strong today.

The band of postgraduate students attended the University of New England under an Australian Government funded education program, which saw the group complete a portion of their degree in Australia. As a teenager, the program meant very little. A decade later, having chosen a career in adult education, I would come to appreciate the program’s true worth.

In 2001, I was fortunate to accompany my father on a consultancy trip to Papua New Guinea. Now as a young man, I found myself sharing a South Pacific lager with some of the scholars from the original tour. I learned that many of the students from the program had since become successful professionals in positions of considerable authority in their home country. Many had made a distinguished contribution to their country and remained active in fostering Australia-Papua New Guinea relations. They had sent their children to Australia for their education and encouraged others to do the same. I could see the many returns on investment in providing educational opportunities such as these, particularly as a form of development assistance. Since then, both my academic and vocational pursuits have centred on adult learning, higher and international education.

A trip to China in 2005 ignited my interest once more in education as a form of development assistance and the contribution it could make to individuals and partner countries. The ADS program in China and Mongolia presented itself as an activity worthy of greater examination and is the focus of this study.
Significance of the Study

The English philosopher, Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) once wrote, ‘the great aim of education is not knowledge but action’. The significance of this study is that it aimed to understand what ‘action’ had since taken place as a consequence of scholars returning from their studies in Australia under the ADS program and whether these were consistent with the program’s overall objectives.

Since 1991, there have been fifteen country-level reviews of ADS and its precursor scholarship programs, and two overall reviews of the ADS program itself (Detto, 2005:vi). However, Detto (2005:vii, 22) argues that, ‘they do not assess the broader impact of the scholarship program which is far more difficult’ so ‘more work needs to be done on the monitoring and reporting of performance outcomes’.

Australia’s considerable investment in education programs such as ADS – AUD744 million in 2010–11 (AusAID, n.d.g) – calls for a degree of accountability in gaining a thorough understanding of the true impacts from Australia’s level of commitment. This was particularly relevant when, in September 2005, the then Prime Minister, the Hon. John Howard MP, announced a projected doubling of Australia’s aid budget from its 2004 level to around AUD4 billion annually by 2010 (Howard, 2005). The Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability White Paper was later released by the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Alexander Downer MP, in April 2006 (AusAID, 2006a) to outline the strategies for achieving this commitment. In the same month, the Hon. Alexander Downer MP jointly launched with the then Minster for Education, Science and Training, the Hon. Julie Bishop, a major Australian Scholarships initiative which aimed at doubling the number of education awards offered to the Asia-Pacific region over five years from 2006 (Bishop and Downer, 2006).

The Australian Scholarships initiative aimed to provide AUD1.387 billion in funding for more than 19,000 scholarships in the Asia-Pacific region. The scholarships aimed to continue the spirit of the Colombo Plan which in the 1950s brought Asia and the West together at a time of significant political and economic uncertainty (DFAT, 2004).
The Australian Scholarships initiative brought together the ADS program managed by AusAID and the Endeavour Scholarships program administered by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), formerly the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). New Australian Leadership Awards (ALA) aimed to target future leaders in participating countries for advanced study. From May 2006, DEEWR aimed to provide up to 9700 scholarships under an expanded Endeavour program, while AusAID would provide 6600 scholarships through the ADS program and 3200 ALA.

In addition to linking education to economic growth and improvements in productivity, the Centre for International Economics (2008:7, 23) identified ‘important “spill over” benefits from education exchange including the transfer of ideas, increased cultural understanding and the development of international contacts’. Indeed, it concluded that, ‘like all forms of education, cross border exchange in education leads to productivity and growth benefits’ and ‘in addition, international education provides benefits not available from domestic education alone’. Four main types of benefits were identified (CIE, 2008:23):

- the transfer of ideas and of educational opportunities – increasing the diversity of available education opportunities;
- an effective increase in resources available for education – increasing the quantity of education services (or, equivalently, reducing their price);
- the impetus that exchange provides to improve quality; and
- the long run benefits of contacts and cultural understanding that result from international education.

Australia’s considerable investment in programs such as ADS has even greater significance for understanding the broader impacts of the program and its performance outcomes. Perhaps just as important though is attempting to identify other incidental returns from the program outside of its stated objectives.

A succinct television advertising campaign on ABC Asia Pacific (broadcast May, June and July 2006) dramatically represented the Australian Government’s vision for Australian scholarships. The advertisement consisted of seven frames through which the following text was projected boldly across the screen:
The message was clear – Australian Government scholarships both represented and provided ‘opportunity’. If this is so, then what ‘opportunities’ have ADS scholars experienced, both during their studies in Australia and in their vocational settings upon returning to country? Are these ‘opportunities’ consistent with the stated objectives of the ADS program? Are other ‘opportunities’ or incidental benefits emerging?

**Scholarship Programs for Development**

AusAID and equivalent national development agencies such as the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) support higher education scholarships as a form of development assistance (AusAID, 2011; CIDA, 2011; DFID, 2011; USAID, 2011). Such agencies advocate the value of higher education scholarships for raising aspirations and building human capital, fostering sustainable development and economic growth, alleviating poverty, and generating enduring ties and goodwill.

Recent publications from a range of international organisations and scholars have emphasised the contribution of higher education towards socioeconomic development and growth. There is also growing recognition that tertiary educated
and trained personnel are needed across all sectors if national and international development targets are to be achieved (Cloete et al., 2011; CSC, 2011; IDP, 2008).

While there are many supporters for higher education as a form of aid, there are also those that question the motives of donor governments, the extent to which aid-funded higher education has assisted development outcomes in the recipient developing countries, or whether in fact the form of aid has been of greater benefit to the sponsoring country (Cassity, 2011; Cuthbert et al., 2006; Hughes, 1988; Kent, 2011; Medica, 2011; Nilan, 2005).

Medica (2011:1) believes funding of higher education as a form of aid has become ‘an indispensable part of international relations… closely related to national policy… used as an instrument of foreign policy and… strengthening diplomatic relations’. However, Medica (2011:1) identifies two opposing schools when it comes to the impact from such investment:

Scholars from the orthodox neo-liberal school would argue that investment in higher education is a key element of the development process that enhances the skills, knowledge, attitudes and motivation necessary to drive forms of economic and social capital accumulation… in contrast… scholars from the heterodox school… tend to focus on the inherent social, political, geographical, historical and cultural power relations, denying that higher education scholarships have assisted economic development outcomes and arguing that such forms of aid have been of greater benefit to the donor countries and elites in the recipient countries.

This study aims to identify the impact of Australia’s investment in the ADS program from the perspective of those most closely associated to the ADS program – facilitators and scholars.

**Australian Development Assistance in International Education**

Education has remained a significant feature of Australia’s overseas development assistance. Scholarships in particular have played an important role in fostering and sustaining Australia’s relations with developing countries in its region. Since 1950, Australia has contributed to scholarships and training through the United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Colombo Plan, the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan and the Commonwealth Cooperation in Education Scheme, as well as various other schemes. From the 1940s to 1985, it is estimated that around 200,000 scholars have been assisted by Australia, other donors or their own governments to study in Australia (DFAT, 2004:xxv–xxxvi, 2005a:12).

In 1996, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Alexander Downer MP, approved the establishment of the ADS program, which came into effect in 1998. The new scheme replaced the Australian Sponsored Training Scholarships and the Australian Development Cooperation Scholarships to become the principal mechanism by which Australia would provide scholarship assistance to individuals from developing countries to undertake tertiary studies in Australia.

It may be argued that Australia’s development assistance through education scholarships has also contributed to promote Australia as a leader in international education. In the mid-1980s, the majority of overseas students studying in Australia were aid-sponsored. By 2005, only 1.6 per cent of all international students enrolled in higher education in Australia were funded through the ADS program. By 2007, a total of 59 higher education providers throughout Australia aimed to be eligible to receive ADS students, subject to contractual agreements with AusAID (DFAT, 2005a:12).

The Australian Government maintains that there is strong accord within Australia and the region on the value of scholarships for promoting development and fostering relationships. In the Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability White Paper (AusAID, 2006a:53), scholarships are promoted as a major mechanism for:

- developing political and economic reform and good governance in partner countries;
- building understanding within Australia of the people and development challenges of the region;
- enabling enduring connections to be developed with regional leaders;
• empowering people from developing countries to drive their own national development and reform agendas based on an informed understanding of a developed economy; and
• providing opportunity for recipients to become leaders in their fields throughout Asia and the Pacific.

By 2007, the ADS program was valued at approximately AUD150 million a year, accounting for 8 to 10 per cent of Australia’s bilateral aid (AusAID, n.d.d).

**Australian Development Scholarships Program**

The stated objective of the ADS program is ‘to strengthen human resource capacity in priority sectors of partner countries consistent with country program strategies and Australia’s national interest’ (Detto, 2005:v). In this regard, the ADS program aims ‘to contribute to the long-term development needs of Australia’s partner countries to promote good governance, economic growth and human development’ (AusAID, 2005e, 2005f). In doing so, AusAID maintains that the ADS program ‘provides people with the necessary skills and knowledge to drive change and influence the development outcomes of their own country, through obtaining tertiary qualifications at participating Australian institutions’ (AusAID, 2006b, 2006c).

In general, ADS students undertake full-time undergraduate or postgraduate study from Certificate level to PhD at participating universities and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions. The scholarships may include preparatory programs, including English language tuition, which are normally limited to a maximum of one year.

The number of scholarships and fields of study are determined annually by each ADS participating country and in accordance with the Australian Government’s bilateral development assistance program. Participating countries often limit the level of study (technical, undergraduate or postgraduate) to give priority to certain fields of study that better meet their development needs alongside Australia’s specific aid objectives for that country. ADS selection rounds are normally held annually in each participating country, with a joint-committee to shortlist and/or finalise selected recipients who are allocated equally between genders.
Two categories are open to applicants from participating countries (though country specific requirements may limit applicants to only one category) (AusAID, n.d.c):

1. **Public sector** – applicants are public sector employees who are nominated by their governments for an ADS award through a competitive selection process and are required to return to their role in the public service at the completion of their award in order to strengthen public service capacity in their home country; and

2. **Open/equity** – applicants do not need to be nominated by their government or employer and provided they meet the selection criteria may apply under this category to return to their country of citizenship after the completion of their award to contribute to the development of the identified priority sector in their country.

The scholarships cover a return airfare to Australia, academic and other compulsory fees, basic health insurance, an establishment allowance and a living allowance for the minimum period that a recipient is expected to complete their academic program. Students are required to return to their country of citizenship for at least two years after completing their scholarship to contribute to the economic and social development of their country (AusAID, n.d.c).

Around 2500 students from 37 developing countries throughout the Asia-Pacific and Africa regions are supported by ADS at any one time (Detto, 2005:3; DFAT, 2005a:12). In 2006, a total of 1054 students commenced a tertiary award in Australia under the ADS program (Table 1.1). Of these students, 23 postgraduates were from China (2.2%) and 16 postgraduates were from Mongolia (1.5%), representing only 3.7 per cent of the total number of commencing ADS students from all regions in 2006.

Between 1996 and 2006, the numbers of ADS offered by the Australian Government dropped 22.5 per cent (Table 1.2). However, under the Australian Government’s new Australian Scholarships scheme, the numbers of ADS offered from 2006–07 to 2010–11 are set to grow to 6600¹ (AusAID, n.d.d).

¹This figure includes Australian Partnership Scholarships (APS) funded under the Australia-Indonesia Program for Reconstruction and Development.
### Table 1.1: Number of ADS Students Commenced in 2006 by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>UNDERGRADUATE</th>
<th>POSTGRADUATE</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cert IV</td>
<td>Dipl</td>
<td>Adv Dipl</td>
<td>Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Polynesia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor Leste</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mekong</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa (South and East)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>39</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AusAID, 2007
Table 1.2: Trends in Award Levels, all Regions 1996–2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Study</th>
<th>Numbers by Level</th>
<th>Distribution as a %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TAFE and Other Technical Training</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>1543</td>
<td>733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters and Other Postgraduate</td>
<td>1259</td>
<td>1837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3643</td>
<td>3110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AusAID, 2007

Over the period 1996–2006 across all regions, the demand for awards at the TAFE and other technical training level remained low (Figure 1.1). In the same period, the proportion of undergraduates and doctorates dropped considerably, while Masters and other postgraduate awards increased and remain by far the most popular ADS award level today.

![Trends in award levels, all regions 1996-2006](image)

**Figure 1.1: Trends in Award Levels, all Regions 1996–2006**

**ADS – China and Mongolia**

In China and Mongolia, the ADS program primarily targets the public sector. Country program strategies or capacity building goals are negotiated annually between AusAID and the partner countries. This largely determines the numbers, award levels and spread of scholarships across government ministries. This targeted approach is aimed at ensuring that human resource capacity is improved in areas perceived by both countries to be most beneficial to the development goals of the country.
Despite the relatively small number of ADS students originating from both China and Mongolia each year (Table 1.1), this study sought to obtain a greater understanding of the students’ success in gaining the necessary skills and knowledge to drive change and influence development outcomes for their country – a major objective of the ADS program. This assessment therefore encompassed the stated objectives of the ADS program in relation to the country program strategies or capacity building goals negotiated between AusAID and the partner countries.

**China ADS Program Objective**

From mid-2004, the ADS program in China has been delivered under AusAID’s China Australia Governance Program (CAGP) which, with the assistance of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), is aimed at addressing governance issues that have an impact on the effectiveness of poverty alleviation in China. The Australian Government committed AUD20.3 million to the CAGP over six years from 2004 to 2010. A Canberra-based consulting company, Hassall and Associates International, administers the CAGP on behalf of AusAID from a partnership facility in Beijing. The CAGP was not originally resourced to undertake post-award monitoring and evaluation and at the time of writing no formal review of the program has ever been undertaken.

Over the period 1996–2006, a total of 326 recipients from China travelled to Australia under the ADS program (Table 1.3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open/Equity</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: AusAID, 2007*

On average, the CAGP has managed around 30 new awards each year. Since 2002, all ADS recipients from China have been targeted from relevant central and provincial government agencies in line with country program strategy priorities (Figure 1.2).
In 1996, the majority of ADS awards were provided to Chinese recipients at the doctoral level. Since then, the ADS program in China has typically targeted mid-level officials from priority sectors, agencies and provinces wanting to undertake Masters and other postgraduate level awards. In 2006, all ADS recipients from China were undertaking awards at this level (Table 1.4).

Table 1.4: Trends in Award Levels, China 1996–2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Study</th>
<th>Numbers by Level</th>
<th>Distribution as a %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TAFE and Other Technical Training</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters and Other Postgraduate</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AusAID, 2007

The lack of demand from China for scholarship awards at the TAFE and other technical training, undergraduate and doctoral levels characterises the focus of the country program strategy negotiated between AusAID and the Chinese Government (Figure 1.3).
Mongolia ADS Program Objective

AusAID launched the Mongolia Australia Targeted Capacity Building and Small Activity Facility (CaBSAF) in August 2003 – contributing AUD5.8 million over two and a half years – as a means to best achieve its development objectives in Mongolia. Since 2003, CaBSAF has been managed by the Australian managing contractor Coffey MPW Pty Ltd.\(^2\)

CaBSAF’s goal was to ‘contribute to poverty alleviation by strengthening the human resource capacity of Mongolian Government agencies to implement their Government’s Action Program in priority areas of good governance reform and by supporting community development activities’ (AusAID, n.d.a). The Facility administered the ADS program in Mongolia, as well as Distance Education Scholarships (DES), and facilitated capacity building, small-scale community and good governance activities. By targeting key Mongolian Government agencies, AusAID through CaBSAF aimed to develop, over a period of time, a ‘critical mass’ of well-trained scholars to maximise the capacity building impact within those agencies.

\(^2\) CaBSAF ended in August 2008 after managing the ADS program in Mongolia for five years. The Mongolia Australian Scholarships Program was established in July 2008 to continue to facilitate Australian scholarships to Mongolia, including ADS, ALA and Endeavour Awards. Coffey MPW Pty Ltd continues to be the managing contractor.
Over the period 1996–2006, a total of 101 recipients from Mongolia travelled to Australia under the ADS program (Table 1.5).

Table 1.5: Number of ADS Students by Category, Mongolia 1996–2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open/Equity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AusAID, 2007

On average, CaBSAF has administered nine ADS awards each year, with a considerable rise in numbers in recent years (Figure 1.4). While Open/Equity category scholarships are available to personnel outside the targeted group of government agencies, they must fall within a limited range of fields of study that will provide strategic support to the overall capacity building goals. As a result, no Open/Equity category scholarships have been awarded since 2000.

On 3 April 2007, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Alexander Downer MP, made an official visit to Mongolia and announced an increase in ADS numbers to around 28 per year. It is envisaged that such an increase will see a return of demand for more Open/Equity category students as the Mongolian public sector finds it increasingly difficult to sustain the departure of growing numbers of ADS recipients.
There is some evidence to suggest that the lack of ADS students in 2001 was attributed, in part at least, to a change in government in July 2000. This brought a period of having to re-brief newly appointed government officials down to the department director level on the then Mongolia Capacity Building Program (MCBP), which administered the ADS program between 1998–2003. The Program Completion Report (AusAID, 2003a:10) for the MCBP stated:

An external factor that had a big impact on Program implementation was the change of government in July 2000. The result was a change to almost all senior officials down to Department Director level. This required the [Australian managing contractor] to forge new relationships within the civil service two years after the start of the Program.

Anecdotal accounts from AusAID representatives suggest that the rise in ADS student numbers year on year since 2001 has been due to numerous factors, including the creation of CaBSAF, the cooperative efforts of AusAID and the Mongolian Government in supporting the ADS program, the return of successful ADS scholars and their influence in key positions in government, and the promotion of the program through the members of the highly successful Mongolia-Australia Alumni Association who affectionately refer to themselves as the ‘Mozzies’ – short for ‘Mongolian Aussies’. These factors are explored in more detail throughout this study.

Since 1996, the vast majority of ADS awards to Mongolian recipients have been at the Masters and other postgraduate award level. From 2001 to 2006, all recipients were at this level (Table 1.6).

Table 1.6: Trends in Award Levels, Mongolia 1996–2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Study</th>
<th>Numbers by Level</th>
<th>Distribution as a %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TAFE and Other Technical Training</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters and Other Postgraduate</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AusAID, 2007

Like China, the lack of demand from Mongolia for scholarship awards at the TAFE and other technical training, undergraduate and doctoral levels characterises the
focus of the capacity building goals negotiated between AusAID and the Mongolian Government (Figure 1.5).

![Trends in award levels, Mongolia 1996-2006](image)

**Figure 1.5: Trends in Award Levels, Mongolia 1996–2006**

**Research Setting**

**China**

China borders the East China Sea, Korea Bay, Yellow Sea and South China Sea, as well as 14 countries, including Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Vietnam. Its regional borders also include Hong Kong and Macau. With a total area of 9,596,960 square kilometres, China is approximately the size of Australia and Indonesia combined, making it the world’s fourth largest country. In July 2006, the estimated population was over 1.3 billion, the largest of any country in the world (CIA, n.d.b).

For centuries, China stood as a leading civilisation. However, the 19th and 20th centuries saw the country beset by civil unrest, major famines, military defeats and foreign occupation. After World War II, the communists under Mao Zedong established an autocratic socialist system, imposing strict controls over everyday life and costing the lives of tens of millions of people. After 1978, Mao Zedong’s successor, Deng Xiaoping, and other leaders focused on market-oriented economic development and increased contact with the capitalist economies of the West. By 2000, the country’s output had quadrupled. Today, living standards have improved
dramatically for much of the population of China and room for personal choice has expanded, though political controls remain tight (CIA, n.d.b).

Since initiating the reforms and adopting an open policy, China has achieved rapid success. Since 1980, China has sustained the highest growth in per capita income in the world and has been the most successful in reducing poverty. Over the last twenty years, China alone has accounted for over 75 per cent of poverty reduction in the developing world. Between 1981 and 2001, China reduced the number of people living on less than USD1 per day from 634 million to 211 million. Nevertheless, substantial challenges remain with approximately 160 million Chinese still living on less than USD1 per day and around 600 million living on less than USD2 per day. Those remaining most vulnerable tend to live in remote and resource-poor areas in the western and interior regions, often without access to clean water, arable land or adequate health and education services (DFID, 2006b; World Bank, n.d.b).

China continues to face ongoing and emerging challenges related to its rapid growth, including growing urban poverty and income inequality, sustaining job growth for laid-off workers from state-owned enterprises and around 12 million annual entrants to the labour market, unsustainable resource exploitation and environmental degradation, water scarcity, the need for fiscal reform to transfer resources to economically lagging western and northeastern regions, and issues related to growing regional and global economic integration (CIA, n.d.b; DFID, 2006b; World Bank, n.d.b).

Today, China is the world’s second largest economy in purchasing power parity terms and the third largest trading nation. China’s economic growth has been the single largest contributor to global growth over the past five years and, in 2005, accounted for around one quarter of world economic growth. China is now Australia’s second-largest merchandise trading partner, second only to Japan. In 2005, imports of goods and services from China amounted to over AUD22.5 billion, while Australia’s exports of goods and services to China were worth over AUD18.5 billion. Resources (minerals and fuels) exports account for just over 60 per cent of merchandise exports from Australia to China, while education and tourism dominate Australia’s service exports to China, accounting for around two-thirds of services exports (DFAT, 2006).
In 2006, Chinese student enrolments in Australia grew by 10.5 per cent to 90,287, making China the largest source market for Australia in international student enrolments. Chinese students now constitute around 24 per cent of all international students in Australia. Further, over 25,000 Chinese students are estimated to be enrolled with Australian providers in China (DFAT, 2006).

Australia’s development assistance to China is predominantly focused on rural poverty and health issues, particularly in underdeveloped provinces of western China, and in providing expert advice on aspects of economic planning and governance reform. Development assistance is also targeted at improving environmental management practices and technical and vocational education systems, as well as advising on practical approaches to improvements in human rights (AusAID, n.d.b).

**Mongolia**

Mongolia is a land-locked country bordered by Russia to the north and China to the east, west and south. With a total area of 1,564,000 square kilometres, the country is slightly smaller than the Australian state of Queensland. In July 2006, the estimated population was just over 2.8 million, with around one-third of the population (an estimated 950,000) residing in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar. Whilst Mongolia’s average population density remains low (around 1.8 persons per square kilometre) it has one of Asia’s highest natural rates of population growth (almost 1.5 per cent in 2006) and has doubled its population since 1960 (DFAT, 2005b; CIA, n.d.a).

Mongolia won its independence from Chinese rule on 11 July 1921 with Soviet support. After the death of the Mongolian king in 1924, the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party (MPRP) proclaimed the Mongolian People’s Republic and installed a communist regime. Mongolia began to adopt Soviet-style political reform in 1988, permitting more open discussion of social, political and economic challenges. The rapidity of change and the willingness of the MPRP to address opposition calls for reform were predominantly due to broad acceptance of the need for reform, particularly economic, to increase the well-being of Mongolians. In December 1989, intelligentsia-led demonstrations reflected a growing undercurrent
of opposition to an entrenched MPRP, leading to a legislative reform program that included laws providing for freedom of religion, the press and emigration.

Mongolia adopted a new constitution in 1992 embracing principles of democracy and private ownership. After 70 years of continuous rule, the MPRP was defeated by the Democratic Union Coalition (DUC) in the 1996 parliamentary election. However, things were no better for the new government as the social impact of Mongolia’s transition became apparent and its reform program increasingly aroused controversy. In 2000, the MPRP regained power and, despite a hung parliament in the June 2004 parliamentary elections, maintained its control once more after a power-sharing agreement with the opposition broke down, seeing 21 DUC members join the voting caucus of the MPRP.

Since 1990, Mongolia has made significant strides in achieving macro-economic stability and fundamental structural reforms through its transition to democracy and a market-based system. However, increasing unemployment and rising poverty remain growing concerns for the Mongolian Government (Bat, 2002). With an estimated 36 per cent of the total population living below the poverty line, and more than 23 per cent of those considered to be living in extreme poverty on an income of less than USD0.40 a day, the next development challenge is to improve the lives and welfare of its people by accelerating sustained and equitable economic growth (ADB, 2005; CIA, n.d.a; World Bank, n.d.a).

Mongolia faces considerable challenges. Many rural communities lack electricity, water and sewerage. Poor road and rail infrastructure and different rail gauges used by China and Mongolia exacerbate transport problems. Harsh natural conditions, geographic isolation, urban migration, education and skills gaps, an underdeveloped financial sector and poor access to health, education and urban services compound issues of poverty and unemployment. Whilst Mongolia ranks among Asia’s richest countries in terms of volume and variety of mineral resources, it has yet to establish the viability of developing much of this natural wealth. Until the 1940s, the vast majority of Mongolians lived a life of nomadic subsistence agriculture. Even today, herding/agriculture represent the vast majority of labour force occupation (42 per cent), followed by services (29 per cent), trade (14 per cent), manufacturing (6 per cent), public sector (5 per cent) and mining (4 per cent).
Despite these challenges, the Mongolian Government has won international praise for its commitment to economic reform. It appears deeply committed to reduce urban and rural vulnerabilities, support sustainable human development, and to promote good governance and gender equality by accelerating private sector led, broad-based equitable growth and improving the efficiency of public expenditure. It seeks to expand its participation and integration into Asian regional economic and trade systems, while maintaining good relations with former Soviet Bloc allies and managing relations with its powerful neighbours, China and Russia.

Australia established diplomatic relations with Mongolia in 1972. Bilateral trade with Mongolia is modest, totalling AUD14 million in 2005, with scope for further trade expansion seen in the areas of telecommunications, building, construction and design, food processing, and mining and infrastructure industries. Australia’s development assistance program to Mongolia commenced in 1991 when, to assist Mongolia’s economic transition and emerging democracy, Australia provided AUD300,000 to support a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Agricultural Management Development Project. By 2003–04 Australia’s development assistance to Mongolia had risen to AUD2.9 million.

The primary goal of Australia’s development cooperation program with Mongolia is to ‘strengthen Mongolia’s human and institutional capacity for long-term sustainable development and to assist its transition to a modern market-based economy’ (AusAID, n.d.a). The ADS program is aimed at continuing to build the skills base of key government agencies to develop specialised expertise and qualifications in areas such as public sector financial management, government administration, education and employment policy, social welfare, and legal and judicial fields.

**Definitions for the Purposes of the Study**

A number of definitions are used throughout this study in order to group participants and methodological instruments. These are defined below.

**ADS Facilitator**

For the purposes of this study, the term *ADS facilitator* denotes a participant who either manages, administers or has some interest in the implementation,
administration, promotion or evaluation of the ADS program in Australia, China or Mongolia (see Appendix A: Profile of Research Participants).

This includes:

- managers or officers who are employed by AusAID, either directly or through contracted agencies;
- government officials involved with foreign aid in China or Mongolia; and
- other relevant parties such as consultants or diplomats.

**ADS Scholar**

For the purposes of this study, the term *ADS scholar* denotes a participant who has successfully graduated from the ADS program through an Australian education provider by completing a tertiary award and who has since returned to employment in their country of origin (China or Mongolia).

**Indicators of Success**

This study applies Mayne’s (1999) Contribution Analysis to identify the contribution that the ADS program has made in line with its stated objectives. Whilst Mayne (1999:11) uses the term ‘performance indicators’ to describe ‘what specific benefits [a] program is intended to achieve’, for the purposes of this study, the term ‘indicators of success’ is the preferred definition.

**Scope and Limitations**

This study highlights the degree of success of the ADS program in meeting its stated objectives and the contribution it has made as perceived by those who are either facilitating or have participated in the program.

While China and Mongolia represent only a small proportion of the number of ADS offered throughout the Asia-Pacific and Africa regions (3.7 per cent), the decision to select these countries as case studies for this research was based on a number of factors. Firstly, at the time of study no previous in-depth research had been undertaken on the ADS program in China or Mongolia compared with other ADS targeted countries. Secondly, China and Mongolia presented a unique contrast
between two distinctly different neighbours – in geographic, population and economic scale. These differences were important to better understand whether, for example, the ADS program’s focus on a small country had greater systemic impact than a larger country. Thirdly, AusAID’s Beijing office oversaw the ADS program for both China and Mongolia, providing a rare opportunity for comparisons between those countries to be made by the same ADS facilitators. Fourthly, the researcher’s own personal interest in undertaking research in the region.

This study purposely focused on two very different research settings. While this provides a comparative perspective, it also influences the findings as a result, and care should be taken in doing so. Primary to this is the fact that both countries may share similar numbers of ADS scholars year on year, though these are grossly disproportionate to their overall populations. Both countries however share many development challenges and have focused on market-oriented economic development and increased contact with the capitalist economies of the West in only the past 20 to 30 years. In China, government ministry offices (central and provincial), from which most ADS scholars are drawn, are located throughout the country. In Mongolia, nearly all government ministry offices are based within the capital Ulaanbaatar. It is understood therefore that similarities and differences such as these affect the findings of the study and should be considered in their respective contexts.

Though not absolute, it is presumed that the findings and conclusions of this study may have generalisability that also reflects experiences of other ADS program countries. Many of the experiences and perceptions found in this study bolster other research undertaken on the ADS program in other economies. However, to the knowledge of the researcher no study to date has focused on the experiences and perceptions of ADS scholars since their return to country after graduating from the ADS program to the depth of this research.

It was impractical for this study to interview all ADS scholars from China and Mongolia between 1996 and 2006. Therefore, a sample of participants was selected for the study representing both genders, a range of age groups and graduation years, as well as varying levels of vocational experience and work responsibilities. This
was to ensure a comprehensive and balanced analysis of the ADS program in meeting its intended objectives through the perceptions of its participants once they had returned to various areas of the workforce. The study also provided perspectives from those ADS scholars who had moved from the public sector into the non-government and private sectors.

The potential for bias by research participants (Borg and Gall, 1989; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Kvale, 1996; Merriam, 2009) was considered, particularly given respondents association with the ADS program. This included the potential for overly positive reviews by ADS facilitators having responsibility for administering the ADS program or those who have perhaps provided policy advice on ADS, as well as ADS scholars having a vested interest in ensuring that the high reputation of the ADS program was maintained since the reputation of the program and the credentials they obtained through it contribute to their personal and professional status. While it is acknowledged that there is always some risk of research bias with in-depth interviewing, it was considered low given that: (i) respondents usually offered both positive and negative views as well as detailed and sophisticated justification of those views; (ii) respondents were asked to review and authenticate with a signature the accuracy of interview notes and interpretations taken by the researcher immediately after the interview; (iii) respondents were made to feel comfortable in volunteering honest and frank views in interviews, including the option of remaining anonymous; and (iv) after interviewing a number of subjects, a composite picture of interpretations was able to be identified.

It is beyond the scope of this study to provide specific program recommendations such as expanding scholarship numbers. This study is not designed to be a ‘formative evaluation’ to help shape the ADS program to improve its outcomes. Rather, it provides a ‘summative evaluation’ of how the program has measured up to its stated goals, parameters and expected outcomes embedded in its design (Borman et al., 2006:127; Kusek and Rist, 2004:225–229). In doing so, the study provides insights from the perspective of ADS facilitators and scholars of challenges to the success of the ADS program which have an impact on the contribution that the program is making.
Kusek and Rist (2004:229) identify *summative evaluation* as related to *impact evaluation*. In this sense, *impacts* are defined as ‘positive and negative, primary and secondary, long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended’ (p.226), while *evaluation* is defined as:

The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, program or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors (p.225).

It is acknowledged that a larger study, encompassing a greater sample size across more participating countries, would generate a more comprehensive analysis of the ADS program from this study’s perspective. Further post-award monitoring and evaluation would be worthwhile for targeting future program decision making towards achieving the program’s full potential.

**Organisation of the Thesis**

The first chapter specifies the purpose, background and significance of the study. It examines Australian development assistance in international education and the ADS program, particularly in China and Mongolia. It delineates the research setting, defines definitions and details the scope and limitations of the study.

The second chapter examines the emergence of new public management (NPM) and the rise of RBM practices in the public sector. It presents the view that the act of trying to assess the extent to which government programs contribute to particular outcomes is difficult and many governments have struggled to fully dedicate the time, money and resources to the challenge. Mayne’s (1999) Contribution Analysis is introduced as a mechanism for understanding the contribution of the ADS program and demonstrating its performance.

The third chapter examines AusAID’s overseas development assistance objective and the logic behind the ADS program in China and Mongolia. It examines the ADS program’s linkages with country strategies as well as the findings of existing ADS program reviews. The chapter forms the basis for developing a program logic chart.
of the ADS program (presented diagrammatically in Chapter 4) and illustrates what is being measured, in the form of indicators of success, and what the major assumptions are concerning the various outputs believed to produce results that will lead to the intended final outcomes of the ADS program.

The fourth chapter outlines the methodology chosen for the study. It outlines the research plan, conceptual framework and research model. An ADS program logic chart is presented along with the decision to use qualitative research methods and in-depth interviews as the major method of data collection. The results of a pilot study, the criteria and process for selecting participants, data presentation and analysis, and problems encountered during data collection are examined. Finally, ethical considerations associated with the study are explored.

The fifth chapter presents and analyses data collected from in-depth interviews with 12 facilitators of the ADS program in Australia, China and Mongolia. The chapter complements the theoretical investigation of the study by identifying additional indicators of success from ADS facilitators from which to measure the performance of the ADS program. Through a ‘traffic light’ (TL) approach, it also examines the extent to which indicators of success are perceived to have been met by ADS facilitators in the field, consolidating ratings diagrammatically at the conclusion of the chapter. The chapter identifies a range of other incidental benefits occurring as a result of the ADS program.

The sixth chapter presents and analyses data collected from in-depth interviews with 21 scholars of the ADS program from China and Mongolia. The chapter again utilises a TL approach to examine the extent to which the indicators of success are perceived to have been met by returned ADS scholars, consolidating ratings diagrammatically at the conclusion of the chapter. The chapter also identifies a range of other incidental benefits occurring as a result of the ADS program.

The seventh chapter presents the major findings of the study in answering the research questions. The major findings of the research are summarised and presented using a TL approach, graphically highlighting the success of the ADS program in China and Mongolia against its objectives. Implications for theory and practice,
including identified problems, recommended action and foreseeable benefits are examined. Recommendations for further research complete this study.
Chapter 2
Towards Public Sector Accountability
For Results

Introduction

Chapter 1 outlined the purpose, background and significance of this study. It gave a brief overview of Australian development assistance in international education and the ADS program, contextualised the research setting in China and Mongolia, provided definitions important to the study and the scope and limitations, and finally presented the organisation of this thesis.

This chapter presents the view that NPM has come about for various reasons and has resulted in the rise of RBM practices in the public sector. However, the rhetoric of effective monitoring and evaluation of public programs – a primary principle of RBM – is often overlooked, despite good reasons for it.

The chapter is pertinent to the ADS program in light of previous criticism that inadequate attention had been given to reviewing the development outcomes of ADS and that those that had been reviewed failed to adequately address the impact of Australian scholarship support on people-to-people connections and on the formation and role of national reform leaders (Detto, 2005). This is particularly true of the ADS program in China and Mongolia where only minor monitoring reviews have been undertaken to date.

Emergence of New Public Management

Since the 1980s, there has been growing pressure on governments worldwide to be more responsive to the demands of internal and external stakeholders for good governance, accountability and transparency, greater effectiveness and the delivery of tangible results. Indeed, within the public sphere the reform movement has permeated to the extent where ‘government performance has now become a global phenomenon’ (Kusek and Rist, 2004:1).
Governments have been grappling with pressures to improve and reform public management as stakeholders demand to know the outcomes and impacts of government actions. Kusek and Rist (2004:2–3) maintain that:

There has been a global sea change in public sector management as a variety of internal and external forces have converged to make governments and organizations more accountable to their stakeholders. Governments are increasingly being called upon to demonstrate results. Stakeholders are no longer solely interested in organizational activities and outputs; they are now more than ever interested in actual outcomes.

Nolan (2001:xx) traces the emergence of a new managerial approach in the public sector to the 1980s and 1990s when governments were responding in their own way to unprecedented changes in the world’s economic and social structures, causing a general move away from traditional public sector administration models. Terms such as ‘managerialism’ (Pollitt, 1993), ‘new public management’ (Ferlie et al., 1996; Hood, 1991; Hughes, 1994; Kaboolian, 1998), ‘neomanagerialism’ (Terry, 1998), ‘market-based public administration’ (Lan and Rosenbloom, 1992) and ‘entrepreneurial government’ (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992) began to be used by writers in the wake of public sector organisations reviewing their processes, analysing their goals and re-evaluating their organisational structures in terms of the efficient delivery of services. Governments championed a vision of public managers as the entrepreneurs of a leaner and increasingly privatised government, emulating both the practices and values of business (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000 cited in Amaral et al., 2003:8).

However, the emergence of NPM was not born out of proactive altruism, nor for the greater ideal of governance par excellence. Rather, it was a reactionary adjustment to traditional public sector models made necessary from a rapidly changing global economic and social climate. Traditional models developed during the industrial era were increasingly being seen as rigid, bureaucratic, narrowly focused and preoccupied with structure and process, proving themselves cumbersome, inadequate and out-of-touch in the rapidly changing, information-rich, knowledge-intensive society and economy of the late 20th century (Nolan, 2001; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992).
Meek (2003:8) maintains that over the last two decades NPM and related concepts have:

… dominated public sector reform as OECD governments respond to declining economic performance, fiscal deficits, changes in the patterns of demand for government services, greater consumer expectations about quality of service, and reduced community confidence in the ability of government to deliver services.

Harman (2001:154) quotes a 1995 OECD report reviewing public sector reforms across OECD countries and the pressures behind their innovation:

A number of key factors have come together to make reform a burning issue. Key among these are: the development of a global market place, which highlighted the impact of government activities on national competitiveness; a perception that public sector performance was inferior to that of the private sector; limits to future growth in the public sector, given budget deficits and high levels of public debt; a lowering of expectations about government’s ability to solve economic and societal problems by traditional remedies; citizen demands for improved responsiveness, choice and quality of service; and demands from public sector staff (OECD, 1995:19).

Harman (2001:154–155) notes that these same pressures were seen to apply to Australia when the coalition government used the same quote in the beginning of its 1996 National Commission of Audit Report, calling for ‘a fundamental re-think of where and how governments are involved in the community’s activities’ (National Commission of Audit, 1996:9). New international ideas were having a major influence on thinking in Australia and soon dominated Commonwealth Government reports pushing for an extension of market competition throughout the economy, including in areas such as health, welfare and education. The Australian Government saw virtue in competition to improve performance, productivity, customer service and economic efficiency. Meek (2001:33) identifies this shift in the Australian public sector orthodoxy:

In Australia as elsewhere, we are witnessing a corporatisation of the public sector brought about by the replacement of principles and values of democratic government with those of managerialism and market discipline. Terms such as contracting-out, re-engineering, mission statements, continuous improvement and performance evaluation, are those of the corporate manager, not the government mandarin of a past era.
The Australian higher education sector – to which the ADS program has played a role in providing sources of international students to eligible higher education providers – has also felt the impact of NPM. Australia’s higher education sector has witnessed dramatic and far-reaching change, having to adapt to a more market-oriented and competitive regulatory environment with a high emphasis on efficiency and monitoring of performance, less dependence on government grants for operating expenses, increases in non-government funding and research and training links with industry, growing international orientation and a more managerial approach to governance within the universities themselves. Australia’s experience is not unique, however, closely mirroring that of other OECD countries, for example, New Zealand and Britain (Santiago et al., 2008a, 2008b; Nolan, 2001; Amaral et al., 2003).

While writers generally agree that NPM represents a replacement of, or at least a modern development within, the traditional model of public administration, there exists a lack of consensus on a precise definition. Writers have supported various reasons for this, including its ability to be viewed as a doctrine (based on economic and public choice theories) as well as a distinctive tool kit of administrative techniques (using, e.g., competition, marketisation, autonomisation, disaggregation and deregulation) and, through its varying currency, its historical implementation and application in places that are culturally, economically and politically as diverse as Mongolia and New Zealand or Singapore and Zimbabwe (Amaral et al., 2003; Nolan, 2001; UN, 2005a:10).

Nevertheless, rudimentary definitions exist, often denying the complex and varied nature of NPM. At the most basic level, they promote the public sector use of private sector management techniques. The United Nations (2005b) suggests that ‘NPM advocates that market discipline provides the incentives and disincentives needed to bring about more efficient and transparent public management’. Batley and Larbi (2004 quoted in Scott and Joubert, 2005:3) broadly define NPM as ‘a set of particular management approaches and techniques, borrowed mainly from the private-for-profit sector and applied in the public sector’. Drechsler (2005:§2) gives a more hardline assessment, tying NPM to a political ideology and the basic epistemology of standard textbook economics:
NPM is the transfer of business and market principles and management techniques from the private into the public sector, symbiotic with and based on a neo-liberal understanding of state and economy. The goal, therefore, is a slim, reduced, minimal state in which any public activity is decreased and, if at all, exercised according to business principles of efficiency.

Differing perspectives on the theoretical and empirical opportunities and challenges presented by NPM mean that scholars have preferred to identify characteristic elements founded on sets of shared principles. In charting the basic models for public sector reform employed in both developed and developing countries around the world, Kettl (2000) identifies six common core ideas related to NPM:

1. the search for greater productivity;
2. more public reliance on private markets;
3. a stronger orientation towards service;
4. more decentralisation from national to sub-national governments;
5. increased capacity to devise and track public policy; and
6. tactics to enhance accountability for results.

Similarly, Keating and Shand (1998:13) summarise their own key features of NPM:

1. a focus on results in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, quality of service and whether the intended beneficiaries actually gain;
2. a decentralised management environment which better matches authority and responsibility so that decisions on resource allocation and service delivery are made closer to the point of delivery, and provides scope for feedback from clients or other interested groups;
3. a greater focus and provision for client choice through the creation of competitive environments within the public sector organisations and non-government competitors;
4. flexibility to explore more cost-effective alternatives to direct public provision or regulation, including the use of market instruments, such as user charging, vouchers and sale of property rights; and
5. accountability for results and for establishing due process rather than compliance with a particular set of rules, and a related change from risk avoidance to risk management.
While a number of pressures have led to NPM’s influence worldwide, writers are increasingly focusing on its deficiencies, exploring post-NPM visions of future governments and even rediscovering the virtues of traditional public administration (Amaral et al., 2003; Barzelay, 2000; Denhardt and Denhardt, 2003; Drechsler, 2005; Steane and Carroll, 2000; UN, 2005a). Most recently, examples of this are seen in Australia with the Federal Government increasingly centralising control (or at least threatening the states/territories to do so) over state/territory-regulated goods and services, including water, Indigenous affairs and health.

While there are many aspects to NPM, the adoption of its practices in the public sector, and in particular results-oriented management approaches, has driven the need to be able to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of public programs in a way that ensures and demonstrates to the public actual results to promises made. Much of this has been achieved through the evolution of RBM.

**The Rise of Results-based Management**

Under NPM ‘the public are clients of government, and administrators should seek to deliver services that satisfy clients’ (Meek, 2003:10). Over the past decade, there has been a growing attendant need for governments to respond by embracing and enhancing the monitoring and evaluation of public policies, programs and projects so that they may demonstrate actual results from public investment. As such, there has been an evolution in the way in which monitoring and evaluation is approached, with a shift away from traditional implementation-based approaches towards new results-based approaches – moving beyond an emphasis on inputs and outputs to a greater focus on outcomes and impacts (ADB, 2006; Kusek and Rist, 2004; OECD, 2000; UNESCO, n.d.).

Further, the move by many governments around the world to embrace reforms involving decentralisation, deregulation, commercialisation and privatisation has brought with it even greater attention as to who and how those goods and services can be effectively monitored and evaluated. New non-government service providers, such as non-government organisations (NGOs), the private sector and civil society groups, are becoming increasingly responsible for the provision of public sector functions that were normally provided by governments. In turn, the monitoring and
evaluation function has increasingly fallen on regional and local levels of government. Growing public expectation for governments to show actual impacts of publicly funded policies and programs, regardless of who administers them, has required governments at all levels to adopt RBM monitoring and evaluation systems that demonstrate performance (Kusek and Rist, 2004:10; Wholey et al., 1994:xxxvii).

Kusek and Rist (2004:228) define RBM simply as ‘a management strategy focusing on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts’. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (n.d.) goes further, maintaining that RBM is:

A comprehensive lifecycle approach to management that integrates strategy, people, resources, processes and measurements to improve decision-making and drive change. The approach focuses on getting the right design early in a process, focusing on outcomes, implementing performance measurement, learning and changing, and reporting performance.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) (2006) defines RBM as ‘the way an organisation is motivated and applies processes and resources to achieve targeted results’ but elaborates by stating that RBM encompasses four dimensions, namely:

- specified results that are measurable, monitorable and relevant;
- resources that are adequate for achieving the targeted results;
- organisational arrangements that ensure authority and responsibilities are aligned with results and resources; and
- processes for planning, monitoring, communicating and resource release that enable the organisation to convert resources into the desired results.

The OECD (2000:6) defines RBM as ‘a broad management strategy aimed at achieving important changes in the way government agencies operate, with improving performance (achieving better results) as the central orientation’. In doing so, a distinction is made between using performance information for reporting to external stakeholders (accountability-for-results) and for internal management processes with the aim of improving performance and achieving better results (managing-for-results). In this sense, RBM may satisfy both: (i) the public – by informing them of what use their resources are being put to and what differences these resources are making to the lives of people; as well as (ii) the performance of organisations – through informing internal management decision making for
improved strategic planning, policy formulation, program or project management, financial and budget management and human resource management.

The need to know current performance is therefore essential, both to manage by and be able to account for what has been achieved with taxpayers’ money. However, the challenges of RBM have been and remain significant, in particular the act of influencing the culture within public administration to focus on the results that matter to citizens, the difficulty with measuring outcomes in the public sector in a cost-effective way, rethinking accountability within the new paradigm, and determining just what contribution a specific program has made to intended outcomes (addressing attribution through contribution analysis). It is important to examine these aspects further to more fully understand the rationale behind the thesis of this research.

Whether public, private, bilateral or multilateral, organisations worldwide have adopted RBM with the aim to improve program and management effectiveness, build accountability and achieve results. Examples of cultural change within organisations to achieve this are prevalent. The United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) provides one such clear example of the strategies employed to create a culture geared towards results. At UNFPA (2005:20), RBM means:

- establishing clear organisational vision, mission and priorities, which are translated into a four-year framework of goals, outputs, indicators, strategies and resources;
- encouraging an organisational and management culture that promotes innovation, learning, accountability and transparency;
- delegating authority and empowering managers and holding them accountable for results;
- focusing on achieving results, through strategic planning, regular monitoring of progress, evaluation of performance, and reporting on performance;
- creating supportive mechanisms, policies and procedures, and building and improving on what is in place;
- sharing information and knowledge, learning lessons, and feeding these back into improving decision making and performance;
- optimising human resources and building capacity among UNFPA staff and national partners to manage for results;
• making the best use of scarce financial resources in an efficient manner to achieve results;
• strengthening and diversifying partnerships at all levels towards achieving results; and
• responding to the realities of country situations and needs, within the organisational mandate.

The aim to change the culture of public administration from one that is focused on a more traditional view of public sector management (process, inputs and outputs) to one that pays greater attention to the actual outcomes of intended results (the contribution to society) assumes an approach that is able to measure progress, be flexible to adjust operations to better meet expectations and report on outcomes. Today, legislation often requires public sector organisations to regularly report on the outcomes of public investment, thus ensuring a place for RBM in modern public management. However, even though governments have adopted the rhetoric of effective monitoring and evaluation of public programs in reality, unless it is legislated, it is often neglected.

According to Mayne and Zapico-Goni (1997:10), ‘the public sector can “account to” the citizens in two ways: by providing good service and by demonstrating to their public that they are giving value for money’. This position assumes a focus on citizens as consumers of services and as a partner in governance, engaging the citizenry more closely and reporting to the public, beyond the normal reporting through Parliament. This is not a new philosophy and is reflected in many writings and movements of reform worldwide (Amaral et al., 2003; Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000, 2003; Kettl, 2000; Mayne and Zapico-Goni, 1997; Nolan, 2001).

To this end, standards for the services provided to citizens by public administrations have been adopted by many countries worldwide. Australia is not immune. The DEST Service Charter 2005 clearly articulates the intentions of a public organisation focusing on citizens as consumers of services and as partners in governance. DEST (n.d.:§1–2) promotes an ‘open for business’ policy to the public, incorporating them as an intrinsic partner in the services it provides:
Our Department’s ‘Open for Business’ approach sums up our firm belief in the Department’s obligation and desire to listen and respond to your needs … the Department sees itself as a continually evolving, growing organisation, responsive and receptive to changing client and stakeholder needs. Our clients’ views are vitally important to us. We want your ongoing input and suggestions for improving our service delivery. That is why this Service Charter, which sets out the high standards of service and professionalism you can expect from us while encouraging you to give us feedback on our services, is so important.

Such approaches reflect the public sector response to the changed expectations of citizens towards their role in holding government accountable for the quality of services it provides through taxation revenue. Mayne and Zapico-Goni (1997:12) highlight this when they state:

Citizens do not, will not, and should not be expected to simply trust politicians and public servants to ‘deliver the goods’. As the source of funds for government programs and services, they are entitled to meaningful and transparent reporting on what their government has achieved for them with their tax dollars.

Indeed, Eyben (2005:98) identifies ‘the public sector equivalent of business’ bottom line are citizens to whom governments must learn to respond to stay in power’.

While government programs are intended to achieve particular outcomes (better education, more jobs, a healthier society, and so on) and effective public programs are those that meet their objectives (they make a difference to intended outcomes that citizens value), trying to effectively measure the performance of a program is not without its challenges. Measuring whether outcomes are actually occurring is one thing. Trying to determine what contribution the specific program in question has made to the outcome is far more difficult. It involves trying to decipher how much success (or failure) can be attributed to the program and what has been the contribution made by the program. Such attribution measurement, despite its invariable assessment difficulty, helps to demonstrate the difference a program is making and justify its worth, as well as provides the necessary advice for future directions and decision making by government.

NPM promotes good governance by enabling public servants to accept greater strategic leadership and, therefore, accountability for decisions made. RBM supports this by making managers of public programs conscious of results, requiring them to
be accountable for outputs as well as outcomes. Effective accountability implies that managers are aware of their role and the resources available to them to attempt to accomplish the expected outcomes of a program. Mayne (1999:2) elaborates:

Accountability for results or outcome asks if you have done everything possible with your authority and resources to effect the achievement of the intended results and if you have learned from past experience what works and doesn’t work. Accounting for results of this kind means demonstrating that you have made a difference; that through your actions and efforts you have contributed to the results achieved. Finding credible ways to demonstrate this is essential if the move toward managing for results is to succeed.

Importantly, the act of measuring attribution is about ‘reducing the uncertainty in our knowledge about the contribution of a program … from a state of not really knowing anything about how a program is influencing a desired outcome’ to a state of ‘reasonable confidence that the program is indeed having an attributable impact; that it is indeed making a difference’ (Mayne, 1999:5).

This way of thinking assumes the position that even if we cannot ‘prove’ things in an absolute sense, we can always reduce uncertainty by gathering data that will help to increase our knowledge and understanding of what works in a particular area. It promotes a degree of measurement that is credible but less concerned with precision and more intent on building knowledge and understanding. In this regard, Mayne (1999:5) suggests ‘we need to include softer and qualitative measurement tools in our concept of measurement in the public sector’.

**Application of Contribution Analysis to this Study**

Public program performance information may be used to fulfil two main functions: firstly, to better understand just what contribution a program is making; secondly, to explain or demonstrate the performance actually achieved by a program. The former helps us to understand more about if and how a program is making a difference. This search for knowledge uses performance measurement as an investigative tool to determine whether a program is the appropriate policy instrument for desired results. The latter helps us to report credibly on what has been accomplished through public investment in a program, particularly to interested parties such as Parliament, the public and the media. This study aims to fulfil both functions. For building better
understanding, the study tries to glean insights on how well the program is working based on performance indicators. For reporting, the study tries to paint a credible picture about the attribution of the program.

Mayne (1999:7) suggests achieving this through Contribution Analysis, which he defines as follows:

Contribution Analysis attempts to explore and perhaps demonstrate what Hendricks (1996) calls ‘plausible association’; whether ‘a reasonable person, knowing what has occurred in the program and that the intended outcomes actually occurred, agrees that the program contributed to those outcomes’.

Mayne (1999:7–16) sets out various considerations when trying to address attribution to identify the contribution of a program. These are examined in turn in relation to the intentions of this study.

1. Acknowledge the Problem

Mayne (1999:7) suggests that too often the measuring and reporting of performance completely ignores the attribution problem. That is, measured performance is either directly attributed, or at least implied, to the program itself without sufficient consideration or analysis of other factors at play. The acknowledgment that there are other factors at play in addition to the program and that it is usually not immediately clear what effects a program has had, or is having, in producing an outcome, is therefore important if one is to build a credible and valuable contribution analysis.

This study does not purport absolute certainty. Rather, it attempts to measure attribution in a way that reduces the uncertainty in our knowledge about the contribution of the ADS program. This means that it is accepted that other factors may or may not have influenced the success or otherwise of the ADS program in meeting its stated objectives in China or Mongolia. Some of these factors are explored in the study. However, it was considered that the best way to achieve reasonable confidence that the program was indeed having an attributable impact was through the perceptions of those involved with the program over various years. The study therefore identifies whether the program is indeed making a difference from the knowledgeable assessments of ADS facilitators and scholars.
2. Analyse and Present the Logic of the Program

By identifying the logical reasoning behind a program, it is possible to understand what a program is designed to accomplish and how it is supposed to achieve it. In order to represent this, Mayne (1999:8) suggests using a program logic chart, defining its purpose as follows:

A logic chart for a program tries to display on a page how the program is supposed to work – how, that is, the various outputs of the program are believed to produce a number of results that will lead to the intended final outcomes of the program.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the basic design of a program logic chart and the linkages between specific outputs and specific immediate, intermediate and final outcomes.

Program logic charts may be illustrated according to the individual design of a program. Importantly, the logic chart includes the idea of reach – who the program is intended to reach – and immediate outcomes that are often more easily controlled at the early stage of the results chain and able to be measured through basic
performance indicators. Mayne (1999:8) suggests that ‘evidence that the intended immediate outcomes have in fact occurred is a critical step in demonstrating the larger performance story’ as, at the very least, ‘the program can be shown to have had some effect’.

The benefits of using a program logic chart are delineated by Mayne (1999:10) as:

- developing consensus on what the program is trying to achieve;
- developing an understanding on how it is believed to be working;
- clearly identifying the clients of the program;
- seeking and getting agreement on precisely what results are intended – the performance expectations; and
- identifying the key measures of performance.

In addition, Mayne (1999:10) suggests other important benefits which include identifying:

- the cause-effect relationships implicit in the program’s theory;
- the outside factors at play; and
- areas where understanding about the impact of the program is weak.

Attempting to understand the linkages between the specific outputs and the specific outcomes (immediate, intermediate and final) are key to adding to our understanding of how a program is working and ‘bolster the argument that the program is making a difference’ (Mayne, 1999:10). Arguably, the best way to achieve this is by gathering the perceptions of those involved in the program and assessing whether they attribute specific outcomes to the program and/or to other factors at play. This is the methodology of this research. If indeed outside factors are identified as having an effect on intended outcomes, then determining the extent of influence of those claims is useful towards addressing the attribution question. Indeed, coming to understand that it is not known what contribution a program is making towards an anticipated result is equally telling.

An analysis of the logic of the ADS program is discussed in Chapter 3. An ADS program logic chart is set out in Chapter 4 (Figure 4.4).
3. Identify and Document Behavioural Changes

As with any program, successful outcomes are based on changed behaviour. Outputs, therefore, must be aimed at influencing the program’s target audience or reach. Program logic charts are invariably restricted by their focus on the sequence of outcomes expected to occur and thus usually unable to adequately detect the specific behavioural changes that occur as prerequisites to each outcome. Mayne (1999:11) suggests:

By trying to identify and then document the changes in attitudes, knowledge, perceptions and decisions taken by program target groups, which logically link to the outcomes being observed, a good understanding of the actual impact the program is having can often be acquired.

This approach is consistent with the methodology of this research, whereby in-depth interviews with ADS program facilitators and scholars are used to decipher behavioural changes that may be attributed, at least in part, to their involvement in the ADS program. These are used to assess some of the successful outcomes of the program against predetermined indicators of success.

4. Use Discriminating Indicators

In order to consider the attribution issue, Mayne (1999:11) supports using performance indicators (or in the case of this study, indicators of success) that ‘best discriminate or focus on the outcomes in question’.

To achieve best coverage of the many aspects of performance that should be measured and reported for the ADS program, this study consolidated a set of indicators of success from two main sources, namely:

i. existing literature on the ADS program, including official websites, program design documents, reviews, issues papers, surveys, impact and tracer studies (theoretical investigation); and

ii. in-depth interviews with ADS program facilitators, utilising their empirical awareness of the program to identify any additional and important indicators of success (empirical investigation).
By formulating a thorough, consolidated list of indicators of success, this study can focus on the specific benefits the ADS program is intended to achieve. It provides a credible list of discriminating indicators from which to assess the success of the program. It also enables the identification of other unintended and incidental benefits that may have occurred from the program.

5. Track Performance Over Time and Location

If an expected outcome is able to be observed after (and not before) a program activity has been implemented, then it may be reasonable to assume that the program has attributed to the result. Moreover, if outcomes are able to be observed within the context of different sites (and times), then the factors that have contributed to the difference may be more fully understood.

Mayne (1999:13) reminds us though that, in some areas of programming such as assessing impacts, there is likely to be a significant delay before intended outcomes may occur or be adequately judged.

This study aims to identify the immediate outcomes of the ADS program as well as the intermediate and ultimate outcomes, to which the program has been perceived as having contributed. It does this by more fully understanding the performance of the program from the perspective of its participants – ADS facilitators and ADS scholars – over:

- two very different countries – China and Mongolia;
- an extended period of time – 1996 to 2006;
- government ministries and levels (national and provincial);
- public and private sector perspectives;
- levels of employment hierarchy;
- different award levels and fields of study; and
- ethnicity, age and gender.

6. Explore and Discuss Plausible Alternative Explanations

Mayne (1999:13) suggests that a program’s efficacy may be influenced by plausible alternative explanations. It was important therefore in this study to consider a range of plausible explanations for the success (or failure) of the ADS program.
This study triangulates ADS program literature (reviews, surveys, impact and tracer studies, and so on) with the perceptions of ADS facilitators and those of ADS scholars so that alternative explanations to outcomes can be examined. Addressing the attribution problem in this way ensures that the formulation of conclusions are from multiple lines of evidence so that findings most likely point to the program having contributed to outcomes.

7. Gather Additional Relevant Evidence

Mayne (1999:14) suggests that by gathering additional evidence that supports statements about attribution a stronger case can be made in concluding a program’s contribution. This is consistent with the approach of this study. A review of existing ADS program literature provides support for the identification and application of *indicators of success*, confirmed through in-depth interviews. The research also utilises expert opinion from people outside the program who are considered knowledgeable about the program area, the program’s impacts and the environment in which the program operates. Individual case study evidence on the program’s outcomes forms the primary basis from which the contribution of the ADS program is assessed. Mayne (1999:15) supports each of these data collection techniques for Contribution Analysis, praising in particular individual case study evidence when he states:

... case study evidence ... can be quite compelling; it can reveal the real nature of the program and also demonstrate ... that one can be fairly confident about the impact of the program’s activities. In addition, case studies can also illustrate whether the program logic is indeed logical and reasonable (or not).

However, Mayne (1999:15) does warn that, while this type of evidence can be quite persuasive, appropriate cautions are a must. Case study evidence is considered best when complemented with additional relevant evidence and when the context and limitations are made clear.

8. Use Multiple Lines of Evidence

Using as many lines of evidence as possible is considered a sensible, practical and credible strategy for reducing the uncertainty surrounding attribution. The more lines...
of evidence used, the more convincing one can be in their argument supporting attribution.

This study amalgamates evidence from ADS program literature, ADS facilitators (including AusAID employees/contractors, government foreign aid officials, consultants and diplomats) and ADS scholars to paint a credible picture of attribution. These multiple lines of evidence are considered sufficient for achieving the objectives of the study.

9. When Required, Defer to the Need for a More Thorough Evaluation

Mayne (1999:16) suggests that if the program has indeed made a significant contribution then the various lines of evidence will confirm this. If not, the lack of credible evidence on the contribution of the program may necessitate a more thorough evaluation addressing the attribution question.

The concluding chapter of this study examines the findings and their implications, and recommends further action that may contribute to improving the outcomes and impact of the ADS program. As acknowledged in Chapter 1, a larger study encompassing a greater sample size across more participating countries would generate a more comprehensive analysis of the ADS program. Moreover, further post-award monitoring and evaluation are considered worthwhile for targeting future program decision making towards achieving the program’s full potential.

It is important to accept that Mayne’s Contribution Analysis reduces uncertainty about the contribution made by a program. It does not prove the contribution made. It therefore examines and presents ‘the best case possible – a credible performance story – for attribution with the available evidence’ (Mayne, 1999:16). This is the clear objective of this study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the view that governments worldwide have become more responsive to the demands of internal and external stakeholders for good governance, accountability and transparency, greater development effectiveness and the delivery of tangible results. It outlined the emergence of new managerial approaches in the
public service (NPM) and the rise of RBM practices in public policy. The chapter identified accountability as a major factor towards the need to attribute results for public programs. Despite the difficulty in measuring attribution, Mayne’s Contribution Analysis was identified as a means through which one may reduce uncertainty in knowledge about the contribution of a given program.

Chapter 3 looks at the logic behind the ADS program in China and Mongolia. In doing so, it identifies the program’s close linkages with country strategies or capacity building goals and how these have evolved over time. Existing reviews of the ADS program are investigated and the performance indicators for the ADS program in China and Mongolia are presented.
Chapter 3
Logic of the ADS Program

Introduction

Chapter 2 presented the view that NPM has come about for various reasons and resulted in the rise of RBM practices in the public sector. However, the rhetoric of effective monitoring and evaluation of public programs – a primary principle of RBM – is often overlooked, despite good reasons for it. The difficulty in measuring attribution is one of these reasons and Mayne’s (1999) Contribution Analysis is presented as one means through which uncertainty in knowledge may be reduced.

This chapter presents the logic of the ADS program in China and Mongolia. In doing so, it identifies the program’s linkages with country strategies or capacity building goals and the evolution of their implementation. Importantly, this chapter forms the basis for developing a program logic chart of the ADS program. It illustrates what is being measured, in the form of *indicators of success*, and what the major assumptions are concerning the various outputs and outcomes.

This chapter has a strong emphasis on Detto (2005) because his writings represent the most comprehensive quality stocktake and broad issues analysis on the ADS program to date.³ Whilst there have been a number of other AusAID reviews on ADS, these have been limited in their breadth and rigour. Detto (2005) also highlights the limitations of these studies undertaken by AusAID (see Appendix C).

AusAID Overseas Development Assistance Objective

The Simons Review (Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program, 1997:69) articulated that ‘the objective of the Australian aid program is to assist

³ Detto (2005) undertook a stocktake of 25 bilateral/regional AusAID programs with scholarship components to note their management arrangements in line with country strategies and highlighted key lessons learned (see China’s and Mongolia’s at Appendix B). The review focused on broad rather than project specific lessons to highlight the contribution of the ADS program to the overall Australian aid program, identifying what has worked and why, and outlining key considerations to inform recommendations for the White Paper (AusAID, 2006a). Lessons identified by Detto (2005) with regards to the Mongolia and China ADS programs were based on their designs/reviews, as well as information extrapolated from ADS administrators in country.
developing countries to reduce poverty through sustainable economic and social
development’. Today, AusAID’s Strategic Framework delineates a more conditional
definition:

The objective of Australia’s aid program is to assist developing
countries reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development, in line
with Australia’s national interest (AusAID, n.d.e:§2).

Within this objective, the Australian aid program is organised around four interlinked
themes:

- accelerating economic growth;
- fostering functioning and effective states;
- investing in people; and
- promoting regional stability and cooperation.

While the ADS program may assist in various ways towards all four themes, AusAID aligns the program under the theme of investing in people. The philosophy of the Australian Government is clear:

… that all people should have the opportunity, through access to …
education services, to develop their full potential to participate in the
economy and find employment and income generating opportunities.
An … educated workforce … enables an economy to be competitive,
thereby increasing aggregate growth … An informed citizenry is more
likely to hold accountable those in political and bureaucratic power …
[Therefore] the Government will significantly increase its investments
in people in developing countries by … supporting higher education
through scholarships (AusAID, 2006a:47).

The 2006 Promoting Growth and Stability White Paper on the Australian
Government’s overseas aid program closely aligns the ADS program with the major
objectives of the Australian aid program. It shows strong support for scholarships as
a form of aid and highlights various advantages to both the donor and receiving
country, including fostering and promoting regional relations, political and economic
reform, and good governance and leadership (AusAID, 2006a:53).

Similarly, the Simons Review (Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid
Program, 1997:132) showed equal conviction, using Indonesia as a case in point:
Scholarships for study in Australia can play a useful human resource development role by providing priority training in fields where developing countries do not have capacity. This is especially true in countries which lack a large cadre of highly educated policy makers. For example, a small group of foreign-trained economists was crucial to the adoption of market-orientated economic policies in Indonesia, which have resulted in the reduction of poverty from 60 per cent in the 1960s to around 15 per cent today. Scholarships also have major benefits for Australian institutions and for developing links with the countries from which students come.

Clearly, the Australian Government identifies the ADS program as having a useful and effective role in the development of, and in its relations with, the region. However, the existence of detailed and impartial results-based research to support many of these assumptions is difficult to find.

**ADS Program Objective**

The stated objective of the ADS program is ‘to strengthen human resource capacity in priority sectors of partner countries consistent with country program strategies and Australia’s national interest’ (Detto, 2005:v).

The focus of ADS in strengthening the human resource capacity in priority sectors of partner countries is the legacy of the 1984 Jackson Review (Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program, 1984) which saw the introduction of country programming and the integration of scholarships within them. Prior to the mid-1980s, Australia’s aid program was primarily administered according to the form of aid delivered, such as food aid, scholarships or projects. The Jackson Review (Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program, 1984) recommended a country programming approach which aimed at increasing aid effectiveness by ensuring that aid activities were designed around an in-depth knowledge of recipients and their needs (Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program, 1997). The strategy engendered a cooperative approach to aid delivery, enabling aid to be tailored to a recipient’s stated needs within the context of the broader program objectives. It also enabled the donor to assess what other donors were doing and where support may be best placed.

To facilitate country programming, AusAID set out to develop country strategies for most major bilateral partners. The country strategies set out development cooperation
objectives in the partner country, developed in association with recipient government authorities.

Given the changing priorities of governments (including for both donor and recipient governments), targeting in relation to country strategies invariably alter over time. It is therefore difficult to make absolute assessments of the priorities and circumstances from one year to the next. Nevertheless, it is possible to understand the broad objectives of AusAID’s country programming with China and Mongolia in relation to the scoping period of this study (1996–2006). While it remains a generic overview, it provides an important understanding of the rationale for targeting scholarships over the period so that results measured align with the intended objectives of the program in country.

**Development Assistance in China**

Over the past decade, the objective of Australia’s country program strategy with China has been ‘to advance Australia’s national interest by assisting China to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development’ (AusAID, 2002a:1). In order to achieve this objective, AusAID’s 1999–2001 strategy set out to assist China to:

- promote good governance, particularly through support of China’s reforms aimed at achieving its transition to a market economy;
- support efforts to improve environmental and natural resource management and rural development, with a special emphasis on water conservation and management;
- increase assistance to improve the health of the rural poor; and
- support China’s reform of its educational system.

Similarly, AusAID’s 2002–05 country strategy focused on two major themes:

i. assisting the reduction of poverty in selected rural areas of western China, through targeted interventions that are integrated with China’s own poverty reduction programs; and

ii. contributing to poverty reduction, directly and indirectly, through governance activities with all levels of government and with civil society.
For the most part, Australia’s country strategies with China have focused on direct poverty-related assistance to the poorer central and western provinces, while providing governance assistance at the national and provincial levels to support national reforms considered essential to ensure a long-term and sustainable impact on poverty in China. Key sectors and areas have included:

- health and HIV/AIDS;
- education;
- the environment;
- rural development; and
- governance.

Activities also incorporated strategies to address environmental sustainability and gender inequality to reflect China’s own priorities and the expertise Australia could provide (AusAID, 2002a:3).

AusAID’s aim was to support the Chinese Government’s own reforms to strengthen corporate, legal and judicial frameworks as well as public administration. These were considered key areas of reform to support China’s transition to a market economy. China’s reforms to promote favourable conditions for private sector development, expanded and more open trade, improved government services and a more equitable legal and judicial system were considered vital to enable China’s significant potential growth to lift the poor permanently out of poverty. It was expected that Australia’s knowledge and experience in many areas of reform would be able to support this, particularly in banking, finance and taxation reform, state-owned enterprise reform, small and medium enterprise development, anti-corruption policy and urban and regional planning (AusAID, 2002a; DFID, 2006b; World Bank, n.d.b).

The ADS program was recognised as a means for promoting human resource development in key Chinese Government ministries and implementing agencies through postgraduate studies at Australian universities. Importantly, fields of study related to poverty alleviation and governance have been the priority areas for the selection of awardees.
Development Assistance in Mongolia

The primary goal of Australia’s development cooperation program with Mongolia is to ‘strengthen Mongolia’s human and institutional capacity for long-term sustainable development and to assist its transition to a modern market-based economy’ (AusAID, n.d.a).

While AusAID does not have a formal country strategy with Mongolia, its development cooperation program under the administration of CaBSAF from 2003 exhibited similar goals and purposes to that of China’s. The 2002 Mongolia-Australia Development Cooperation Program CaBSAF Design Document identified that:

The goal … is to contribute to poverty alleviation by strengthening the human resource capacity of Mongolian Government Agencies to implement their Government’s Action Program in priority areas for good governance reform and by supporting community development activities.

The purpose … is to support the Government’s Action Program by strengthening the policy, management and analytical capacity of key Mongolian Government Agencies and by supporting communities through the provision of ADS and Distance Education (DE) awards, other capacity building and small-scale community assistance (AusAID, 2002b:xi).

The role of CaBSAF was to administer targeted assistance, which included the ‘strategic targeting of scholarships and institutional capacity building’ to ‘support Mongolian Government Agencies and individuals that are undertaking work of a policy, analytical or managerial nature in agreed priority areas’ (AusAID, 2002b:xi). The aim was to focus on targeting key public sector institutions, fields and levels of study considered strategically important to the future development needs and goals of the country. These were determined in consultation with relevant Mongolian Government authorities and have included areas such as public sector financial management, government administration, education and employment policy, social welfare and legal and judicial fields.

While CaBSAF was also assigned responsibility for evaluating scholarship outcomes and their impact, to date there has been limited results-based research done in this area.
Developing the Program Logic Chart

By reviewing AusAID literature, an overall understanding of the logic of the ADS program was able to be defined. This enabled a program logic chart to be developed which broadly defined the activity and its output/reach, expected immediate outcomes, as well as intermediate and final outcomes. This is set out diagrammatically in Chapter 4.

Of particular importance to this study was obtaining evidence of the expected immediate and intermediate outcomes so that an assessment of the impact of the ADS program towards its macro objectives, or final outcomes, could be made. The development of *indicators of success*, primarily drawn from AusAID literature (including official websites, program design documents, reviews, issues papers, surveys, impact and tracer studies) was recognised as key to achieving this.

**ADS Program Reviews**

Since 1991, there have been fifteen country-level reviews of ADS and its precursor scholarship programs, and two overall reviews of the ADS program itself (Detto, 2005:vi). In 1997, the Simons Review (Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program, 1997:132–133) noted various drawbacks to the provision of tertiary assistance via overseas scholarships, including:

- **Cost** – bringing students (and sometimes family members) to Australia for full fee-paying study was expensive (averaging over $100,000 per completed undergraduate course);
- **Student loss** – students were being attracted away from local and regional universities thereby diminishing incentives to ensure quality in developing country institutions;
- **Equity** – immediate gains from tertiary education in Australia accrued primarily to individuals who were often among the more affluent members of their communities and who had already gone through many years of education;
- **Targeting** – scholarships were being provided to government officials who usually had secure, relatively well-paid jobs (if these officials made major contributions to development then the personal investment in them was
worthwhile, but this usually required selection of the most academically qualified students);

- Returning scholars – if students emigrated, as many did on the basis of their higher qualifications, their skills were lost to their home countries (studies showed rates of emigration by Australian-trained students as high as 50% in several Pacific countries in the early 1990s);
- High failure rates – a lingering concern, notwithstanding remedial action taken to improve performance; and
- Lack of post-award monitoring and evaluation – to help determine the impact of the provision of Australian scholarships.

Detto (2005:v) points out that the Simons Review (Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program, 1997) was ‘critical of the level of expenditure on scholarships’ and ‘concerned about the quality of scholarship programs and its commercial focus rationale’. Today, most programs have fully integrated scholarships to the extent that the ADS program now operates as a delivery mechanism across a range of sectors consistent with country strategy priorities. Detto (2005:vi) elaborates:

Larger programs have outsourced ADS management and with improved targeting have developed innovative approaches to post award support and monitoring. ADS is no longer a global program with diffuse objectives but one increasingly sharpened by country strategies increasing the likely impact of the program.

Despite improvements, Detto (2005:vi) is quick to advise that ‘one issue that … should be universally addressed by all programs is to monitor post award outcomes’.

**Mongolia**

For Mongolia, Detto (2005:29) noted CaBSAF’s role since its inception in 2003 as the mechanism for strengthening the capacity of selected Mongolian Government ministries by providing targeted ADS, as well as DES, and other capacity building activities in support of their human resource development programs. CaBSAF administers up to 12 ADS per year, plus three to six DES, for a period of study at eligible higher education providers in Australia. Other capacity building activities are
also available to the selected Mongolian Government ministries to complement the scholarship support.

The objective of targeting selected Mongolian Government ministries is to develop over time a ‘critical mass’ of well-trained scholars who will return with the necessary skills to maximise the impact of CaBSAF in areas aligned with capacity building goals.

Key institutions are selected according to mutual AusAID and Mongolian Government priorities. The selected ministries are guaranteed a fixed number of ADS awards each year, subject to satisfactory human resource development plans, signed agreements committing to transparent student selection processes and agreed post-return reintegration strategies for graduates. According to Detto (2005:7), ‘the approach is producing results’ but no further elaboration is provided beyond that of the ministries changing management practices, procedures and responsibilities.

Awards are also available to officials from Mongolian Government ministries that have not been targeted but are working within a limited range of targeted fields that may provide strategic support to the overall goals of CaBSAF. However, non-targeted ministries do not qualify for other capacity building activities beyond awards.

Postgraduate awards at the Diploma, Masters and PhD level are offered. CaBSAF is responsible for screening, interviewing and selecting candidates with Mongolian Government and AusAID participation. The program design specifies accountability through open and transparent selection processes, and support for action planning and performance management systems. Ministry working groups set up in seven selected ministries are comprised of human resource development staff responsible for action planning and involvement in the process of advertising, ranking and the selection of ADS applicants.

Detto (2005:55) assessed that overall the targeting and capacity building objectives were being met. However, their sustainability was in question. While the ministry working groups responsible for developing action plans for additional capacity building support were functioning within each of the seven target ministries,
considerable facilitation was required to change management culture. The difficulty in moving from an appreciation of individual benefit to a situation of both individual and institutional benefit was proving to be a considerable challenge. Further, while the action planning process was functioning well at the individual level, progress was slower at the ministry level. Despite this, monitoring of individual action plans was underway, with graduates being interviewed on a six-monthly basis over two years. These action plans were considered an important monitoring and evaluation tool.

Detto (2005:55) also identified English language training in country as a main constraint to ADS. DES were also not yet functioning, attracting few applicants and experiencing reluctance from Australian higher education providers in supporting one-off distance education investments.

Mongolia’s active Australian graduate alumni association, the ‘Mozzies’, was identified as playing a role in the reform process of the country. Some members had achieved high office in government – including a Member of Parliament, an Advisor to the President and the State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance – as well as senior positions in the private sector. The program design allocated funds to facilitate alumni undertaking mentoring roles for new ADS and DES scholars and to assist in monitoring and evaluation tasks. Detto (2005:55) noted that two factions had developed within the alumni group. The first covered those who studied in Australia prior to 1999, many of whom had obtained high office. The second covered more recent graduates who were recognised as possibly developing into an industry group of senior professionals.

Four main implementation lessons, since the inception of CaBSAF in 2003, were identified by Detto (2005:29) with regards to the Mongolia ADS program:

1. Considerable facilitation is required to change management culture in target ministries; procedures and their implementation are not enough. Facilitation and discussions with senior staff and working groups are continuous requirements.
2. The institutions have developed institutional capacity building priorities. Institutional action plans for their achievement have not. Monitoring of individual action plans is underway. This monitoring has an institutional element.
3. Moving from an appreciation of individual benefit to a situation of both individual and institutional benefit is a considerable challenge in countries in transition.

4. Study by distance education needs to be firstly developed as a viable ADS component and effectively publicised.

Detto (2005:30) also identified the major lessons from the 2002 Program Design (AusAID, 2002b), which drew on lessons from other designs and evaluations:

- the need for better targeting of organisations for improved outcomes and impact and focusing resources for capacity building;
- clear specification in the project design of processes including management arrangements, roles and responsibilities, modes of assistance, selection criteria, scope for follow-on activities and expected outcomes;
- rigorous and in-depth preparation of activities including thorough risk analysis, clear understanding of objectives, expected outputs, outcomes, follow-up and monitoring arrangements;
- local ownership and involvement in processes including strong support by ministry leaders;
- building improved human resource development planning capacity in target ministries to maximise the impact of capacity building generally and scholarship programs specifically;
- progressive engagement in capacity building activities supported by managing contractor assistance in activity design and follow-up; starting small, building success and understanding and then moving to larger activities;
- ensuring that expertise in support of capacity building includes change agent specialists rather than technical experts alone;
- targeted activities which integrate scholarship training interventions with the human resource development plans of organisations to increase the potential for capacity building and, conversely, one-off activities conceived outside of organisational plans resulting in little institutional impact;
- ensuring strong governance arrangements that enable key coordinating ministries to play a strategic role and accept ownership of scholarship and capacity building outcomes and impact;
• selection processes not only fair and equitable but also perceived as fair and equitable emphasising the need for greater transparency;
• the need for a monitoring and evaluation framework to enhance, monitor and measure outcomes and impact;
• in contrast to one-off activities, realistic sustainability objectives and long-term commitment to capacity building by participating ministries;
• the most successful activities have the full support of the ministry being targeted, where the ministry has identified the reform issues to be addressed and is committed to addressing them; and
• proposals more likely to be successful if part of wider capacity building within a ministry.

It is beyond the scope of this study to provide further insight to all of these identified lessons. However, it is the aim of this study to provide greater awareness of the contribution of the ADS program through the perceptions of ADS facilitators and scholars and the value they place on the program.

**China**

In China, ADS administration has been outsourced to a managing contractor since 2000. In mid-2004, ADS became part of the contract to implement a new CAGP, under which approximately 23 new ADS awards were managed each year. These awards remained restricted to country strategies with the aim to distribute them equally between government ministries at the central and provincial level.

Since 2000, the responsibility of the managing contractor has been to provide administrative support, including receiving ADS nominations from Chinese Government ministries through MOFCOM, verifying eligibility, arranging IELTS (International English Language Testing System) tests and preparing reports for AusAID. A joint AusAID/MOFCOM selection panel undertakes assessment and ranking of eligible applicants while AusAID Beijing maintains a strategic development role throughout the process.

As of 2008, there had been no formal review of the ADS program in China, with a 2004 Project Completion Report providing only limited information on any progress
or lessons learned (Detto, 2005:39). Nevertheless, the Report identifies that over the four-year project period, 130 ADS recipients were successfully placed for study at the Masters level. These were targeted at mid-level officials in priority sectors, agencies and provinces who then returned to China. While there is a lack of any evidence to support outcomes beyond this, Detto (2005:39) elaborates:

> Based on mainly anecdotal evidence, ADS graduates were said to be in positions to use their experience in an English language speaking open market economy and their specialist training in key fields to improve services through introducing international approaches and innovations.

Key lessons identified by Detto (2005:39) from the 2004 Project Completion Report include the following:

- ADS outcomes need to be monitored in some way to inform future decisions about the value of such programs and to improve targeting.
- Awardees may struggle with IELTS testing in part due to a lack of understanding of the contents of the test and a one-day IELTS preparation course may be needed (preparation for IELTS has been identified as an issue to be addressed even in countries where English is spoken more widely – PNG, Philippines).
- While the Project Completion Report only hints at this, outsourcing ADS management to a managing contractor does not necessarily achieve quick workload gains for Post staff (those officers located at overseas posts). This is a lesson learned based on experience early in the life of the project. A great deal of coaching may initially be required which in turn suggests that more attention needs to be given to the expertise/skills claims of contractors during the tender assessment phase.

Unlike Mongolia, in China there is no formal ADS alumni association.

Detto’s (2005) synthesis of major lessons and good practice examples from ADS programs provides a benchmark for analysis of the ADS program in China and Mongolia. The findings are a useful guide for the development of *indicators of success* – a means for measuring the extent to which the ADS program meets its stated objectives.
Indicators of Success

A key aspect of Contribution Analysis is the use of discriminating indicators through which aspects of performance can be measured and reported (Mayne, 1999:11). This study uses them as a legitimate and credible means through which the extent of the success of the ADS program in meeting its stated objectives may be measured. Morgan (1997:11) identifies that:

> Indicators are becoming a key part of donor reporting and accountability systems that, in theory, enable them to track outcomes, value for money and the overall performance and impact of their investments … They can be used as part of an approach to results-based or performance management to help set objectives and monitor progress at the field level.

Mayne (1999:11) maintains that in order to attribute the contribution of a program ‘it is important to use performance indicators that best discriminate or focus on the outcomes in question’. In this sense, it is vital for the indicators to be linked with the desired outcomes as set out in the existing AusAID literature. However, Morgan (1997:iv–11) goes even further, identifying the need to have indicators ‘designed by field participants’ so that they are ‘relevant to the management for results at the field level and … earn a sense of legitimacy and ownership amongst key field participants’. As a result, this study was careful to incorporate a methodology that utilised the empirical awareness of ADS facilitators to identify additional indicators of success. Interviews with ADS facilitators therefore had a dual role:

i. they acted as a means through which to identify additional indicators of success – perceived by facilitators in the field to be important and achievable in the unique context of the participating country; and

ii. they helped to confirm the extent to which various indicators of success were being met – based on the empirical awareness of ADS facilitators in the field.

This dual strategy enabled a consolidated and credible list of indicators of success to be developed (based on a theoretical and empirical investigation – see also Chapter 4). Further, its function served as a means to ensure legitimacy and ownership in the list of indicators of success, based not only on theory but also on empirical perspectives through practice.
Based on the theoretical investigation of AusAID literature, four major objectives of the ADS program were able to be identified, linked to AusAID’s overall overseas development assistance objectives (Figure 3.1). These include five thematic categories which emerged under *Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity*. The objectives and sub-themes represent an overall theory of change by the implementation of the ADS program. They illustrate what the major assumptions are concerning the contribution of the ADS program and exactly what will be measured in this study.

While it is acknowledged that the targeting of sectors, agencies and groups of scholars at the selection stage could have a major influence on the impact of the ADS program in meeting its stated objectives, this study focused primarily on the post-selection stage. In other words, the research was concerned with the contribution that the ADS program was making throughout the study in Australia and the period since the awardees’ return to work in country. The criticisms of the 1997 ‘One Clear Objective’ Review (Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program, 1997) resulted in most Posts improving their scholarship selection processes, complemented by a suite of administrative reforms introduced by AusAID in Canberra designed to improve quality and targeting (Detto, 2005:v). What was found most lacking in current AusAID literature however was an understanding of the impacts of the ADS program from the awardees’ candidature at an Australian university through to their present vocational situation. This was identified as a major contribution that this study could provide. *Indicators of success* in relation to selection processes for ADS awardees were therefore not included in Figure 3.1.
Theme 1: Program relevance to country

Indicators of success:
- Study and work consistent with country strategies
- Qualifications valued in country

Theme 2: The Australian experience

Indicators of success:
- Benefits to the individual through the experience of living and studying in Australia, including:
  - meeting and working with people from different cultures
  - developing confidence and competence in English language proficiency
  - exposure to international practices

Theme 3: Characteristics of returning scholars

Indicators of success:
- Scholars return from Australia and remain in country
- Scholars return to their original place of employ (sponsoring agency)
- Scholars given greater responsibilities/promoted upon returning from Australia
- Scholars reform minded/have confidence and skills to drive reform
- Scholars in positions of authority to make their own systems adapt and work better

Theme 4: Institutional targeting and capacity building objectives

Indicators of success:
- Scholars return to a supportive work environment with a commitment to adopting strategies for utilising the graduate’s new knowledge, skills and qualifications
- Scholars are valued for their new skills and knowledge by employer/colleagues
- Scholars are able to use their new skills and knowledge in the work environment
- Scholars are utilising learning in various types of work
- Scholars are passing their new skills and knowledge to others
- Scholars are helped to address specific knowledge and skills gaps of the agency
- Scholars fulfilled all obligations to the employer and vice versa (e.g. contractual agreement, action plan, etc.)
- Access and commitment to further education and professional development opportunities
### Theme 5: ‘Critical mass’ theory

**Indicators of success:**
- A critical mass of well-trained and capable local leaders
- The effective use of critical mass (e.g., within the organisation or alumni network for mentoring, discussion of ideas and ways forward)
- Building of good people-to-people links

### Objective 2: To achieve poverty alleviation

**Indicator of success:**
- Scholars working on poverty reduction policies and programs

### Objective 3: To achieve sustainable development

**Indicators of success:**
- Supporting improvements in governance
- Training of local people in skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership

### Objective 4: To advance Australia’s national interest

**Indicators of success:**
- AusAID (Australian Government) closely identified with the ADS program
- Promotion of AusAID (Australian Government) as the scholarship provider through media and information strategies
- Scholars maintaining links with Australia
- Promotion of cross-cultural awareness and cooperation
- Promotion of Australia as a quality exporter of educational services
- Supporting the interests of domestic educational institutions

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**Figure 3.1: Major ADS Objectives and Indicators of Success Drawn From AusAID Literature**

It is important to understand that each of the major objectives, sub-themes and indicators of success are by no means absolute. They represent a snapshot only of key aspects and assumptions of the ADS program, gleaned from the literature review. They are in many ways multifaceted and interrelated and are therefore simplified for the purpose of definition only. Various theoretical underpinnings provide clarity for their derivation, which is discussed in some detail below.
Rationale Behind Each Objective

Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity

In China and Mongolia the ADS program is focused on training individuals that are employed by key agencies undertaking work of relevance to country strategies or capacity building goals. The objective is to achieve a critical mass of returning scholars with fresh ideas and with the confidence and skills to drive reform (Detto, 2005:v). The approach is considered more sustainable than driving reform through technical assistance via consultants from developed countries.

Detto (2005:14) identifies that a constant theme at meetings throughout the most recent AusAID White Paper review process was:

… the view that the drive for sustained reform through scholarships was based on the experience of learning overseas and that a critical mass of scholars returning from overseas drive the demand side of reform by seeing that things can be done differently.

AusAID assumes that by developing a critical mass of well-trained graduates in targeted institutions then together they may play a more key role in reform in an agency. Detto (2005:8, 16) quotes the 2005 White Paper on Australia’s Aid Program – Asia Analytical Report (AusAID, 2005a) which concludes that a critical mass of returning scholars:

… can build both the supply and demand for reform within developing countries; ‘drive reform from within’; build the next generation of leaders and reformers; and build good people-to-people links … the most effective and durable reform comes from having a critical mass of well trained and capable local leaders, who have exposure to international practices in positions of authority to make their own systems adapt and work better.

However, Detto (2005:8) warns that there is very little evidence to date to demonstrate the validity of this assumption. Even the 2002 AusAID Review of the Australia-IMF Scholarship Program for Asia⁴ could only assume its potential:

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⁴ The Australia-IMF Scholarship Program for Asia was first introduced in 1997. It is funded by the Australian Government, administered by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and facilitated at the Australian National University (ANU). The Program offers 12 months study at the Graduate Diploma or Masters level and is targeted solely at training future macro-economic managers from nine Asian economies in transition. The Program aims to create a critical mass of former students within single institutions for improved outcomes and impact.
... five scholars who have returned to the People’s Bank of China represent the biggest single group of students from one institution, and, although the Bank is a very large organisation, they have the potential to form a critical mass with a real impact (AusAID, 2002c quoted in Detto, 2005:8).

However, the efficacy of the ADS program relies on the commitment of employers (sponsoring agencies) to support scholars, particularly when they return from study in Australia, and to absorb new ideas as a learning organisation. It may be assumed that targeting associated with a sponsoring agency’s institutional strengthening objectives will be most effective when scholars return to their original place of employ, are provided the opportunity, authority and incentive to pass on their new skills and knowledge to others, and are seen to be valued by their employers for their new skills and knowledge. This assumes the need for post-return reintegration strategies that are closely linked to human resource development and management plans of the organisation.

According to the 2002 Review (AusAID 2002c), a fundamental strategy to enhance impact is through the formulation of contracts between scholarship awardees and sending agencies. Such contracts perform two functions:

1. they set out the knowledge and skills that are expected by the sending agency to be acquired by the student through their overseas study experience; and
2. they formalise a commitment from the sending agency to employ the returning scholar in an area relevant for the application of the student’s new knowledge and skills.

Accountability measures through such scholar and agency agreements, or action plans, are now being adopted by many ADS programs in a bid to enhance post-award outcomes.

**Objective 2: To achieve poverty alleviation**

While the design of the ADS program may not be aimed directly at reducing poverty, it is assumed that the program’s intention to address broader issues of institutional capacity building and economic growth will invariably have an impact on poverty alleviation in the longer term.
**Objective 3: To achieve sustainable development**

Detto (2005:16) identifies the fundamental question of ownership as a good practice principle for achieving sustainability in the ADS development objective, proposing that:

- the most successful activities tend to be those that have the full support of the agency being targeted and where the agency has identified the reform issues to be addressed and is committed to addressing them; and
- local ownership and involvement in processes including support by agency leaders is critical for success.

Therefore, the sustainability of strengthening human resource capacity and, in the longer term, helping to alleviate poverty will not only require ‘the training of local people in key skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership’ (AusAID, 2002c quoted in Detto, 2005:16), but also a commitment and ownership by all involved to aspire to develop and achieve change through improvements in governance.

**Objective 4: To advance Australia’s national interest**

In addition to helping to meet the human resource development needs of developing countries, the ADS program also has a direct role in fostering and sustaining Australia’s relations with other countries, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Indeed, the ADS program continues the spirit of the Colombo Plan which in the 1950s brought Asia and the West together at a time of significant political and economic uncertainty (DFAT, 2004).

At any one time, the ADS program supports around 2500 students from 37 developing countries. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the ADS program has had an impact on the formation and role of national reform leaders in the region (Detto, 2005:3–22). There are clear benefits for Australia in having people with an affinity for Australia in key positions of authority in central government agencies, civil society and business.

It is fair to say that Australia’s higher education system has significant potential for contributing to the human resource development needs of developing countries. The
quality of Australian courses is recognised as world class and Australian institutions have built a good reputation in the region. There is much to support this assessment. Australia remains the third largest English-speaking destination for international students in higher education, behind the United States of America and the United Kingdom. Annual growth in 2006 (5%) was equal with Canada and outstripped the growth of other major English-speaking destination countries (AEI, 2007). The value of Australia’s education export reached AUD11.7 billion in 2006–07, accounting for a quarter of total services exports, surpassing tourism (AUD11.5 billion). It is now the largest services export industry for Australia and the third largest export industry after coal (AUD21.9 billion) and iron ore (AUD15.5 billion) (ABS, 2007).

Detto (2005:24) reminds us however that while ‘ADS may showcase Australian tertiary education … their prime purpose is developmental’. While this may be so, from a purely economic point of view, the Australian Government in awarding scholarship funding is able to recoup much of what it outlays by the very act of having students live and study, and therefore spend their bestowment, in Australia.

One issue identified in past ADS reviews involves problems associated with the identity of ADS as an AusAID (Australian Government) funded scholarship program. Confusion is often made between ADS and IDP (IDP Education Pty Ltd) scholarships. It may be fair to assume that much of this failure in association may be attributed to, for example, AusAID appointing IDP as the managing contractor for the APS program in Indonesia. Similarly, pre-departure training for ADS awardees in some countries are held in training institutions that are also attended by a significant number of English language training IDP scholarship recipients. Detto (2005:vii–17) therefore shares the view of previous ADS reviews in recommending that requirements are strengthened for preserving and promoting the AusAID (Australian Government) profile as the provider of the ADS program, particularly through media and information strategies undertaken by managing contractors.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter has satisfied Mayne’s (1999) recommendation to analyse and present the logic of a program when trying to address attribution to identify the contribution of a program. This consideration was examined in Chapter 2. In providing an
overview of the logic of the ADS program in China and Mongolia, the chapter formed the basis for developing a program logic chart (diagrammatically represented in Chapter 4). The chapter also identified, through a review of AusAID literature, the *indicators of success* through which the major assumptions concerning the various outputs of the program will be able to be measured.

Chapter 4 presents the methodology for this study. It combines a theoretical conception of the ADS program with an empirical investigation to determine the success of the program in achieving its stated objectives in China and Mongolia.
Chapter 4
Methodology

Introduction

Chapters 2 and 3 illustrated the emergence of NPM and RBM and presented Contribution Analysis as a means by which to reduce uncertainty in knowledge of the impacts of government programs. The logic of the ADS program was explored to establish *indicators of success* from which to analyse the program’s contribution in line with its stated objectives.

This chapter outlines the methodology for this study. The study involves a literature review and an empirical investigation of the ADS program in China and Mongolia, involving interviews with 21 ADS scholars and 12 facilitators in Australia, China and Mongolia.

First, the purpose of the research together with the problem and sub-problems are re-stated. Second, the research plan is outlined and the conceptual framework is presented along with a research model and ADS program logic chart. Third, the choice of predominantly using qualitative research methods is explained and interviews are defined as the major method of data collection. Fourth, the results of a pilot study aimed at confirming the appropriateness of the researcher’s interviewing techniques and interview schedule are assessed, and the criteria and process for selecting participants are explained. Fifth, the way in which data are presented and analysed is illustrated. Sixth, problems encountered during the data collection phase are examined as well as ethical considerations associated with the research. A chapter summary concludes Chapter 4.

Research Problem and Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether the ADS program was successful in terms of its stated objectives. That is, ‘to strengthen human resource capacity in priority sectors of partner countries consistent with country program strategies and Australia’s national interest’ (Detto, 2005:v).
The research problem was presented as a question:

*Is the ADS program in China and Mongolia successful in terms of its stated objectives (1996–2006)?*

Two subordinate questions dealing with aspects outside of the stated objectives arose:

*Has the experience of being an ADS recipient positively influenced the recipient’s work life?*

*Is there evidence of other positive outcomes as a result of the ADS program?*

There have been various changes to the ADS program over the research scoping period (1996–2006). The closer targeting of agencies tied to country strategies and the introduction of ADS scholar action plans to try to achieve greater ADS program outputs, outcomes and impacts are two such examples. It was therefore acknowledged that the ADS scholars and ADS facilitators interviewed for this study would have differing perspectives based on their empirical awareness of the ADS program at different points in the program’s evolution. This was not considered a weakness of the study. Rather, it presented an opportunity to develop a holistic understanding of the ADS program over the period and the aspects attributed to the contribution of the ADS program in meeting its stated objectives.

**Research Plan**

A *research plan* was developed to identify each major stage of the study. This is diagrammatically represented in Figure 4.1.
STAGE ONE
THEORETICAL INVESTIGATION
Review of relevant literature

STAGE TWO
CONSTRUCTION OF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

STAGE THREE
CONSTRUCTION OF RESEARCH MODEL BASED ON CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

STAGE FOUR
CONSTRUCTION OF ADS PROGRAM LOGIC CHART BASED ON CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

STAGE FIVE
PILOT STUDY
Modifications to interview questions and techniques based on results of pilot study

STAGE SIX
SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS
Identify suitable participants
Seek permission to conduct interviews

STAGE SEVEN
DATA COLLECTION
Conduct interviews
Source qualitative data

STAGE EIGHT
COLLATION OF DATA
Data presentation and analysis
Intersection of two research spheres – theoretical investigation with empirical findings

STAGE NINE
CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Figure 4.1: Research Plan
A review of the relevant literature formed the theoretical investigation from which the conceptual framework (Figure 4.2) was constructed. A research model (Figure 4.3) was then derived from the conceptual framework to establish the way in which indicators of success were identified, consolidated and used as the means to verify evidence of success of the ADS program (performance measurement). The conceptual framework includes Mayne’s (1999) Contribution Analysis approach from which a program logic chart was designed to diagrammatically represent the various levels of evaluation and analysis of the study. The results of a pilot study identified any necessary modifications to the interview schedule and techniques of the researcher prior to the selection of participants and data collection phase. The collation of data formed the eighth stage of the research plan and represented the intersection between the theoretical investigation of the study and the empirical findings based on interviews. The formulation of conclusions, implications and recommendations formed the final stage of the research process.

**Conceptual Framework and Research Model**

A conceptual framework was drawn from the literature review and is represented diagrammatically in Figure 4.2.

The conceptual framework places the research problem within three main influential fields – the environment of international education and development assistance; Australian Government policy and program design; and AusAID’s ADS program, focusing on China and Mongolia as specific case studies.

The concept or idea of this research was to identify the degree of success of the ADS program in meeting its stated objectives as perceived by those who were either facilitating or had participated in the program. In doing so, it sought to obtain meaningful and valid information about the contribution attributed to the ADS program. To assess the results that had occurred and to make plausible judgments about the nature and extent of these results, Mayne’s (1999) Contribution Analysis was used.

*Indicators of success* were used as a primary instrument for determining evidence of success of the ADS program. The *indicators of success* were drawn from literature
which formed the theoretical investigation of the study. They were then consolidated through interviews with ADS facilitators to form the first part of the empirical investigation of the study. Interviews with ADS facilitators and scholars formed the final part of the empirical investigation of the study. These aimed to identify evidence of success of the ADS program in meeting its stated objectives as well as other outcomes outside of the stated objectives. This process is best represented in Figure 4.3 as an expanded research model.

![Figure 4.2: Conceptual Framework for the Study of Australian Government Policy (ADS Program) in China and Mongolia](image-url)
The theoretical investigation involved a review of relevant literature which informed the development of an initial list of indicators of success aligned with the objectives of the ADS program.

**THEORETICAL INVESTIGATION**

**Literature review** of:
- international education and development assistance – Australia;
- ADS program – China and Mongolia; and
- country program strategy/capacity building goals – China and Mongolia

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES – INDICATORS OF SUCCESS (1)**
(Drawn from literature review)

**EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION (1)**
(Field research)

Interviews with **ADS facilitators** (Australia, China and Mongolia) to:
- consolidate indicators of success with those drawn from literature review; and
- identify perceived evidence of success of program objectives from work experience

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES – INDICATORS OF SUCCESS (2)**
(Consolidated through interviews with ADS facilitators)

**EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION (2)**
(Field research)

Interviews with **ADS scholars** (China and Mongolia) to:
- identify evidence of success of ADS program objectives; and
- identify other outcomes outside of the stated objectives

*Figure 4.3: Research Model*
An empirical investigation (field research) was then undertaken in the form of interviews with ADS facilitators from Australia, China and Mongolia to consolidate the initial list of indicators of success drawn from the literature review. During these interviews, ADS facilitators both confirmed and raised new indicators from which to assess the success of the ADS program in meeting its stated objectives. The ADS facilitators were also able to draw on their work experience and identify examples of evidentiary success of the program in achieving its stated objectives. These empirical perspectives were considered legitimate qualitative data for the purposes of the study.

With a consolidated list of indicators of success supported by both the literature and the ADS program facilitators, a second empirical investigation (field research) in the form of interviews was undertaken with ADS scholars from China and Mongolia to identify evidence of success of the ADS program in achieving its stated objectives and any other outcomes.

The findings of these empirical investigations are presented and analysed in Chapters 5 and 6.

**Selected Theory for Evaluation and Analysis**

A program logic chart identifies the logical reasoning behind a given program with regards to what it is supposed to be accomplishing (Mayne, 1999; Wholey et al., 1994; Yin, 2006a). Constructing and presenting this ‘theory’ in relation to the ADS program were recognised as crucial components of planning the evaluation for this study.

Figure 4.4 illustrates the program logic chart of the ADS program in China and Mongolia. The program logic chart illustrates the linkages between the various outputs, immediate outcomes, intermediate outcomes and end outcomes examined in this study.
Australian Development Scholarships Program

Activity
To provide postgraduate scholarships at participating Australian universities to strengthen human resource capacity in priority sectors of partner countries consistent with country program strategies and Australia's national interest

Output/Reach 1
Mongolia
Average of 9 applicants of equal gender selected per year (since 1996) from target ministries, universities and other open category groups

Output/Reach 2
China
Average of 30 applicants of equal gender selected per year (since 1996) from target ministries, universities and other open category groups

Immediate Outcomes
Number of scholars successfully graduating and returning to origin of work in country

Intermediate Outcomes
Evidence of application of other defined indicators of success

End outcome 1
Strengthened human resource capacity in priority sectors

End outcome 2
Achievement of poverty alleviation

End outcome 3
Achievement of sustainable development

End outcome 4
Advancement of Australia's national interest

Figure 4.4: ADS Program Logic Chart
Qualitative Research Method

This study centred upon the perceptions of ADS facilitators and scholars in Australia, China and Mongolia to determine the success of the ADS program in meeting its stated objectives against various *indicators of success*. The views and opinions of participants towards the success of the ADS program were considered relevant and important. For this reason, interviews were chosen as the primary method of data collection to gain an understanding of the participants’ perceptions.

Research was conducted in the natural settings of the participants. This was consistent with a qualitative approach in which individuals construct their own meanings of ‘social reality’ in their own contexts, and the researcher interprets those meanings within that context.

Writers have supported research which values respondents’ perceptions within their natural settings. Delamont (1992:7) suggested that in conducting qualitative research the researcher ‘values the views, perspectives, opinions, prejudices and beliefs of the informants, actors or respondents’ and that it is the responsibility of the researcher to accurately determine how the people being researched understand their world in their setting. Heaton (2004:56) agrees, maintaining that:

> Qualitative methods are used to describe and examine the nature of subjects’ perceptions of the world and how their views are constructed … Accordingly, the science of qualitative research essentially involves demonstrating fidelity to subjects’ perspectives.

Burns (1997:292, 301) makes a similar observation, maintaining that ‘qualitative methods attempt to capture and understand individual definitions, descriptions and meanings of events’ as ‘the things people say and do depend on the social context in which they find themselves’.

Schwandt (1998:221) also supports this view maintaining that qualitative research exhibits ‘the goal of understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it’. Denzin and Lincoln (2003:5) elaborate further declaring that qualitative research involves:

> … an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting
to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Qualitative research may be traced to various traditions of social inquiry dating back to the nineteenth century (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Heaton, 2004). Denzin and Lincoln (2003:3) identify no less than seven ‘historical moments’ (in North America) with which qualitative research has evolved, including the traditional (1900–50), the modernist or golden age (1950–70), blurred genres (1970–86), the crisis of representation (1986–90), the postmodern (1990–95) and the future (2000– ). These ‘moments’ overlap and simultaneously operate in the present and, while they are not explained in detail in this study, they nevertheless allude to the ever-evolving complexity of what is qualitative research today.

Qualitative research has become a complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts and assumptions that cut across disciplines, fields and subject matters. Heaton (2004:54–55) describes it as a ‘broad church’ encompassing many traditions which include different ‘schools’ (such as the Chicago School), theoretical perspectives (such as phenomenology or naturalism), research protocols (such as grounded theory or framework analysis), methods of data analysis (such as narrative discourse or content analysis), and types of qualitative data studied (naturalistic and non-naturalistic). Schram (2006:1–2) goes even further, claiming that conversations around qualitative research differ according to what you read and to whom you listen, proving it much more difficult to define than it is simply to identify:

The myriad forms of qualitative research … leave many of those who seek a common defining thread in a state of despair … A qualitative research designation may refer to a perspective (‘interpretive’, ‘naturalistic’), a disciplinary tradition (‘ethnography’, ‘phenomenology’), an epistemological stance (‘feminist’, ‘hermeneutic’), a type of strategy (‘participant observation’, ‘focus group’), or even a location (‘field study’) … try wrapping yourself around the term phenomenology. Depending on what you read and to whom you listen, it can refer to a philosophy (Husserl, 1967), an analytical perspective (Schutz, 1970), a research tradition (Creswell, 1998), an interpretive theory (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), or a research methods framework (Moustakas, 1994).

Despite such complexity, Bryman (1988 quoted in Heaton, 2004:55) manages to highlight six key features of qualitative research:
the emphasis on ‘seeing through the eyes of’ the people being studied;

the description of the social setting being investigated;

the examination of social behaviour and events in their historical and social context;

the examination of the process by which social life is accomplished (rather than the end-products or outcomes of interaction);

the adoption of a flexible and unstructured approach to social inquiry, allowing researchers to modify and adapt their approach as need be in the course of the research; and

the reliance on theories and concepts that have been derived from the data (rather than defined in advance).

Writers who specialise in evaluating aid effectiveness understand the value of qualitative inquiry in relation to appropriate performance indicators and in identifying the contribution (good and bad) that a particular program may have achieved. Ellis (2004:69–70) maintains that:

Many times the appropriate performance indicator will not be a straightforward quantitative measure … qualitative data is often the most important for indicating success; and there is nothing to beat open-ended, qualitative enquiry … to identify … the unintended consequences (good or bad) of interventions.

Baker (2000:8) also supports qualitative research methods for evaluating the impact of development programs when she states:

The benefits of qualitative assessment are that they … can greatly enhance the findings of an impact evaluation through providing a better understanding of stakeholders’ perceptions and priorities and the conditions and processes that may have affected program impact.

While being careful not to favour one research preference over another (i.e. quantitative vs. qualitative) for impact evaluations of programs, Rossi and Freeman (1993:254) note that ‘qualitative observations have important roles to play in certain types of evaluative activities, particularly in the monitoring of ongoing programs’.

This study sought to measure the success of the ADS program and the contribution that the program had made through the perceptions of its participants. In this sense, the research focused on multiple case studies within real-life contexts, where the
ADS program had made an impact on people’s educational, working and social lives. Yin (2006b:111) supports the case study method for conducting such research:

The case study method has attained routine status as a viable method for doing education research … Compared to other methods, the strength of the case study method is its ability to examine, in-depth, a ‘case’ within its ‘real-life’ context.

Borman et al. (2006:126) also support using case studies in evaluation research, particularly when the method is employed to prove predetermined outcome measures or, in the case of this study, indicators of success:

The use of case studies in evaluation research is strategic in that information gathered from interviews and observations may be considered alongside the results of … appropriate outcome measures.

The use of multiple case studies, or ‘cross-case analysis’, is also supported by Borman et al. (2006:123), who define the technique as a ‘process of collecting and analyzing data from multiple examples selected to inform particular research questions of interest’. Borman et al. (2006:125) quote Stake (2000) in maintaining that collective case studies are chosen because ‘it is believed that understanding them will lead to more comprehensive knowledge and, perhaps, better theorizing about a still larger collection of cases’. In this sense, it is presumed that a certain level of generalisation may be accepted as representative of a larger group. This is pertinent, particularly when logistics (such as time, cost, geographics and the lack of up-to-date alumni records) prohibit interviewing all returned ADS scholars.

The case study method allows for various research strategies to be employed in order to produce a first-hand understanding of people and events. Data collection and data analysis may be undertaken simultaneously while the research is conducted. For instance, one interview may provide conflicting information to that of another. Conducting the interview is data collection, while identifying the conflict is data analysis. A third interview may resolve the conflict, thus teasing out comparative views and common themes that will eventually contribute to an implicit understanding of the true contribution made by the ADS program. Further, it is possible to pursue an entire (and sometimes subtle) line of inquiry at the same time as (and not after) data are being collected.
Yin (2006b:114) quotes Stake (2000) in warning however that ‘selecting the case(s) serves as possibly the most critical step in doing case study research’. Participants for this study were selected according to various predetermined criteria (see Selection of Participants). Yin (2006a:118) also supports the use of logic models or logic charts, such as that adopted for this study in the form of Mayne’s (1999) *program logic chart*, to complement case study research.

Triangulation or converging lines of evidence were sought to identify thematic replications that would support explanations of outcomes. This study triangulates ADS program literature with the perceptions of ADS facilitators and those of ADS scholars so that the formulation of conclusions most likely points to the program having contributed to those outcomes. Yin (2006b:115) supports this strategy when conducting case study research:

> Good case studies benefit from having multiple sources of evidence … In collecting case study data, the main idea is to ‘triangulate’ or establish converging lines of evidence to make your findings as robust as possible … The most desired convergence occurs when two or more independent sources all point to the same set of events or facts.

Therefore, in order to obtain rich data through respondents’ perceptions towards the success and contribution of the ADS program, the qualitative research methods outlined above were selected as the favoured means through which to answer the research problem and sub-problems.

**Method of Data Collection**

Trow (1957 quoted in Bryman, 2001:331–332) maintained that ‘the problem under investigation properly dictates the methods of investigation’. Various options for data collection were considered for the study, including mailed questionnaires, personal interviews and telephone surveys. The final decision was informed by Miller’s (1991:68) ‘Evaluation of the Modes of Field Operation’ in which a comparison was made between these three data collection methods. The analysis of this comparison is shown in Table 4.1.

Given that 1 is the most favourable ranking and 3 the least favourable, Miller (1991) concluded that the personal interview was superior overall since it reflected:
• the **highest percentage of return**;
• the **highest accuracy of information**;
• the **largest sample coverage**;
• **completeness including sensitive material**; and
• **overall reliability and validity**.

Table 4.1: Choosing Among the Questionnaire, Personal Interview and Telephone Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors Influencing Coverage and Information Secured</th>
<th>Mailed Questionnaire</th>
<th>Personal Interview</th>
<th>Telephone Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lowest relative cost</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest percentage of return</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest accuracy of information</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest sample coverage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completeness including sensitive material</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall reliability and validity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time required to secure information</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of securing information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total rankings:**
- 1 = most favourable
- 2 = intermediate
- 3 = least favourable

**Source:** Based on Miller’s (1991) evaluation of findings for cross-sectional samples of students and adult populations.

**Note:** All evaluations are based on ‘average’ determinations.

A review of literature on qualitative education research also favoured interviews as a desirable data collection method for providing rich descriptions of participants’ perceived social realities (Bryman, 2001; Bogdan and Biklen, 1998; Borg and Gall, 1989; Cohen et al., 2007).

Qualitative research interviews were further supported by Kvale (1996:30) as a way ‘to obtain descriptions of the lived world of the interviewees with respect to interpretations of the meaning of the described phenomena’. Minichiello et al. (1995:61) expanded on this, claiming that interviews had the advantage of making public:

… the informant’s perception of self, life and experience, and expressed in his or her own words. It is the means by which the researcher can gain access to, and subsequently understand, the private interpretations of social reality that individuals hold.
Further, Tuckman (1972 quoted in Cohen et al., 2007:351) described qualitative interviews as a way to ‘measure’ conceptual dispositions held by an individual:

By providing access to what is ‘inside a person’s head’, [it] makes it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences), and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs).

Borg and Gall (1989:448) were also supportive of the qualitative interview, suggesting that flexibility, adaptability and human interaction were its key strengths, but warned of the possibility of subjectivity and bias affecting the accuracy of information gathered. Borg and Gall (1989) refer to the dangers of ‘response effects’, such as an eagerness of respondents to please the interviewer, antagonism between the interviewer and interviewee, and the tendency for interviewers to seek answers that support their preconceived ideas. ‘Response effect’ was defined by Borg and Gall (1989:448) as:

… the tendency of the respondent to give inaccurate or incorrect responses or, more precisely, [the response effect] is the difference between the answer given by the respondent and the true answer.

Despite such warnings, Borg and Gall (1989:452) supported semi-structured interviews for providing objectivity and depth:

The semi-structured interview … has the advantage of being reasonably objective while still permitting a more thorough understanding of the respondent’s opinions and the reasons behind them … It provides a desirable combination of objectivity and depth and often permits gathering valuable data that could not be successfully obtained by any other approach.

Kerlinger (1970 quoted in Cohen et al., 2007:357) defined semi-structured interviews as ‘those that supply a frame of reference for respondents’ answers, but put a minimum of restraint on the answers and their expressions’. Similarly, Bryman (2001:314) defined semi-structured interviews as:

… a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered, often referred to as an interview guide, but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to reply … Questions that are not included in the guide may be asked as the interviewer picks up on things said by the interviewees. But, by and large, all the questions will be asked and a similar wording will be used from interviewee to interviewee.
Examinations of such writings led to the final decision to use face-to-face, semi-structured interviews for the purposes of the study.

It is important to note however that semi-structured, open-ended interviews are, by their very definition, unable to consistently generate responses that will assess all of the identified indicators of success. In this sense, the degree to which various indicators of success are identified and either supported or rejected by the interviewees provides the measure from which this study assesses their attribution towards the contribution of the ADS program.

Another important consideration involved the awareness of cross-cultural communication techniques in order to gain the Chinese and Mongolian participants’ confidence and trust and obtain rich and meaningful data. Birks et al. (2007:150) states:

The interview as a data collection tool is an essential component of qualitative research … however, in-depth interviewing … is a unique process. The ability to conduct an effective in-depth interview requires skill in the use of specific techniques, in particular when interviewing people from other cultures. A number of factors specific to the researcher, the participant, and the research context can affect the interview procedure.

Solinger (2006:18) identified a number of fundamental rules that have proved helpful to her in conducting research and interviews in China over many years:

It has been my own experience that a number of fundamental rules should be followed: arrange appropriate approval for one’s project – and the necessary access – if officials are to be your subjects … but stay flexible once on the spot; keep track of all the friendly people you meet, for one never knows in advance who might later be able to introduce suitable subjects; and, in the course of the interview, seem to be both aware and uninitiated, first to appear to be an insider but then to make certain of all the fine points. Finally, keep the subject’s safety at the center of your consciousness.

Importantly, Solinger (2006:13) identified the need to ‘shoot the breeze for awhile’ before delving into any real detail with Chinese participants. This was considered an important initial step in interviewing Chinese participants to gain a level of trust so that they felt safe to share their stories and true feelings beyond that which is expected to be projected publicly. Moreover, Solinger (2006:11) identified the
importance of ensuring that those being interviewed understood the nature of the interest in learning from them and coming from an informed position of some knowledge or common understanding with the interviewee, maintaining that:

People felt much freer to speak frankly to me so long as I appeared already to be privy to their private matters. Informants could see that I knew enough to ask the telling questions and in such instances were more often than not willing to give at least part of the answer. Thus, one can clearly enhance the interview by being well informed ahead of time; such prior knowledge forms a springboard for diving much deeper (p.11).

Indeed, Solinger (2006:11) somewhat amusingly summed up her tactics as ‘what one might describe as a Daoist-type dictum: appear at once knowledgeable but ignorant, knowing and not knowing’.

While literature on interviewing techniques with Mongolian people proved elusive, the lessons from cross-cultural awareness writers such as Solinger (2006) and Birks et al. (2007) were also considered to be useful for the Mongolian research environment. However, while understanding that the cultural behaviour and expectations of those within the research setting were important, the fact that I was an outsider to this environment also presented opportunity. In discussing the characteristics of social anthropology, Beattie (1966:86) identified what he referred to as ‘stranger value’ when interviewing subjects:

‘Stranger value’ is an important asset: often people talk more freely to an outsider, so long as he is not too much of an outsider … The ideal social anthropologist fieldworker is adaptable, tactful, good-humoured, and possessed of a sense of proportion. Above all, he is patient and considerate. He is, after all, a guest … in the community he is studying.

The characteristics identified by Beattie (1966) would be important attributes for my own gathering of rich and meaningful data.

**Pilot Study**

A pilot interview was conducted with Ms Kirsty Dudgeon, First Secretary, AusAID, at the Australian Embassy, Beijing. The pilot interview was arranged to satisfy two main functions: first, to test the primary interview questions that were based on the major objectives and sub-themes set out in the list of *indicators of success* in Chapter 3 (see Appendix D: Primary Interview Questions – ADS Facilitators and
Scholars); and second, to assess the researcher’s own techniques in preparation for interviewing ADS program facilitators and scholars. None of the research gathered from the pilot interview was incorporated in the data analysis for the study.

The pilot participant was chosen for her generic knowledge of the ADS program. Though not specialised, the pilot participant’s knowledge was considered sufficient enough to be able to answer questions so that the researcher could deduce whether any modifications or adjustments to the interview schedule and approach were necessary.

The pilot in-terview was recorded on minidisk and summary notes were also taken by the researcher. Throughout the interview, the pilot participant’s answers were also crosschecked with the prepared primary list of indicators of success drawn from the AusAID literature. At the conclusion of the interview, the pilot participant was asked to review the summary notes to ensure that she had not been misinterpreted in any way. If she wished to change anything, then she was welcome to do so. The pilot participant was then asked to verify the accuracy of the data by initialising each page of the summary notes.

The pilot interview proved successful in obtaining the types of answers presumed beneficial for the overall study. Most of the primary list of indicators of success was identified and anecdotal accounts gave empirical insights to support them. Additional indicators of success were also raised.

Feedback from the pilot participant was welcomed and only minor adjustments to some words in the interview questions were considered necessary. One interview question proved challenging for the pilot participant to answer however it was agreed by the researcher and the pilot interviewee that participants who were more familiar with the ADS program should be able to answer the question with reasonable ease.

A second pilot interview with an ADS scholar was not considered essential due to the similarity between the interview questions designed for both the facilitators of the ADS program and the scholars.
Selection of Participants

Participants were identified through their involvement with the ADS program, either as facilitators of the program or as past ADS recipients since 1996 (Figure 4.5). The rationale for focusing on post-1996 was due largely to the introduction of new ADS arrangements whereby scholarships were brought more in line with country program strategies.

Facilitators of the ADS program were initially contacted in Australia, China and Mongolia to provide assistance in contacting past ADS scholars. To some extent, case study screening was employed as a legitimate strategy to ensure that candidates were suitable for the intended research (Yin, 2006a:115). In this sense, ADS facilitators were queried as to which ADS scholars may be most willing to participate in the research, be confident to express their opinions, be most able to convey interesting experiences upon their return to work (including those who had chosen to move to the private sector and those who had been rapidly promoted, or lack thereof, upon return), and so on. By tapping into the empirical awareness of the ADS facilitators and their knowledge of the different personalities, experiences and movements of ADS alumni, it was considered that the study may encapsulate a greater variation of case studies.

Participants for the study were selected to represent a mix of:

- genders;
- years of graduation (between 1996 and 2006);
- public, private and NGOs; and
- vocational fields, roles and levels (see Appendix A).

Initial contact was made by either email or telephone by the researcher or an ADS facilitator of the program or alumni group. The assistance of ADS facilitators in initially approaching ADS scholars was highly beneficial towards securing interviews with participants who might not have otherwise taken part, such as those who are now in positions of considerable authority. An information sheet for participants (see Appendix E), the option of two consent forms (see Appendix F) and the primary interview questions (see Appendix D) were provided to all participants.
prior to interviewing. Some participants chose not to view the interview questions before starting.

Various similarities and differences existed between research sites and, as a consequence, the working environments of those involved in the study. While participants in Mongolia were centralised within the single, capital city of Ulaanbaatar, those in China were spread further afar, representing sometimes very different environments such as those of Beijing and Lhasa, Tibet. This meant that the study also involved different ethnic groups.

Such variation was seen as a positive in developing a complex and rich understanding of the contribution of the ADS program through the lived experiences of its participants in China and Mongolia.

For ease of identification of an interviewee’s role (ADS facilitator or ADS scholar) and associated country (Australia, China or Mongolia) each interviewee was
assigned an identification symbol. The following key helps to define the identification symbols:

1, 2, 3 and so on = numerical order of interviewees  
A = Australia  
C = China  
M = Mongolia  
F = ADS facilitator  
S = ADS scholar

Therefore, the first interviewed ADS facilitator from Mongolia was assigned the identification symbol – 1MF. Likewise, the fifth ADS scholar interviewed from China was assigned the identification symbol – 5CS.

While ADS facilitators were assigned a symbol that associated them with a single country, some had expertise of the ADS program in China and Mongolia and so their responses were accepted in the context of the country to which they referred.

Interviews with selected participants were conducted in Australia, China and Mongolia throughout 2006-07. In addition to the interview schedule (Appendix D), informal discussions often arose with participants around topics relevant to the study. These informal and unstructured interviews provided additional sources of rich data which were sometimes caught on minidisk and at other times had to be recorded by the researcher on paper immediately after the interview. These informal interviews were considered equally valuable, relevant, and valid forms of data collection for the study in identifying the perceptions of participants.

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

A TL approach was adopted as a complementary graphical presentation of data. It identifies the level of attribution (great, moderate or little) by respondents towards the *indicators of success* and their contribution to the success of the program (Table 4.2).
The TL approach provides a simple, clear and easily understandable diagrammatical presentation of the degree to which *indicators of success* are perceived to have contributed. This was judged by the researcher based on the qualitative assessment of responses from the ADS facilitators and ADS scholars.

This performance reporting approach is consistent with the methodology adopted by the Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), AusAID, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and other researchers around the world (AusAID, n.d.; Capper, 1998; DFID, 2006a; DPMC, n.d.).

The responses of ADS facilitators and ADS scholars were carefully analysed against four main data recordings:

1. individual taped interviews;
2. written transcriptions of interviews;
3. written notes taken by the researcher at the time of interviews and signed by interviewees as accurate representations of their perceptions; and
4. the active observations of the researcher during the interview.

These four recordings of data enabled accuracy in analysing responses to make judgments on the level of attribution of each interviewee towards a given *indicator of success* (green, yellow or red). The sum of all responses by the ADS facilitators or ADS scholars was then able to be used to identify the level of attribution by each group. These consolidated ratings are represented diagrammatically in Table 5.2 and Table 6.2.

The detection of green (great attribution) and red (little attribution) TL ratings was generally straightforward. Similarly, a yellow (moderate attribution) TL rating was
logical where there was obvious middle support for the contribution of a given indicator of success. However, indefinite and uncertain views on the success of an indicator (e.g. a response like ‘well yes and no’) as well as polar views between respondents (e.g. 1MS agreed but 2MS disagreed) meant that a yellow (moderate attribution) TL rating was presented. Such complexity towards attribution was reflected through the responses presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

The TL approach lends itself to Contribution Analysis as it promotes a degree of measurement that is credible but less concerned with precision and more intent on building knowledge and understanding. Importantly, the TL approach also provides a simple matrix from which to identify and gauge which indicators have an attributable impact on outcomes. In other words, it tells a performance story at a given point in time.

Problems Encountered During the Data Collection Phase

Both anticipated and unanticipated problems occurred during the data collection phase. Whilst many of the expected difficulties associated with conducting research within foreign countries could be strategically overcome (language, unfamiliar terrain, itinerary logistics, and so on), a number of other problems specific to the countries in which the research was undertaken were experienced.

That all interviews were conducted in English did not present any problems due to interviewees either being native English speakers or having acquired a high level of English language proficiency through their work and study experiences. Indeed, many of the ADS scholars interviewed were highly proficient in the English language which was largely attributed to their experience of living and studying in Australia under the ADS program.

China

Interviews with ADS representatives across China proved challenging. AusAID had no list of past scholars and, while a list of alumni was able to be secured from the ADS managing contractor, Hassall and Associates, almost all contact details were out-of-date. This required significant investigative work to track down returned ADS
scholars, compounded by the researcher’s lack of facility in the Chinese language. Moreover, even when the address details of an ADS scholar was known, the act of locating that address on the day of an interview proved equally challenging in a nation with little regard for street numbers. The research also took the researcher to remote locations such as Lhasa in Tibet, where headaches from high altitude were a necessary part of the adventure.

Word of mouth through established contacts, as well as subjects who had already been interviewed, proved most beneficial in tracking down further participants. This strategy proved particularly helpful in achieving a higher response rate in China. Building rapport and trust with Chinese participants was important in creating a non-threatening environment where they could freely express their views on the ADS program without fear of judgment or feelings of impoliteness.

**Mongolia**

Prior to travelling to Mongolia, it was envisaged that a schedule of interviews would need to be confirmed in order to ensure that all prospective interviewees could dedicate times and meeting places within a set amount of time. Colleagues and friends who had previously worked in Mongolia also emphasised the importance of using networks in Mongolia to secure interviews as things very much worked on a system of ‘who knows who’. This would prove particularly true for securing interviews with those participants who were now ranked highly within the public and private sectors. With these issues in mind, it was decided that, due to the knowledge and expertise of the staff at CaBSAF, they would be best placed to assist with the logistics for arranging interviews.

Through correspondence with the staff at CaBSAF, the unique nature of working in Mongolia was soon realised. A list of proposed interviewees was negotiated according to the selection requirements of the study. Actual confirmation of these would be reserved however until the day before or, in some cases, on the day of the actual interview. The quota of proposed interviewees was also deliberately high due to the expectation that some participants may pull out or perhaps not even show up to the interview at all. This deliberate strategy was partly to accommodate unavoidable work commitments that may present themselves at designated interview times, and
partly to cater for other unexplainable circumstances that were defined to me by locals as the ‘Mongolian way’. This proved a successful strategy, as some interviewees in positions of authority experienced unavoidable changes to work priorities that prevented them from meeting the scheduled interview times.

This was certainly true of the Minister for Foreign Affairs who was unable to dedicate more than 15 minutes on the day of the scheduled interview due to another commitment. Nevertheless, the Minister provided some reflections on the ADS program, as well as a promise to complete the interview by written correspondence. Unfortunately, this did not eventuate despite various attempts to contact the Minister via his nominated representative and even one mutual attempt to meet during his transit overseas via Beijing airport. Despite this setback, the opportunity to meet briefly and secure the perceptions of a senior Mongolian Government representative was considered worthwhile.

On another occasion, it was explained that the Mongolian interviewee had simply ‘gone to the countryside’, despite the researcher having confirmed the interview time and place the previous day by telephone. It was clear that I had experienced first-hand the unpredictable and somewhat perplexing ‘Mongolian way’.

Reflections on the ‘Mongolian way’ are by no means a criticism on the part of the researcher. Indeed, the unpredictability is not dissimilar to experiences of working in other South Pacific nations. Mongolians themselves observe the phenomenon in a jovial way. It remains, however, a cultural distinction that required a particular way of working during the data collection phase.

**Ethical Considerations**

In undertaking this research, ethical issues could not be ignored as they directly related to the integrity and disciplines used to conduct the research. Barnes (1979 quoted in Nolan, 1995:112) maintains that:

… ethical problems are those that arise when one tries to decide between one course of action and another, not in terms of expediency or efficiency, but by reference to standards of what is morally right and wrong.
Similarly, Kimmel (1988:40–41) suggested that ethical problems in research ‘reflect concerns about proper conduct related to the processes and consequences of research and procedure’ and include ‘the treatment of research participants, responsibility to society and integrity in the collection, analysis and reporting of data’.

Bryman (2001:479) argues that discussions about ethical principles in social research, and also transgressions of them, have tended to revolve around four main overlapping principles:

- whether there is harm to participants;
- whether there is lack of informed consent;
- whether there is an invasion of privacy; and
- whether deception is involved.

Christians (2003:217) makes a similar assessment, maintaining that since the 1980s major scholarly associations have focused on four main overlapping moral guidelines involving:

1. informed consent;
2. deception;
3. privacy and confidentiality; and
4. accuracy.

However, Bryman (2001:478) identifies varying dispositions towards transgressions of ethical principles by researchers, characterising four major stances on ethics held by authors in social science research, including:

- Universalism – the view that ethical precepts should never be broken as infractions of ethical principles are morally wrong and damaging to the reputation of social research;
- Situation ethics – the view that ethical principles are mediated within different research practices and that either some breaking of ethical rules is appropriate (such as deception through disguised observation) or that on occasion we have no choice but to engage in dissimulation otherwise we would never learn about certain social phenomena;
Ethical transgression is pervasive – the view that virtually all research involves elements that are at least ethically questionable (such as when participants are not provided with absolutely all details about a piece of research); and

Anything goes (more or less) – the view that deceptive tactics may be employed to gain participants’ trust so that they will reveal themselves to the researcher.

Wherever possible this study aimed to satisfy a ‘universalism’ stance. Ethical principles were closely adhered to under the requirements set by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England in order to protect those being investigated.

Burns’ (1997:22–23) summary of official codes of ethical conduct for research with human participants provides a generic guide of ethical standards arising from the codes of associations such as the American Psychological Association and the British Psychological Society. The codes have become major standards and models for research in the social sciences, and outline eight requirements for conducting research with human participants, including that:

1. risks to participants are minimised by procedures which do not expose subjects to risks;
2. risks to participants are outweighed by the anticipated benefit of the research;
3. the rights and welfare of participants are protected and the research avoids unnecessary psychological harm or discomfort to the subjects;
4. participation should be voluntary;
5. the subject has the right to know the nature, purpose and duration of the study (i.e. informed consent) and sign an informed consent form which outlines the study, who is conducting it and for what purpose, how it is to be carried out, and with assurances of confidentiality and voluntary participation so that the participant may sign it acknowledging that they freely consent to participate;
6. the subject should be free to withdraw at any time without penalty;
7. information obtained is confidential; and
8. participants are debriefed after the study.

Burns’ (1997:22–23) summary analysis was examined against this study to ensure that ethical standards were assured. These are examined in turn below.
1. **Risks to participants are minimised by procedures which do not expose subjects to risks**

The nature of this study did not pose any anticipated risks to subjects in raising any sensitive issues or discomfort. Interview questions focused on the subject’s own lived experience under the ADS program and their perceptions towards the contribution it had made.

The research methodology was designed to impinge as little as possible on the subjects and their time. Interviews were arranged at a convenient time and place for the subjects and there was a willingness at all times to postpone interview times or change locations to cater for other unexpected commitments.

2. **Risks to participants are outweighed by the anticipated benefit of the research**

The research proposal was approved by the ethics committee and did not present a situation of harm, danger or risk to participants.

The anticipated benefit of the research was that it would respond to a need for greater awareness of the outcomes of an Australian Government funded program to which current research was lacking.

3. **The rights and welfare of participants are protected**

The research posed no threat of psychological harm. Respondents divulged information completely at their own discretion. The participants were provided with the opportunity to peruse the interview schedule prior to commencement and were informed that other probe questions may be asked to seek further clarification to their responses. The participants were made aware that the interview would take around 45 minutes and be recorded for the purpose of assisting the researcher with the analysis of their responses.

Participants were provided with the choice of two consent forms (see Appendix F) to sign before the commencement of the interview. The consent forms identified that the participant had read the information contained in the information sheet for
participants (see Appendix E), that any questions about the research had been answered to their satisfaction, that they were 18 years of age or older and agreed to participate in the research knowing that they may withdraw at any time, and that research data gathered for the study may be published. Consent Form (1) provided participants with anonymity in the publishing of the research, while Consent Form (2) enabled the researcher to publish the name and position of the participant. The choice of which consent form to sign was left to the volition of the participant without any persuasion or coercion on the part of the researcher.

Due to the reasonably non-sensitive nature of the research, the vast majority of participants chose to sign Consent Form (2), agreeing to have their name and position published. Those who signed Consent Form (1) have remained anonymous in this study.

Research participants were informed in writing that the research project had been approved by the ethics committee and were provided with the contact details of the University Research Ethics Officer should they have any complaints concerning the manner in which the research was conducted.

4. Participation should be voluntary

From initial contact, participants were informed that their cooperation was completely voluntary and that they were free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation at any time. This was relayed to participants both verbally and in written form through the information sheet for participants and consent forms.

5. The subject has the right to know the nature, purpose and duration of the study (i.e. informed consent)

The nature, purpose and duration of the study, as well as the way in which research data would be securely stored and treated, were outlined in the information sheet for participants. In accordance with the requirements of the ethics committee, the information sheet was provided to participants upon initial contact.
6. *The subject should be free to withdraw at any time without penalty*

Both the information sheet for participants and the consent form informed participants of their right to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the research at any time. This principle was upheld when an unexpected work commitment prevented a participant from continuing an interview. The participant’s predicament and decision to discontinue the interview was respected and understood. Unfortunately, rescheduling the interview proved impossible due to the competing itineraries of both the participant and researcher.

7. *Information obtained is confidential*

In accordance with the requirements of the ethics committee, all recorded interviews and written records remained securely stored by the researcher in a locked office. Research participants were informed that access to raw data would be available only to the researcher, two named supervisors identified in the information sheet for participants and, where necessary, examiners of the thesis. Recordings of the interviews would be destroyed after five years of completing the research.

8. *Participants are debriefed after the study*

At the completion of each interview, participants were asked to review the written summary sheets to ensure they had not been misinterpreted in any way. If they wished to change any written recordings they were invited to do so. The respondents were then asked to initial each page to verify the accuracy of the data.

The respondents were informed that the researcher would return to his office, review the audio recording along with the written summary and analyse the data.

The participants were informed that it was anticipated that the research findings would be published in a thesis and made available to them.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlined the methodology chosen for this study in the context of the purpose of the research and the research problem and sub-problems. It outlined the research plan, conceptual framework and research model, and presented an ADS
program logic chart. Qualitative research methods and in-depth interviews were selected as the major method of data collection and tested through the results of a pilot study. The criteria and process for selecting participants, the way in which data are presented and analysed, problems encountered during the data collection phase and ethical considerations associated with the research were also examined.

Chapter 5 presents and analyses data collected from in-depth interviews with 12 facilitators of the ADS program in Australia, China and Mongolia. This is followed by Chapter 6 which presents and analyses data collected from in-depth interviews with 21 scholars of the ADS program from China and Mongolia.
Introduction

Chapter 4 outlined the methodology for this research. In doing so, it set out the objective of combining a theoretical conception of the ADS program with an empirical investigation of its success in achieving its stated objectives in China and Mongolia. The empirical investigation was conducted through interviews with 21 ADS scholars and 12 facilitators of the ADS program in Australia, China and Mongolia.

This chapter presents and analyses data collected from in-depth interviews with 12 facilitators of the ADS program. The chapter fulfils two functions: first, it acts as a means through which additional indicators of success, perceived by facilitators in the field to be important and achievable in the unique context of the participating country, are identified, thereby consolidating the list of indicators of success in Chapter 3; and second, it indicates the extent to which various indicators of success are being met, based on the empirical awareness of ADS facilitators in the field.

The TL approach was used as a complementary graphical presentation of the data (Table 5.1).

### Table 5.1: Ratings of Indicators of Success – ADS Facilitators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution to the Success of the ADS Program</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADS facilitators attribute great contribution to the success of the ADS program</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADS facilitators attribute moderate contribution to the success of the ADS program</td>
<td>Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADS facilitators attribute little contribution to the success of the ADS program</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not all responses were able to be quoted in the qualitative analysis presented in this chapter. However, any attribution towards a given indicator of success was included in the overall qualitative analysis used to determine the TL classifications. Some ADS facilitators were in the position to provide perspectives on indicators of success for both China and Mongolia. This was particularly true for the Australia ADS facilitators. These were treated as legitimate sources of data in the context of the country to which they referred.
The primary interview questions (see Appendix D) were based on the major objectives and sub-themes set out in the list of indicators of success in Chapter 3. Their open-ended design was deliberate in order to gain voluntary responses from interviewees that may support or negate the identified indicators of success. As such, each primary question is used to form the structure of this chapter to demonstrate responses accordingly. Additional probing questions asked throughout the interviews are not identified in this chapter. Responses in relation to these are included under the primary interview questions. This chapter is presented in the past tense however qualitative responses from interviewees appear in the tense they have chosen to submit their views.

Primary Interview Question Analysis

Question 1: How is the ADS program relevant to China and/or Mongolia?

Relevance to: Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity
Theme 1: Program relevance to country
Indicators of success:
- Study and work consistent with country strategies
- Qualifications valued in country

Australia Results

There was support from ADS facilitators in Australia that the ADS program held particular relevance to China and Mongolia in developing their respective human resource capacity needs. Importantly, IAF contextualised the program’s relevance in terms of its appropriate ‘level and form of assistance’ according to the development maturity of a country:

We need to look at what development assistance is intended to achieve. It is intended to get the poorer countries up and running to stimulate economic growth, to have people’s human rights met, including rights to education and health, and to make sure the society is properly governed and run. In a country like China, and in Mongolia to a lesser extent, the traditional aid program is less relevant. Development assistance is so marginal that it’s likely to make no difference. In China, ADS is one mechanism to address the higher level needs … to run the country better … to install more democratic and liberal principles … to meet the human rights of delivering health, sanitation, etc. In China, ADS is relevant because it is at the right sort of level and form of assistance.
2AF held a similar view for Mongolia, maintaining that when the ADS program was first introduced there, ‘Mongolia was going through very significant and sudden political change, and in that situation there was a great need to develop government agencies within Mongolia’. While in the early days ‘the private sector was not such a factor’, 2AF maintained that AusAID’s ‘launch of a very substantial ADS program … enabled the program to very quickly achieve critical mass’ through ‘large numbers of students returning from Australia’, both under the ADS program and also the AusAID funded IMF program (see Chapter 3). As such, 2AF claimed that ‘it was possible to see change within a number of years’ and ‘there has been a lot of capacity building’.

3AF identified that similarities between Australia and Mongolia, including ‘large land areas, small population and difficulties in distance’, had contributed to the success of the ADS program in Mongolia. 3AF elaborated:

You know how we talk about the ‘raras’, the ‘regional and rural areas’, the Mongolian have forever struggled with the same problems – how do they provide administrative assistance and services to the [outlying] centres … A number of the ADS scholars I know have been working on environment management which is particularly important because the Mongolians are dealing with the same problems as Australia. Mongolia is where Australia was ten years ago … arguing about the benefits of development against environmental preservation … You now have a number of staff from the Ministry of Nature and Environment who have been to Australia and have done degrees … so that’s good … overall I think it’s very positive.

Australia’s expertise in dealing with issues that hold relevance for Mongolia is identified as a driver for the success of the ADS program in Mongolia. The perception is that lessons learned by Australia are able to be relayed to ADS scholars from Mongolia so that they may introduce strategies domestically that have been found to be effective in Australia. However, the strategy suggests the need for careful targeting, where any strengthening of human resource capacity will need to be aligned with country needs. In addition to the ADS program being ‘carefully targeted to the human resource needs of agencies’, 2AF maintained that ‘the use of action plans, where the students have to spell out in detail why they are going, what they want to study and how that study is relevant to what they will do back in the agencies’, was a new prerequisite. In addition, ‘agencies also have action plans which again complement what the students have in their individual plans, and they
agree to reintegrate the students on return to give them useful jobs’, so ‘all of that is clearly very beneficial to Mongolia in terms of its needs’ (2AF). Moreover, 2AF declared that in Mongolia ‘the ADS program is also associated with some short-term training to complement the long-term study in Australia’. Indeed, while 2AF admitted that ‘China is a much bigger country … I have no information on where the students go’, he did identify that ADS students from China ‘study in fields that are of significance in terms of the country strategy’ and, importantly, highlighted that ‘over the last seven years or so I don’t think there is any program in AusAID that doesn’t relate the ADS program to the country strategy in some way’.

Based on his own research, 2AF concluded that qualifications were valued in Mongolia and suggested that their match with country strategies would likely involve employer support:

To me, yes they are valued. If I think back to when we did the Mongolian design and interviewed some of those students there was plenty of evidence to suggest those qualifications are valued … I suspect there is quite a bit of employer support for the fields students choose to study … there is a match between what they study and what is in the country strategy.

Indeed, 2AF supported the notion that agreed action plans between ADS scholars and sponsoring agencies provided greater assurance for qualifications to be valued in country through their focus on the human resource needs of the agency:

We know in Mongolia that must be the case because of the way that the qualifications relate to what are in the action plans that the sponsoring agencies have agreed to. So, unlike programs many years ago, the student doesn’t have freedom of choice. It is the need of the agency that is paramount.

However, 3AF warns that, through his experience of the public sector in Mongolia, there is a danger that ADS graduates are becoming recognised as a threat to those in more senior levels of the public service, denying the translation of higher qualification and learning into accelerated promotion and expertise within the Mongolian system:

Once the public service did everything and then was severely contracted over a 7–8 year period. And either by people opting out or being pushed out, the senior ones that are left are hanging on to their seniority. So the promotion opportunities are just not there … The graduate scholars are
still in the ‘young blokes department’ so they are not consulted in a way that we think they should be. So their skills and knowledge are not being directly drawn into the management programs of various ministries.

Based on interviews for this study, there is some evidence to suggest that some returning ADS scholars are also being exploited as English translators as opposed to being nurtured leaders within public sector ministries in Mongolia. This issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

**China Results**

ADS facilitators in China also showed support for the ADS program contributing to the human resource development needs of countries. Two ADS facilitators agreed that the program contributed in two major ways: firstly, it increased the capacity in a country to accumulate knowledge and expertise that would assist in its development challenges; secondly, it helped to build goodwill between two countries through personal linkages, understanding and relationships (2CF; 3CF).

However, the degree of contribution made by the ADS program to China compared to that made to Mongolia was perceived to be quite different. For China, its geographical and population size meant that it was ‘really hard to make a real contribution in terms of increasing expertise’ and therefore ‘any contribution made through ADS was really quite marginal’ (2CF). Australia’s ability to offer expertise in niche areas, such as through ‘things like dry land farming in remote areas in China’ had greater potential for making a significant contribution (2CF). Indeed, the view was held that ‘the training of a few people can have a real impact’ (2CF). In the case of Mongolia, the contribution of the ADS program was perceived to be ‘different because it is a much smaller place so it can have a more significant impact’ (2CF).

In terms of building goodwill between countries, it was perceived that in China ‘even the small number [of ADS scholars] in the giant population can be particularly useful and can assist in some key issues’ (2CF). For Mongolia, the contribution was considered to achieve ‘even more because of where those people end up’ (2CF). In this regard, the ratio of people with higher degrees was considered to have greater effect in Mongolia, where ‘a much smaller pool of people have had international
training and have done a Masters overseas’ so they ‘tend to rise up in the system’. Evidence of this was supported by both 2CF and 3CF from their observations of ADS scholars who were now in key government positions in Mongolia, and in some cases also in China.

The perception did exist that the ADS program in both China and Mongolia made a significant impact. 2CF concluded that:

   The ADS program is extremely relevant and really has had an impact on the relationship between Australia and Mongolia and the capacity of people to carry out senior roles in Mongolia.

Similarly, 3CF concluded that the ADS program ‘strengthens the person-to-person links between the two countries and that contributes to better relations between those two countries’. 5CF supported this view, maintaining that ‘the assistance from the Australian people to the Chinese people’ was regarded as ‘the bridge to link our two countries and develop the friendship further’. 2CF also noted that ‘our partners [government agencies] value the scheme and how it works’.

Importantly, 2CF recognised that improvements in selecting ‘the right people’ were still necessary in order to achieve greater results:

   The process for selecting ADS in China is not as strong as in Mongolia. We are much more reliant on Chinese officials from MOFCOM to nominate officials to go on the program and there are weaknesses in that approach. We try to address that but we do not get as strong people as possible. We are also in competition with a lot of other scholarship programs.

1CF agreed, maintaining that ‘it is very targeted in Mongolia compared to China’ as the program in Mongolia ‘focuses on key ministries’ and is ‘tied into a broader government work plan in relation to their human resource development’. 1CF elaborated:

   In Mongolia it is quite specific in that we have target ministries linked to human resource plans … The areas of studies therefore focus on the areas that ministries are interested in … There are currently seven target ministries … In China, [ADS] are only open to government officials – usually 50% national government and 50% provincial government. And we try to focus on the areas that are consistent with our broader country strategy.
Nevertheless, 1CF reminded that in the case of Mongolia:

Current targeting has only been over the last three years, so I’m not sure whether we can really claim results yet. Certainly in terms of its relevancy, I now see it as a lot more targeted and a lot more relevant to where Mongolia’s gaps are, linked to their own priorities.

4CF held a more positive view of the ADS program in China, believing it to be ‘very targeted’, particularly in ‘programs like the environment, education and also health’.

4CF championed the ADS program, maintaining that it was ‘very important to the Chinese Government for developing and changing policy administration’ and that the qualifications gained by ADS scholars were ‘absolutely … very relevant for China’.

2CF provided further insight into the ADS program in Mongolia and its targeting compared to that of the China ADS program:

[We] have quite a robust process for selecting people. So we are tying the scholarships to our broader interests and activities in Mongolia. Whereas in China … our selection process is by themes in our country strategy. It is not as focused – probably broader. You could potentially make it more focused in China, targeted towards a specific theme or sector, but we would need to negotiate this with the counterpart government.

However, 1CF identified that ‘we have to negotiate with our counterparts on what the priorities should be’ and in China ‘MOFCOM is the coordinating ministry for aid; it’s not responsible for human resource strengthening across government’.

Linking the ADS program in China with the broader development strategies of the country was confirmed by 5CF when he stated:

Public relations, law, environment protection, rural development, governance – the subjects are all closely linked to the government strategy for development [and] … we link ADS to our country’s development strategies.

Moreover, 5CF identified how ministries worked to ensure that ADS scholars chose appropriate subjects that would complement the human resource development needs of the organisation and the country, using MOFCOM as an example:

Before [ADS scholars] select a subject at university, MOFCOM gives information on the purpose of the program and how to select a subject. For instance, in MOFCOM [ADS scholars] are asked to select subjects linked with governance … After one or two years studying they have
this strong feeling that what they’ve learned can closely link with their work. It is quite easy for them to use their knowledge when they come back.

Importantly, 1CF identified various challenges facing China and how the ADS program was responding to those challenges by enabling ADS scholars to return with a more holistic and integrated approach to development:

For example, someone who is studying natural resource management might now have a much more integrated approach to looking at how you use a resource, not just for its economic benefit but how you balance that with environmental degradation, shifting populations or something, so it has a different perspective.

The issue of competing scholarship programs, previously identified by 2CF, was also recognised by 5CF when he confirmed that ‘besides the ADS program, [MOFCOM] also takes care of scholarship programs from Japan and New Zealand’. While it is beyond the scope of this study to also analyse the contribution associated with these competing scholarship programs, it is recognised that their existence in conjunction with the ADS program requires careful analysis of data that point to the ADS program having made a significant contribution to outcomes.

There were various views associated with how qualifications were valued in country. Based on conversations with returned ADS scholars in both China and Mongolia, 2CF concluded that ‘people are often regularly promoted on return to take up specific positions to take advantage of their skills’. 4CF observed that value was placed on ‘going and studying in Australia for the exchange of information to know international practices for work’. 1CF believed that it was the ‘nature of the interaction’ of having lived and learned overseas that had created an affinity for Australia and a sense of pride and value in obtaining qualifications there:

I think the qualifications are valued … When I travel to Mongolia I’ll be in a meeting with someone who is an Advisor to the President and they say ‘Oh, I’m an ADS scholar’ … I met someone at the Ministry of Water Resources recently and he was a former ADS scholar and it’s just clear from the interaction that they have benefited from that.

From the perspective of the employer, 2CF concluded that in Mongolia, ‘target ministries actively participate and seek out scholars and are looking at ways to get more scholarships for their own agencies which would suggest they are valued’.
Similarly, in China, 2CF maintained that MOFCOM, ‘very much prize these scholarships and try and get as many for themselves as they can and are always talking about ways to expand the numbers’. 2CF also made the point that ‘these organisations are losing their employees for the best part of two years to do a Masters and then giving them a position on their return’. Such investment by the employer can only equate to a perceived value of good return.

**Mongolia Results**

Like those in Australia and China, ADS facilitators in Mongolia showed support for the ADS program in developing the human resource needs of the country. 1MF maintained that:

> The ADS program in Mongolia forms part of the country program goal to strengthen human resource capacity to support Mongolia’s transition to a market economy and as an emerging democracy. So we use the ADS as a development mechanism to support those objectives.

According to 1MF, AusAID’s objective is ‘to see a well-educated public sector’ by supporting ‘individuals within government agencies’ with access to ‘high quality education’. The results of this strategy were already being observed by 1MF when she claimed:

> We are actually seeing better quality governance in Mongolia, more effective policy processes and outcomes, and better management of the government sectors, social services and activities that the government is responsible for.

Similarly, 3MF also observed that ‘a lot of Australian programs and laws and regulations have been adapted into the Mongolian system’. 2MF agreed, declaring that:

> Foreign relations, economic growth, development issues and also all the legal reform issues are national priorities through which ADS graduates are trying to make some commitment.

In this regard, three of the four ADS facilitators for Mongolia identified the transition from a socialist to a democratic system in the 1990s as central to the relevance of the ADS program for Mongolia. 2MF explained:

> It is a very interesting program and it has been continuing for a long time – since we started this democratic movement in Mongolia in 1990
and after we opened our door to everyone … So that is why this
continuation and the success of ADS is most important for Mongolia
towards progress, especially through those people who went to
Australia and came back to Mongolia working in relevant agencies,
ministries and also at some public universities.

The perception was that ADS scholars employed by key agencies, ministries and
public universities had contributed to new policies within Mongolia. 3MF supported
this view when she concluded:

ADS support the public sector reform program of Mongolia … There is
a real demand to retrain public servants because most of the public
servants were trained in Russia … But since the 1990s, Mongolia has
become a democratic country which is completely different … So the
ADS program can really support Mongolia in training those public
servants who had experience or training in the socialist system … I
think it is very relevant and supportive for our further development.

Moreover, 1MF recognised the capacity development role of the ADS program in
Mongolia, instilling ownership towards reform:

Importantly, it’s about strengthening Mongolia’s capacity in an area
where they are taking charge of their own development, particularly
when you consider that they had a development agenda forced on them
from the socialist regime.

1MF maintained that the ADS program in Mongolia was introduced ‘in an effort to
stabilise the government which is typically prone to a lot of upheaval and shifting of
positions because of frequent elections’. In this sense, contributing to government
reform was seen to ‘help stabilise government functions’ and ‘support an efficient
and lean public sector that was actually doing its job’ (1MF). This was elaborated
further by 1MF when she stated:

You’ve got an old generation of government officials that has come up
through the socialist system and a young generation that has had more
of an international exposure. But the government isn’t necessarily
experienced in managing the economy of the country in that new
context. So our aim is to actually strengthen human resources for the
agency. And the agency is identifying their core functions and skill sets
themselves, and how to prioritise the work of their department. So our
ADS feed into that.

1MF also believed ‘very much’ that the qualifications obtained by ADS scholars in
Australia were valued in Mongolia, maintaining that ‘Mongolia perceives it not only
as an opportunity for overseas tertiary level education, which is relatively underdeveloped in Mongolia, but also as high quality education’.

It would appear then that the ADS program in Mongolia is not only contributing to the human resource development needs of the Mongolian public service, but also acting as a conduit for promoting Australia as a quality international student destination. In this sense, the ADS program in Mongolia is playing a quality ‘branding’ role, beneficial to the Australian education sector as a whole. While international student numbers from Mongolia going to Australia remain small – only 71 student enrolments and 30 student commencements in higher education in 2007, of which the vast majority are ADS awardees – it would appear that any future education and training cooperation with Mongolia has a solid base from which to build.

3MF supported this view and declared that ‘ADS is a very famous program and popular because a lot of graduates are in very senior positions’. 2MF made a similar observation, identifying the reputation of the Mongolia-Australia Alumni Association, or ‘Mozzies’:

The ‘Mozzies Association’ is famous because very many graduates are working in different levels of the public sector. These people have shown their knowledge, experience and education as being useful for this country. We have several MPs, a Presidential Advisor and other senior people in the public sector.

**Summary: Question 1**

On average, there was moderate to great support by ADS facilitators from China and Mongolia that the ADS program was *relevant to the needs of China and Mongolia* (Theme 1) in *strengthening human resource capacity* (Objective 1).

In terms of the ADS program supporting study and work consistent with country strategies, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and great attribution towards the *indicator of success* for Mongolia. This differentiation was due to a variety of factors. For China, the ADS program was generally perceived to be supporting knowledge and expertise to assist with development challenges across broad themes. However, the degree of contribution of the ADS program in achieving country strategy outcomes
(good governance, environment and natural resource management, health, education and poverty reduction) was limited due to China’s sheer geographical and population size. For Mongolia, despite the lack of a formal country strategy, the ADS program was perceived to be closely linked to the human resource development strategies (and weaknesses) of Mongolian Government agencies. The ADS program was strongly supported for its role in improving governance and policy, foreign relations, legal reform and development issues, particularly in areas of like-challenges for Australia and Mongolia, such as the provision of administration and services to remote centres. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of the qualifications awarded to ADS scholars being valued in country, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the indicator of success for China and great attribution towards the indicator of success for Mongolia. This differentiation was due to a variety of factors. For China, attribution towards the value of Australian qualifications was primarily limited to opportunities for promotion and the application of new skills. For Mongolia, there was greater significance towards the perception of the quality of Australian qualifications, particularly in a country where tertiary level study was relatively underdeveloped. Moreover, ADS graduates were meeting the skills needs of agencies and being promoted to senior positions in government. While there was criticism that some returning ADS scholars were experiencing career progression problems within the Mongolian public service, the weight of responses were very much in support of their qualifications being valued in country. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 5.2).

**Question 2:** How would the experience of living and studying in Australia benefit the ADS recipient?

**Relevance to:** Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity
Theme 2: The Australian experience

Indicators of success:
- Benefits to the individual through the experience of living and studying in Australia, including:
  - meeting and working with people from different cultures
  - developing confidence and competence in English language proficiency
- exposure to international practices
- adopting self-directed and participatory teaching/learning methods

**Australia Results**

ADS facilitators in Australia identified various benefits to ADS scholars through their experience of living and studying in Australia. While 3AF was careful to explain that he ‘can’t really say that the Australian experience is rated more highly than an American or British experience’ he did conclude that ‘it is the overseas experience that is definitely given a high rating’ and that over the years he had received very positive responses from ADS scholars with regards to their Australian experience:

They love it … love it with a passion … From the first tranche that went out in ’94 … they all appreciate how much better the living conditions are in Australia compared to Mongolia … A lot of them given the chance would go back to Australia. A few of them are applying under the new ALA … recycling themselves through the ‘Australian experience’ rather than going to the US or the UK because they like it here.

Importantly, 3AF suggested that the ADS program was influencing student choice in undertaking further international study. Through the positive experiences of ADS scholars, the perception was that they were more inclined to choose to study in Australia again. According to 3AF, this was occurring with the new ALA and, as a result, students were being attracted away from Australia’s traditional competitor countries.

Understanding aspects that influence the decision of international students in choosing Australia as an education destination is valuable for Australia in maintaining or improving its international student market share. This is particularly important for what is now the largest services export industry for Australia.

However, one of the criticisms of Australia’s growing international education sector relates to the number of international students now filling Australian classrooms and student locales. This issue was identified by 1AF when he claimed that the numbers of international students in Australia were in danger of affecting the Australian experience of ADS scholars:
The standard line is that the in-Australia experience is the most valuable bit because it introduces people to Western democratic morays and processes and the benefits of that … However, in reality, in Australia there are large numbers of students from abroad and so you can end up with … people interacting only with people from their own country. There is reasonably good evidence that it’s the interaction with the broader society that is beneficial. You do get an installing of liberal democratic principles. However you can’t force students to do this. And a number of students don’t take up this opportunity.

1AF makes a valid point. If we look at Chinese international students as an example, in 2007 Chinese student commencements increased by 27.9% to 59,048 and Chinese student enrolments exceeded 100,000 for the first time (107,071, up 18.9%). Given the expected continued growth in the number of Chinese families with the means to afford an international education for their children (and even taking into account the declining demographic in persons of university age), there is good reason to expect that demand for Australian education from China will continue to grow strongly. In the period 2002–07, growth in Chinese student enrolments was on average 17% as student enrolments increased from around 50,000 to 107,000. It would take only four more years of growth at this rate to see Chinese student enrolments in Australia almost double (by 2011). If high growth rates continue, by 2015 Australia will have around 375,000 Chinese student enrolments (Figure 5.1).

![Figure 5.1: Projections of Chinese Student Enrolments in Australia](image)

**Source:** AEI, 2008

Nevertheless, 2AF referred to the 2002 AusAID Review of the Australia-IMF Scholarship Program for Asia which ‘looked at how important it was to go to
Australia as opposed to doing [scholarships] by distance education’. The review interviewed a number of Mongolian students and found that ‘it was simply being exposed to a different country, a different system, reading the daily newspapers – that in itself was of great benefit’ (2AF).

Two of the Australia ADS facilitators identified the different teaching style in Australia as a major part of the Australian experience valued by ADS scholars. 2AF recognised this in terms of the teaching and learning experience of the ADS scholars at university, while 3AF identified it in relation to the experience of the ADS scholars’ children in school. 2AF perceived that ‘what was particularly valuable’ for ADS scholars was that ‘basic instruction methods were so different’ in Australia. ADS scholars were given the opportunity ‘to undertake critical analysis and study in different ways’ as opposed to ‘just being force-fed with information’ (2AF). This was considered ‘a tremendous factor for them’ in becoming ‘a much more valuable resource’ for their employer (2AF).

Indeed, 2AF claimed that even if ADS scholars decided to leave their original employer after fulfilling their obligatory two-year return policy period, they were ‘snapped up by the UN, AusAID and other donors and private sector companies’ who recognised them as ‘a very valuable commodity’. Moreover, 2AF claimed that these skills often provided ADS scholars with the confidence and abilities to ‘set up their own companies’. According to 2AF:

> It’s just a different way of looking at things and dealing with issues – that is one very significant value you get from studying overseas. It’s more than just the subject matter.

Similarly, 3AF described how ‘one of the first bits of feedback’ he received from ADS scholars in the mid-1990s was ‘the way primary school kids were encouraged to observe, report and learn … they didn’t just copy what was written on the chalkboard’. According to 3AF, the ADS graduates from Mongolia were so ‘entranced with the way primary education was handled in Australia’ that they sought to ‘set up a primary school in Ulaanbaatar based on Australian school principles and they applied to AusAID for assistance’. Unfortunately, the scheme never eventuated.
Both 2AF and 3AF provided clear examples of where ADS scholars’ exposure to international practices was influencing their skills, knowledge and actions when they returned to their home country.

**China Results**

Observations with regards to the benefits of ADS scholars being exposed to Australian approaches to teaching and learning were also identified by China ADS facilitators. Interestingly, it was an aspect of the ADS program not picked up in the literature review for the formulation of *indicators of success*. That the style of teaching and learning in Australia may have an attributable impact on returning ADS scholars was noteworthy and deemed to warrant inclusion as a new *indicator of success* under Theme 2: *The Australian Experience*.

1CF identified the benefits in terms of the ADS scholars attaining ‘a broader perspective on issues that they are working on’ by being ‘exposed to a really different culture and culture of study’ that fostered self-directed and participatory approaches to learning. This difference in *study culture* was observed by 1CF through her attendance at ‘a lot of workshops and seminars in China that are a lot less interactive, with a focus on lecturing’ as opposed to self-directed and participatory teaching methods. The term ‘tien ya’ or *feeding duck* approach was used to describe the style of teaching and learning in China, where students were primarily treated as passive learners. According to 1CF:

> They benefit from the learning experience in Australia – it’s a different approach to education and hopefully it is brought back to their workplace and influences how they interact with their stakeholders.

5CF supported this notion when he described how ADS scholars were responding in the workplace:

> Definitely they learn different ways to transfer knowledge and how to complete their tasks. They prefer case studies, try to use real practice from different countries and different sectors, use the research and write their own articles.

5CF’s observations suggest that the Australian experience is indeed having an influence on the way in which ADS scholars transfer knowledge within their organisations and base their decisions on informed research of international
practices. It would also appear that these attributes, combined with the positive learning experiences of ADS scholars in Australia, are not ignored by the sponsoring Chinese Government agencies. 5CF concluded that the ADS program was regarded as one able to provide a positive international experience for employees:

After discussion with scholar recipients who have been studying in Australia … they are very satisfied with the different university arrangements, pleased with the atmosphere and local citizens of Australia – this beautiful country … So we regard this program as an international program.

2CF supported the notion that exposure to Australian approaches enabled better interaction at the working level, declaring that ‘it gives those people an understanding of the Australian way of life, our culture and enables them to much more easily understand us and work with us’.

4CF also identified that the lived experience of ADS scholars in Australia did much to influence their depth of understanding and development agendas when they returned to China:

They feel the security system in Australia is quite advanced. Also the health system in Australia is quite advanced. That’s quite different from China. In China, they have to pay a very high price to go and see a doctor and a lot of people worry about that, so they think the Australian system is more advanced than China … Because a lot of them are policy makers within departments, they are involved in the policy making in China, so if they know what is advanced in Australia and what is not good in China they can compare, they can change that.

3CF agreed that the experience of ADS scholars in Australia provided them with both ‘professional knowledge and lived experience in certain areas’. In this regard, 2CF concluded that ADS scholars were maintaining a valuable role in international collaborations and Chinese employers were responding by placing them in key positions that enabled them to utilise their combined knowledge and skills:

We have had dealings with people who have studied in Australia and that has helped them in their own work in China … Some end up working in the international areas of the departments because of their combined knowledge of the topic, improved English language and skills in dealing with internationals.

4CF also recognised that ‘because ADS scholars’ English is so perfect, they are not only key staff to work for the department but also they will always be the interpreter
for their leader’. However, 4CF clarified that this was also ‘because they not only know English but they also have the professional experience’.

2CF also identified the many advantages to both the ADS scholar and their family:

> It broadens their mind. It’s a completely different lifestyle to what they have experienced in China or Mongolia and there are benefits there … benefits for the whole family if they are accompanying … Benefits to the family can be underestimated a lot. It has also helped spouses’ career prospects and opportunities for their children … they advance so much in English and that has really helped them. It is one of those intangible things – other benefits that make us more worldly.

1CF agreed, identifying that the family stipends ‘have really benefited’ ADS scholars and their families from the aspect of ‘having their families there while they study and their family and children getting access to English’. According to 1CF, ‘English language capacity in both China and Mongolia is a real bonus’ and ADS scholars ‘are very pleased with the benefits they have accrued’ including ‘opportunities for their kids to go to an Australian school’ and opportunities for their spouses to gain Australian ‘work experience’.

However, 4CF identified that many ADS scholars from China have initial reservations about going to Australia:

> A lot of ADS recipients don’t have any experience outside of China … Before they go to Australia they just think … it is very expensive, the life is very hard, that it is not safe … so they are quite worried about leaving home … Before they go they just want to go there very quickly, asking if they can shorten their scholarship, but once they’ve been there they always want to extend.

Such reservations could be deleterious in attracting quality ADS graduates. While it is recognised that the growing numbers of Chinese going to Australia for work, study and leisure will no doubt influence conceptions of Australia in China, the fact that some ADS recipients still hold reservations identifies the potential need for reviewing promotional material and pre-departure briefings and having alumni involved to adequately and accurately portray aspects of living and studying in Australia to mitigate any negative preconceptions.
Mongolia Results

Mongolia ADS facilitators also raised a variety of benefits to the individual through the experience of living and studying in Australia. Four major advantages identified were improving English language proficiency, developing a broader world view, the enabling of greater opportunities and skills for promotion upon return and exposure to Australian teaching approaches.

1MF concluded that English language skills were ‘vitally important for Mongolia’ and so AusAID dedicated ‘a lot of resources in the program to train short-listed applicants in English to have a sufficient number to apply to university’. This was considered particularly important for a country with low rates of English speakers. 3MF recalled that Mongolia was ‘a closed country until 15 years ago and the only foreign experience was from other socialist countries like Russia’. Therefore, English language proficiency was considered vital for gaining ‘better information access’ that enabled Mongolians to learn from the broader international community (3MF). In this sense, ADS scholars were perceived to be able to ‘gain more information and use that for policy development at work’ as well as for ‘finding the right words for translations and reporting’. The utility of English language proficiency was perceived to be meaningful towards the development of Mongolia. This also held true for the individual, with 3MF concluding that, through such exposure, ADS scholars had ‘a better chance of being promoted or even being a consultant in their field’. 1MF also agreed, maintaining that ‘there’s a perceived benefit if you study in Australia, as so many Mongolians have gone to Australia and come back with good promotional opportunities’.

Interestingly, 4MF maintained that such skills were directly attributable to the experience of ADS scholars studying in Australia at the Masters level:

> When you read you get ideas and I guess this is the most important part … by getting to know where to read, where to get the information, and how to read and get ideas from them. But in order to get ideas you have to understand them and to understand them you have to have knowledge … The Masters makes it possible for [an ADS scholar] to read papers that they wouldn’t have been able to understand if they hadn’t gone to Australia.
2MF also identified that the living and learning experience of ADS scholars in Australia did far more than simply improve their English language skills:

They benefit a lot – their living experience, learning experience. And also by taking their families their kids learn a lot from Australia too – English language, Australian culture and also how people live in a democratic society … a new way of thinking and way of communicating. When we meet our ADS graduates it is very noticeable how much they have changed over the period. They are very confident and relaxed when they talk to people compared to before they did the ADS program. Also they have an open mind in the way they conduct discussions.

2MF associated the experience of living in Australia as inextricably tied to ADS scholars’ learning. In this sense, the Australian experience represents a type of kinesthetic learning for the ADS scholar, wherein realisations occur from the actual process of living and doing things within the physical environment. 2MF attributes the development of the individual to the ADS program. From the unique perspective of working with ADS scholars before they leave for Australia and then after they return, 2MF is able to assess noticeable changes in their communication and cognitive skills, as well as in their overall demeanour as a result of the ADS program.

4MF also noted that the opportunity for ADS scholars to live and study in Australia provided a distinct advantage in developing knowledgeable perspectives from which comparative assessments may be made in order to inform Mongolia’s own economic development:

[ADS scholars] learn the Australian style of life … The level you are now is different to the level we are now. Being there, living there, it’s definitely of benefit … [ADS scholars] get exposed to the problems that Australia is having and the way Australia deals with its problems … Looking at those things in Australia and feeling it, because [ADS scholars] are living there, gives an exposure which puts them in an advantageous position.

1MF also identified that ADS scholars benefited greatly from ‘the exchange they have with students from other developing countries’. In this sense, the Australian experience was perceived as much more than just exposure to Australia and its people. While there may be some scrutiny over the numbers of international students affecting the Australian experience for some students, 1MF recognised that it does
provide the advantage of giving international students the opportunity to communicate and compare their respective systems.

The quality of the education that Australia provides was also identified as a distinct benefit. Australia was perceived to be ‘a well-recognised location to go to for postgraduate education’ and provided a ‘direct benefit compared to the quality of tertiary education in Mongolia’ (1MF). In fact, ‘the resources, the collegiality, the access to international academics and being in an environment that is conducive to study’ were all considered ‘quality’ aspects of studying in Australia that provided both ‘an advantage and a benefit’ (1MF). The facilitation of learning was also recognised as a distinct advantage. 2MF identified that the Australian teaching approach was beneficial to ADS scholars in developing personal responsibility, independent learning and time management skills:

When they come back they say there is a big difference between Australian and Mongolian education in terms of teaching ways. Mongolia is focused on teacher-centred learning – the teacher will dominate … In Australia, they are given more responsibilities, more time and more chances to learn by themselves. More responsibility is on them to meet deadlines and to hand in their assignments on time.

The opportunity for ADS scholars and their spouses to gain Australian work experience was considered ‘a great advantage’ (1MF). ADS scholars were able to work ‘up to something like 15 hours’, while ‘family members were also able to work full time’ (1MF). 3MF identified that while the ADS program primarily enabled ‘Mongolians to go abroad to study’, it also produced long-term ‘financial benefits to family income’ when family members returned to Mongolia ‘with better qualifications to get a better job and more money’. 3MF expanded on this when he stated:

… living and studying in Australia is very beneficial for the future promotion of all family members. Their knowledge gets expanded and is useful for the development of Mongolia through gaining new skills [and] bringing another type of living style to Mongolia.

According to 3MF, the contribution of the ADS program does not stop there:

They can make good contacts and friends so they can share information for further study and skills development and that will be beneficial for work as well. They also influence other people in Mongolia to live and
study in Australia. I know a lot of people who send their kids back to Australia for study or even some living.

Such additional returns on investment from scholarship programs are not unique to ADS. A report published by the Western Australian Technology and Industry Advisory Council (TIAC) (2000) highlighted a case study of three Thai Colombo Plan scholars who, since attending the University of Western Australia in 1963, had made a distinguished contribution to their country’s development, remained active in fostering Australia-Thai relations via commercial and diplomatic channels and by investing in Australia, and had each sent their children (six in total) to Australia for their private school and university education. TIAC equated the monetary return to Australia from the children’s education alone to approximate AUD720,000. In addition, it was estimated that the three scholars had collectively facilitated the enrolment of at least 30 other Thai students into Australian schools and subsequently into Australian universities over a period of a decade. By adding the latter student income (approximately AUD3.6 million), TIAC estimated that the total student income to the Australian economy generated by the three Colombo scholars/goodwill ambassadors was around AUD1.5 million each.

**Summary: Question 2**

On average, there was moderate support by ADS facilitators from Australia, China and Mongolia that the experience of ADS scholars living and studying in Australia (Theme 2) was having an attributable impact in strengthening human resource capacity (Objective 1). The perceived benefits were varied, with much of the attribution being directed towards the development of the individual which, in turn, had the potential to contribute to the development of the partner country.

In terms of the Australian experience enabling ADS scholars to meet and work with people from different cultures, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the indicator of success for both China and Mongolia. For China, the numbers of international students already in Australia meant that the degree to which ADS scholars integrated with people other than from their own country was regarded as key to the degree of success of the indicator. For Mongolia, meeting and working with people from different cultures was perceived to be having a positive impact for ADS scholars, particularly in broadening understanding and
influencing practice (such as teaching and learning approaches). However, some
corns were raised whether the ADS program was sufficiently enabling scholars to
meet and work with Australians. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for
both China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of the Australian experience enabling ADS scholars to develop confidence
and competence in English language proficiency, the sum of responses by ADS
facilitators indicated little attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and
moderate attribution for Mongolia. For China, there was little support for this being a
particularly important outcome for ADS scholars. One explanation may lie with the
minimum English language proficiency requirements for ADS scholars. While
English language capability levels vary across different Australian universities,
acceptance levels often exceed the minimum of 6.0 IELTS, meaning that many ADS
scholars have already achieved a reasonable level of English language proficiency.
For Mongolia, developing greater confidence and competence in English language
proficiency held slightly higher regard, particularly given the country’s low English
literacy rates and new focus towards the West. These findings resulted in a red TL
rating for China and a yellow TL rating for Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of the Australian experience enabling ADS scholars to be exposed to
international practices, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate
attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and great attribution for
Mongolia. This discrepancy was due to the weight of attribution by ADS facilitators
towards this *indicator of success* benefiting Mongolia ADS scholars. For China, such
exposure enabled ADS scholars to develop, for example, critical analysis and
knowledge transfer skills that were considered a valuable commodity for employers.
For Mongolia, exposure to different teaching and learning styles, social and cultural
practices, democratic systems of governance and overseas work experience was
perceived to be influencing the actions and practice of ADS scholars in their home
country. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and a green TL
rating for Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of the Australian experience enabling ADS scholars to adopt self-directed
and participatory teaching/learning methods, the sum of responses by ADS
facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for both
China and Mongolia. For China, ADS scholars experienced how to become active learners as opposed to passive learners. Some ADS facilitators believed that this approach to learning was then being transferred to the workplace. For Mongolia this view was also shared, with ADS scholars improving their professional knowledge and practice through lived experience and Australian approaches to teaching/learning. While there was strong support for this indicator of success by some ADS facilitators, the ratio of support resulted in a yellow TL rating for both China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).

**Question 3:** What do scholars do after their study? How are they different?

**Relevance to:**
- Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity
- Theme 3: Characteristics of returning scholars

**Indicators of success:**
- Scholars return from Australia and remain in country
- Scholars return to their original place of employ (sponsoring agency)
- Scholars move to other organisations (public, private or non-government) but continue in work relevant to the objectives of the ADS program
- Scholars given greater responsibilities/promoted upon returning from Australia
- Scholars reform minded/have confidence and skills to drive reform
- Scholars in positions of authority to make their own systems adapt and work better

**Australia Results**

There were common characteristics of returned scholars for both China and Mongolia that were identified by ADS facilitators in Australia as contributing to the strengthening of the human resource capacity of their respective countries. For the most part, it was understood that the ‘majority of ADS scholars do go back to their original positions’ and that ‘a number of them are promoted soon after’ (1AF). This view was also supported by 2AF and 3AF. It was accepted that ‘people who are not promoted afterwards probably leave the organisation’ and that there are a ‘number who have stayed for a year and then left’ the organisation (1AF). However, this was considered ‘not necessarily a bad thing’, as ‘the point of ADS is to build the capacity of people in the government system and change their global outlook on things’ and
‘people who leave often still work within government or as a consultant interacting with government’ (1AF). This was supported by 2AF who explained further:

It is clear that the benefit from the scholarship is not just the subject that they have studied but it is new approaches, critical thinking, so the study has been in no way wasted … There is some leakage where people will go to the private sector. That is not necessarily a bad thing, especially if the organisation has had the benefit of that student’s knowledge for a couple of years.

That ADS scholars may move to other organisations, whether they be public, private or non-government, was noteworthy and raised questions as to whether scholars generally remained in work relevant to the objectives of the ADS program. If so, the program’s success could be seen to transcend sectors. This was considered an appropriate and worthwhile additional indicator of success from the perspective of determining the ongoing contribution of the ADS program regardless of its intended target sector.

1AF expanded on 2AF’s assessment of the ADS program offering more than just subject knowledge, encapsulating well the program’s influence on building not only technical expertise but also a broader world view:

What ADS is aiming for is greater levels of technical or academic skills which will allow them to progress up through their organisation and have an influence on the functioning of their home organisation. The theory is that the exposure in Australia to Western liberal democratic society will also change their mind set in many different ways. So ADS is aimed at piggybacking a broad global exposure on how the world works and how different societies work to increase technical expertise.

This was considered most beneficial to those ADS scholars who had originated from societies criticised for their ‘very isolated or insular’ world views (1AF).

1AF did warn of a ‘number of issues around ADS scholars returning to their home countries and back to their home organisation’. This included issues around job vacancy and job replacement during an ADS scholar’s study period overseas, as well as job placement upon their return:

One issue is that if you can take someone out of a job for a number of years then is that job essential to the functioning of the organisation? And how does the organisation cope with that gap? They will have to put someone into that job if it is actually important. And insisting that
the organisation has to put that person back into that job could cause problems for the home organisation.

1AF raised a number of possible risks to the ADS program. There exists the danger that without proper strategic assessment of the actual and real human resource development needs of a counterpart organisation, the ADS program could potentially address artificial needs. There are also issues around the value an organisation places on the ADS program and the willingness of that organisation to invest long term in staff. Organisations need to be willing to lose a performing staff member selected for the ADS program based on merit for the period of their candidature in Australia. In the interim, the organisation will most likely need to replace that void with another member of staff. The risk is that some organisations may be reluctant to select their ‘best and brightest’ for risk of losing them throughout the ADS study period. Moreover, applicants may be selected where the void will be felt the least by the organisation.

The desire to equate an ADS scholar’s promotion soon after their return as a key performance indicator was also raised by 1AF:

On return, we often try to insist that returning scholars get promotions but there are problems with this as promotions should be based on performance, not on the qualification you have. In order to show ADS is delivering something useful, there is a push from a number of our Posts who’d prefer if returning scholars were promoted – it demonstrates performance of ADS … The promotions within the host organisations can get distorted and biased and that’s an unfortunate consequence – understandable, but not ideal.

Such expectations on organisations, and indeed individuals, have the potential to seriously jeopardise the reputation and standing of the ADS program itself, not to mention its overall objective. While promotion is positive, it is important that the ADS program is recognised as a conduit for advanced knowledge and skills through quality education and training that may then lead to promotion, as opposed to simply a program for acquiring a qualification or work level. If the ADS program objective is to indeed strengthen human resource capacity then this is crucial.

According to 3AF, ADS scholars in Mongolia were not receiving ‘any such special treatment’. In fact, 3AF felt that many ADS scholars were returning to ‘levels that were almost disappointing’ as ‘the ministry management didn’t want to acknowledge
that these guys have a special place in the scheme of things’. 3AF put this down to ‘a
hangover of old’ where ‘the old communist system worked on the fact that you had
to have loyalty upwards but there was no loyalty downwards’ and ‘at the lower end
of the scale there were absolutely no prizes for using your initiative’. 3AF considered
this to be ‘ingrained’ in Mongolia and ‘a serious issue that will take a long time to
overcome’. However, 3AF did identify some exceptions, highlighting ‘two or three
in the Ministry of Finance who have been involved in restructuring the ministry and
who have been allowed to use their initiative quite a lot’. Others were identified as
having since left the public service to follow successful entrepreneurial roles. 3AF
felt that one of the major barriers to ADS scholar promotion in Mongolia was that
there was ‘very little scope for promotion in the ministries which are very small and
very under resourced’. Mongolia was ‘still struggling with public sector reform’ and,
while some of the earlier ADS scholars had managed to ‘move up the ladder’, there
was a growing problem of ‘newly returned ADS scholars who were back in desk jobs
with no more or less responsibilities than guys that never went anywhere’ (3AF).
3AF also believed that there had ‘been problems with a number of leaders looking at
these guys as better qualified and not wanting to give them a leg up’. While the ADS
program was producing ‘a lot of people who came back reform minded’, the
opportunity for them to then exercise their initiative towards public sector reform
was stifled (3AF).

2AF agreed that while ADS scholars ‘will have the where-with-all to engage in
reform activities, a lot will depend on the atmospherics of the institutions when they
go back’. Nevertheless, 2AF believed that:

… they certainly are reform minded and I’d expect they would be using
that very actively in terms of their own agendas … yes … we have seen
in Mongolia how they can rise up and become minister and there is
scope for reform there.

China Results

While ADS facilitators in China appeared to have some knowledge of the
characteristics of returning ADS scholars, it was acknowledged that ‘there is not a lot
of return information and this has been recognised as a weakness of the scheme and
hence the push for alumni associations’ (2CF). Indeed, 2CF admitted that ‘a lot of
the scholars we have no contact with at all [and] we only get to see a small selection’. 1CF agreed, maintaining that:

We haven’t managed to keep really good track of where people have ended up. From my perspective, it’s not clear to me where all our scholars are now and what they are doing, so it’s hard to make assessments.

Deficiency in information or access to ADS scholars was not only attributed to the lack of tracking or the establishment of other channels such as an ADS alumni association, but also to the geographical constraints posed by China compared to Mongolia. 2CF provided a common observation made by many of the ADS facilitators:

In Mongolia, the ‘Mozzie’ network is a support network – they are all in Ulaanbaatar in a three kilometre radius so they come across each other all the time. In China, they are much more spread out.

Nevertheless, there was consensus among all of the ADS facilitators in China that anecdotally ‘the majority of ADS scholars return to their original employer’ (2CF) and ‘in most cases go back to their original job’ (3CF). It was also agreed that ‘some of them will change jobs after some months through promotion or go to another employer’ (3CF) but such movement was usually to ‘a more important post’ in a ‘different department but still within the ministry’ (5CF). According to 5CF, ‘only a few had left the ministries after returning’ and ‘only a few move to the private sector’ (5CF).

While it was acknowledged that ministries ‘could not force ADS scholars to return’ (5CF) it was considered that most ‘felt obliged’ (1CF) to do so. Measures to further encourage this included restricting ADS scholars from ‘receiving a visa to Australia for two years after their study’ (5CF) and having ADS scholars ‘sign an agreement that they will go back to their target ministries’ (1CF) for a period of at least two years. 4CF explained:

Before ADS scholars go they may sign a contract with their government department … This contract guarantees that after they study in Australia they will work for at least two years for their employer … They don’t tend to break that because the students come from very important departments and like their work.
Such contracts between ADS scholars and their employers were considered important to the ADS program.

There was some evidence to suggest that ADS scholars were returning reform minded and having confidence to discuss issues and suggest alternative approaches. 1CF admitted that she had enjoyed ‘debating with some returnees on issues’ and 2CF found that ADS scholars were returning more ‘open minded with a more worldly vision’ and ‘more open to air their views’. 3CF attributed this to the experience of studying in Australia:

> China is a relatively closed place compared to Australia – there’s not a lot of opportunity to explore ideas and debate. Australian education has a more interactive approach and this impacts on their own openness … [It] provides more than just the course content – it’s the process of being back studying, sharing ideas and discussing alternative approaches to things.

5CF also witnessed the change in returning ADS scholars, maintaining that they ‘try to link their new knowledge with their position’ and ‘after learning new knowledge can give some good proposals to their bosses/leaders’ which ‘sometimes results in very visible reforms’.

The degree to which ADS scholars were able to make their own systems adapt and work better was not clear from the interviews. While it may be assumed that with greater authority comes greater freedom to adopt and implement one’s own systems for improvement, there was little evidence to support this. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that ADS scholars were indeed being promoted to positions of authority and, as part of that, ministries were paying attention to the new knowledge and skills brought by ADS scholars. This was therefore considered sufficient to warrant at least some recognition of the indicator of success.

**Mongolia Results**

All of the ADS facilitators from Mongolia maintained that since the introduction of CaBSAF in 2003 all Mongolian ADS scholars had returned to Mongolia and their original place of employ upon graduating. 1MF concluded:
Under CaBSAF, we have had a 100% success rate on returns. We haven’t had anyone not come back and all of them work with their previous employer.

It was acknowledged that ADS scholars may not ‘necessarily come back to the same position or the same department but they are all going back to the same ministry’ (1MF). Even those pre-dating the inception of CaBSAF have ‘usually come back to their original divisions and departments’ and almost all those who have since moved to the private sector or to NGOs have ‘remained in country’ and often ‘to positions in some way relevant to development’ (2MF).

With ‘ministries developing the training priorities every year for ADS’ in Mongolia, it was understood that ‘some ADS scholars may choose study which is a little bit different from their current position which has been prioritised by the ministry’ (3MF). Therefore, some movements within ministries upon return were typical.

However, while CaBSAF ‘aimed to secure an agreement with the home ministry that they will have employment for ADS scholars on their return’, it was revealed that this was not always the case (1MF). According to 1MF, ‘previously, if you left your employer for three months you’d lose your position’ which posed ‘a real problem’ for returning ADS scholars. While ‘typically [ADS scholars] return to their home ministry and resume employment’, 1MF admitted that ‘at the universities it hasn’t been as clear cut’ with some departments choosing to ‘utilise the experience of returned ADS scholars more than others’. As a result, 1MF confessed that ‘we consider it an achievement to get these agreements between the individual and the employer’.

The promotion of ADS scholars was ‘not automatic’ (2MF) or ‘immediately on return’ (1MF) but often occurred ‘a little bit after their return’ (2MF) or ‘after a year or two’ (1MF). Promotion was often associated with the ADS scholars having ‘more skills and experience so they can do much more’ (2MF). In this sense, the ADS program was seen to ‘be contributing’ (1MF). ADS scholars were achieving considerable success in their promotion within the Mongolian public service. 2MF conceded that ‘most [ADS scholars] are promoted and most are senior officers in their ministries’.
4MF provided an interesting assessment as to how scholarship programs such as the ADS have managed to fill skills gaps within organisations in Mongolia and, through the promotion of scholars to key positions, have introduced major new fiscal and legislative reform to support Mongolia’s transition to a market economy:

After 1990, a lot of people left the civil service – the good ones, the ones who had good language, international knowledge … they left for the international organisations … because life was difficult and they were looking for the money … so there were real skills gaps which the organisations knew they had to fill … they needed knowledge … they needed people with complicated minds … Non-banking financial institutions law, savings and credit cooperative law, deposit insurance law – all are new things to Mongolian life … Of course the promotions have helped to initiate these things.

4MF’s analysis suggests that returning scholars involved in developing and implementing such reform must therefore be reform minded and have the confidence and skills to drive reform. In fact, all of the Mongolian ADS facilitators were supportive of these attributes in returning ADS scholars. 2MF believed that ADS scholars were ‘willing to use new ideas and connect them to the strategic plan of the sector’ and 3MF observed that ‘they are very enthusiastic when they come back and also have high expectations of the ministry’. However, the support of employers in allowing ADS scholars to put it into practice was identified as a major inhibitor. 3MF elaborated:

Doing the action plan they sometimes can’t imagine what they will do on their return but when they come back they are very enthusiastic. They have very high expectations from the ministry which is not always met. Sometimes they get frustrated because ministry support is limited but their expectation is so high.

1MF also identified that while ADS scholars were ‘often keen and enthusiastic’, if you have ‘the individual who is reform minded but you don’t have the support of the institution, it can be brought to a halt’. 2MF supported this view and observed that ‘culture change and management change can be a problem’. For the most part, however, it was understood that the ministries, in selecting ADS scholars, were often ‘quite involved in looking for persons who have a plan on how they will apply their knowledge’ and will ‘try to identify particular courses which they think are necessary to the reform and major priorities for the ministry’ (1MF).
Summary: Question 3

On average, there was moderate to strong support by ADS facilitators from Australia, China and Mongolia that the characteristics of returning scholars (Theme 3) were having an attributable impact in strengthening human resource capacity (Objective 1). There was however a distinct lack of knowledge by ADS facilitators of the characteristics of returning scholars in China compared with Mongolia. Much of this was attributed to the centralised location of ADS scholars returning to Ulaanbaatar and the strength and identity of the Mongolia-Australia Alumni Association. CaBSAF also played a more active role in maintaining knowledge of returned ADS scholars compared with the counterpart managing facility in China. Such information had invariably filtered through to ADS facilitators, not only in Mongolia but also in China and Australia. This is particularly evident in the recordings of responses whereby ADS facilitators in Australia and China were able to more frequently comment on characteristics of returning ADS scholars in Mongolia.

In terms of ADS scholars returning from Australia and remaining in country, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated great attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. For China, almost all ADS facilitators confirmed that the majority of scholars returned from Australia and remained in country. For Mongolia, this was also the view. These findings resulted in a green TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of ADS scholars returning to their original place of employ (sponsoring agency), the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated great attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. For China, all ADS facilitators identified that the vast majority of ADS scholars returned to their original place of employ in China. For Mongolia, this was also the case. These findings resulted in a green TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of returning ADS scholars moving to other organisations (public, private or non-government) but continuing in work relevant to the objectives of the ADS program, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated little attribution towards the indicator of success for China and moderate attribution for Mongolia. For China,
most movement was usually to higher duties within the same Chinese ministry, with only a small number moving to the private sector. However, there was no comment on whether ADS scholars were continuing in work relevant to the objectives of the ADS program. For Mongolia, some ADS scholars were known to move to the private and non-government sectors upon their return, however, the majority were believed to have remained in work relevant to development. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a yellow TL rating for Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of ADS scholars being given greater responsibilities/promoted upon returning from Australia, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated little attribution towards the indicator of success for China and moderate attribution for Mongolia. For China, there was little acknowledgment of the indicator of success. For Mongolia, there was some strong support, including knowledge of ADS scholars being elevated to senior levels of government. However, this was tempered by knowledge of some ADS scholars being denied progression due to Mongolia’s small, under-resourced and rigidly hierarchical public service. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a yellow TL rating for Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of ADS scholars returning reform minded or having the confidence and skills to drive reform, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the indicator of success for China and great attribution for Mongolia. This differentiation was due to a variety of factors. For China, there was some evidence to suggest ADS scholars were returning with the confidence to discuss issues and suggest alternative approaches, based on open-minded and more worldly perspectives. However, the level to which the ADS scholars may then exercise and achieve reform depended largely on the ethos of their employer. This was perceived to be a major inhibitor for ADS scholars returning to China, where large government ministries often had bureaucratic processes that tended to smother opportunities for practicing reform-mindedness. For Mongolia, all ADS facilitators identified that the ADS program was producing scholars who returned with ideas for reform. While there was some admission that the opportunity for ADS scholars to exercise their initiative was sometimes limited and depended upon their influence through position or the atmospherics of their organisation, there was a strong belief that ADS scholars had made significant contributions to public and private sector
reform in Mongolia. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of ADS scholars returning to positions of authority to make their own systems adapt and work better, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated little attribution towards the indicator of success for China and moderate attribution for Mongolia. For China, there was little evidence to suggest ADS scholars were being recognised for their new knowledge and skills to then inform new policy and work systems. For Mongolia, ADS scholars seemed better placed to implement their own, improved systems in the workplace. However, there was a suggestion that this was more readily enjoyed by those at more senior levels in the Mongolian public service. Those who struggled to achieve higher positions were sometimes denied authority to exert change. This had also led to a number of ADS scholars choosing to move into private business which allowed them the freedom to capitalise on their new and own ways of doing things. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a yellow TL rating for Mongolia (Table 5.2).

**Question 4:** Do employers support returning scholars? How?

**Relevance to:** Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity

Theme 4: Institutional targeting and capacity building objectives

Indicators of success:

- Scholars return to a supportive work environment with a commitment to adopting strategies for utilising the graduate’s new knowledge, skills and qualifications
- Scholars are valued for their new skills and knowledge by employer/colleagues
- Scholars are able to use their new skills and knowledge in the work environment
- Scholars are utilising learning in various types of work
- Scholars are passing their new skills and knowledge to others
- Scholars are helped to address specific knowledge and skills gaps of the agency
- Scholars fulfilled all obligations to the employer and vice versa (e.g. contractual agreement, action plan, etc.)
- Access and commitment to further education and professional development opportunities
Australia Results

There was a lack of empirical knowledge by the Australia ADS facilitators of the support offered to, and expectations of and on, ADS scholars once they returned to their original place of employ. Indeed, many shared 2AF’s admission that he had ‘limited knowledge’ in the area and therefore ‘couldn’t vouch one way or the other’. This lack of empirical awareness was attributed by 2AF to the fact that ‘the focus on the needs of the agencies is more recent’ to the ADS design, given that ‘in the earlier years there were no action plans and direct connections between that and the objective of some agencies’. Regardless, analyses of indicators of success in this regard are important considerations and should not be ignored, particularly in understanding the implications for returning ADS scholars.

For the most part, 2AF believed that employers were supporting their ADS scholars as ‘they need those scholars, they need the qualifications they come back with and they do want to use them’. However, 2AF believed ‘the challenge often for them is that the AusAID programs tend to focus on supporting government agencies [which] do not pay nearly as much as the private sector and other UN agencies’. The result is ‘a great incentive for them to make things pleasant or meaningful for the ADS scholars through promotions and challenging tasks, otherwise they will lose them’ (2AF). 1AF agreed but qualified that ‘the form of support varies enormously between countries and programs and presumably different departments’. While ‘overall, in poorer countries, and even in China, the point of a scholarship is to increase the capacity of the government department by increasing the capacity of an individual’, 1AF maintained that ‘there are particular constraints on governance in these countries’ and ‘it is a little unreasonable for the department to make yet another investment in the scholar’. Despite this, 2AF confirmed that:

Over the years, AusAID has developed more targeted programs and focus on institutions that are able to utilise the students properly … it means AusAID has had a close look at organisations and some have provided them with extra support so they can have proper human resource plans. This is another important element of the success of the programs – sometimes other things have to go side by side with the scholarship program. In Mongolia, you have the short-term training to complement what happens.
A key strategy adopted by AusAID in recent years has been to introduce to some countries the requirement for targeted organisations to develop individual/agency action plans or work plans. The approach formalises expectations of both the organisation and the ADS scholar so that their skills and knowledge may best contribute to the needs and aspirations of both parties. The ADS program in Mongolia has adopted this approach, while China has not.

For Mongolia, 3AF felt that action plans were ‘a bloody good idea’ but was quick to warn that ‘AusAID is turning a blind eye to the implications of what these work plans mean’. 2AF made a similar assessment, claiming that ‘it’s not easy for the agencies to understand the purpose of these plans because we are then dealing with the restructuring in some of these agencies’ in order to properly apply them.

While 2AF did confirm that in some countries the ‘process was working well’, there was uncertainty ‘at this stage as to whether there has been significant monitoring or evaluation on how action plans have been applied’. This was largely put down to their relatively recent introduction. However, 3AF had a more negative view, claiming that he was ‘not aware of any of the action plans written two years ago being picked up by employees to see how they would make use of them’.

While it would appear that the Australian facilitators felt that there was room for much greater improvement in the management and application of action plans, 2AF reminded that:

We need to keep in mind that the action plan … doesn’t capture the totality of what ADS scholars will be doing when they come back. It might reflect a project that they want to carry out. We also have to keep in mind it keeps them focused on the study that they undertake but if things have changed and it is no longer appropriate to do that project then that does not mean they will not make a significant impact when they come back.

Despite various challenges for AusAID in facilitating the effective transition of ADS scholars and importing their new skills and knowledge into the organisation, 2AF provided the following broad assessment of returning ADS scholars and the program:

In my experience, there are plenty of instances where their return is eagerly awaited and they are given quite significant tasks. But I imagine
in other situations there is a bit of culture shock for them to go back and there is a process of assimilation. In the Mongolia program … there is some monitoring to ensure that students are assimilated and the knowledge that they have gained is properly utilised. That is why we have the contractor who monitors that type of activity. And if that doesn’t happen, then under the agreements they may not be treated as favourably in future years. But in my experience the institutions that are part of this arrangement in Mongolia and elsewhere are very keen – they want those students, they need those students and they will go out of their way to keep them and promote them.

2AF supported, in particular, the ADS program in countries like Mongolia where it was ‘strongly targeted towards certain institutions’ so that the managing contractor could ‘look at the performance of the institutions in meeting their obligations’ which ‘impacts on whether they get the guaranteed number of ADS scholars in the following year’.

**China Results**

Like her Australian counterparts, 1CF admitted having ‘limited exposure to returned scholars’ which prevented her from ‘making a proper assessment’. Nevertheless, 1CF was prepared to conclude that ‘generally employers are supportive’ but quick to add that such observation was ‘based on individual views rather than organisational views’.

4CF did provide a good example of one ADS scholar who returned with noticeably improved skills that resulted in considerable support from his employer through rapid promotion and further development within the Chinese public service:

One student from the Ministry of Water Resources studied a Masters of Arts in Water Resources in Australia. It was really relevant for his work. Before he left, he was just a normal officer but when he came back with a lot of relevant knowledge from Australia he was promoted very quickly to the Vice Chief of the Division. The department thought he was really professional so they gave him some projects to work on by himself … His leaders told us he had improved a lot after the study in Australia … and the leaders sent him to the Party School … especially to train future leaders … After the Party School study they often come back and are promoted very quickly again.

While it may be fair to view this as an exception, 4CF maintained that it was not uncommon for ADS scholars to be afforded greater opportunity to use and relay their knowledge and skills upon their return:
Because a lot of ADS scholars are selected very carefully by their organisation, when they come back the organisation will give them more chances to be the key staff relevant to their study program – to use their experience and try and get the knowledge from them and their study.

5CF made a similar assessment, using MOFCOM as an example:

ADS scholars are provided with a good chance from their ministry, for instance, some of them have been promoted or posted to a more important post … MOFCOM selects people who have worked for at least five years with the ministry, with good experience [and] with the potential for a bright future with MOFCOM [who] can contribute a lot to the ministry … MOFCOM definitely gives strong support to the fellows (sic) they select … ADS returnees have a stronger background for future selection compared to those who haven’t studied overseas … We try our best to … use their knowledge [and] link their efforts to development.

That organisations chose to invest in ADS scholars by allowing them to study overseas for an extended period to acquire greater skills, knowledge and qualifications provided motivation for employers to capitalise on their investment. 1CF concluded:

Certainly, in terms of returning scholars … there is a direct benefit in that they are getting a highly skilled person back into their ministries to ideally work on what they have just come back from studying. There have been some instances where that hasn’t always occurred and that is to do with the ministries themselves.

Indeed, 4CF noted that ADS scholars were also often inclined to seek to go on to further study at the completion of their studies under ADS:

ADS scholars often try to extend their study in Australia. A lot of students after they finish their Masters degree then try to directly do a doctoral degree. They call me and ask to extend their time in Australia but they have to come back because they signed a contract with their organisation.

For whatever reason, it is clear that many scholars develop a desire or commitment to access further education after having completed the ADS program. Whether it be for continued professional development or simply a way to extend their time in Australia, the message is a positive one.
Mongolia Results

The Mongolia ADS facilitators displayed some awareness of the types of support strategies (and challenges) experienced by returning ADS scholars. While much of this understanding was linked to the more recent introduction of work plans in Mongolia, there was an understanding of a broad range of issues affecting returned ADS scholars and their employers.

Despite the view ‘AusAID and employers could do more’ to support and utilise returning ADS scholars, there was acknowledgment that ‘if you compare the situation to other countries you’d think Mongolia did a great deal’ (1MF). This was partly attributed to the organisational culture in Mongolia where ‘the size of the ministries – 60 to 120 people in a department – creates certain opportunities for returned scholars because they are known’ and ‘are not in massive institutions where everyone has a Masters degree’ (1MF). Indeed, 3MF concluded that many ADS scholars in Mongolia were considered ‘experts in their ministry’. These views were balanced however with admissions that ‘some students do complain and think their employers could do more’ and ‘feel a little frustrated that they are not getting utilised as much as they could’ (1MF). Nevertheless, the perception of IMF was shared by many of the Mongolia ADS facilitators that the returned ADS scholars were ‘definitely valued by their employers’ for the new knowledge and skills that they could bring to their organisation.

The adoption of work plans was considered one part of the support strategy in Mongolia that, while still relatively new, appeared to be working well. IMF summarised:

One aspect is the work plans that ADS scholars develop and have signed off by CaBSAF and the ministries. The plan is to work on some specific issues in their study so that when they return they have a specific policy issue that they can work on … What we are finding is that this is a great initiative of the program. It looks at some specific outcomes linked to the ADS scholars’ studies and applies new knowledge to the ministries. It also encourages the ministries to think about how they will utilise the new skills and integrate them into their work priorities.
However, the work plans alone may not be a panacea, with 1MF admitting that funding to implement the work plans posed a considerable challenge to their ongoing utility and success:

We’ve heard stories that there is a cost to implementing these work plans and they need resources to do that and they are not always secured. We need to look at this.

According to 1MF, identifying skills gaps within Mongolian Government agencies was another strategy being employed by AusAID to encourage greater targeting and post-ADS support for scholars:

We are encouraging government agencies to do skills gap assessments, similar to the Australian Government process. We have encouraged the development of frameworks but that’s the responsibility of the Mongolia Government.

AusAID’s strategy in Mongolia aimed to assist government agencies to identify skills gaps within their organisations so that they may identify needs that would, in turn, foster greater efforts to support returning ADS scholars and utilise their knowledge and skills more effectively. The strategy relies on organisations finding the need to take ownership of such frameworks within their human resource development structures. That is why, according to 2MF, CaBSAF ‘really wants Mongolia to be the owners of the ADS program and experience all the stages of the selection process and priority setting’. Early signs are positive, with 3MF concluding that:

When CaBSAF started we conducted a day and a half workshop on human resource development to identify priority areas for training and human resources. Following the workshop, we conducted a survey among our seven target ministries to identify their human resource priorities and that’s where this process started. We now believe these ministries have the capacity to identify their own needs and … bring the priorities to us.

However, at the time of interviewing, the strategy was still considered to be embryonic. Nevertheless, the introduction and ongoing implementation of skills gap assessments within the ministries support a degree of sustainability that may be attributed to the ADS program and will invariably impact on the human resources development of those organisations.
Also in early development are meetings by CaBSAF six months after the return of ADS scholars. According to 2MF:

Graduates meet with us six months after they come back or email a report to tell us what they did, what new presentations they shared with their colleagues or what new skills they have acquired. This is just starting.

The meetings are supported by interviews with the direct supervisor of the returned ADS scholar as well as the State Secretary within the relevant government agency. According to 2MF, the meetings and interviews are a chance for:

… both governments to see how much achievements the ADS scholars make and, more importantly, to see how much the target ministries have benefited from the new skills and experiences of those individuals … If the individual does not come back to the ministry or the ministry does not properly use the ADS scholars as a good resource, both are not good outcomes.

Early signs are positive, with 2MF revealing that the State Secretaries from the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Social Welfare ‘highly valued the new skills of the graduates who are using their new skills in their work’. Indeed, 2MF confirmed that ‘they even named some new policies and strategic papers which they had developed in the ministry since their return’. 2MF knew this of ‘a couple of people’ including ‘a guy from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who compared international experiences to see which were applicable to the Mongolian situation’.

However, 2MF also acknowledged difficulties for returning ADS scholars in applying their new ideas once they had returned:

I noticed that everyone is full of new ideas but not many know how to implement them because they need to find now the next key to implement those ideas. First, they need to discuss them with their ministries very well, and secondly, they need very good team members which is lacking in this country … ADS scholars get much more experience in teamwork, group work, working on their assignments.

2MF’s observation certainly points to the advantage of building a critical mass of returned ADS scholars within ministries so that they may generate momentum to introduce change. This is discussed in more detail under Question 5 of this chapter.

In Mongolia, there have been some problems in resettling ADS scholars into relevant positions within the ministries. This has even seen some ADS scholars encouraged to
move to positions out of government and into international development organisations, where it was perceived they would provide a greater contribution to the development of Mongolia. 2MF explained:

For example, the Ministry of Nature and Environment did not have many candidates with CaBSAF but they did have quite a few ADS graduates before and most of them are now working with international organisations on different projects. Ministry people say the international projects are much more important than their work so that’s why they are using their human resources in those projects.

It would appear that these early resettling problems of ADS graduates in some Mongolian ministries have since improved, with CaBSAF boasting a 100 per cent success rate on returned ADS scholars to Mongolia and their original place of employ.

There was some evidence to suggest that ADS scholars from Mongolia were relaying their knowledge and skills acquired in Australia on to others. This included both required briefings upon their return ‘to their supervisor and State Secretary about what they have learned’ (2MF), and non-required but employee-supported briefings such as ‘short presentations to staff members’ (2MF), ‘seminars and workshops on what they studied in Australia’ (3MF) and the placement of ‘ADS scholar presentations on the Cabinet Secretariat website’ (2MF), as well as voluntary briefings such as ‘going to universities to give a lecture on certain topics’ (2MF). While each of these initiatives were considered to be ‘a good way to share information’, their frequency was low (2MF).

There was some recognition that the skills and knowledge acquired by ADS scholars were being utilised at a strategic level by the Mongolian ministries. According to 3MF, this included supporting opportunities to better communicate with international counterparts in a variety of ways:

Ministries have higher expectations from their ADS scholars and they require certain things from them … They support the ministry to develop project proposals and also their English language is very useful to translate, to gain information, to work with consultants or international teams.
There were also examples of ADS scholars returning and implementing their own improvements to existing systems, based on their experiences of living and studying in Australia. 3MF provided a good example:

I met a guy from the Ministry of Justice who … noticed a big gap between what is studied in Australia and what is studied in Mongolia. So he wanted to develop handbooks for lawyers in Mongolia, mainly for retraining to provide updated information, and he thought there was a need for more short-term training for lawyers in Mongolia … So he was very enthusiastic to do this … That’s only one example but there are many more.

**Summary: Question 4**

On average, there was little to moderate support by ADS facilitators from Australia, China and Mongolia that *institutional targeting and capacity building objectives* (Theme 4) were having an attributable impact on *strengthening human resource capacity* (Objective 1). It was difficult for the ADS facilitators to comment on the ways in which human resource capacity was strengthened once ADS scholars returned to their original place of employ. This was largely due to lack of adequate knowledge of the experiences of returned ADS scholars and their employers’ strategies for re-assimilating and utilising them in the workplace. This was not unexpected given the rationale for this study. Where attribution was given, the ADS facilitator responses were often based on isolated examples or general statements that sometimes made it difficult to confirm any broader existence of the given *indicators of success*.

In terms of ADS scholars returning to a supportive work environment with a commitment to adopting strategies for utilising the graduate’s new knowledge, skills and qualifications, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and Mongolia. For China, there was some recognition that scholars were being supported given their value to the organisation. Indeed, there was the general perception that if ADS scholars were not supported and motivated upon their return then the public sector ran the risk of losing them to the private sector and NGOs. Rapid promotion, further professional development and placing ADS scholars in key roles to impart knowledge and skills were some strategies of sponsoring organisations. For Mongolia, action plans or work plans were regarded as a positive approach to formalising expectations of both
the organisation and the ADS scholar so that their skills and knowledge may best contribute to the needs and aspirations of both parties. However, the dedication and capacity of organisations to abide and fully implement them were questioned. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of ADS scholars being valued for their new skills and knowledge, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and Mongolia. For China, there was a perceived motivation by employers to use the knowledge and experience of ADS scholars to the advantage of the organisation. However, there was also admission that this was not always fully capitalised. For Mongolia, there was the perception that many ADS graduates were considered experts by their organisation. However, some ADS scholars were also known to feel undervalued through resettling problems, a sense of underutilisation or even discrimination, either through jealousy or convenience by senior colleagues and peers. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of ADS scholars being able to use their new skills and knowledge in the work environment, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and Mongolia. For China, the return of scholars was generally perceived to be eagerly awaited and sometimes resulted in responsibility to demonstrate new skills and knowledge through significant work tasks. For Mongolia, monitoring by CaBSAF on the assimilation of ADS scholars back into their organisation and the utility of action plans helped to ensure greater application of acquired skills and knowledge. Targeted institutional agreements tied to guaranteed numbers of scholarships had also helped to encourage ministries to think about how they would utilise and integrate ADS scholars’ skills into their work priorities. Skills gap analyses were justifying effective integration of new skills and knowledge within organisations. Funding and resources continued to be a challenge though, particularly for the adequate implementation of action plans. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of ADS scholars utilising their learning in various types of work, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and Mongolia. For China, there was knowledge of some ADS
scholars being placed in key policy and project roles where new learning could be utilised. Most responses identified ADS scholars using their refined research and writing skills to access information from a variety of sources, both locally and internationally, and produce reports and other publications. Broadened knowledge and awareness of up-to-date research and world views, as well as English language skills and Western styles of writing, played an important role. As a result, there were various examples where ADS scholars were given significant tasks and special projects to complete on behalf of their organisations. For Mongolia, the utility of action plans saw some monitoring to ensure the learning of ADS scholars was implemented. ADS scholars’ learning was influencing specific work outcomes, including strategic policy, and the dissemination of knowledge throughout ministries. The ministries were also thinking about how they could better utilise ADS scholars’ learning and integrate it into particular work priorities. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of ADS scholars passing their new skills and knowledge to others, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. For China, there was evidence to suggest some employers were capitalising on their investment in ADS scholars by encouraging them to share their new skills and knowledge with colleagues, placing them in key positions relevant to their study. For Mongolia, CaBSAF’s focus on improved monitoring was contributing to ADS scholars and their supervisors reporting on strategies that better enabled the transfer of new skills and knowledge. ADS scholars were known to be transferring new skills and knowledge through presentations, briefings, seminars, workshops, lectures and strategic papers. However, the frequency of such sharing remained low and the skills and support to successfully impart new skills and knowledge also remained a challenge. Other inhibiting factors included vocational commitments upon the return of scholars which prevented them from finding the time and opportunity to impart their learning, the organisational culture towards learning, the position of the ADS scholar, and the expectations of management that they relay their learning to others. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).
In terms of ADS scholars being helped to address specific knowledge and skills gaps of the agency, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated little attribution towards the indicator of success for China and moderate attribution for Mongolia. For China, there was little evidence to suggest any formal strategies for actively addressing specific knowledge and skills gaps of agencies. There was peripheral acknowledgment that ADS scholars were being carefully selected to provide direct benefit to their organisation. For Mongolia, CaBSAF was actively encouraging government agencies to undertake skills gap assessments. While frameworks were not fully developed, ministries were identifying their own skills needs and suggesting priority areas to inform ADS selection criteria. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a yellow TL rating for Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of ADS scholars fulfilling all obligations to the employer and vice versa, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated little attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. For China, there was little evidence of obligation beyond the usual agreement requiring ADS scholars to return to their employer for at least two years after having completed their scholarship. For Mongolia, there was evidence of action plans stipulating certain work expectations between employers and ADS scholars. However, their full and successful implementation was often questioned and the need for greater monitoring and evaluation recommended. There was concern that the purpose of such agreements was not always fully understood and their proper implementation required certain restructuring within agencies. Moreover, organisational restructuring and changing work priorities over the course of an ADS candidate’s study period meant that their original agreements sometimes became obsolete. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of ADS scholars’ access and commitment to further education and professional development opportunities, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated little attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. It was interesting to note that, while this indicator was derived from AusAID literature, there was very little attribution by ADS facilitators towards it. For China, only two ADS facilitators attributed that ADS scholars were provided with some access or had developed a commitment to further education and professional
development. However, there was also acknowledgment that, while ADS scholars may be committed to further education and professional development, they were not always provided access to it. This included some ADS scholars wanting to continue on to the PhD level but denied the opportunity by their employer due to the significant investment already afforded to them. It should be noted that many of these were ADS scholars nearing the completion of their scholarship who wanted to extend their stay in Australia. For Mongolia, there were only broad assumptions that ADS scholars would be more inclined to undertake further education and professional development, though funding restrictions of government agencies and individuals were recognised as inhibitors. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).

**Question 5:** Do returned scholars assist one another? How?

**Relevance to:** Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity

**Theme 5: ‘Critical mass’ theory**

**Indicators of success:**
- A critical mass of well-trained and capable local leaders
- The effective use of critical mass (e.g. within the organisation or alumni network for mentoring, discussion of ideas and ways forward)
- Building of good people-to-people links

**Australia Results**

The notion of cultivating a critical mass of well-trained and capable local leaders in China and Mongolia was advocated by the Australia ADS facilitators. However, 3AF admitted that he found it ‘hard to say’ whether or not critical mass was actually occurring as he ‘didn’t see enough of ADS scholars on the ground or on the job’. 1AF agreed, maintaining that the way in which ADS scholars assisted and supported one another once they had returned to country was ‘extremely variable – in some countries not at all and other countries quite a lot’.

Nevertheless, 3AF ‘did think there was camaraderie through a sense of shared experience’ among scholars which encouraged and affected their working together and supporting one another. 3AF did qualify that in his experience this was ‘much more a social cohesion than a professional cohesion’ and ‘if you wanted a professional cohesion then you’d have to have a separate strategy, and fund and
manage that strategy, to make it work’. Using Mongolia as an example, 3AF identified various issues that were affecting the cultivation of critical mass among ADS scholars and between ministries:

The problem is that I know four guys in the last two years that have gone back to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but once they go back … they are in one sense competitors for promotion, overseas’ preferment and these sorts of things. Whereas the gang in the Ministry of Finance, they have worked together and there is a sense of using their shared experience. What you also get is more of the people that went to one uni … sticking together.

Despite this, 2AF identified that ‘the only place where I have seen evidence of critical mass is in Mongolia because of its outstanding alumni association that exists without any support’. While in recent years the Mozzies have received some financial support for activities from DEEWR, as well as from BHP Billiton for the development of their website (www.mozzies.mn), for many years they developed themselves ‘without ever asking for support’ (2AF) into a strong and successful alumni association with membership that now spans the public, private and non-government sectors at most levels. 2AF explained:

It is so effective that they support each other not only in Mongolia but also when they are studying in Australia. Normally the alumni is something that you join after you have graduated.

For China, 2AF suggested that ‘it’s really not possible to do some of the things being done in Mongolia’ as ‘China is too big a country and the numbers are just not there’. 2AF maintained that ‘you certainly can’t talk about critical mass in the same way’ and ‘it would be far more difficult to suggest that any one agency has benefited significantly from critical mass as you may just have one person coming back to an agency’. Rather, the concept was more appropriately conceptualised in terms of it being ‘a much more general issue about having a number of scholars returning who have studied in fields that are consistent with AusAID’s country strategy priorities’ and finding ways to link them in the work context (2AF).

Nevertheless, 1AF maintained that ‘linkages between alumni do seem to increase the benefits’ and therefore AusAID was ‘trying in most countries to set up alumni associations’. Perhaps in China, the development of any alumni group solely dedicated to linking ADS scholars for the effective use of critical mass is too narrow
in focus. There may be value for AusAID to consider a broader strategy linking ADS alumni with other Australian university alumni through already established groups such as the growing Australia China Alumni Association (www.austchina alumni.org).

However, 3AF recognised that the utility of alumni alone to cultivate and effectively use critical mass was not enough. 1AF agreed, maintaining that:

> There is a conceptual issue here – scholars may have studied at different times at different universities but there isn’t a link here other than them being funded from the same source. There isn’t really any connection.

While 3AF admitted that building critical mass was ‘a slow and diffuse process’, he also maintained that in order for critical mass to work, the current design of the ADS program needed to change:

> I don’t think the design of the program as it stands can expect to achieve critical mass unless you do something about these work plans and drawing the managers of the scholars into the overall process, not just in selection but more particularly into the business of reintegration and making use of ADS scholars’ skills … to make more effective use of the scholars when they come back … more effort on their reintegration in their ministries, more effort on drawing in ministry managers into the overall process – making them part of the process rather than observers of the process.

3AF believed that the success of critical mass relied upon the development of ownership of the concept by managers and ADS scholars within and between organisations.

**China Results**

There was general recognition from ADS facilitators in China that the concept of critical mass was not being achieved. 4CF admitted that she ‘hadn’t seen any evidence of critical mass’ throughout her tenure with the ADS program and 2CF claimed that it simply ‘was not possible to achieve critical mass in China’ unless AusAID perhaps ‘focused on a specific sector such as health’ and implemented certain strategies to achieve it. While 5CF claimed that ‘we try our best to link ADS scholars to use their knowledge’, he believed that ‘annually 24 scholars was not enough’ and there was a ‘need to enlarge the program’ if a successful critical mass was to be achieved in China.
At the institutional level, 5CF did believe that ‘in a small ministry it is quite easy for ADS scholars to give each other a hand but in the large ministry it is more difficult’. However, 5CF also saw benefit in cultivating a critical mass of well-trained and capable local leaders ‘in the western region of China’ so that they may bring ‘strong knowledge’ and ‘a strong, clear purpose’ to ‘link with MOFCOM and other provinces’ and achieve shared development goals.

2CF did identify an example of ‘two women in Tibet who were ADS scholars and supporting each other in their work’. However, the women revealed to 2CF that due to a lack of appropriate ‘English language support in Tibet where the English language is not so good’, there was ‘low participation in the ADS program from Tibet’ and therefore an inability to build any critical mass.

1CF did acknowledge that, while she ‘couldn’t give examples’ of critical mass in the working context, she did believe that there were examples of ADS scholars in Mongolia and China ‘supporting each other, particularly where there are a number of scholars in one ministry and they studied together’. However, 1CF did admit she had ‘mixed views’ on building a critical mass of ADS scholars in China to drive change. She did not believe that this should be limited to ADS scholars alone:

In terms of drivers for change … it could be internationally educated scholars or those educated to an international standard, and those generally younger, allowing for generational change to occur … It’s not just the ADS program – there are a number of donors providing scholarships as well as the Chinese Government. It’s not realistic to expect ADS to create that critical mass.

**Mongolia Results**

There was agreement among the Mongolia ADS facilitators that critical mass was beginning to take shape. This was partly attributed to the Mozzie network and also to AusAID’s own strategies to maintain links between generations of ADS scholars and to consciously build critical mass within Mongolian Government ministries. 1MF explained:

For the generation that studied in Australia in the mid-1990s, there’s a strong support network there. The next generation that has been supported through CaBSAF has also been nurtured as a network and now we are trying to merge the two generations so that they can provide more support as the older generation now occupies some senior
positions in government … We therefore have critical mass theory in the design of CaBSAF. The idea is that we have seven target ministries and if we offer two scholarships a year for each ministry, by the end of the life of the program we would have developed a critical mass. When you look at the size of these ministries – with 60 to 100 people – if you train ten of those people that is actually quite a significant contribution.

1CF made a similar assessment, maintaining that ‘by the end of a five-year period you are talking about ten or so people within a single ministry’ which represents ‘quite a large number for a ministry in Mongolia’. Moreover, 1CF pointed out that ‘in Mongolia, ADS is not the only scholarship program; you also get scholarships from the IMF and Japan’ which has the potential to feed into any critical mass of ADS scholars with other internationally educated individuals.

2MF was able to provide some examples of how critical mass was working in Mongolia, including ‘at the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour’ where ‘three female ADS scholars regularly shared information and thoughts with each other’ and found it ‘helpful to work as a team rather than just being by themselves’ in implementing new ideas. 2MF also noted that during ‘CaBSAF meetings’ and through other ‘informal discussions’, ADS scholars revealed that they had found it ‘nice to meet with each other and find out who was doing what so that they could fit them in with their work’. 2MF recalled ‘three ADS scholars wanting to organise a seminar on English language learning methodology’ given that ‘English was one of the priority issues for the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture’ and Mongolia ‘now had very well qualified people in that field … whose skills need to be used’.

3MF supported the notion of critical mass to influence change in Mongolia, recognising that ‘one person trying to make change is different to ten people trying to make change’. However, 3MF was careful to validate that while ‘to make change you need critical mass … you also need ADS returnees to be promoted’ so that they may have the authority and influence to make that change. 3MF believed that ‘it was happening’ and that ‘a large quantity of graduates, not necessarily all from ADS but people with overseas study, were assisting one another to bring about change’ and ‘the changes have been dramatic’. 3MF highlighted two examples, including ‘a program for health systems on quality care which was adopted from Australia in some way through ADS graduates and Australian consultants’, as well as ‘some laws
partially adopted from Australia’ through the combined efforts of returned ADS graduates.

2MF also supported critical mass, arguing that ‘it is a good thing as it means you have common ground and have a better understanding which can help with work contacts’. Indeed, 4MF revealed how ADS scholars who had since reached higher levels within the Mongolian public service were proving ‘advantageous’ for other ADS graduates, including ‘the current Deputy Minister of Finance’ and ‘the State Secretary of Finance who went to Australia under an AusAID scholarship’, as well as ‘the Minister for Foreign Affairs’ who was also the ‘President of the Mozzies’. These contacts proved invaluable for graduates to ‘organise things, make calls and send emails’ to senior contacts within the Mongolian public service.

Summary: Question 5

On average, there was little to moderate support by ADS facilitators from Australia, China and Mongolia that the ADS program was creating a critical mass (Theme 5) of scholars that was having an attributable impact on strengthening human resource capacity (Objective 1). While ADS facilitators could see merit in the concept of developing a critical mass of well-trained and capable local leaders, its achievement in practice was considered a challenge without a dedicated strategy with appropriate funding and management. There was some evidence of camaraderie among ADS scholars which fostered collaboration and support, though this was generally considered more of a social rather than professional cohesion.

In terms of the ADS program producing a critical mass of well-trained and capable local leaders, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated little attribution towards the indicator of success for China and moderate attribution for Mongolia. This differentiation was due to a variety of factors. For China, there was little evidence to support the existence of critical mass. China’s massive land and population size meant that the small number of returning ADS scholars inhibited the opportunity for its formation. A targeted strategy focused on a specific sector (such as health) with an expanded number of scholars over an extended period and within a particular ministry or region was the only way ADS facilitators considered critical mass could develop. For Mongolia, there was some evidence to suggest that a critical
mass of well-trained and capable local leaders was beginning to take shape. This was largely attributed to: (i) the efforts of the Mozzies in building and maintaining close networks of returned ADS scholars; (ii) the strategy of AusAID to maintain links between generations of ADS scholars; (iii) the return of most ADS scholars to the centralised hub of Ulaanbaatar; (iv) the higher number of ADS scholars in proportion to ministry populations; and (v) the reputation of the Mozzies as highly educated community members with leadership capabilities. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a yellow TL rating for Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of evidence of the effective use of critical mass, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated little attribution towards the indicator of success for China and moderate attribution for Mongolia. For China, there were only some isolated examples of small numbers of ADS scholars working together, supporting one another and achieving change. For Mongolia, there was some evidence to suggest ADS scholars were sharing information and thoughts with one another, working in teams and implementing new ideas at work, meeting and finding ways to use other ADS scholars in their work, organising seminars together and practicing new and collective skills, and using the authority and influence of other ADS graduates to drive reform and access senior contacts within the Mongolian public service. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a yellow TL rating for Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of the ADS program building good people-to-people links, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated little attribution towards the indicator of success for China and great attribution for Mongolia. For China, the small pool of ADS scholars across China and, in particular, the lack of any alumni network were perceived to significantly disadvantage the building of good people-to-people links. There were only some isolated examples of ADS scholars maintaining effective links with one another. For Mongolia, the Mozzie alumni association was considered highly successful in building people-to-people links across the public, private and non-government sectors at most levels. This included providing unique support, links and access to contacts in both Mongolia and Australia during and after an ADS scholar’s study period. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 5.2).
Question 6: How do you think the ADS program helps to alleviate poverty?

Relevance to: Objective 2: To achieve poverty alleviation

Indicator of success:
• Scholars working on poverty reduction policies and programs

Australia Results

While 1AF purported that ‘all of AusAID’s work is directed towards alleviating poverty and achieving sustainable development’, each of the Australia ADS facilitators shared the view that the program only achieved this in a ‘very indirect way’. Nevertheless, 1AF explained the theory behind AusAID’s agenda through the ADS program:

The ADS program contributes to alleviating poverty by improving governance in two ways – in the technical sense and also in the liberal democratic sense. That’s the theory but the problem is we haven’t got any good monitoring or evaluation mechanisms that actually demonstrate how it does that.

2AF supported a broad approach to poverty alleviation through improved governance, identifying that much more may be done through a committed reform-minded government, to which the ADS program was perceived to be attributing:

I would think especially with the more targeted programs it tends to be more indirect, which is not to say that it diminishes the impact on poverty. You can have a much bigger impact on poverty if you have a key reform-minded ministry that takes poverty alleviation seriously than if you have a handful of people go into the villages doing things at a village level.

2AF used Mongolia as an example to explain how the ADS program was helping to inject reform-minded people into government so that the implementation of poverty-related programs may be more successfully accepted and implemented:

Mongolia provides a good example where the strategy was to focus on a range of agencies that were quite critical to the reform process within the government that ultimately dealt with the alleviation of poverty. So if you can get reform-minded people in those agencies then they can implement those poverty programs more effectively. That’s the sort of impact you get.

However, 2AF recognised that the degree to which the ADS program acted to alleviate poverty was variable and could be viewed as having between ‘more direct
through to more indirect’ influence. 2AF acknowledged that ‘you can think of many fields’ that would have a direct or indirect influence on poverty alleviation and suggested that ‘one would have to look at individual cases and programs’ in order to assess that influence. While such an assessment is beyond the scope of this study, it was hoped that some examples of how ADS scholars may be helping to alleviate poverty in their respective countries might be highlighted given AusAID’s objective in this regard.

3AF was more critical of the ADS program in having any influence at all on poverty alleviation. 3AF ‘was not sure that the ADS program does in any specific sense’ help to do so and ‘could see no direct link to poverty alleviation’. 3AF was ‘not even aware of any scholars that have got caught up in the area’ and could only think of ‘a few ADS scholars who have worked in the health area to improve health and health management’ but felt that any influence would be ‘very indirect’, even questioning ‘what the selected ministries were doing to alleviate poverty’.

**China Results**

Like their Australian counterparts, the China ADS facilitators supported AusAID’s broad approach. While 1CF confessed that the ADS program was ‘not that defined’ in terms of directly targeting poverty alleviation, she did acknowledge that the program was ‘providing an enabling environment … relevant to countries like China and Mongolia’ by producing ‘scholars who have a leadership role in government … with the potential to advocate on behalf of the poor’. 1CF attributed much of this to ADS scholars receiving an ‘international education and understanding of how to analyse problems and deal with them’ and believed that ‘ultimately, that’s where you’ll get broad-based growth which will naturally alleviate the poverty’ – ‘an approach which only targets a poor population in a certain area may not give you the greatest gains in poverty alleviation’. Nevertheless, 1CF did believe that the ‘most direct impact would be from those who return to the provincial government level and have a role in development programs in those provinces’.

While 2CF believed that any attribution to the ADS program helping to alleviate poverty was ‘quite a stretch’ as ‘it was quite indirect’, he was able to identify some examples of where ADS scholars were contributing, including ‘in Tibet where they
are working on development cooperation programs and encouraging donors’ in this area.

4CF also understood that ‘some returnees are involved in aid programs that are connected with poverty alleviation goals’. 3CF made a similar assessment stating that ‘ADS scholars often end up in international departments and deal with donors that sometimes implement programs involving poverty alleviation objectives’. 3CF also believed that ADS scholars ‘learning about international experience’ made them ‘better able to deal with donors’.

An important consideration identified by 1CF, 2CF, 3CF and 4CF was that the ADS program in China was ‘purposefully spread out amongst the ministries and amongst the provinces’ (2CF), ‘allocating half of the positions to the poorer western areas’ and ‘half to the central level ministries’ (3CF). There was also ‘usually a 50:50 split between men and women’ and ‘a tendency to push for people doing public administration programs or governance’ so that they ‘might support AusAID’s program objectives such as in health and the environment’ (2CF).

The deliberate ‘emphasis on providing 50 per cent of scholarships to the provincial western areas’ (1CF) was clearly supported by the China ADS facilitators, including 4CF:

> We have ADS scholars from really poor areas like Ningxia and Gansu and Qinghai … After they come back they know the advanced systems of Australia and … they use their knowledge when they make policy for the poor areas.

1CF also identified AusAID’s *pro-poor* approach towards development in China, using the ADS program as its conduit:

> If you have a better-educated, human resource base and provide a focus mainly on government then presumably they are coming back with different approaches to development. And most of the programs are looking at an integrated approach to poverty alleviation, so not just a *pro-growth* approach to development – development for economic growth – but a *pro-poor* approach to development – looking at whether or not your policies are also to the best benefit of the poor, targeting the poor. Otherwise China’s focus on industry development in eastern China might not have an impact on poor ethnic minorities living in western China.
5CF observed China’s own approach to reducing poverty and how the ADS program complemented that strategy:

We have changed our mind on the reduction of poverty … knowledge is more important than food. We have a saying in China, ‘To keep the good mind is much better than the good car’. If we continue the ADS program we will have a lot of rich persons in their minds … It’s like a big snowball that will become bigger and bigger. It can have a strong impact on poverty reduction in the future. This is the philosophy.

Though not always directly geared towards poverty alleviation intervention, the ADS program in China was perceived by the ADS facilitators to be assisting in ways that could be attributed to helping the poor.

**Mongolia Results**

The Mongolia ADS facilitators identified ‘an indirect contribution’ (1MF) by the ADS program to helping to alleviate poverty. This contribution was attributed to the influence that ADS scholars could have on improving the policy of government. 1MF explained:

The contribution comes in policy … where ADS scholars can work on programs for development, pro-poor policies, look at long-term sustainable development, economic development, contribute to better human rights … government policy is about poverty reduction … so if you have better policy making then hopefully they will be contributing to poverty reduction.

1MF noted that ‘Mongolia does have significant poverty and development challenges and is a long way from becoming a middle-income country’. She states that, while ‘typically the scholar recipients are not the poor, they are already in a relatively privileged position even though government salaries are low’. 1MF believed that it was primarily through improved government policy decision making that the greatest impact on poverty reduction may be made.

2MF agreed when she stated ‘I think in the long term we would expect better policy from the government ministries as they have better human resources’. 3MF made a similar observation:

It’s my understanding that one of the reasons for the poverty problem is because of the poor policy or management of the government … So if
people study public policy and management maybe there will be a solution for this in the future.

Importantly, 2MF identified the importance of ADS scholars returning to the university sector and their ability to influence Mongolia’s younger generation:

If ADS graduates pass on their knowledge and skills in universities … by using their own personal skills they can make some contribution to poverty alleviation and get the younger generation to think in new ways and of new ideas about issues which we have limited knowledge in.

It would appear that such knowledge transfer is being achieved. 2MF maintained that ‘ADS scholars are preparing policy papers and drafting laws’ and ‘even if they are not policy makers straightaway, they have seen what’s happening in Australia in their sector and they know the weaknesses in Mongolia’. 4MF supported this when he stated that, ‘a lot of the work of ADS scholars helps Mongolia’s development and economic growth, which definitely in some way, directly and indirectly, influences poverty’. 3MF concluded that ‘there are a number of ADS scholars working with international organisations on poverty alleviation’ and, while ‘they may not develop the policies themselves, they influence policy development in Mongolia and often provide direct support for poverty alleviation’.

In addition, 3MF identified how the ‘ADS program also helps families to earn more and support the family on their return’. This included spouses who were often able to gain valuable international work experience and English language skills in Australia which improved their own employment prospects upon returning to Mongolia.

**Summary: Question 6**

On average, there was moderate support by ADS facilitators from Australia, China and Mongolia that the ADS program was having an attributable impact in achieving poverty alleviation (Objective 2). Recognition of contribution was usually described as ‘indirect’ and involving ADS scholars influencing policy that would positively impact on the poor in some way. The potential impact of this influence was considered worthwhile and even more desirable than direct poverty reduction programs at the local level, given the potential to make large-scale change through improved governance and higher level policy reform.
In terms of ADS scholars working on poverty reduction policies and programs, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and Mongolia. For China, the ADS program was not considered primary in helping to alleviate poverty. However, a number of examples were identified where ADS scholars were contributing to poverty reduction policies and programs. ADS scholars’ international education, their ability to analyse problems and find solutions, and their leadership in government meant they were better equipped to potentially advocate on behalf of the poor. The international experience obtained by ADS scholars was also considered an advantage in dealing with donors working on poverty alleviation programs. The return of ADS scholars to various ministries and provinces, including the poorer western regions of China, and the deliberate push for applicants in public administration or governance in areas such as health and the environment contributed to the likelihood of ADS scholars working on policies and programs with poverty reduction outcomes. For Mongolia, the ADS program’s contribution towards poverty alleviation was also considered indirect. However, the work of ADS scholars was considered to be helping Mongolia’s development and economic growth, which directly and indirectly influenced poverty alleviation. Contribution was attributed to the influence that ADS scholars were having on improved government policies and programs. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).

**Question 7:** How do you think the ADS program helps to achieve sustainable development?

**Relevance to:** Objective 3: To achieve sustainable development

**Indicators of success:**
- Supporting improvements in governance
- Training of local people in skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership

**Australia Results**

Such is the breadth of the definition of *sustainable development* that ADS facilitators in Australia struggled to reason how the ADS program contributed to it. For 2AF, the notion ‘ultimately came back to what the organisations were doing, where ADS scholars were employed and how they helped with the work of those organisations’. According to 2AF ‘it’s such a broad term that people going back to the private sector
are also part of sustainable development – you do need a strong private sector in these places too’. As a consequence, 2AF ‘could not think of too many activities where ADS scholars wouldn’t contribute to sustainable development’, particularly in terms of supporting improvements in governance and receiving the skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership.

For 3AF, the ADS program contributed to sustainable development ‘only in an indirect sense’ and by providing scholars with the necessary awareness to question and resolve domestic development issues based on their experience of what constituted public debate elsewhere around the world. 3AF saw value in ADS scholars progressing development by using current debates to inform and guide their own challenges.

Interestingly, 1AF described the contribution of the ADS program as having a ‘ratchet effect’ on improving governance and achieving sustainable development over the long term:

> Good governance can’t really go backwards except in the case of coups and wars … That ‘ratchet effect’ is what the sustainable development side of ADS is. Once you improve governance, even if the ADS scholar is dead and buried, the improved governance, the improved systems, the improved expectations and improved institutions, in terms of rules of the game in the countries, will carry on.

The ADS program was perceived to be part of a long-term strategy to improve and sustain good governance within the targeted country. The strategy goes beyond the development of the individual and, in the words of 3AF, ‘is another piece of the jigsaw’ in supporting broader improvements in governance.

**China Results**

The China ADS facilitators also found it a challenge to attribute how the ADS program was helping to achieve sustainable development. 2CF admitted that ‘ADS is very worthwhile but it is very difficult to link it closely to sustainable development’ and any attempt to do so would be ‘a little bit of a stretch’.

Nevertheless, the perception was held by 4CF and the other China ADS facilitators that ‘ADS students study in areas that will help China shape sustainable
development’ and that ‘the ADS program is supported widely by the Chinese Government’ for this reason. Indeed, 5CF revealed in his role as a Chinese Government representative that:

It is very, very important to continue the ADS program. Returnees provide their knowledge through their work for practical and social development. They provide a linkage for practical development in different sectors and different areas of China. The ADS program provides a strong base for sustainable development in China.

1CF also shared this view, maintaining that ‘ADS scholars are coming back with the capacity to analyse and think through issues from various perspectives’ and that this was influencing ‘issues of sustainable development when designing policies and approaches … and in how they implement those policies’.

**Mongolia Results**

The Mongolia ADS facilitators had a firmer view of how the ADS program was influencing sustainable development. 1MF identified a range of areas, maintaining that:

The ADS program is contributing to building greater human resource capacity which is striving for better policy, better service delivery, better economic management, private sector development, development of civil society, human rights and cultivating the non-government organisation sector. Each of our returned scholars are working in these areas.

While 1MF admitted that ‘the contribution was indirect’, she also believed that ‘at the same time, it is quite a strong contribution given that Mongolia has a relatively underdeveloped tertiary sector’. 1MF explained further:

For example, you have a State Secretary and a Minister for Foreign Affairs that both studied in Australia and they are key people in determining major policies in Mongolia. There are also people who were on ADS prior to CaBSAF who are working in the private sector and with other donors such as the US Agency for International Development, the ADB, the World Bank, etc. They are also contributing to sustainable development outcomes in Mongolia.

3MF attributed the skills and knowledge of ADS scholars and their long-term contribution to the public sector in Mongolia as the most beneficial aspect of the ADS program, viewing it as a form of sustainable development in its own right:
Skills development and knowledge is a big part of ADS … That’s why ADS really supports Mongolia in a sustainable way. These public servants will be working in Mongolia for the next 20, 30, 40 years.

2MF made a similar assessment, identifying that ‘once people are well educated and they know what they are good at’ then ‘they know where to go and how to go and keep going’ and ‘once that mind set is there, by acting, by doing, by saying they can help … just by doing their work they can present ideas up the line’.

For 3MF and 2MF, the relationship of the ADS program to sustainable development was very much linked to its investment in the individual and their ongoing contribution to ideas that would inevitably improve the development of Mongolia in a sustained way.

**Summary: Question 7**

On average, there was moderate support by ADS facilitators from Australia, China and Mongolia that the ADS program was having an attributable impact in achieving sustainable development (Objective 3). Generally the ADS program was perceived as part of a long-term strategy to improve and sustain good governance and systems development in China and Mongolia. While many ADS facilitators found it difficult to delineate links between the ADS program and how it was actually achieving sustainable development, the way in which the program was training local people in the skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership was attributed as being central to its achievement.

In terms of the ADS program supporting improvements in governance, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. For China, there was general support that ADS scholars were helping to shape the foundations for sustainable development, with returnees providing knowledge through their work for improved governance and social development. For Mongolia, greater human resource capacity was supporting improvements to policy, service delivery, economic management, private sector and civil society development, human rights and cultivation of the non-government organisation sector. The ADS program was investing in the individual to contribute to ideas to improve the development of Mongolia in a sustained way. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).
In terms of the ADS program training local people in the skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the indicator of success for China and great attribution for Mongolia. For China, the ADS facilitators believed scholars exhibited the capacity to analyse and think through issues from various perspectives which were influencing policy design and implementation, and development approaches and outcomes. For Mongolia, ADS scholars were in key leadership positions to determine major policies; they were working in the private sector and with international donors and contributing to sustainable development outcomes in a direct way, and drawing on their skills and contributing to their country over the long term. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 5.2).

**Question 8:** What benefits does Australia receive from providing this type of educational aid?

**Relevance to:** Objective 4: To advance Australia’s national interest

**Indicators of success:**
- AusAID (Australian Government) closely identified with the ADS program
- Promotion of AusAID (Australian Government) as the scholarship provider through media and information strategies
- Scholars maintaining links with Australia
- Promotion of cross-cultural awareness and cooperation
- Promotion of Australia as a quality exporter of educational services
- Supporting the interests of domestic educational institutions

**Australia Results**

AusAID’s website states that the overall aim of Australia’s aid program ‘is to assist developing countries reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development, in line with Australia’s national interest’ (AusAID:n.d.e:§2). AusAID maintains that ‘Australia gives aid because we want to help those less fortunate than ourselves’ and ‘Australians believe that giving aid is the right thing to do; it makes a real difference to other people’s lives’. However, perhaps more in line with the tangible benefits to Australia, AusAID also states that ‘Australia gives aid to other countries because it improves our regional security’ and ‘by helping to build stronger communities and
more stable governments we improve our own economic and security interests’. This was certainly concluded by 1AF when he declared, ‘it’s better for Australia to have a nice stable neighbour that we can trade with, than having a poor country that we have to send troops to’.

The more tangible benefits to Australia as a result of the ADS program were identified by 2AF as:

We are achieving enormous goodwill which can be reflected in a whole range of areas – political issues, individuals in key positions well disposed towards Australia – which can ultimately have spin-offs of an economic kind. Even where Australia wants to nominate people for key institutions – if you are having to argue your case with someone who has had a good experience in Australia, you may just do a bit better there.

1AF held the view that ‘development of countries in the region is in our national interest’ and believed that ‘the ADS program does contribute to this’. However, 1AF also noted that there was often a narrow perspective on the definition of ‘in our national interest’, despite AusAID taking a modern ‘untied’ approach to its aid program. 1AF recognised that unlike the UK which has also untied its scholarship programs, making it ‘possible for a Nigerian to apply to the UK for a scholarship to South Africa’ for example, ‘in ADS we still bring scholars to Australia only and this is in the interests of the higher education institutions’. Further, 2AF identified the benefits of ADS scholars advertising Australia as a quality education destination:

Where you have a sponsored student that comes back, they are likely to recommend Australia to other students, who may then go as a private student to Australia rather than the US … I would expect there have been a few private students who chose Australia after it was recommended by a sponsored student.

The flow-on effects or, in the words of 2AF, ‘spin-offs’ are clearly perceived by the Australia ADS facilitators to be happening and working. This was supported by 3AF when he concluded that as a result of the ADS program:

You now have a core of well-placed people who are increasingly becoming leaders. Even if they leave their public service job they will move into the private sector and do something interesting. They are all so passionate about Australia. They not only like Australia but they trust Australia. I think it’s building a bridge that will last a very long time and they will trust Australia more than other countries just because
Australia can be seen to be doing this for no particular advantage for itself.

**China Results**

The China ADS facilitators identified various benefits to Australia through the ADS program. 1CF saw it as an opportunity to ‘profile Australia’ and ‘advocate Australia’ overseas, while 5CF identified it as ‘a win-win arrangement with mutual benefit’ for both countries, maintaining that:

When scholars return they bring back knowledge and strong feelings – a background affected by the philosophy they’ve learned in Australia … It’s a strong base for friendship and future cooperation.

Importantly, 5CF also noted that ‘most probably, after five to ten years these scholars will have important posts and can contribute to good cooperation between the two countries’. This view was shared by 4CF when she stated:

All the ADS students work for very important Chinese Government ministries. They are very familiar with Australian systems and they also have knowledge of Australian policy. So when they come back it is very easy for them to communicate with Australia. I think it is very good for improving cooperation between the two countries, now and into the future.

According to 1CF, ‘the majority of scholars that I’ve met had a great time in Australia and say the Australian people are very nice’ and it is that ‘experience in Australia’ that affects ‘how they relate to people’. 2CF also identified ‘the linkages it builds between the country and the people’.

All of the China ADS facilitators identified benefits to Australia and its universities through the ADS program. 1CF maintained that ‘educational institutions receive benefit’ by ‘getting quality students who go through a rigorous selection process’. However, 1CF also believed that ‘because of the language constraints, they might not recognise that’.

In terms of perceptions of quality and cost, 1CF maintained that ADS scholars ‘realise there are real benefits from studying in Australia’. 2CF agreed, maintaining that:

For professionals, Australia is very well regarded as a place to do your Masters. It is right up there with other countries that have established histories.
While the ADS program enables ADS scholars to study only at participating tertiary education providers in Australia, 3CF also made the general observation that:

Before, people would look to the UK or the US but more recently people tend to go to Australia or New Zealand due to cheaper prices and education quality. Australia is a preferred study place overseas.

**Mongolia Results**

The Mongolia ADS facilitators were also supportive of the benefits to Australia as a result of the ADS program. Indeed, 1MF believed that the benefits acquired were disproportionate to the outlay by Australia:

The benefits are plenty. It has definitely generated a strong sense of good cooperation and goodwill to Australia despite the lack of presence of an Australian embassy, of an AusAID office, of government representation. Australia and the ADS program are very well regarded at quite senior levels of government. The positive attitude that Mongolia expresses towards Australia is quite remarkable given the small value for dollar contribution that AusAID actually contributes.

1MF raised an interesting point. In a country like Mongolia, where Australia has little representation by way of an official Australian embassy or Australian Government office, the ADS program fulfils an important foreign policy engagement role by building and maintaining linkages with that country. 4MF also supported this:

From the political perspective, I believe that it is really important for Australia. ADS scholars in Mongolia are in key decision-making positions … and the Australian way of thinking is reflected in that … I’m sure it helps Australia … it makes those people pro-Australian. It is one of the best tools of Australian foreign policy … giving out scholarships.

Such developments are positive given Mongolia’s relatively recent transition to democracy and a market-based system. The attitude of Mongolians in this regard was also raised by 3MF when she observed:

Australia is becoming more popular. It is a very distant country and Mongolia was very closed for a long time, so knowledge of other countries was very poor. But because ADS scholars are going there, they tell people about Australia and Mongolians now know more about Australia … maybe Australians know more about Mongolia as well.
The promotion of cross-cultural awareness and cooperation was supported by each of the Mongolia ADS facilitators. 1MF believed that ‘in Australia it is important that we learn from the experiences of other countries’ and by having ADS scholars study in Australia ‘we are learning about the experience of Mongolia … in the universities and the communities where they live’. 3MF also observed that ‘ADS scholars keep in contact with Australia and their universities and they bring new culture, products and new business to Mongolia’. Indeed, 3MF believed that the exchange was ‘beneficial for business development’ as she had seen ‘a lot of industrial relations develop, especially in mining and wine importing’ with Australia. 1MF also recognised the ‘financial benefits to Australian universities and businesses from Mongolian students’, creating ‘a win-win for Australia’ which also extended to Mongolians ‘living with other families, travelling on holidays in Australia and having medical insurance costs paid to Australian companies’.

There also existed a perception that the success of the relationship between Mongolia and Australia was helped by a sense of shared understanding. According to 3MF, both Australia and Mongolia have ‘small populations for their land size, very open and friendly people, a lot of dry land, animals and farming and big distances’ which meant that they ‘had a shared understanding’ and ‘could understand each other quite easily’. This view was consistent with 3AF’s observation of similarities between Mongolia and Australia, as identified in Question 1 of this chapter. Like 3AF, it was the view of 3MF that this also transferred to the policy level:

At the policy level, there are a lot of similarities between Australia and Mongolia so I think there are a lot of regulations or laws or national programs that we have to learn or adopt from Australia into our own public service. And I think this has been happening.

2MF noted the contribution of the ADS program to Mongolia’s development across a range of policy areas and believed that Australia could be proud of the support it provided:

By introducing new ideas to Mongolia such as good governance, sustainable development, poverty alleviation, public sector management and financial systems through ADS graduates … and giving more opportunities to Mongolians … and seeing how successful it is … Australians must be proud of this, doing good things for others.
Indeed, 3MF confirmed that ‘ministry working groups are telling us that ADS is the preferred program and most highly regarded with the most highly qualified applicants’ and that ‘the management of ADS is also very popular among our target ministries’ as ‘we haven’t had many complaints or problems in selecting the right candidates’. The ADS program was also perceived to be favoured by prospective applicants, with 3MF revealing that:

Australia is regarded as one of the very good places for education … Living in Australia is easier for Mongolians compared to living in America or Europe. That’s why it’s attractive for Mongolians.

Summary: Question 8

On average, there was moderate support by ADS facilitators from Australia, China and Mongolia that the ADS program was having an attributable impact in advancing Australia's national interest (Objective 4). ADS facilitators identified various benefits to Australia through the ADS program, including its assistance with the development of stable economies in the region and generating goodwill towards Australia for political and economic spin-offs. The ADS program was seen to profile and advocate Australia and its systems overseas, including education, and build key linkages, cross-cultural awareness and cooperation.

In terms of AusAID (Australian Government) being closely identified with the ADS program, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated little attribution towards the indicator of success for China and great attribution for Mongolia. For China, while there was some acknowledgment that Australia was viewed positively for its contribution to China through the ADS program, it was not considered very well known. This limited public recognition of AusAID and the Australian Government. For Mongolia, ADS facilitators were convinced by the positive promotion the ADS program gave AusAID and the Australian Government. Despite having no permanent presence in Mongolia, the ADS program was playing an important role in promoting a sense of cooperation and goodwill and was highly regarded at senior levels of the Mongolian Government. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of the promotion of AusAID (Australian Government) as the scholarship provider through media and information strategies, the sum of responses by ADS
facilitators indicated little attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and Mongolia. For China, ADS facilitators expressed little knowledge of media and information strategies to actively promote AusAID as the scholarship provider. For Mongolia, the promotion of AusAID as the scholarship provider was perceived to be primarily through word of mouth by ADS scholars, CaBSAF staff and ministry representatives. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of ADS scholars maintaining links with Australia, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and Mongolia. For China, friendships developed by ADS scholars in Australia were enabling cooperation, improved networks, industry links and communication in both the government and non-government sectors. For Mongolia, ADS scholars were perceived to be maintaining a variety of links with Australia which was bringing new culture, products and business to Mongolia. However for both countries ongoing links with Australia were not always developed nor maintained. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of the promotion of cross-cultural awareness and cooperation, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and great attribution for Mongolia. For China, ADS scholars were generally perceived to return with greater knowledge of the social background, systems and policies of Australia. However examples were limited. For Mongolia, the experience of ADS scholars in Australia was perceived to have a profound impact on their awareness of Australian culture, and vice versa. This transferred into an enthusiasm for Australia and a desire to cooperate with Australian people. Similar challenges faced by both countries helped build a sense of shared understanding and a certain recognition of public policy ‘fit’ when it came to implementing reform. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of the promotion of Australia as a quality exporter of educational services, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and Mongolia. For China, there was some evidence to suggest Australia was well regarded for its education quality at the Masters level.
through the ADS program. Australia was generally regarded as competitive with traditional study destinations for Chinese students, such as the UK or the US, and Australia’s cost advantage over its competitors was also recognised. For Mongolia, there was some evidence to suggest Australia’s education quality was being promoted through the ADS program, particularly in a country where few were in a position to experience an international education. That a number of Mongolia’s senior officials were now Australian alumnus did much to promote the quality of Australian education. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).

In terms of the ADS program supporting the interests of domestic educational institutions, the sum of responses by ADS facilitators indicated great attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. For China, the ADS program was seen to assist Australian education institutions through the recruitment of quality students who have undergone rigorous selection, the formation of friendships for future cooperation, and the building of institutional reputation. For Mongolia, the same benefits were raised, as well as the financial gain for institutions in receiving ADS scholars. These findings resulted in a green TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 5.2).

Question 9: Do any other incidental benefits occur from the program?

Indicator of success:
• Other incidental benefits occurring from the ADS program

**Australia Results**

The Australia ADS facilitators identified various incidental benefits occurring from the ADS program. For 1AF, the program provided ‘links between Australia and other countries which help people in Australia to get a greater understanding of what is happening in the region and problems facing these countries’. 1AF also considered this an important example of how ‘development in its own right is in Australia’s national interest’ as it ‘helps to break down stereotypes and gives people in Australia a broader world view which is generally good for international relationships’.
2AF recognised benefits for Australia at ‘not just the official level but also for the private sector’. 2AF maintained that industry linkages were often generated through ADS scholar contacts. 2AF also saw that ‘the ongoing relationships with universities’ were beneficial, ‘especially when it comes to research’.

3AF believed that ‘yes, there are incidental benefits occurring’ as a result of the ADS program and recalled a good example of where Mongolian school children benefited through the efforts of an ADS scholar and their collaboration with the Australian community:

One ADS scholar who graduated a couple of years ago set up a charity to help poor school children. She received support from her friends in Adelaide to buy ten school uniforms for children who couldn’t go to school because their parents couldn’t afford school uniforms. The contribution was matched by the Honorary Consul General, so 20 uniforms were bought. This year I’m carrying another $1000 from her friends in Adelaide and she was thinking of buying a computer or something for the school.

3AF believed that ‘this idea of personal effort to support people is an indirect benefit that comes out of this program because ADS scholars see it happening when they are living in Australia’. 3AF maintained that, through the experience of living in Australia, ADS scholars developed ‘the awareness that public debate is a normal part of life and that issues like sustainability are part of the public debate’. 3AF suggested that this built confidence in ADS scholars to debate public issues in their own country to achieve development goals.

3AF noted that while ADS scholars in China may later choose to send their children to Australia to study as a result of their positive educational experience, he did not believe this to be the case for ADS scholars in Mongolia. 3AF maintained that ‘they would if they could because they really trust the Australian system’ but ‘most of them can’t afford it’.

**China Results**

The China ADS facilitators provided limited responses with regards to incidental benefits occurring as a result of the ADS program. 5CF recognised the ‘visible benefit of English improvement’ and 1CF identified ‘a common knowledge of each other’s culture helping to break down protocol in both Mongolia and China’.
Both 2CF and 3CF identified that ADS scholars and their families were more inclined to ‘go back to Australia and encourage their friends to go there’ (2CF) as tourists and to also ‘send their child there too for education’ (3CF).

2CF also noted that ‘ADS scholars are more likely to encourage their organisations to look at Australian models through study tours’ and that they ‘look for opportunities to get back to Australia to build on those linkages’.

**Mongolia Results**

The Mongolia ADS facilitators were reasonably confident that there were incidental benefits occurring as a result of the ADS program but found it difficult to provide examples. 1MF maintained that ‘because the program has been focusing on government it is difficult to see the linkages that have been formed beyond that’. In saying so, 1MF admitted ‘perhaps we don’t appreciate the extent to which Mongolia benefits from the program’.

Nevertheless, 2MF had ‘heard of a lot of good start-ups, some linkages, some business’ that had occurred as a result of the ADS program. 3MF had also heard of ‘children from ADS scholars learning English’ and ‘returning with good experience and knowledge of the English language’. 3MF noted other benefits to the families of ADS scholars including ‘financial support, cultural learning and learning how to swim, which is not popular in Mongolia as there is not much water or any beaches’. 4MF identified the desire of many ADS scholars to ‘go back to Australia’ for both vocational and tourism purposes and that many ‘still have links with their professors and Australian friends’.

**Summary: Question 9**

Incidental benefits occurring as a result of the ADS program were varied and included improved cross-cultural awareness, international friendships, industry linkages, philanthropy, public debate, international education, English language learning, and other vocational and individual gains.

For the most part, the ADS facilitators had little knowledge of any broad range of incidental benefits occurring as a result of the ADS program, with responses usually
limited to one or two examples. This was not unexpected given that many of the ADS facilitators had little contact with ADS scholars once they returned to country.

This question was designed to identify other incidental benefits arising from the ADS program. Application of a TL rating is therefore not appropriate.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented and analysed data collected from in-depth interviews with 12 facilitators of the ADS program. The chapter identified the extent to which various *indicators of success* were being met, based on the empirical awareness of ADS facilitators in the field. It also identified two additional *indicators of success* which continue to be analysed in Chapter 6 based on the responses of 21 ADS scholars in China and Mongolia.

Table 5.2 provides a graphical representation of the level of attribution (great, moderate or little) by respondents towards the contribution of the *indicators of success*. It provides a useful analysis of consolidated ratings and a cross-reference between the ADS program in China and Mongolia in relation to its perceived contribution.

**Table 5.2: Consolidated Ratings of Indicators of Success – ADS Facilitators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Mongolia</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1: Program relevance to country</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Indicators of success:</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Study and work consistent with country strategies</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications valued in country</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Theme 2: The Australian experience            |      |          |
| *Indicators of success:*                      |      |          |
| Meeting and working with people from different cultures |   |          |
| Developing confidence and competence in English language proficiency | |          |
| Exposure to international practices           |     |          |
| Adopting self-directed and participatory teaching/learning methods | |          |
### Theme 3: Characteristics of returning scholars

**Indicators of success:**

- Scholars return from Australia and remain in country
- Scholars return to their original place of employ (sponsoring agency)
- Scholars move to other organisations (public, private or non-government) but continue in work relevant to the objectives of the ADS program
- Scholars given greater responsibilities/promoted upon returning from Australia
- Scholars reform minded/have confidence and skills to drive reform
- Scholars in positions of authority to make their own systems adapt and work better

### Theme 4: Institutional targeting and capacity building objectives

**Indicators of success:**

- Scholars return to a supportive work environment with a commitment to adopting strategies for utilising the graduate’s new knowledge, skills and qualifications
- Scholars are valued for their new skills and knowledge by employer/colleagues
- Scholars are able to use their new skills and knowledge in the work environment
- Scholars are utilising learning in various types of work
- Scholars are passing their new skills and knowledge to others
- Scholars are helped to address specific knowledge and skills gaps of the agency
- Scholars fulfilled all obligations to the employer and vice versa (e.g. contractual agreement, action plan, etc.)
- Access and commitment to further education and professional development opportunities

### Theme 5: ‘Critical mass' theory

**Indicators of success:**

- A critical mass of well-trained and capable local leaders
- The effective use of critical mass (e.g. within the organisation or alumni network for mentoring, discussion of ideas and ways forward)
- Building of good people-to-people links

### Objective 2: To achieve poverty alleviation

**Indicator of success:**

- Scholars working on poverty reduction policies and programs
Objective 3: To achieve sustainable development

Indicators of success:
- Supporting improvements in governance
- Training of local people in skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership

Objective 4: To advance Australia's national interest

Indicators of success:
- AusAID (Australian Government) closely identified with the ADS program
- Promotion of AusAID (Australian Government) as the scholarship provider through media and information strategies
- Scholars maintaining links with Australia
- Promotion of cross-cultural awareness and cooperation
- Promotion of Australia as a quality exporter of educational services
- Supporting the interests of domestic educational institutions

Based on the overall responses of ADS facilitators, there was moderate support that the ADS program was meeting Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity. Interestingly, there was higher attribution towards the achievement of this objective in Mongolia than China. Notable reasons for this difference included:

- the ADS program’s relevance to Mongolia given perceptions that –
  - in China, the ADS program’s reach for achieving country strategy outcomes was limited due to China’s sheer geographic and population size;
  - in Mongolia, the ADS program was more closely linked to the human resource development strategies (and weaknesses) of Mongolian Government agencies;
  - in Mongolia, Australian qualifications were particularly valued where tertiary level study was relatively underdeveloped;
- the Australian experience and its perceived benefit to Mongolian ADS scholars in terms of –
  - developing confidence and competence in English language proficiency where English literacy rates were low and focus on the West was increasing;
• exposure to international practices across a range of areas which were then influencing actions and practices in country;

• knowledge of the characteristics of returning Mongolian ADS scholars due to the –
  o centralised return of scholars to Ulaanbaatar;
  o strength and identity of the Mozzie alumni association;
  o role of CaBSAF in building a knowledge bank of returned ADS scholars compared with the counterpart managing facility in China;

• the characteristics of Mongolian ADS scholars in –
  o continuing to work in areas relevant to the objectives of the ADS program when moving to other organisations (public, private or non-government);
  o gaining greater responsibilities or promotion upon their return, evidenced by the considerable success and elevation of many returned scholars;
  o returning with ideas and skills to make significant contributions to public and private sector reform in country;
  o implementing improved systems in the workplace, particularly when in positions of authority to exert change;

• ADS scholars addressing specific knowledge and skills gaps of agencies in Mongolia through –
  o encouragement of government agencies to undertake skills gap assessments;
  o ministries identifying their own skills needs and suggesting priority areas to inform ADS selection criteria;

• a critical mass of ADS scholars beginning to take shape in Mongolia, as opposed to China, thanks to the –
  o return of most ADS scholars to the centralised hub of Ulaanbaatar;
  o high number of ADS scholars in proportion to ministry populations;
  o efforts of the Mozzies in building and maintaining close networks of returned ADS scholars;
  o strategy of AusAID to maintain links between generations of ADS scholars;
o reputation of the Mozzies as highly educated community members with leadership capabilities;

o knowledge of ADS scholars working together, supporting one another and achieving change;

o Mozzie network building effective people-to-people links across the public, private and non-government sectors at most levels.

Based on the overall responses of ADS facilitators, there was also moderate support that the ADS program was meeting Objective 2: To achieve poverty alleviation. For both China and Mongolia, ADS facilitators attributed the program’s contribution as indirect and largely through scholars influencing policy that positively impacted on the poor in some way.

There was moderate support that the ADS program was meeting Objective 3: To achieve sustainable development, with slightly higher attribution towards the achievement of this objective in Mongolia. While ADS facilitators believed scholars were providing a base for shaping future sustainable development in China, there were firmer views on how the ADS program was influencing sustainable development in Mongolia.

There was also moderate support that the ADS program was meeting Objective 4: To advance Australia’s national interest, with slightly higher attribution towards the achievement of this objective in Mongolia. This was largely due to a perceived lack of knowledge of the ADS program in China. This was in contrast to Mongolia, where the ADS program was perceived to give AusAID and the Australian Government significant positive promotion. Moreover, the experience of ADS scholars in Australia was perceived to have a more profound impact on Mongolian ADS scholars, resulting in a range of outcomes including greater cultural awareness, cooperation and recognition of public policy synergies.
CHAPTER 6
Analysis of Data – ADS Scholars

Introduction

Chapter 5 presented and analysed data collected from in-depth interviews with 12 facilitators of the ADS program. The chapter fulfilled two functions: first, it acted as a means through which additional indicators of success were identified and consolidated into the list of indicators of success in Chapter 3, and included in this chapter based on the interviews with ADS scholars; and second, it confirmed the extent to which various indicators of success were being met, based on the empirical awareness of ADS facilitators in the field.

This chapter presents and analyses data collected from in-depth interviews with 21 scholars of the ADS program. The chapter indicates the extent to which the various indicators of success are being met, based on the perceptions of returned ADS scholars in China and Mongolia.

Like Chapter 5, this chapter utilises the TL approach (Table 6.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.1: Ratings of Indicators of Success – ADS Scholars</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADS scholars attribute great contribution to the success of the ADS program</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADS scholars attribute moderate contribution to the success of the ADS program</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADS scholars attribute little contribution to the success of the ADS program</td>
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</table>

It should be noted that some responses were found to fall outside the identified indicators of success. These were still analysed as they often remained relevant to an identified theme under an objective of the ADS program.

The primary interview questions for the ADS scholars were largely similar to those asked of ADS facilitators, with slight variation given their differing roles (see Appendix D). This chapter is presented in the past tense however qualitative responses from interviewees appear in the tense they have chosen to submit their views.
Primary Interview Question Analysis

**Question 1:** Do you think that your Australian degree has been relevant to your work in Mongolia/China? How?

**Relevance to:** Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity
Theme 1: Program relevance to country
Indicators of success:
- Study and work consistent with country strategies
- Qualifications valued in country

**China Results**

It was unrealistic to expect that ADS scholars would specifically describe their study and work in terms of being consistent with AusAID’s country strategies. Nevertheless, there was strong agreement from all ADS scholars in China that their Australian postgraduate qualifications were relevant to their work and beneficial towards strengthening human resource capacity and skills needs in country.

While simplified responses were common for describing the ADS program’s relevancy to work, some China ADS scholars revealed more in-depth connections between what they had studied and their role in the broader development strategies of the country. 4CS provided a good example of how he saw his Master of Natural Resources from the University of Queensland being relevant to a variety of work in the forestry sector as well as to a broader national strategy:

> I work for the forestry sector in China which covers several areas – forests, conservation of forests, forest resources, wildlife management, wetlands conservation – these are the main areas and I think all of these are relevant to my Master of Natural Resources. Forests are a very important ecosystem and one of the most important natural resources in China. Since the 1990s, the Chinese Government has invested a huge amount of money in forests, especially for forest regeneration … So yes, definitely my Australian degree is very relevant to this work.

Some ADS scholars attributed the relevance of the ADS program to China to the efforts of AusAID in ensuring careful targeting of the program. 6CS recounted that:

> Before I applied to study in Australia we had to consider the relevance to my work, otherwise AusAID would not grant me the scholarship. AusAID had a list of priority areas so I chose social planning and development [as] it was the most relevant to my work and organisation.
Various China ADS scholars confirmed that they were now involved in major projects associated with their area of expertise. 6CS stated that she was ‘involved in two international projects’. These international projects required 6CS to work in collaboration with a range of groups, including ‘the US Department of Labor … the International Labour Organization of the United Nations … local provincial labour departments and some enterprises’. 3CS also described how in his role at the Ministry of Education, he was responsible for building linkages between China’s and Australia’s education and research sectors:

I played a unique role simply because my Australian degree and my two-year stay in Australia gave me a lot of knowledge and experience. So when I was involved in this project I had a lot of contacts and interactions with Australian institutions. I felt very comfortable and very confident. And I went back to Australia to visit many Australian institutions that applied for this Institutional Linkages Program … sponsored by AusAID … We were very active in promoting institutional linkages of the two countries.

Evidence of both building and maintaining linkages between Australia and China by ADS scholars was common. A number of scholars revealed that upon their return to country they were placed in positions that would capitalise on their experience and knowledge of Australia. These usually involved positions within bilateral divisions of their organisation which often continued the relationship between the ADS scholar and their Australian university or with AusAID.

Many scholars also took it upon themselves to maintain their own links with Australia, particularly in research. One such example was 5CS who was responsible for authoring and co-authoring various research articles in both national and international publications. Importantly, 5CS admitted that ‘I had a lack of background in Agriculture as well as Agriculture Economics’ and ‘the ADS program gave me the opportunity to learn these things as well as the English language’. 5CS elaborated:

The study gave me a lot of knowledge and benefits and experience in Agriculture … Before going to Australia I had worked in the Ministry of Agriculture for about ten years and the study gave me a lot of help for my professional research, management skills, policy review and analysis, and so on.
In this sense, the ADS program clearly satisfied skills gaps. 8CS maintained that the ADS program helped her own skills gaps and broadened her ‘way of thinking – of considering the issues of things’. 8CS attributed the development of her research and project management skills to the teaching approaches in Australia:

> Before I did the Masters I did a Bachelor degree and I think the way of teaching here in China for undergraduate students doesn’t have much emphasis in teaching students how to do research … So over there when I did my Masters I benefited a lot in how to do research. And the way of doing research is a kind of training – training how to think … That helps not only for research but also in my management of projects.

Importantly, 8CS also recognised how her experience on the ADS program had enabled her to better prepare proposals in line with the expectations of international organisations:

> We have a lot of contact with international organisations like UNDP, the World Bank, all these sorts of groups. For them we need to prepare proposals in their way. If people are not trained in their way, like before I studied in Australia, then they can’t understand their way of thinking … So now I can understand.

Coming to understand the ‘Western way of thinking’ and then being able to apply that knowledge to the workplace was a common claim made by the ADS scholars, including 5CS:

> I use my experience as an example that learning overseas is good – to improve your English language, to learn the way of thinking in the Western world because it is different … if you learn the social, cultural, economic and political background of people then you can easily understand why they think in a certain way.

The applicability of learning across various work settings was identified by a number of ADS scholars. This applied to those who had moved within agencies as well as those who had since moved from their original place of employ, either within or outside the public service. 2CS admitted that while her ‘major was in International Business and Human Resource Management’, she had since moved to a new employer and was ‘now doing banking regulation supervision’ which:

> … sounds like it doesn’t fit with my major but the Banking Regulatory Bureau here in Lhasa … require people who have an English language background and awareness in International Business … Also my Human Resource Management major is very useful because this is a
new organisation … So my Australian degree has really helped me in the work that I’m doing now.

Attribution in China towards the value placed on the qualifications obtained by the ADS scholars varied from affording greater opportunity for promotion to the recognition of new skills, knowledge and methods. 1CS believed that ‘it was one of the reasons why I got promoted last year’. 7CS shared this view when she stated ‘I think ADS scholars are quite valued … the qualification I obtained in Australia definitely helped towards my promotion’. However, the acquisition of internationally recognised qualifications from Australian universities was generally most highly valued, as 3CS explained:

They are highly valued because Australian higher education institutions, generally speaking, are of a high standard which are recognised by Chinese authorities and Chinese people. That’s why we have so many Chinese students going to Australia to study.

1CS believed that ‘you are treated differently with a globally recognised Masters degree’ because ‘it’s harder to get this degree compared to studying in China and Tibet’. Indeed, 1CS also noted that ‘as a female with such a degree I think it’s particularly valued’ and ‘there are not really many people in Tibet with a Masters degree, especially with overseas study experience’. 8CS identified the value that local employers placed on international qualifications and experience:

In recent years that’s the kind of trend – people in different organisations, government and non-government, they seem to prefer to employ people who studied overseas, especially if they have some working background here and then they studied overseas and come back.

In terms of training, 1CS believed that ‘it helped a lot in terms of my personal skills, even simply how to use computers’ and 2CS acknowledged that:

It absolutely benefited me because the study I did at university in Australia not only gave me knowledge in my major, but I also learned skills.

The ability of ADS scholars to acquire up-to-date knowledge, skills and methods that can assist them in actively applying their learning in the workplace was a common theme. 7CS admitted that:
Sustainable development is already popular in China but, generally speaking, public awareness is not as up-to-date. Actually, for me, before I went to Australia I didn’t know very clearly what sustainable development was … In Australia, we not only learned about the theory of sustainable development but we also learned some practical skills – how to put the principle into practice.

It may be fair to assume that the development of principle and practice is important if the ADS program is to achieve its objective of strengthening human resource capacity in priority sectors (Detto, 2005:v). Without ADS scholars being able to actively apply their learning within the workplace, this aim cannot be achieved. Analysis of the data suggests that there is some evidence to support this. 7CS maintained that ‘one responsibility of my section is to mediate water disputes between provinces’ and ‘when I mediate a water dispute I always think of the principles I learnt in Australia’. 9CS also felt that her study experience in Australia enabled her to better understand her role and how to achieve improvements within the workplace:

When I came back I felt those two years in Australia gave me much more than the seven years with the [Chinese Government department]. I played a more important role when I got back after doing my Masters degree – higher duties, more responsibilities. And in myself I also had a better view of what I could do and how I could do the job better.

While such insight may have been advantageous to some, for others it proved to be the catalyst for change in employment. 2CS provided a good example where, after learning certain principles in Australia, she soon realised that her original role and employer in China would not have enabled her to adequately apply her new knowledge and skills to achieve positive change:

I used to work for the [name omitted] Corporation before I went to Australia. I knew the job very well and I knew all the people as well. But when I came back things had changed … It was very difficult for me. On the one hand you learned new knowledge and skills to find problems but on the other hand, when you found those problems, you couldn’t make any change by yourself. So I felt that I had to move to another job to be able to use my knowledge to do a better job.

Herein lay an issue that a number of China ADS scholars raised. While certain principles may have been able to be learned in Australia, the ability for ADS scholars to then put them into practice within the work setting was often more difficult. This was particularly true in the often more rigid and process driven culture
of the Chinese public service. Nevertheless, the qualifications, skills and knowledge of ADS scholars do appear to be highly valued by the Chinese Government and other employers. Comments such as those of 5CS, who revealed that ‘I was lucky to be part of the first ADS group from China in the early 1990s’ and ‘even now the Ministry of Agriculture has six or seven ADS scholars in Australia I think’, only help to support this. This positive perception towards the ADS program remains despite various ADS scholars choosing to move abroad after having graduated. 5CS maintained that:

At that time, the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture sent four students to Australia and only I returned. One went to Canada, one went to Singapore and I don’t know about the other one because we lost contact.

While much has been written on China’s brain drain over the last 20–30 years (Chang and Deng, 1992; Gaillard and Gaillard, 1997; Zweig, 1997; Zweig et al., 1995), in more recent years authors have increasingly reflected on China’s brain gain as a result of Chinese graduates, researchers and professionals choosing to return home (Aiyar, 2005; Pomfret, 2000; Zweig and Rosen, 2003). Much of this shift has been attributed to China’s dynamic macro-economic environment as well as other direct incentives. It was interesting to note however that any mention of ADS scholars choosing to remain overseas after graduating from the ADS program was reflected positively. The China ADS scholars maintained that the Chinese ministries also shared this positive view, recognising that those who had returned to China usually exhibited advanced skills and experience of overseas markets. Moreover, those who had not returned continued to be invaluable contacts for China’s cooperation with other countries including in the transference of knowledge and trade. This concept is what Saxenian (2005) describes as brain circulation.

**Mongolia Results**

The Mongolia ADS scholars were no different in their belief that their Australian education was relevant to their work and the broader needs of their country. 1MS provided a good example, where her knowledge and skills were being passed on through her teaching:

It has been very relevant because I teach English language and also some British studies … I did my Masters degree in TESOL, teaching
English as a second language, so it was very useful for me. I studied about how to design a curriculum, design tests and how to teach efficiently to speakers of other languages, and also how to do research in TESOL.

2MS made a similar assessment, maintaining that his Australian degree was ‘not only useful for personal benefit but good for Mongolia’. In this sense, 2MS identified the skills gap at the time in Mongolia in qualified Masters-level Business Administration graduates. This was perhaps even more valuable given Mongolia’s economic reform of the day:

A Masters in Business Administration – very few people had this kind of degree in Mongolia so it was really relevant when Mongolia had introduced a new economic period … we lacked skills and knowledge of doing business so it was really important to bring some knowledge and skills here … So the experience of the market economy was really relevant.

While 2MS identified that Mongolia still had some way to go in building its human capital with the necessary skills and knowledge for working in a market economy, he recognised the value that the ADS program provides in enabling such development:

We’ve been sort of messengers to grasp the main ideas, skills, and come back to Mongolia and disseminate. It was fortunate I was working at the Academy of Management in Mongolia so I lectured to the financial sector and business people. If I hadn’t been sent to Australia, I couldn’t bring this back.

In this regard, 2MS felt that his study in Australia under the ADS program was ‘highly valued’ in Mongolia. This view was also shared by 4MS who, after completing a Masters degree in commerce and specialising in marketing, returned to Mongolia at a time when the emergence of a new market economy demanded such knowledge and skills:

In the late 1990s, the public and private sectors were starting to learn what marketing was and how to apply marketing to real situations – how to write down marketing plans, strategic plans, business plans – so what I studied in Australia was quite good timing to apply all of my knowledge into this real situation. It was very valuable, very relevant and on-time knowledge.

1MS also returned to lecture at the National University of Mongolia (NUM). While 1MS ‘couldn’t say yes or no’ whether her qualifications were valued in Mongolia as she ‘didn’t know what other people thought’, she did believe that ‘the ADS program
was very useful “cos” I improved my English, my teaching methodology and learned a lot in Australia:

After I came back to Mongolia, I started teaching some lectures and it was different from my teaching before ‘cos’ I started using the methodologies that I had learned in Australia … My students liked it.

Similarly, 3MS has since returned to take up a human resource development position that enables him to train and educate health professionals in Mongolia:

I graduated in 2004 with a Masters in Health Services Management … This was quite relevant to my work as I’m now working in a position in human resource development, including the training and education of health professionals – medical doctors, public health officers, nurses, biomedical researchers and others. The generic management skills are relevant to education and health management. It is quite relevant to my work.

Indeed, 3MS took advantage of his Masters research thesis to examine ‘the continuing education for medical practitioners with particular reference to quality management’ and how that applies to Mongolia’s own system. 3MS strongly believed that his ‘qualification was valued by Mongolia’ and that this is supported by his involvement ‘in many projects with the ADB, UNDP, World Health Organization (WHO) and others’. 3MS was also ‘a member of the human resource team to develop the Master Plan for Health Services in Mongolia, sponsored by the Japan International Corporation of Welfare Services (JICWELS)’ and ‘a national consultant on an ADB project on anti-corruption in licensing systems’ in Mongolia. The qualifications 3MS received in Australia had enabled him to become an important asset in helping to guide Mongolia’s own health development agenda.

Just as important, 5MS identified that the generalist skills she obtained in completing her Masters by research in Australia was valued by her ministry perhaps even more than the specialised knowledge she had gained:

When I came back to the ministry, I was assigned to work on poverty issues … Although it took me away from my area of interest, I did a lot of reading of reports on different issues … My thesis didn’t influence much as a paper but they expected that this person had better abilities – in a general sense, improved analytical skills, comprehension, linking different things. These skills have helped a lot in my work. I can clearly say that my English, particularly my writing, has improved. So the area
in which I specialised may not have been valued but the skills gained were.

Prior to studying in Australia, many of the Mongolian ADS scholars had undertaken their undergraduate studies in Russia. Australia provided the opportunity for insight into an established democracy and market economy. This was particularly important to many of the ADS scholars given Mongolia’s own transition to democracy and a market economy in the 1990s. 6MS noted the demand for qualified personnel at the time to meet the demands of this transition:

My dream was to work as an economist, so I think I fulfilled my dream … When I went to Australia I studied market economies. In 1996, Mongolia didn’t have many economists that had done degrees in market economy countries, so it was very important for the Ministry of Finance to have a specialist like me.

7MS had since moved from the public sector into private business, heading her own company in Mongolia. For her, the knowledge and skills gained in Australia enabled her to create her own business that employed locals and assisted with the development of information technology (IT) networks in Mongolia:

Prior to going to Australia, I was working in government organisations. It was 1994 and there weren’t so many people in the private sector – most were in the public service. So it was a challenge to look at the business side of life, to use your best knowledge and experience to earn money in your favourite field. The Master of Business Systems offered me this opportunity.

While the ADS program is essentially aimed at supporting those who are expected to return to contribute to the public sector, a number of ADS scholars had since moved into the private sector. Interestingly, each of the ADS scholars interviewed for this study continued to assist with development outcomes for Mongolia through the very nature of their business and new roles. For example, 7MS revealed:

I went to Australia as a public servant but, upon return, because I did an IT related degree, there were not many opportunities in the public sector. I was looking at the development side – using my knowledge to improve the development of Mongolia … The Master of Business Systems was looking at the programming side but also looking at the development side of that – how to integrate technology into business, how to integrate technology into the organisation.
7MS felt compelled to share her new knowledge that she had gained in Australia, as well as continue to develop her skills in IT. For this reason, 7MS moved from the public sector and into project work with the UNDP to be part of Mongolia’s early IT development. In doing so, 7MS helped to bridge important links between the Mongolian Government and its citizens, while building the IT capacity of the country:

One of the projects was to set up Community Information Centres (CICs) … The citizens could come and learn to use the technology for their benefit and, through that technology, have access to information, simple information like government information which was quite limited at that time. The other side of that was convincing the government officials, government organisations, so that they would be able to provide their information to the citizens. And that was quite challenging because in 1997 there were few organisations that had websites.

The investment in 7MS in developing her IT expertise through a Master of Business Systems complemented the development goals of UNDP for Mongolia, who were able to employ 7MS for their IT development programs. While 7MS admitted that her work for UNDP was an extension of her learning and development after having received her Masters, particularly ‘in terms of technical skills – hardware, maintenance, networks, etc.’, she was influenced to build on her study through relevant work that remained consistent with the development agenda of AusAID in her country. Her qualifications were therefore valued and utilised.

For 8MS, ‘my Master of Economics at the ANU helped me to understand trade relations with other countries’ which saw him ‘teach at the Mongolia University’. 8MS was very aware that in doing so ‘I was able to directly apply my learning in Australia to the classroom in Mongolia’. 8MS believed ‘ADS is a valued experience’ and ‘is very well known in Mongolia and a lot of graduates are now in high positions in the public service and in key policy-making roles’. 8MS supported the view that qualifications obtained in Australia were valued in Mongolia, and that his decision to apply for an ADS scholarship was due to its consistency with development strategies to improve the human resource capacity of the Mongolian public service:

Higher education in Australia is equal in quality to the US, Canada or the UK. I chose ADS because it was directly focused towards development within the public service.
After having studied a Master of Economics at the University of Sydney, 12MS rose through the ranks of the Mongolian public service to become the Minister of Foreign Affairs. His view of the ADS program was overwhelmingly positive:

The ADS program is one of the most successful foreign aid projects in this country … there are more than 100 ADS scholars now in Mongolia [and while] Mongolia is only a small country, well-educated people can make a real difference.

The support of 12MS for the ADS program, in terms of its success as a foreign aid project, suggests a level of confidence that the study and work of ADS scholars is consistent with country/regional development priorities. Moreover, with more than 100 ADS scholars in Mongolia, the numbers suggest that the qualifications being attained continue to be valued in country. 11MS supports this view, maintaining that ‘all the work I have done since graduating was relevant to my degree and major’, particularly through her timely assistance with Mongolian organisational strategic planning:

Back in 2000, it was very common in poor Mongolian organisations to develop their strategic planning to reorient their business. So it was very relevant and a good opportunity for me to use my knowledge, my academic knowledge in practice. It was in 2000 that I helped with the development of the strategic plan for the NUM and last year they completed one cycle and invited me again to help them develop a new one. In terms of the content of the study I think everything was relevant.

However, 9MS did not attribute her learning in Australia as relevant to the existing needs of Mongolia. After having acquired a Master of e-Learning from the University of Technology, Sydney, 9MS returned to a country where ‘e-learning hasn’t been developed [and] is just not there’. 9MS found little opportunity within the Mongolian public service to contribute her unique mix of knowledge and skills, returning to her original position as a lecturer at the University of Humanities, Ulaanbaatar:

There’s no existing structure to support what I learned. But the government wanted somebody to have skills in e-learning because it’s important … it’s their ambition to eventually have e-learning throughout Mongolia. There are big donor organisation programs doing this so of course the government had some intentions in sending me to Australia under ADS – they needed professionals. But the government didn’t take me so I came back to my position as a lecturer … I gave one or two lectures and tried to promote what I’ve learned and people were
excited, but at the same time you need money to support it and you need some programs to really be in a position to influence.

9MS was frustrated by the fact that ‘there were many examples of strong IT people in Mongolia but when it comes to education and IT, only one person has studied in this area and that’s me’. 9MS revealed a lack of any reintegration strategy or responsibility from her employer to match her newly acquired knowledge and skills with work:

Going to Australia was perceived as ‘OK, she’s done her Masters’. What was not clear was what I studied – e-learning – and the President of the university didn’t really want to ask what it was either.

As a result, 9MS was forced to take her own initiative and applied to the ADB to work as a monitoring and evaluation consultant on the ‘ICT for Innovating Rural Schools in Mongolia’ project.

The importance of enabling ADS scholars to return to work that is meaningful to them and their field of study, as well as meaningful to development outcomes of their country, is paramount if the ADS program is to achieve its objectives and remain valued by the participating country. Leaving this up to the individual may result in missed opportunities and the undervaluing of the ADS program.

**Summary: Question 1**

On average, there was great support by ADS scholars from China and Mongolia that the ADS program was relevant to the needs of China and Mongolia (Theme 1) in strengthening human resource capacity (Objective 1).

In terms of the ADS program supporting study and work consistent with country strategies, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated great attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. There was strong support that their studies and work were having an attributable impact on the development needs of their respective countries. Most ADS scholars revealed awareness of AusAID’s objective to strengthen the human resource capacity of the public service and were able to provide examples of how their study and work was consistent with such an objective. In doing so, the ADS program was found to be highly relevant to the needs of both China and Mongolia. For China, ADS scholars provided a range of examples
where their work was contributing to areas under AusAID’s country strategies. Importantly, ADS scholars in China attributed AusAID’s careful targeting of ADS to the success of the program’s relevance to priority development areas. For Mongolia, despite the lack of a formal country strategy, there were examples where ADS scholars were contributing in areas consistent with AusAID’s primary goal and targeting for Mongolia. Importantly, ADS scholars were found to continue to contribute to development in these areas even when they moved between the public, private and non-government sectors. These findings resulted in a green TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of the qualifications awarded to ADS scholars being valued in country, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated great attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. For China, ADS scholars were returning with qualifications that enabled them to fill individual and organisational skills gaps. International qualifications were highly valued in China, affording greater opportunity for promotion to the recipient as well as capacity to demonstrate new skills, knowledge and methods. This included research and publication skills of international quality and standards. ADS scholars were also often placed in positions by their organisations to capitalise on their links with, and experience and knowledge of, Australia for bilateral collaboration. For Mongolia, ADS scholars represented a select few of highly educated community leaders from which knowledge and skills may be imparted to others. This was particularly valued throughout Mongolia’s transition to a market economy. In this sense, ADS scholars were filling skills gaps and acting as qualified ‘messengers’ and ‘teachers’ of new methods and practices. The only exception was when Mongolia’s own development was not on a par with the level of knowledge and skills of the ADS scholars, thereby preventing the effective imparting of that knowledge and skill. Nonetheless, these findings resulted in a green TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).
Question 2: How did your experience of living and studying in Australia benefit you?

Relevance to: Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity
Theme 2: The Australian experience

Indicators of success:
- Benefits to the individual through the experience of living and studying in Australia, including:
  - meeting and working with people from different cultures
  - developing confidence and competence in English language proficiency
  - exposure to international practices
  - adopting self-directed and participatory teaching/learning methods

China Results

There was general consensus among the China ADS scholars that the experience of living and studying in Australia did much for their multicultural understanding. This exposure was not limited to meeting only Australians but the gamut of other international students that the ADS scholars met while in Australia. In turn, the ADS scholars felt that they were able to relay their own cultural backgrounds and beliefs to others. Indeed, many of the ADS scholars believed that this experience had enabled them to acquire an understanding and respect which gave them an advantage when dealing with representatives from abroad in their work roles.

In undertaking a Master of Public Administration at the University of Queensland, 1CS was able to ‘get to know people … and how to get along with different people from different countries’. As a Master of Commerce student at the University of Sydney, 2CS made the deliberate choice to live with other Australian students in order to learn more about the Australian culture:

I decided to share with Australians rather than other Chinese students because that way I could not only learn something from university but also from my association with Australians. I could learn more about the culture and get to know the people well. I made more friends than probably any of the other Chinese students.

For 3CS, ‘living in Australia was a very good experience’. As a Master of Education Administration student at the University of Sydney, 3CS found himself ‘living in a
completely different culture’ but found a measure of comfort in ‘living in Sydney because … I was very close to Chinatown’. However, 3CS understood that:

To understand a new culture you have to see not only the physical things, like the Opera House, but also to try things like the Australian BBQ or going to the pub to have a shout with the local guys. This was completely new and I enjoyed it very much.

The student experience at university was an important aspect of the Australian experience for 3CS, particularly in building his understanding of people, culture, society and democracy:

There were many social activities like International Day with students presenting their own culture on the campus and student uni elections with students presenting themselves to be elected. It was like a democracy on campus. This was something I very much enjoyed and it helped me to better my understanding of people, the culture and society.

5CS undertook a Master of Agriculture Economics degree at the University of Queensland. The experience provided him with an insight into the different styles of thinking and communicating between Australians and Chinese:

I learned a lot of things from my supervisor about the Australian way of thinking which is usually very direct and to the point. It’s unlike Chinese people who are always talking, talking, talking, talking and then you may find the point … So for me, I learned knowledge, experience and the way of thinking from the other side of the hemisphere.

Such insight can only benefit 5CS in his role as Deputy Director General within the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture, particularly when communicating with Australia.

For 8CS, studying a Master of Environmental Management and Development at the ANU was as important as the experience of communicating with people from different cultures:

The most important thing is the experience of studying overseas – an experience in my life. Study is just one part, learning is just one part. The other is communicating with people, not only with Australians but with people from other countries – to understand other people from different cultures.

Indeed, 3CS described well the significance of being exposed to different cultures and learning about different ways of approaching things:
Before being exposed … your way of thinking is basically purely Chinese – your way of doing things … So my two years in Australia, studying and dealing with educators and academics, helped me to understand. We often have the same goal but different approaches, but you have to appreciate different approaches. There’s not only one way … Before I was educated, when I heard a different opinion I would firstly think ‘why are you different, why do you have a different opinion, this is very simple and your way of doing this is wrong’ … So it’s a kind of mind opening experience.

In terms of developing confidence and competence in English language proficiency, 1CS described how her ‘English had improved a lot’ after attending a ‘three-month language training course at the University of Queensland’. Such a program might have benefited 5CS who admitted ‘English language was the most difficult obstacle while studying in Australia’.

For 3CS, the act of studying itself provided the best opportunity to better his English:

As a non-native speaker, when you write something you have to think a lot about the vocabulary, the grammar … it really helped me a lot with my English. I learned English before I went to Australia, I majored in English language literature, but even though I majored in it, I didn’t use it very often before I went abroad. So my two years in Australia really helped me improve my English language proficiency.

6CS was able to improve her confidence and competence in English language proficiency to a level that enabled her to become an interpreter, providing a number of work opportunities upon her return to China:

My English level improved a lot. Before I went to Australia I could only translate in writing but after I came back I could act as an interpreter. I have attended study tours for Chinese delegations as an interpreter. Only last month I went to Sweden as an interpreter for a Chinese delegation for around two weeks.

One issue for ADS applicants from more remote regions of China, such as Tibet, was access to IELTS resources for passing the level of spoken and written English required for the ADS program. 1CS acknowledged that ‘for Tibetan applicants the IELTS test score is difficult’ and ‘this year, the ADS require an even higher score’. 1CS maintained that this was particularly challenging for applicants from Tibet:

In Tibet this is a problem because we don’t have any IELTS training centres. When I applied I had never even heard of IELTS. Even IELTS
books, you can’t find them in Tibet. For all of us, we had never heard of IELTS … It’s really difficult for us.

As a result, 1CS maintained that ‘many times when people in Tibet learn that they have to pass an IELTS test, they are hesitant to be a candidate’, despite the fact that ‘their English is very good’.

2CS also raised the issue, explaining that:

We don’t have an IELTS test centre here. I think Chengdu is the closest test centre. This costs lots of money to fly there and there are no IELTS books available in the shops in Tibet.

With this in mind, 1CS believed that ‘It’s not really fair for … Tibetan applicants’ and as such ‘AUSAID should have special policies to not treat us like the other provinces in China’. To avoid loss of quality applicants, the issue to provide better access to IELTS information for Tibetan ADS applicants, including resources for local IELTS testing, calls for some consideration.

In terms of the experience of living and studying in Australia providing exposure to international practices, 1CS supported the notion, maintaining that, when she studied public administration in Australia, she ‘had to really think about the way we did things in Tibet compared to the Western countries’.

2CS provided a similar assessment, maintaining that she ‘can now make more comparisons by knowing the differences to make better judgments’. 2CS declared that ‘I use this in my work every day’. Where ‘colleagues think only in the Chinese way and ignore other solutions’, 2CS was ‘able to suggest other solutions that colleagues often think are a good idea’. This provided a great deal of satisfaction to 2CS, evidenced by her admission that ‘I feel like I’m doing the right thing’.

3CS felt that ‘in terms of gaining an international perspective, I think I gained quite a lot’ from his Master of Education Administration program at the University of Sydney. 3CS maintained that:

Our program was quite internationally focused … we learned a lot of things, even vocational technical education with an international perspective, such as in Australia, Germany and China. So that gave me a lot of opportunity to understand different systems.
The advantage of this broad view, or wider perspective, was identified by 6CS who, after having obtained her Master of Social Development and Planning from the University of Queensland, felt that she ‘had learned a lot of knowledge’ that ‘was very useful in my work and also very useful for my thinking’. 6CS declared that:

I have a wider perspective and I think more logically. Another benefit is that I’m now more involved in international projects which I think is due to my Australian study background.

7CS declared how she acquired new management concepts to take back with her to China:

I think it definitely enriched my knowledge and my new concept of management. For example, participation is very important as it involves all interested departments in one project … For water dispute mediation … nowadays we have a constitution and we arrange meetings every year to provide a chance for consultation … This is one example of what I learned in Australia … With my manager I often discuss ways for change.

That 7CS continues to discuss and facilitate change management in her organisation in China is noteworthy. It suggests that 7CS is an advocate for change based on her learning from Australia. 9CS experienced a similar benefit, maintaining that the thing that benefited her the most ‘was the way of thinking and becoming more independent in doing things – thinking in a more critical way’.

8CS provided an excellent example of how her exposure to practices in Australia had informed her work in integrating environmental issues into business school courses in China:

I managed a project between our Centre for Environmental Education and Communication and the World Resource Institute to develop courses and initiatives for business schools in China to integrate environmental issues into courses … and yes, I included ideas from Australia and what I learned there, like Environmental Accounting and Corporate Social Responsibilities.

Interestingly, the China ADS scholars volunteered many examples of how the methods of teaching and learning in Australia differed from that of their own country. Importantly, all of the China ADS scholars believed that this had benefited them, even favouring the Australian approach. While most admitted initial concerns, such as ‘the first semester was a bit difficult because the tertiary system is very
different’ (2CS) and ‘in the beginning it was very hard for me – I didn’t know where to start and where to go’ (1CS), they were quickly accompanied by comments such as ‘the different approach did benefit me … and I enjoyed it very much’ (3CS) and ‘it helped me, absolutely … and is extremely useful now’ (2CS).

The notion of having to learn a self-directed approach to learning in Australia was exemplified by 2CS when she described:

You had to learn how to manage by yourself. For instance … in China, students will wait for the teacher to organise everything and you follow the rule. Tertiary education in Australia is very different, especially for Masters, you have to do your work by yourself, find your material at the library and determine what is most relevant for you. That was a bit daunting at first … And you have all of these different papers due at different times and you have to manage your time and decide when you will do your research … You learn to manage your time. It taught me how to teach myself.

The skills acquired by 2CS are now benefiting her and her workplace. By learning how to self-learn, she has strengthened her capacity and confidence to work more independently and, in her view, more efficiently.

1CS described how the experience of studying in Australia required self-direction beyond just the university learning environment:

When I was in university in China, I didn’t have to worry about selecting a course or having to find accommodation. I never had any experience in having to deal with an estate agent or landlord. In China, we have dormitories and each department chooses deans to take care of you. In Australia, you have to do everything by yourself. I think it has benefited me a lot.

4CS described how ‘the way of education in China was different from in Australia’, requiring him to adapt to a self-directed learning approach:

In China, you just attend courses every day, maybe for four to six hours a day, then you finish your homework and that’s it … But in Australia you may have only two hours of teaching courses every day and then you have a lot of homework. You have to study by yourself for most of the time – in the library, at home, you have to read books and search the Internet to get information, you have to digest all of this and then write your own articles … I had to adapt to this way of learning and I felt a lot of pressure … but I was happy.
The number of voluntary responses by China ADS scholars with regards to developing a self-directed learning approach in Australia was noteworthy. While many admitted it was a challenge at first to adjust to a new way of learning, all gave positive responses for having acquired the skill. Importantly, many found it to be particularly advantageous after their return to country in the working environment.

**Mongolia Results**

For the Mongolia ADS scholars, meeting and working with people from different cultures were also important parts of the experience of living and studying in Australia. 5MS felt that ‘the characteristics of the Australian people, the working environment and learning from that environment helped me a lot’. Similarly, 1MS maintained that ‘professionally I had learned a lot’ not only from her Master of Education (TESOL) studies at Monash University, but also from ‘living in an English speaking country’ and ‘learning a lot about the Australian culture and how Australian people lived’. 4MS agreed, maintaining that:

> It was very good for me … getting introduced to Australian culture, traditions and to have a look at what is the real life in Australia … To study over the Internet is one thing but to study in Australia and live with Australian people that’s another thing.

3MS completed a Master of Health Services Management at Curtin University of Technology and enjoyed how ‘Australia was very different from Mongolia and other former socialist countries’. It was the opportunity of ‘working and living with Australian people’ and building friendships with other international students which enriched his overall learning experience:

> I was working in a café and hotel and it was a very different experience for me … I changed my mindset and learned a lot of new information and knowledge. I met very good friends and had contact with many classmates. I’m still in contact with friends from South Africa, Papua New Guinea, Thailand and India.

The experience of meeting and learning from other international students in Australia was also key to the learning experience for 4MS:

> To go abroad opens your mind and makes a lot of changes in the way you think. It was a good experience to meet other people – Australian, Korean, Japanese. In Australia, there are a lot of international people
studying together … so it is a very good chance to learn or study how international people think in another way.

This notion of learning about other cultures through Australia’s multiculturalism and large international student population was also highlighted by 6MS:

In Australia, I studied with students from many other countries, as well as from Oz. I made very good friends with them and learned from them and their lifestyle. By studying in Oz, I received a better perspective on how people live in Asia and the Pacific. I made good friends with people from Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Korea, PNG. It helps me to understand people much better.

For 7MS, ‘experiencing the customs and traditions by living in another country, especially in a developed country like Australia’, was highly rewarding for her family and she described the experience as ‘the great challenge of meeting different people’.

8MS felt that ‘Australia is a welcoming country with welcoming people’ and ‘a different world or place to live and learn from’. That Mongolia has been relatively isolated from the West until more recent times only deepens the impact that such an experience may have on ADS scholars. For many, the experience of living and studying in Australia was a unique opportunity to learn from others from a variety of countries across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

In terms of developing confidence and competence in English language proficiency, 8MS believed living and studying in Australia ‘helped my English proficiency which, in turn, has helped me in my current job’. Importantly, 8MS explained that ‘English is the working language now at the ministry’ and believed that his proficiency ‘helped raise my profile within the ministry’. Indeed, this was exemplified by 8MS being ‘recently asked to write a paper on the position of the government to explain to foreign investors Mongolia’s position on a new tax law’.

6MS made a similar assessment, claiming that:

In Russia, I also studied English but I think my English improved greatly in Oz. You have to write and read. That helped me a lot in my work at the Ministry of Finance when I had to go through materials and literature in English to do my job.
For 11MS, ‘my writing test score was quite high but my speaking was much lower’ and so her ‘speaking skills were able to improve much more by living in Australia’. For 3MS, it was ‘the development of my English academic writing skills during my training that really improved’. Indeed, the confidence and skills in English language proficiency in 10MS was such that ‘after returning from Australia, I got published three times’. In this context, 10MS declared ‘what ADS is doing is really important because it should be understood, both in Mongolia and also in Australia, that people really benefited from this program’.

With regards to the experience of living and studying in Australia providing exposure to international practices, the Mongolia ADS scholars provided a variety of examples. 1MS described how ‘after studying in Australia I changed my teaching methodologies from traditional to more communicative teaching’. Likewise, 9MS tries ‘to promote how Australian teachers prepare their curriculum in my own lessons … because you see the difference’. Adopting Australian teaching approaches at Mongolia’s leading universities is a significant example of the impact of an ADS scholars’ exposure to international practices in Australia, particularly given the traditional difference in teaching approaches. While being careful not to discredit the traditional ‘very Russian style of teaching’ in Mongolian universities, 9MS maintained that:

Mongolia is trying to become more Westernised but all of the professors were taught in Russia so when they come they teach like they do in Russia. It’s a totally different style – less independent work … This is totally different to Australia. Academically it was very good, the ADS program for me … It makes you more professional, more of an international standard … The Masters program is very strong in Australia … I learned academic research skills, Western standard research skills, and they’re totally different … It was very good training.

That ADS scholars in educational vocations are influenced to aspire to Australian approaches and standards in education is noteworthy and perhaps an opportunity for future Australia-Mongolia collaboration.

As a Master in Public Policy and Management graduate from Monash University, 11MS learned more participatory approaches to public policy engagement which have benefited her in her role as a governance specialist for UNDP:
Because of the past socialist period, most Mongolians have their particular way of thinking. To take a very simple example, when we hold a seminar people are used to only saying the good sides of things, congratulating each other and not so much getting down into detail and asking questions or proposing that things could be done differently … Australia was very different. In Australia … you just go straight to the problem, ask questions, pros and cons, and the ways of solving it.

For the Mongolia ADS scholars, particularly those who had gone through the ADS program in the mid-1990s, the experience of living in Australia was beneficial in terms of developing a better understanding of a mature market economy. 7MS explained:

Mongolia was part of the socialist communist system for over 70 years and, as being a part of that, we have been working with the socialist system countries and not the so-called capitalist or market economy system countries.

2MS explained further:

We’d been in a different society … sort of closed … the total system was changing so people had to change … You had to learn different practices, different behaviour … Australia was a totally different environment – it’s a market economy.

Essentially, the ADS program provided the scholars with the unique experience of learning while living in a market economy country. It is interesting to note that the two Mongolian ADS scholars to attribute exposure to a market economy as being a successful outcome of their experience under the ADS program both now head their own successful private companies in Ulaanbaatar.

In terms of adopting self-directed and participatory teaching/learning methods, like their Chinese counterparts the Mongolia ADS scholars revealed that ‘at the beginning it was difficult to understand what was expected’ (11MS) but were grateful for having developed such skills. For 6MS, the process of ‘learning how to study and doing completely new things’ was ‘much better’ than having to ‘learn everything by heart’ under the traditional ‘Mongolian or Russian type of study’. While 10MS was careful to explain that his ‘Russian education was not bad at all, it was very good’, he maintained that his Australian education ‘was really to the point and very practical in application’ while also encouraging the learner to be self-directed.
11MS favoured how ‘in Australia there is not so much lecturing and there is time for independent work’ and that ‘assignments were usually two, three or four key questions and you had to answer them using all that you had learned, read, heard’. 11MS favoured this approach ‘because in the Russian system … questions are in line with textbook headings’ and students are simply ‘expected to describe what is inside the chapter’ which requires ‘lots of memorising’. 5MS made a similar assessment, maintaining that:

This process has changed my whole approach to learning … and approach to my work. Now it’s different but when we were young kids we were more prone to memorise things. The learning style in Australia was very different to the learning style in Mongolia. Very helpful.

10MS admitted that he ‘virtually became a bookworm’ in Australia in his ‘little cabin in the library’ and even ‘for writing one essay I had to read heaps of books’. This eager admission of self-directed learning was largely stimulated by 10MS noticing that ‘the quality of my writing, the methodology of my analysis, really changed’. According to 10MS:

You learn to be efficient. You do not waste time on things that you’re not going to use. You’re exactly targeting things that are relevant. When you write essays, the ethics are so tight and right that you have no choice but to be the righteous person because you do not want to go plagiarising. And you always use as much material as possible.

10MS came to understand academic research methodologies, including research ethics, data collection, referencing and formulating self-theories. In doing so, 10MS admitted that, in developing these new skills, he became ‘committed’ to ‘work hard’. Such motivation assumes self-direction in learning.

**Summary: Question 2**

On average, there was moderate to great support by ADS scholars from China and Mongolia that the experience of living and studying in Australia (Theme 2) was having an attributable impact in strengthening human resource capacity (Objective 1).

In terms of the Australian experience enabling ADS scholars to meet and work with people from different cultures, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated great attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. For China, there
was general consensus that the experience of meeting and working with people from different cultures enabled greater multicultural understanding, including of people, culture, society and democracy. This exposure was not only to Australia but also to other cultures through meeting and working with other international students in Australia. For Mongolia, the experience of living and studying in Australia provided ADS scholars with particularly unique exposure to other cultures, helped largely by Australia’s multiculturalism and international student population. Like the China ADS scholars, the experience of meeting and working with people from other cultures was commonly described in terms of changing or opening one’s mind to other ways of thinking. ADS scholars were able to learn about people, language, culture and traditions that were very different to the former socialist economies traditionally known to Mongolia. Interestingly, the Mongolia ADS scholars exhibited a strong tendency to build and maintain friendships with a wide range of people from across the region. These findings resulted in a green TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of the Australian experience enabling ADS scholars to develop confidence and competence in English language proficiency, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated little attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and moderate attribution for Mongolia. For China, there was some recognition towards greater confidence and competence in English language proficiency. One explanation for this lack of attribution was that many ADS scholars had already achieved a reasonable level of English language proficiency before travelling to Australia. Another explanation was that, for many, the need for English language proficiency was limited in their daily work role in China. Where attribution was evident, ADS scholars revealed greater confidence and competence with accents and colloquialisms and interpreting expertise. One major problem for Tibetan ADS applicants was the lack of access to IELTS information, resources and testing centres, which was perceived to be a disincentive for attracting quality ADS applicants. For Mongolia, there was slightly greater attribution towards the meaningful development of confidence and competence in English language proficiency and its value to the work environment. One explanation for this was that English was now the working language at ministries and a number of ADS scholars were able to describe work responsibilities based on their English language
proficiency. This included writing papers for overseas audiences as well as staff reports in English. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a yellow TL rating for Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of the Australian experience enabling ADS scholars to be exposed to international practices, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and Mongolia. For China, some ADS scholars revealed how they were able to compare systems of their own country with Western countries and, through this comparative analysis, inform new and different ways of doing things. For Mongolia, there was also some evidence to suggest that ADS scholars were exposed to international practices which then contributed to outcomes upon their return. This included adopting Australian teaching and learning approaches, academic research skills and global perspectives, participatory approaches to public policy engagement and better understanding of a mature market economy. Nonetheless, the majority of ADS scholars were not forthcoming with such examples, resulting in a yellow TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of the Australian experience enabling ADS scholars to adopt self-directed and participatory teaching/learning methods, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated great attribution towards the *indicator of success* for both China and Mongolia. For China, there was strong support towards the benefits of ADS scholars learning to adopt self-directed and participatory teaching/learning methods in Australia. While ADS scholars revealed initial difficulties experienced during the learning process, all supported the acquisition of the skills and continued to actively utilise them in their working lives. China ADS scholars learned how to independently manage their time, research, conceptualise and write essays and theses of their findings. For Mongolia, the findings were the same. ADS scholars revealed initial challenges with a new approach but found benefit in learning how to independently gather data from various sources, reference those sources, synthesise ideas and formulate theories. Like their Chinese counterparts, the Mongolia ADS scholars revealed how they were continuing to take this approach to their work. These findings resulted in a green TL rating for both China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).
Question 3: What did you do after your study?
Relevance to: Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity
Theme 3: Characteristics of returning scholars
Indicators of success:
- Scholars return from Australia and remain in country
- Scholars return to their original place of employ (sponsoring agency)
- Scholars move to other organisations (public, private or non-government) but continue in work relevant to the objectives of the ADS program
- Scholars given greater responsibilities/promoted upon returning from Australia

China Results

All of the China ADS scholars confirmed that they returned to China after having completed their ADS scholarship in Australia. 3CS believed that in the past ‘the non-return rates were an issue because … probably half of the Chinese students who were on the ADS program didn’t come back’:

They stayed in Australia or emigrated to Canada or other countries … In theory there is a requirement that you have to return for a minimum of two years but in practice it doesn’t work … We did a review at the time on this and the return rate was not very high … It’s not so serious because the AusAID program is not very big in China … If you have 20 ADS scholars and half of them stay, it doesn’t concern China too much … It was a concern for some program managers though.

Nevertheless, each of the China ADS scholars interviewed for this study returned to country and to their original employer, though many were either moved to a new division to take advantage of their new knowledge and skills or promoted soon after. While 1CS noted ‘I came back to the same division and same work – there were no changes’, 3CS confirmed:

When I returned to the Chinese Ministry of Education I was transferred to the bilateral division … I was in charge of the China-Australia education exchange program … because of my experience in Australia and my understanding of the Australian education system, especially the higher education system.

Indeed, 3CS was made responsible for ‘developing an Institutional Linkages Program involving linking Australian and Chinese higher education institutions and research institutes to develop joint projects’.
Likewise, 4CS returned to a ‘job even more relevant than before’ as he was ‘moved to another office for bilateral affairs … for the Asia-Pacific region’. 4CS became ‘directly involved in bilateral relations and cooperation with Australia’. Indeed, 4CS believed that ‘the courses that I did in Australia … gave me much of my knowledge on Australia’s own policies’ and, as a result, ‘the ministry was thinking about my job before I came back’. 4CS continues to work closely with the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, AusAID and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR).

6CS confirmed that she ‘returned to the same research position … and was promoted very quickly’. Indeed, 6CS ‘came back in October 2002 and was promoted in December 2002’ and felt that ‘the promotion was due to my study in Australia’. Similarly, 5CS returned to ‘continue work in the same position and only a couple of months later was promoted’, though he did not solely attribute this to his ADS scholarship but also to his previous experience.

However, 7CS ‘came back to the same section, to the same work’ and was only promoted four years after her return. For 2CS, her return saw little change in her work role nor opportunity for promotion, resulting in her actively finding new work. Despite this, 2CS attributed securing her new role and rapid promotion to her Masters through the ADS program:

I worked for one year in the same job and then moved to a new job … but I had to start again from the bottom … After two months I was asked to write a paper … my boss was very impressed and … after four months I was promoted to higher duties. My boss said that they had never had someone promoted so quickly … The reason why I got this new job was totally because of my degree because they require people who have Masters or higher.

2CS moved to the Tibet Banking Regulatory Bureau. While not a bureau traditionally targeted by AusAID and the Chinese Government for the ADS program, the skills acquired by 2CS in her Master of Commerce degree at the University of Sydney would no doubt be in demand in the Lhasa Bureau. That 2CS remains in the public service, to which the ADS program in particular aims to strengthen, is positive, particularly given that ‘there are only four ADS scholars in Tibet and none of them are in my area of work’.
3CS returned to the Chinese Ministry of Education with a Master of Education Administration degree from the University of Sydney. However, within five years he decided to ‘move into my own business to help other education institutions to set up their business in China’. Despite this move, 3CS maintains that his ‘consulting company has since helped many education institutions to develop programs in China’. 3CS decided to leave ‘simply because I wanted to try both public and private’ and saw the move as ‘a personal goal’. 3CS explained:

I had been working for the ministry for 15 years so I thought I should try the private sector … I saw at that time such big opportunity in the private sector in education and I wondered what I could do … to contribute my knowledge and to help other private sector organisations in education programs in China. So I left in 2001 and I went with a European company … and after six years I have helped them set up twenty-six centres across China … My job is to understand the local market, understand the regulation and help them to set up quickly. Also, I’m in charge of high-level government relations. If they have any problems with the local governments or education authorities then I help them to resolve the issues … so I’ve been very happy with my work in the public sector for 15 years and now almost six years with the private sector. Now I’m developing my own business and also helping another American company to invest in private universities in China.

While 3CS has predominantly assisted European and American companies in this endeavour, he remains a valuable resource for any Australian education provider wanting to enter, or expand in, the massive Chinese education market.

After receiving a Master of Agriculture Economics from the University of Queensland, 5CS returned to China only to be sent to Rome for two years as the Counsellor for the Permanent Representation of the People’s Republic of China to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture. 5CS then returned to the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture as a Division Director and has since been promoted to the level of Deputy Director General. Though always within the Chinese public service, 5CS provides an excellent example of an ADS scholar who has both excelled in his career and continued to work in areas relevant to the objectives of the ADS program, both domestically and abroad.
Mongolia Results

Like all of their Chinese counterparts, each of the Mongolia ADS scholars confirmed that they returned to Mongolia after having studied under the ADS program. While 1MS returned to ‘the same position … and continued my previous job’, she was in the minority, with most Mongolia ADS scholars returning to new positions within their original place of employ (sponsoring agency). This was due to a variety of factors including internal ministry restructuring, particularly due to changes in government, and the conscious decision by the supporting agency to utilise the new knowledge and skills of their ADS graduate in a new role within the organisation. 6MS was one example, after completing her Graduate Diploma in Economics Development at the ANU:

When I came back in 1996 we had a new government … I was a specialist in International Relations, however when I came back from Oz I worked as an economist in the Treasury Department of the Ministry of Finance.

8MS had a similar experience, returning ‘to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ but then ‘asked to go to another department where economics expertise was needed’. According to 8MS, ‘I was placed according to the skills I could bring’ and ‘directly promoted to Third Secretary upon return’.

However, like 1MS before, 9MS ‘moved back to the same position’ and indicated her intentions to ‘probably leave my position given that I was not being utilised as effectively as I could be’.

For 7MS, the decision to move from the public service to UNDP was based on the opportunity to have access to, and continue learning about, IT in a country that had limited IT infrastructure at the time of her return. Despite moving to another organisation, 7MS continued in work relevant to the objectives of the ADS program. Working for UNDP and now as a CEO of her own IT consulting company, 7MS continues to work on improving IT infrastructure and expertise in Mongolia, making a significant contribution to better communication throughout the country and with the world.
2MS has also made a significant contribution to the country, having set up and become CEO of his own national insurance and reinsurance company. According to 2MS, his move to the private sector continues to help the government and, indeed, the economy:

We had to return and bring changes … this is the important moral … There was a debate about the brain drain from the government to the private sector but I think it is normal we are helping the private sector [as] it helps the government. Some guys think they have to keep all the ADS returnees from overseas but this is a matter of choice. If some join the private sector, for example, and can implement new laws for the insurance industry, try to build up new practices for general insurance that helps the economy. In total, it is helping the economy.

5MS too had since moved from the public service to be a national program manager with the International Labour Organization. In this role, 5MS was working on the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour. Her move from the Mongolian public service saw her working in a field very much related to the poverty alleviation objective of AusAID and the ADS program.

The majority of Mongolia ADS scholars felt that they had returned from Australia to greater responsibilities or promotion. While many were moved to new divisions within their organisations, their new roles were generally perceived as ‘a kind of promotion’ (4MS), particularly where their newly acquired knowledge and skills were strategically utilised. Perceptions of lack of responsibility and promotional opportunity upon return were minimal.

5MS believed her ‘degree from Australia was a big thing’ towards her promotion to the Head of the International Relations Division in the Mongolia Ministry of Health and Social Welfare within a year of her return. However, 5MS also believed that her promotion was ‘partly’ due to her increased ‘confidence in English and proficiency in work’ acquired from Australia, as well as the fact that ‘the newly assigned minister knew me from my previous work and thought I could do the job’. Now, as a national program manager for the International Labour Organization, 5MS revealed that she ‘went through a recruitment process to get the job’ and felt that her ‘experience in Australia assisted with this’.
6MS also felt that ‘my Australian degree had greatly helped me to be promoted’ which also led her to further work opportunities in economic development with ‘the Mongolian Ministry of Finance … the IMF … the Japan International Cooperation Agency … and the World Bank’.

**Summary: Question 3**

On average, there was moderate to great support by ADS scholars from China and Mongolia that the *characteristics of returning ADS scholars* (Theme 3) were having an attributable impact in *strengthening human resource capacity* (Objective 1).

In terms of ADS scholars returning from Australia and remaining in country, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated great attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and Mongolia. All of the respondents interviewed for this study returned to their respective country. While it is acknowledged that most of the respondents were sourced for this study in country, thereby opening the possibility of a skewed result in this regard, respondents from both countries confirmed that other ADS scholars known to them had also returned to country. It was known that some returned scholars had moved overseas since their return, however, this was for short periods for work or study. These findings resulted in a green TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of ADS scholars returning to their original place of employ (sponsoring agency), the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated great attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and Mongolia. For China, each of the ADS scholars interviewed returned to their original place of employ. However, many returned to new divisions where their organisation could better utilise their new knowledge and skills. This typically involved work related to China-Australia bilateral relations or other international activities. For Mongolia, the findings were the same however only a minority returned to their same position. Most ADS scholars were placed in new positions, either due to ministry restructuring or a conscious decision by their organisation to better utilise their new knowledge and skills. These findings resulted in a green TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).
In terms of returning ADS scholars moving to other organisations (public, private or non-government) but continuing in work relevant to the objectives of the ADS program, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated moderate attribution towards the indicator of success for China and great attribution for Mongolia. For China, there was movement by four ADS scholars to other organisations. This included movement across the public sector (motivated by more meaningful work opportunities), from public to private (motivated by the opportunity to open business); overseas secondment (motivated by nomination by the sponsoring agency) as well as further overseas study (motivated by post-doctoral research opportunities). The two ADS scholars on overseas secondment and study remained in work relevant to the objectives of the ADS program, while the other two remained in work in the banking and education sectors that could only partially be judged as relevant. For Mongolia, there was far greater movement of ADS scholars to other organisations, with some individuals moving across all three sectors. Importantly, movements usually involved work which remained relevant to the objectives of the ADS program. One explanation for this was that the attractive work options for higher qualified graduates in Mongolia were often tied to policy and programs that were a priority for the government and aimed at the sustainable development of Mongolia. Another explanation was that ADS graduates represented a small group of higher qualified individuals that were in strong demand by government, private and non-government agencies. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of ADS scholars being given greater responsibilities/promoted upon returning from Australia, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated moderate attribution towards the indicator of success for China and great attribution for Mongolia. For China, there was some evidence to suggest that ADS scholars were being promoted soon after their return. Of those that were promoted, most attributed their Australian qualifications and their newly acquired knowledge and skills as a contributing factor. However, there was also some evidence of China ADS scholars experiencing little change in their work responsibilities upon their return, which motivated some to find different work. For Mongolia, there was some evidence of ADS scholars experiencing little change in their work responsibilities upon their return from Australia. However, the vast majority revealed how they were appointed
by their organisations to work roles representing greater responsibility and promotion, often immediately upon their return. This was a conscious decision by the organisations to strategically utilise the newly acquired knowledge and skills. Others returned with the confidence to take on greater responsibilities or promotion through work opportunities in other organisations, including some ADS scholars setting up and managing their own large and successful enterprises. Most had managed to excel in their career progression after returning from Australia and there was now a significant presence of ADS scholars in senior levels of government and business. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 6.2).

**Question 4:** Do you think your educational experience in Australia made you different in the way you approached things at work? In what way?

**Relevance to:** Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity
Theme 3: Characteristics of returning scholars

**Indicators of success:**
- Scholars reform minded/have confidence and skills to drive reform
- Scholars in positions of authority to make their own systems adapt and work better

**China Results**

In terms of scholars returning more reform minded with the confidence and skills to drive reform, ICS noted that ‘while I personally felt more confident … and in my small team, I was able to make some changes’, it was difficult to drive reform further in a large hierarchical system of government with traditional bureaucratic processes:

For my work, coordinating and managing international assistance projects, you have a lot of close contact with people from different countries … So [my Australian study] really helped when dealing with multicultural aspects and approaching things differently … But in government it’s hard for one person to make change because you have the hierarchical structure. Normally, you just follow directions from those above … we normally have set ways of doing things.

Nevertheless, ICS believed that:

I have more confidence and I think I’ve become more rational in the way I do things.
Importantly, such an admission assumes a reform-mindedness and confidence to try to approach things differently. That 1CS made some changes in her small team also assumes a confidence and ability to make her own systems adapt and work better.

Similarly, 7CS believed it was ‘very hard to work differently because … in a government office you work in a way already organised’ and ‘if your director tells you that you should do work in this way, you must do it in this way’. While 7CS commented that ‘in doing your work you can mix your thoughts in your work’, she felt that any reform ‘in a big way’ was generally ‘quite limited’ as ‘you can’t disobey your supervisor’. Nevertheless, 7CS did recognise that the opportunity to drive reform would be more likely the higher she was elevated in her organisation and felt that ‘now that I am director, I take responsibility for the section, I can organise things under my power and organise things the way I think’.

2CS admitted that while she felt ‘more confident to make change’ unfortunately ‘the type of work I do now doesn’t require me to make change’. According to 2CS, ‘the work is very specific’ and ‘already very well organised’. Nevertheless, 2CS felt that she did ‘suggest some changes at work meetings’ and agreed that she now ‘looks at things … from different ways’ and is ‘more balanced’ because ‘before I only saw things from one angle but now I can see things from more angles’.

This notion of developing a wider and more balanced perspective in order to make informed decisions for reform was also highlighted by 6CS when she stated:

I try to look at and think of things more comprehensively, more logically and also from a wider perspective. I try to choose more options for doing things and also try to do things flexibly … it gave me a lot of techniques.

9CS believed that after returning from Australia ‘to some extent I was more reform minded’ and ‘had more ideas on how to do my job better’ but that ‘to then make reform happen, depends on the organisation’. Nevertheless, 9CS believed that ‘China is becoming more open to change, more open minded’ and through her work she ‘was able to feed in a lot of my own ideas’.

For 3CS, the experience of living and studying in Australia influenced him ‘to speak and talk’ more openly about public policy and ‘ask questions and challenge
opinions’. 3CS was initially surprised that in Australia ‘even as part of the university program, students were encouraged to ask questions and challenge opinions’ which ‘was something I was not quite used to’. 3CS admitted that:

My education experience in China is that it’s not very polite for students to challenge professors, even if you disagree … In Australia, you’re encouraged to speak and to talk … I think I changed quite a lot.

While too much confidence to openly converse and perhaps criticise public policy in China could be seen as potentially deleterious, 3CS explained that ‘this is happening in China’ as ‘the system becomes more and more democratic’. According to 3CS:

In the past, the government was responsible for making public policies without consulting. Now they have public hearing systems to hear from people from all walks of life … to contribute their ideas, to challenge, to ask questions. I think this is something very, very Western or democratic. I think it’s a good thing because public policy has to be transparent if you want your people to understand and appreciate it.

That 3CS has been exposed to such democratic debate in Australia, and is a champion for it, is noteworthy. Indeed, 4CS made a similar assessment and now tries to adopt the same approach in the work environment:

I remember one of the most interesting things that I learned from my study was the way of openness, openness of information, and also an open approach for public consultation before a decision is made. I think that’s a very practical and well-established way of doing things in Australia, while in China it is a little bit different. Therefore, when I am doing my job I try to incorporate this into my daily work.

Perhaps one of the finest examples of an ADS scholar having the confidence and skills to drive reform, and being in a position of authority to do so, was recounted by 5CS who reinstalled the ADS program in his department after a seven- or eight-year hiatus:

I returned from Australia in the mid-1990s. My department then stopped sending people to Australia under the ADS program because the boss thought that personnel was very lacking so we couldn’t commit to send any more people to learn overseas … So for seven or eight years my department didn’t send anyone to go to Australia but gave the chance to other departments … Then I became the Deputy Director General in this department in 2004 and I said, ‘No, for my department if we get the chance it is good for people to study overseas’.
That 5CS, now a senior Chinese public servant, is so supportive of the ADS program is a clear indication of the perceived value and success of the program by a returned ADS scholar.

**Mongolia Results**

The Mongolia ADS scholars provided good examples of their reform-mindedness after returning from Australia and having the confidence and skills to drive reform. 1MS provided a good example of her confidence to reform her teaching and assessment methodologies in her classes:

I changed my methodology and started using very different activities amongst students, especially in the evaluative system. Previously we only used tests and asked them to write reports. From this year, I started asking them to do assignments and started to conduct more discussions during the lectures. Now my students are getting used to it.

Indeed, 1MS maintained that other colleagues were also ‘coming back after doing their Masters in the UK, US and in Australia’ and incorporating new approaches to teaching and learning.

However, 2MS argued that reform-mindedness was inherently part of the modern Mongolian culture anyway, noting that it had ‘only been 15 years since the transition to a market economy’ and ‘Mongolia is still changing … so you have to be ready everyday for changes’. Interestingly, 2MS maintained that ‘Mongolian culture is quick to adapt because it’s nomadic, so decision making is not that slow’. Nevertheless, 2MS did admit that ‘you can’t make change by yourself, you have to persuade people … you have to communicate the change process’ and ‘international exposure helps a lot’.

In fact, 2MS revealed that his very decision to study in Australia under the ADS program was based on the foundation of wanting to learn in view of Mongolia’s period of immense reform:

Change was coming and I thought we needed some management skills and knowledge and information to do the right things for the market economy. So that’s why I joined … to pick up a second way of thinking and skills … to look in a different way at lessons and experiences of China and Japan.
In a way, 2MS represents an ADS scholar who actively engaged in the ADS program in order to build his confidence and skills towards reform. In his admission, 2MS also provided an excellent example of an ADS scholar learning from his exposure to international practices.

3MS believed that he had developed confidence to ‘change many things’ since returning from Australia, ‘especially in education management and policy’. 3MS had facilitated ‘changing the regulations of Masters and doctoral training in Mongolia’, wherein he ‘presented on the changes at two seminars with 17 accredited universities attending’. 3MS also facilitated changing ‘the regulation for academic affairs’ at his university. Importantly, 3MS attributed his skills in change management to his Masters studies in Australia:

Through my Masters, I learned how to realise reform through change management. We experienced a lot of teamwork and received many presentations on change management. So here I teamed up with colleagues and also contacts outside of the university … to distribute new information among members and educate and train new professionals and other medical doctors.

While 3MS accepted that being in a position of authority was certainly ‘useful for change management and influencing policy making’, he also maintained that it depended on ‘teamwork, your ideas and your own activities’. For this reason, 3MS believed ‘many people used NGOs to realise many things’ in Mongolia.

In terms of driving change in his role, 3MS admitted that his ‘educational experience in Australia was helpful for managing change at the Health Science University in Mongolia’. 3MS had ‘changed from a teacher-centred to a student-centred’ approach, including affording the ‘opportunity for students to choose from more subjects’ and introducing a program that was ‘now coursework and research based’. 3MS attributed ‘these changes were based on what I saw in Australia’.

For 4MS, the experience of studying in Australia under the ADS program resulted in ‘many influences and changes compared to before and after’ his return, including the ability to ‘think about other people’s ideas and make comparisons of advantages and disadvantages’. To 4MS, this represented a ‘reasonable and strategic way of thinking’ which ‘opened my mind, made changes in my way of thinking and broadened my thinking’.
8MS made a similar observation, admitting that he ‘felt more reform minded now’ and believed that he ‘was asked to write a project proposal for AusAID on human resource changes … due to my abilities to think more broadly and strategically’. Indeed, 8MS felt that, as a result of his educational experience in Australia, whenever ‘I watched the television or read on economic policy I always approach things critically – it’s habitual now’.

6MS felt that, as a result of her Australian experience, ‘I understood the principles of a market economy and really became more confident and tried to apply my knowledge and experience gained to my professional and private life’. As a result, 6MS felt that:

Studying in Oz gave me a lot of confidence – a new outlook, more adapted to new things, able to implement new innovations, understanding more change involved … I became more adapted to change so I can understand things better … I try to make others understand new things and then implement.

6MS’ admission indicates adaptability to change which has given her the confidence to better understand change in order to implement it.

For 7MS, ‘without the self-confidence I had developed I would not have taken the UNDP position. I felt that with my newly gained knowledge I would be able to improve things in the job’. 7MS thought she ‘had succeeded in this’ and provided some significant examples of IT reform that she had contributed to in Mongolia since her return:

One of the things that we did when I first started working at UNDP was that we introduced the Internet into the office. We could then be part of the global network meetings held by UNDP … to see what the other countries were doing … I wasn’t expecting too many people to show up but the room was packed. Everybody came over … At the same time … I started being involved in IT policy issues … One of the biggest achievements was … the development of the ICT Vision for 2010 in Mongolia. And this is still valued now after six or seven years. Government officials still often refer to this as one of the main policy documents.

7MS thought that she ‘was the first one in the IT sector who gained their Masters degree from a Western university’ and ‘on any IT related issues, whether it was a meeting with the Prime Minister … other government officials or … donors, I would
be asked to join the meeting’. For 7MS, ‘it was a very good challenge’ and one that she attributed to her skills in ‘looking in broader ways … looking sector-wise in terms of technology, as well as talking to the different stakeholders and how to involve them’.

For 5MS, the experience of writing her thesis enabled her to build skills in quantitative analysis that has assisted her in providing advice to government, workers and employers in order to drive policy reform:

My capacity of working with data has been critical to me in my work and my advocacy work as well. We give advice to government, workers, employers on how they can improve their policies, what are the gaps. Numbers persuade! … This area, that I learned in Australia, has been very critical to my work.

5MS felt that her experience in Australia under the ADS program had ‘very, very, very much’ assisted her with implementing change. According to 5MS:

Upon returning you see how different it is – difference in culture, development, how people think about development – you can easily spot these differences so you want to contribute to change and doing more things. I felt more confident to make change and make a difference.

However, 5MS admitted that ‘at that time, I was younger so more energetic as well’ and ‘now I know change doesn’t come quickly, it takes time’.

For 11MS, ‘I returned very confident to give recommendations to the National University based on what I had learned in Australia’. Indeed, 11MS maintained that:

Because I learned about the way things should be, I am more confident to say ‘Oh, this is not the way we should be doing things, instead we could do it this way’, drawing on the knowledge of how it’s done in other countries and how it may be applied to the Mongolian context.

However, 11MS recognised that while she was ‘confident to make change’, its successful implementation ‘depended on various actors, on many stakeholders’. 11MS was currently ‘in charge of an anti-corruption project and Parliament strengthening project’ and ‘looking at areas where I can make a difference’.
That 11MS looked to Australia as a benchmark is noteworthy and a clear indication of the success of the ADS program in enabling ADS scholars to return to their home country with a drive for reform and the confidence and skills to enable it.

**Summary: Question 4**

On average, there was moderate to great support by ADS scholars from China and Mongolia that the *characteristics of returning ADS scholars* (Theme 3) were having an attributable impact in *strengthening human resource capacity* (Objective 1). The main exception was with regards to China ADS scholars returning to positions of authority to make their own systems adapt and work better (see below).

In terms of ADS scholars returning reform minded or having the confidence and skills to drive reform, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and great attribution for Mongolia. For China, a number of ADS scholars exhibited an enthusiasm towards reform and admitted that their Australian experience had made them more critical, open minded and inclined to question and debate. They also felt they had developed a wider and more balanced perspective in order to make informed decisions for reform. However, most ADS scholars revealed that they were inhibited in driving reform due to the large hierarchical and bureaucratic system of government, the organisational culture towards reform and expectation to only follow decisions from above. For Mongolia, there were numerous concrete examples of ADS scholars returning reform minded or having the confidence and skills to successfully drive reform. This included reforming teaching, learning and assessment methodologies, education management and policy in local universities, disseminating information on overseas reforms to local health professionals, implementing new infrastructure, policy and public information and awareness in IT, and introducing practical approaches to enable greater community consultation for the passage of new laws. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of ADS scholars returning to positions of authority to make their own systems adapt and work better, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated little attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and moderate attribution for
Mongolia. This differentiation was due to a variety of factors. For China, there was very little evidence to adequately judge the success based on the responses of interviewees. For the most part, hierarchy and bureaucracy remained an inhibiting factor towards meaningful change. Nonetheless, one ADS scholar provided a good example of how he was promoted to Director General of his department which enabled him to reverse a longstanding decision of his predecessor and allow staff access to the ADS program. For Mongolia, ADS scholars appeared to be better placed to make their own systems adapt and work better. This was attributed to the strategic placement of ADS scholars by organisations to utilise their new knowledge and skills, as well as the rapid promotion of ADS scholars to positions where they could influence decisions and apply their own way of doing things. That ADS scholars represented a small group of higher qualified personnel meant that they enjoyed an added freedom to move where they felt they could make the most contribution, whether it be in the public, private or non-government sectors. Moreover, those that set up businesses created their own positions of authority to make their own systems adapt and work better. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a yellow TL rating for Mongolia (Table 6.2).

**Question 5:** Did your employer support you when you returned?

**How?**

**Relevance to:** Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity

Theme 4: Institutional targeting and capacity building objectives

Indicators of success:

- Scholars return to a supportive work environment with a commitment to adopting strategies for utilising the graduate’s new knowledge, skills and qualifications
- Scholars are valued for their new skills and knowledge by employer/colleagues
- Scholars are able to use their new skills and knowledge in the work environment
- Scholars are utilising learning in various types of work
- Scholars are passing their new skills and knowledge to others
- Scholars are helped to address specific knowledge and skills gaps of the agency
- Scholars fulfilled all obligations to the employer and vice versa (e.g. contractual agreement, action plan, etc.)
- Access and commitment to further education and professional development opportunities
China Results

In terms of China ADS scholars returning to a supportive work environment, 7CS identified ‘the fact that the ministry left my position open for when I came back’ as ‘quite supportive’. 3CS ‘valued very much’ the support he received from his employer upon his return, particularly in terms of placing him ‘in the right position’. 3CS believed ‘they gave me the right job and they gave me the right promotion at the right moment’ and ‘I was soon in charge of the whole division’. 3CS saw this as ‘the best support I could get’ and was in ‘no doubt’ that his ‘employer gave me this opportunity – employment, promotion, responsibility’ as a result of his background, experience and qualifications. It meant that the human resource division ensured that ‘I didn’t go back to my old position’ and ‘was immediately put into the China-Australia program’.

8CS had a similar experience, recalling how after her return her work ‘wanted me to do this major project and after that, provided me with the opportunity to be promoted with more responsibilities’.

9CS maintained that her ‘employer has always been very supportive’ and ‘gave me a lot of freedom when I returned to make decisions and take part in climate change negotiations with the UN’. 9CS believed this was because her employer ‘trusted and believed in my capabilities’ upon her return from Australia.

4CS too believed that ‘I have always received support from my employer … colleagues … and boss’. Upon his return from Australia, 4CS accompanied his Deputy Director General on a ‘trip to Qinghai for a forest resources management project funded by AusAID’ and recalled how he was introduced as ‘the AusAID student who is now responsible for AusAID projects’. According to 4CS, his Deputy Director General ‘was very happy to see that I could get engaged with Australia and China cooperation’. Such opportunity was not rare, with 4CS identifying that in his department there were ‘several ADS scholars’ and ‘most were at the division director level … playing an important role’. In this regard, 4CS believed that ‘the senior management staff had a strategy for their returned ADS scholars in terms of their positions and future careers’.
However, other China ADS scholars did not feel that they had returned to supportive work environments. Indeed, for the most part, the responses of China ADS scholars identified a lack of any tangible strategies for utilising scholars’ new knowledge, skills and qualifications. This may have also been the reason for moderate attribution towards scholars being made to feel valued for their new skills and knowledge by their employer and colleagues. 1CS even admitted that she was made to feel most valued merely ‘as a translator’ which was ‘annoying sometimes because I didn’t go to Australia to study translation’. 1CS explained:

Because your directors know you studied overseas, they think your English is very good so sometimes when the department receives a high-level delegation they will nominate you to be the translator.

Despite this, there were some good examples of how China ADS scholars were using their new skills and knowledge in the work environment and utilising learning in various types of work. After having completed his Master of Agriculture Economics degree at the University of Queensland, 5CS ‘worked with my supervisor at UQ to make my thesis into an ACIAR project proposal’ which was successful and saw him ‘continue to do research’ for ‘that project which lasted three years’. 5CS has also since worked for the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture in Rome, the UNDP in Pyongyang, as well as in various capacities for the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture in Beijing. Indeed, 5CS identified how ‘my research has been quite valuable for the authorities concerned’ as ‘they get to consider what the researchers suggest’ in their own policy deliberations. Importantly, 5CS maintained that the ADS program ‘enriched my knowledge, but not only in Agriculture’ which has proved useful in obtaining a broader range of knowledge and skills for various work demands. 5CS explained:

I work in the Ministry of Agriculture but my position is administrative so I don’t think Agriculture is enough. Sometimes I need macro-economics, sometimes I need micro- and sometimes I should know Psychology, to know people’s behaviour. So I was able to get a broader range of knowledge and skills, not just in Agriculture.

9CS returned to China and quickly became ‘involved in climate change negotiations’ to which she believed her ‘degree helped a great deal in this area’. 9CS believed that ‘through my studies, I was already exposed to all the details of negotiation and was able to directly use these skills in my work’.
1CS maintained that ‘one of the benefits of doing a Masters in Australia is that you learn that when you’re doing something you really have to obtain lots of details’. In this regard, 1CS continues to use these skills in her work by ‘doing lots of research and collecting lots of information and data to better understand a situation’. 1CS claimed that ‘before, I didn’t have this experience but the study in Australia really helped’ to develop her skills in ‘drawing all sorts of different resources together’. According to 1CS, ‘this was a new thing that I learned from studying in Australia’ which ‘is a really magic way of helping you to legitimise your ideas … and understand a subject’.

There was some evidence to suggest that China ADS scholars were passing their new skills and knowledge to others, however, for the most part this was limited to individual scholar efforts as opposed to any formal strategies within their organisation.

1CS was selected by her employer to be ‘the facilitator for a Sino-Swedish development training course’ and believed that ‘one of the reasons why they selected me was because I had the study experience in Australia’ and ‘the course involved teaching how to make project proposals for international development projects for participants from all different provinces in China’. 1CS also revealed how her experience of studying in Australia had incidentally enabled her to learn how to use the Internet, which she was then able to pass on to others within her organisation once the Internet was introduced:

Before I left for Australia, our department didn’t even have connection to the Internet. I was one of the first in the office to be able to use the Internet when I returned so I helped people to learn that and showed them how to search things.

3CS felt that ‘because I was put into a more senior position, having a few people working for me’, he was ‘basically the team leader and had the chance to have a lot of discussions about programs, projects and improving management skills’ in the workplace based on his Australian experience. 3CS elaborated:

I gave a lot of presentations and talks to help them to understand … We didn’t have a formal system for this. This was very much up to the individual wanting to share with their colleagues. At the time I felt that
it was my responsibility because not everyone would have the opportunity to go to Australia and stay there for two years.

While 3CS noted that his sense of duty in passing on his new skills and knowledge to others was not due to any formal dissemination system within the work environment, 4CS maintained that:

I think it’s a tradition in our department that whenever someone comes back from overseas study, they are required to give a presentation about the study, about the experience and share their knowledge with other colleagues. I did.

2CS felt that she had ‘not really’ passed on her new skills and knowledge to others, however, she had spoken to other colleagues about her overseas study experiences and ‘encouraged others to go and study overseas’. 2CS admitted that ‘if there are any opportunities, I always encourage people to try’.

6CS made a similar assessment, claiming that she had not passed on her new skills and knowledge but that ‘the majority of my colleagues were very interested in my study in Australia and asked me what I learned and how I learned in Australia’. This represented a significant lost opportunity, particularly given 6CS’ admission that ‘they don’t have the same opportunity … because there is very fierce competition to get an ADS scholarship’.

7CS also noted that ‘I was just expected to provide a report to my supervisor, not pass on any learning to others’. 8CS too confirmed that ‘I wasn’t expected to pass on my knowledge in a direct way, like giving talks or presentations’ but ‘reports, yes’. As well, 9CS ‘didn’t give any formal talks on my experiences but casual talks with colleagues have resulted in some also coming on the ADS program’.

There were few examples of China ADS scholars helping to address specific knowledge and skills gaps of their agency. Nevertheless, for 1CS at the Department of Commerce of the Tibet Autonomous Region, the ADS scholarship represented a unique opportunity for human resource development within the organisation for the benefit of the region:

We never had any such scholarship offered to us at the department … This type of scholarship is very rare … There needs to be more … of
this type of scholarship in Tibet. There are only three people who have received an ADS scholarship in Tibet. I was the second one.

1CS fully supported the ADS program and its potential to address skills gaps and strengthen the human resource capacity of Tibet. That 1CS made this assessment despite such a low level of ADS scholar representation in Tibet is noteworthy.

3CS believed that he ‘directly and indirectly’ addressed skills gaps in his organisation as a result of his ADS scholarship and gave a good example of how his experience of Australian university amalgamations assisted China in its own process of university amalgamation:

When I was in Australia, I experienced at the time Australian universities going through a kind of amalgamation – many small universities came together. China’s higher education institutions went through that sort of process later than Australia. I think we learned a lot about that process from Australia.

Based on the knowledge and skills obtained from Australia during his Master of Education Administration degree, 3CS contributed to addressing skills gaps by organising presentations and talks that were relevant to the needs of the Chinese Government in drawing on the experience of others for its own development of approaches to university amalgamation.

Most of the China ADS scholars confirmed that they were not required to fulfil any obligations to their employer, or vice versa, as part of their reintegration or contribution to the organisation after their ADS scholarship. There was little evidence of any employer/employee contractual agreements, action plans, reintegration strategies and so on. If at all, scholars were ‘just required to write one report on what they had learned, what they got out of studying in Australia’ (1CS). Even then, reporting was usually confined to the scholars’ immediate supervisor and not known by scholars if disseminated more broadly. 7CS maintained that:

After I came back I submitted a paper report to my supervisor about my study experience, study results and living experience in Australia. It was a requirement of the ministry. This department supported me for my study so when you come back you definitely have to report on what you learned, what you did.
8CS confirmed that employees in her department were ‘always required to do a two-page report’ but admitted that these were only ‘very simple, introducing what was learned, courses, what was done apart from study, experiences, ideas from the two years in Australia’. 9CS also ‘gave a short report … on the courses I did, my academic performance and the benefits to me’.

While 5CS ‘gave a written report’ to his employer on ‘what I did, what I gained’ under the ADS program, he noted that ‘this was not compulsory’ and was simply something ‘I was willing to do because my department gave me the chance and supported me’. 3CS was also under no formal obligations, noting that:

> The only expectations from my employer upon my return was basically that I should take on more responsibility and do a better job – something very general and not specific.

There was also minimal attribution by the China ADS scholars towards their access and commitment to further education and professional development opportunities after their ADS scholarship. 2CS was one exception, having decided to apply for a Chevening Scholarship, as was 9CS, who received a second scholarship from an Australian university and returned as a post-doctoral student in Environmental Management.

Interestingly, 4CS believed that while he would be ‘very happy’ if he had another chance to further his education, ‘I was not sure if my boss would agree to it because it is very difficult to find good staff working for government’ and ‘to train a new person just graduated from university’ as his replacement would require ‘a long time’.

**Mongolia Results**

In terms of Mongolia ADS scholars returning to a supportive work environment with a commitment to adopting strategies for utilising the graduate’s new knowledge, skills and qualifications, 4MS maintained that ‘all graduates when they come back are given good support’ through things such as ‘promotion and more responsibilities, more difficult tasks and more assignments for more qualified staff’. 5MS certainly experienced this, being ‘promoted to the international division’ with ‘much greater responsibility’ and representation in ‘meeting people from other organisations’.
6MS also experienced ‘very good support from my superiors and colleagues’ upon her return through their ‘support for new initiatives which I put forward and accepting my proposals and recommendations’. In this regard, 2MS believed that ‘being an academic institution, my work was quite open to my new ideas’ which ‘was very positive’. Indeed, 11MS identified:

They had trust in us and because we had a degree from an Australian university they had hope that we would contribute more and so listened to what we said.

For 7MS, it was the support for her ‘to provide training to others in ICT, introducing the Internet into the office and things like that’. For 8MS, it was ‘the level of freedom in my appointment’ afforded to him by his employer. Indeed, 8MS made the point that ‘there are many aid programs from many donors in Mongolia but the only scholarship that is relevant to the ministries is ADS’.

However, 3MS claimed that he was lucky to even return to a position after his ADS scholarship as his employer was ‘ordered by the new Prime Minister not to re-employ old employees’. Such restriction could pose significant problems for returning ADS scholars. Fortunately for 3MS, the university ‘supported me because they knew I worked at the university’ and his ‘research was relevant to the job’.

9MS confirmed that she felt ‘very little support’ upon her return as her employer ‘had little understanding of how to use me and my skills’. Similarly, 11MS revealed that ‘in terms of [management] working more closely to use our skills and allow them to be transferred to others, that didn’t happen’. Such admissions suggest a lack of commitment by employers to strategies for utilising ADS scholars’ new knowledge, skills and qualifications. Indeed, 9MS went even further, identifying some important issues and considerations concerning returning ADS scholars to Mongolia:

Everyone who comes back, even with better skills and visions, they go back by their contract to the same positions. They’re not promoted to the head of a division or department or whatever. So when you are not in a position at the policy-making level or the decision-making level you do nothing … But of course the ADS can open up many opportunities to private companies or whatever. But what it’s intended to do at the government level, it’s not promoted like that.
9MS raised some important points for deliberation. That ADS scholars return to country with improved English language skills may tempt some sponsoring agencies to keep scholars in translating roles, as opposed to policy-making roles. Certainly, 9MS makes a good point when it comes to the importance of ADS scholars being in positions to influence policy, rather than simply implement it.

However, while some ADS scholars admitted to being in translating roles, this was not normally the majority of their work nor seen as an inhibitor to further promotion, even in the short term. Many of the ADS scholars were able to reflect on examples of where they had influenced policy in some way and most had received promotions within a relatively short amount of time after their return. Nonetheless, the importance remains in ensuring that ADS scholars are utilised for their intended purpose, not only for the benefit of the scholar and the development needs of their country, but also for AusAID’s ADS program and its reputation and objectives.

Like their Chinese counterparts, there was moderate attribution from the Mongolia ADS scholars in terms of them being made to feel valued for their new skills and knowledge by their employer and colleagues. 1MS felt valued by being ‘asked to teach new lectures and publish some articles’ by her employer to ‘share my knowledge with colleagues and students’. This resulted in 1MS ‘publishing two articles and starting to lecture in new subjects’. 2MS thought that his employer ‘should be very happy’ as he ‘was moving business in a different way’ which was resulting in more ‘repeat business’ from ‘very happy’ customers who could ‘see the value’.

There were some good examples of how Mongolia ADS scholars were using their new skills and knowledge in the work environment and utilising learning in various types of work. Indeed, 1MS believed that ‘if I stayed in Mongolia, I couldn’t have changed a lot of myself in my professional life’. This was in the context of her adopting ‘changed teaching methodologies … after studying in Australia’.

Similarly, 4MS recognised that ‘I needed a lot of things to improve my professional level which is why I applied for a Masters degree in Commerce, specialising in Marketing’. 4MS felt that his studies were ‘very good’ in this regard and ‘it was
quite easy’ to utilise his new knowledge and skills in ‘working for the Chamber of Commerce in a newly established Department of Marketing’ upon his return.

For 5MS, it was the ‘writing of essays, reading a lot of literature in English and the writing up of my thesis’ which ‘has been very important for me in handling my work’. In fact, 5MS attributed ‘100 per cent this was due to my experience in Australia’. 6MS too maintained that she used her ‘knowledge and qualification I obtained in Oz in my new job … as an economist in the Treasury Division of the Ministry of Finance’, wherein she was able to utilise her new skills in her various work responsibilities ‘in charge of foreign debt and foreign assistance issues’.

7MS revealed that her degree remains highly influential to her work and relevant to her skills and knowledge needs in a variety of work roles, both in Mongolia and abroad:

My degree was a Master of Business Systems which is a combination of Business and Information Technology. The company that I’m currently working at is an IT consulting company. So as you can see it’s a combination of these two areas … it has influenced everything I do … and it has opened opportunities for me to work in not only Mongolia but also internationally.

7MS identified that, through her studies in Australia, she had learned to ‘become more businesslike, trying to solve problems in a less time consuming manner, being responsive and timely’ in the working environment. 7MS admitted that she ‘wasn’t as organised before’ in the workplace and had learned to ‘become more responsible’. 7MS also recognised that her Australian studies had, ‘at the same time, enabled me to look into policy-level issues’.

9MS also felt that she had become ‘more systematic’ in the way she approached things at work through her ‘very strong academic schooling’ in Australia which has ‘helped a lot’.

10MS admitted to ‘using my knowledge to always try to deliver quality – in research, in policy development – so that people can see that my knowledge is relevant to my work’ and in achieving effective outcomes. As a result of his ADS scholarship, 10MS believed that he had ‘become very pragmatic and efficient’ in his
work which was, to some extent, in contrast to the traditional ways of thinking, writing and working in Mongolia.

For 3MS, the ability to use his new knowledge and skills in the work environment and utilise his learning in various types of work was more difficult. While 3MS believed his ‘capacity was strengthened by the theoretical and practical knowledge and skills’ he acquired in Australia ‘in the management of health services and other relevant fields’, he was mindful that ‘in practice it is a very changeable environment so it is a little bit different from studying a Masters’.

In terms of Mongolia ADS scholars passing their new skills and knowledge to others, 3MS provided a good example where ‘I presented on what my research thesis was on’ in a ‘six-minute presentation to 60–70% of the Ministry of Health staff’ upon his return. In contrast, 5MS ‘wasn’t given the opportunity to share my knowledge in a specific area’ because when she returned, ‘the ministry was so busy’ due to ‘government change and new people coming in’ that the ‘intention to present on my thesis and the benefit of doing a Masters overseas … never happened’.

4MS ‘tried his best’ to disseminate his new knowledge and skills to ‘a lot of my staff’ and ‘I gave them international standards and samples’ for improving the quality of their work. 4MS maintained that ‘during a task I tried to pass on what I had learned to other staff’. However, much of this dissemination was through ‘day-to-day discussions’ as opposed to 4MS ‘organising any planned workshops for other staff to attend’.

1MS ‘experienced how Australian education, and especially tertiary education, operated’ and, as such, ‘I could now speak to my students about the education system in Australia’ in her role as a lecturer at the NUM.

7MS returned to Mongolia and ‘joined UNDP’ where ‘one of my roles was to train the staff’. While 7MS admitted that ‘it was training for staff to better use Microsoft Office’ which ‘was not what I was learning in Australia’, she maintained that ‘basically, you got to learn it in terms of study, by using these applications in everyday practice’.
7MS also recounted the sense of obligation felt by the first tranche of returned ADS scholars to Mongolia to pass on their knowledge, skills and experience to others:

For example, just after returning to Mongolia, my friends were also interested in studying and living in Australia so we would sit for hours talking about our life in Australia, our experiences, our knowledge … You felt a bit like you were a step ahead of others so you had an obligation to look back to those who were following your path to give them some support, advice, assistance.

11MS also identified that she ‘talked a lot to colleagues and relatives and younger people’ about what she had learned in Australia and always ‘tried to spot a person who was committed to coach informally’ given that:

It is such a pity that young people, because they haven’t had any experience studying overseas, are going in the wrong direction. Wrong direction is maybe not the right word. I try to share with them and encourage them to think differently.

Interestingly, 8MS ‘lectured in Applied Economics’ by ‘taking subjects taught at the ANU and bridging Western economics thinking with the Mongolian situation’. According to 8MS, ‘the project was entitled Excellence in Teaching Econometrics in Mongolia’ and ‘some of those students are now working in banks’. This was a significant example of an ADS scholar passing on his knowledge and skills to others, influencing the next generation of workers in Mongolia’s banking sector.

9MS also provided a good example of her passing on her knowledge and skills in academic writing, particularly with regards to accurate referencing to avoid plagiarism with the next generation of Mongolian university graduates:

Copyright – it’s totally absent in Mongolia. You wouldn’t believe it. Students just copy things and they don’t even blink … they do not do references. Even for Masters degrees, people copy a book and write their name on it … So in this kind of environment, academic writing skills for university teachers is very important because it’s absent, totally. So when I give my students home tasks I teach them how to do references … and I try to have them do their own research, going around interviewing people. So it’s changing attitudes.

In terms of Mongolia ADS scholars helping to address specific knowledge and skills gaps of their agency, there was very little attribution. This lack of attribution was somewhat surprising given that one of the major objectives of the ADS program was to strengthen human resource capacity in partner countries. Such an objective
assumes the targeting of specific knowledge and skills gaps of agencies and a consciousness of this agenda among ADS scholars. 6MS provided the only example where ‘the Ministry of Finance used my new qualification’ in Economics Development to their advantage by placing her in ‘work in foreign debt management’ which ‘at the time was very important for the ministry … since Mongolia started the transition to a market economy from 1991’.

Like their Chinese counterparts, the Mongolia ADS scholars were generally not required to fulfil any obligations to their employer, or vice versa, as part of their ADS scholarship. Evidence of employer/employee contractual agreements, action plans, reintegration strategies and so on was limited and, even when there were examples of such approaches, lack of commitment by the organisation often led to failure in implementation. Further, 1MS admitted that ‘because of the financial situation’ within her organisation, ‘I couldn’t implement the action plan’. 1MS’s action plan involved ‘starting an English methodology course’ however ‘I needed finances to do this’ which was not something that her organisation could provide at the time. Nevertheless, 1MS optimistically considered that ‘maybe next year I will try to do it again’.

9MS felt that ‘the ADS action plan is terrible’ and while she believed ‘the concept behind it is OK’, she maintained that ‘the form was too complicated’ and represented little more than ‘just paper work’. 9MS declared:

To do the action plan you need money and support … In my action plan I mentioned that I would do two or three courses, so I tried to do something, but for most people at the ministries I don’t think their action plans ever eventuate.

Certainly, this was the experience of 1MS. 9MS also revealed that ‘two or three departments asked me to give seminars on what I had learned and were excited’, however, ‘to move it you need money … and infrastructure’ which made the idea impractical.

2MS provided a more positive example, maintaining that his action plan ‘focused on consultancy’ and was able to be successfully implemented. Nonetheless, most Mongolia ADS scholars were like 5MS, who confirmed that ‘there wasn’t any official document signed’ to outline and commit joint obligations upon an ADS
scholar’s return, other than ‘a mutual understanding that we would return to the ministry’. Indeed, 5MS noted how her ‘ministry wasn’t happy at all’ of her decision to move to the International Labour Organization one year after her return.

There was also minimal attribution by the Mongolia ADS scholars towards their access and commitment to further education and professional development opportunities after their ADS scholarship. 7MS had since undertaken further postgraduate studies in Hungary and the United States, 2MS indicated his intentions to undertake a Masters in Finance and 9MS admitted that her Australian studies had ‘influenced everything’, including her intention to go on to ‘do a PhD in Anthropology’.

**Summary: Question 5**

On average, there was little to moderate support by ADS scholars from China and Mongolia that *institutional targeting and capacity building objectives* (Theme 4) were having an attributable impact in *strengthening human resource capacity* (Objective 1).

In terms of ADS scholars returning to a supportive work environment with a commitment to adopting strategies for utilising the graduate’s new knowledge, skills and qualifications, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and Mongolia. For China, there were mixed reactions towards the support provided to ADS scholars upon their return. Support included keeping positions available for returning ADS scholars, finding appropriate placements aligned to the new skills and knowledge of ADS scholars, as well as higher or expanded responsibilities, freedom to make decisions and promotion. However, not all returning China ADS scholars felt supported upon their return, with the lack of tangible strategies for utilising ADS scholars’ new knowledge, skills and qualifications being the failure. For Mongolia, support to returning ADS scholars included awarding greater responsibilities, more challenging work tasks and promotion, accepting proposals and recommendations of ADS scholars, and providing greater freedom to ADS scholars to introduce new learning to the organisation. However, like their Chinese counterparts, not all Mongolia ADS scholars felt supported upon their return, with a lack of commitment by employers to
dedicated strategies for utilising ADS scholars’ new knowledge, skills and qualifications also being the failure. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of ADS scholars being valued for their new skills and knowledge by their employer/colleagues, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and Mongolia. For China, feelings of being valued were closely linked to the supportive factors of the work environment identified above. However, improved English language skills of ADS scholars saw some employers tempted to over-utilise them in an interpreting role. For Mongolia, this temptation was also experienced by some ADS scholars. However, performing a translation role was not always seen as a negative nor a major part of ADS scholars’ work. There was some risk in ADS scholars returning to their original contract with little change in work roles nor opportunity to influence policy or business direction. This invariably caused feelings of underutilisation. Where ADS scholars were actively transferring learning and influencing business outcomes, a high feeling of being valued was felt. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of ADS scholars being able to use their new skills and knowledge in the work environment, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and Mongolia. For China, ADS scholars gave some good examples of continuing to utilise their academic research and actively applying their broader knowledge and skills to their work in country. That only some ADS scholars shared such examples meant that attribution could only be rated as moderate. For Mongolia, ADS scholars were using their new skills and knowledge to influence new teaching methodologies and to come to new roles with advanced approaches in Commerce and Marketing, Economics, and Business and Information Technology. Greater confidence and deftness through the utility of new skills and knowledge was a common theme. This was often attributed to greater skills in reading and writing, problem solving, analysis and research which enabled ADS scholars to be more pragmatic, organised, responsive and efficient in achieving quality work outcomes. However, like their Chinese counterparts, attribution was
only shared by some ADS scholars resulting in a yellow TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of ADS scholars utilising their learning in various types of work, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated little attribution towards the indicator of success for China and moderate attribution for Mongolia. For China, there was a lack of evidence to adequately decipher how ADS scholars were utilising their learning in various types of work. A tendency for less movement in work roles by China ADS scholars may have contributed to this. For Mongolia, there appeared to be a greater tendency for movement, providing opportunity for ADS scholars to utilise their learning in various types of work across the public, private and non-government sectors, both domestically and abroad. This was often through secondment or a conscious decision by the ADS scholar to change career. Enhanced reading and writing, problem solving, analysis and research skills enabled ADS scholars to apply their learning effectively across various work roles. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a yellow TL rating for Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of ADS scholars passing their new skills and knowledge to others, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated little attribution towards the indicator of success for China and moderate attribution for Mongolia. For China, there was little evidence of formal strategies by organisations to have ADS scholars pass on their new skills and knowledge to others. For Mongolia, the privilege of being awarded the opportunity to study overseas seemed to stimulate a sense of obligation in ADS scholars to share their new skills and knowledge with others. There also appeared to be a greater degree of expectation from employers that they would pass on their learning within the organisation. However, not all ADS scholars felt that they were given adequate opportunity by their organisation to formally pass on their new skills and knowledge. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a yellow TL rating for Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of ADS scholars being helped to address specific knowledge and skills gaps of the agency, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated little attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. For China, there were few examples to support the indicator of success. Nevertheless, the ADS program was recognised for its unique contribution to Tibet by providing a rare opportunity for
agencies to develop a staff member through an overseas scholarship. For Mongolia, there was also a surprising lack of attribution towards the indicator of success, with only one ADS scholar acknowledging her deliberate work placement in the area of foreign debt management. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of ADS scholars fulfilling all obligations to the employer and vice versa (e.g. contractual agreement, action plan, etc.), the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated little attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. For China, most ADS scholars were not required to fulfil any obligations as part of their reintegration or contribution to the organisation after their ADS scholarship. The only evidence of any reporting was the submission of short reports on the ADS scholars’ study experience. For Mongolia, evidence of employer/employee contractual agreements, action plans or reintegration strategies was limited and where examples were evident a lack of commitment or resources by the organisation usually led to failure in implementation. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of ADS scholars’ access and commitment to further education and professional development opportunities, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated little attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. For China, two ADS scholars had applied for further international scholarships. However, the vast majority of ADS scholars did not pursue further education and professional development opportunities. It was acknowledged that employers may not be supportive for further opportunities given the significant investment already made in the ADS scholar. For Mongolia, there was also little attribution with only one ADS scholar providing evidence of further postgraduate study overseas and two others exhibiting an intention to undertake further study. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).
Question 6: Have other returned scholars assisted you in your work? How?

Relevance to:
Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity
Theme 5: ‘Critical mass’ theory
Indicators of success:
- A critical mass of well-trained and capable local leaders
- The effective use of critical mass (e.g. within the organisation or alumni network for mentoring, discussion of ideas and ways forward)
- Building of good people-to-people links

China Results

For the China ADS scholars in Tibet, the notion of the ADS program developing a critical mass of well-trained and capable local leaders was difficult considering that ‘there are only four ADS scholars from Tibet and none of them are in [the same] area of work’ (2CS). Nevertheless, 1CS confirmed that ‘sometimes we send emails to each other’ and 2CS admitted:

I meet up with the other ADS scholars in Tibet and also some others who went overseas to study – two from the United States, two from Norway – but we’re all in different vocational areas. In the summer we meet twice a month.

In Beijing, 3CS had a similar experience, stating that ‘in my department, not too many people received an ADS scholarship’ and while ‘I knew one lady who went on the scholarship with me, she worked for the UNESCO program which was another sector but also part of the ministry’. As a consequence, 3CS ‘didn’t have any direct interactions’ with her or other ADS scholars. 3CS maintained that ‘when I went to Australia … a dozen or two dozen students were on the ADS program’ but, after their return, ‘they all disappeared to their different provinces, so it’s hard for them to link’.

6CS was the same, maintaining that ‘although there are two ADS scholars in my department’, they ‘work in different divisions’ and ‘don’t work together’. Interestingly, 6CS revealed that ‘in the Department of International Cooperation’, of which there are 20 employees, ‘over half have studied in the UK on Chevening Scholarships’. 6CS observed that ‘very few have studied in Australia’ because ‘every
year there are around two people from the ministry going to study in the UK’ and ‘around one every two years going to Australia to study under ADS’.

9CS admitted that ‘I didn’t know many ADS scholars’ because her area of study is ‘only one area among many scholarship recipients’. 9CS also revealed that ‘I couldn’t feel any sense of networks assisting one another’ in China, nor was she ‘aware of any alumni networks’.

4CS described a more positive view of a network of ADS scholars developing within her department and across other ministries:

There are several ADS scholars within my department and I think we are very supportive, not only because we are colleagues but also we have a common language and we find our experiences make us able to find more commonalities … Of course, I also know ADS scholars in other organisations. Currently we are working with AusAID for the new Environmental Development Project for 2006–10 and the focus of that is water resource management which involves the Ministry of Water Resources and one guy from that ministry is also an AusAID student. That puts us on common ground.

4CS’s description suggests an effective use of critical mass within and across organisations and involving ADS scholars working together, discussing ideas and developing ways forward. Importantly, 4CS identifies the network as ‘very supportive’ and based on ‘common language’ and ‘common ground’.

6CS also suggested the effective use of critical mass through the exchange of ideas and opinions with other ADS scholars across different organisations in China:

I met some of the other ADS students in Australia and we still communicate with each other and often exchange ideas and opinions concerning our work and life. They are all working in China now in different organisations.

8CS too described how several of her ADS scholar ‘classmates’ continued to assist her in her work:

One works at the provincial level in Jiangxi Province … I’m sometimes in contact with him for work. It’s very helpful … What I’m doing is environmental education. We don’t have that much experience working with people at the local level but he does. And there is another guy who works with the Bureau of Forestry in Beijing. We have some
educational projects between our centre and his organisation. The relationship has helped.

7CS confirmed that ‘I knew two other people who went to study in Australia and I’m still in contact in their work’ across ‘different departments’.

Though not so much a network of returned ADS scholars, ICS described how she was utilising a fellow ADS scholar for her own development project:

One of the other ADS scholars in Tibet is involved in one of my development projects … It’s a bilateral project with a component on HIV/AIDS prevention … I’ve been working with her for a short time on this.

These are all examples of the ADS program building good people-to-people links, which was also supported by ICS when she exclaimed:

I think the ADS program has built good links in Tibet because we have had the same experience and in some way have lots of similarities … We also keep in contact with our classmates from other countries … Even with other overseas scholars, sometimes we get together.

While there was no evidence to suggest the formation of a formal ADS alumni network in China, there were some examples of ADS scholars continuing to communicate and sometimes meet. That there are so few ADS scholars spread across a large share of organisations and locations throughout China is a major barrier to the formation of both a viable alumni network and a critical mass of ADS scholars.

**Mongolia Results**

There was definite acknowledgment and pride among the Mongolia ADS scholars towards their growing network of alumni in Ulaanbaatar. That Ulaanbaatar is the administrative and political hub of the country, where all the ADS scholars had returned to and reside, did much to support the development of a critical mass of scholars. Moreover, that the local Mongolia-Australia Alumni Association (the ‘Mozzies’) was known as ‘the most active alumni association in Mongolia’ (8MS), did much to support, rally and sustain returned ADS scholars in an ongoing, unified and collective way.

7MS was one of the founding members of the Mozzies and explained well the rationale behind its development, its ongoing activities and membership:
The first group of Mongolians who went to Australia was made up of six people and I was one of the first to go there. When we returned from Australia, because we were in touch all the time, we talked about how we could make this into a viable network and set up the Mongolia-Australia Association – the ‘Mozzies’. And it has been viable ever since. The original aim was to introduce Australia to Mongolians because we wanted to share the knowledge that we had received with others because of our good experiences and the opportunities that exist there … We do a number of things. We try to meet on Australia Day every January for a formal gathering and also during summer, usually in June for an outing, as well as other irregular meetings such as when the Australian Minister for Trade came to visit Mongolia … There are a diverse range of people represented amongst the Mozzie community. There are government officials who are very high ranking. But at the same time we have representatives from the NGOs, the private sector. And that is why I think it is one of the things that binds us together – our common experience, knowledge of the country. We’re all trying to use these skills that we gained during our studies and which are helping us in our careers towards the betterment of the Mongolian community.

4MS considered himself ‘an active member of the Mozzies’ and described how members ‘often meet each other and play snooker or go to the countryside’. 4MS believed the network to be ‘quite an active association’ where ‘all these Mozzies gather and exchange information in both official and private matters’. 8MS agreed, maintaining that:

We exchange information and meet each other through the Mozzie network which has many prominent public figure members. We meet and talk and encourage one another to excel and achieve greater promotion.

For 10MS, the Mozzie network didn’t so much assist him in his work, but rather provided an opportunity to be part of a community, bonded by shared fond memories of Australia and its culture:

We share fond memories so that’s something that unites us. And it’s a really free volition, union of friends, and you just have this common sympathy. It’s like, ‘Ah, you studied in Australia’ and then you start talking about Tooheys, clubs, sometimes snooker. Frankly, it’s not always about the learning, books, libraries, it’s about the fun, BBQs, yeah. That’s part of life. You work in order to get BBQs!

However, like all things the choice to be part of the Mozzies Association was very much up to the individual. While 5MS admitted that ‘at that time there weren’t many’ returned ADS scholars and so she ‘hadn’t receive any assistance from other
ADS graduates’, she had ‘heard about some meetings’ but was ‘not involved with the Mozzies’.

3MS revealed that while he had ‘heard about the Mozzies’ he hadn’t ‘joined a meeting yet’ but ‘planned to in the future’. 3MS had been in contact though with ‘two or three ADS scholars working in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the former Ministry of Infrastructure’ but for the most part this was just ‘friendly contact’.

9MS had ‘a good relationship with a number of other ADS graduates’ but declared that they were ‘from different fields’. This meant that ‘on a personal level we would meet but on a professional level we didn’t really have anything to do with each other’. Interestingly, 9MS had attended a Mozzie gathering but chose not to continue her involvement:

I went to the Mozzie club once and we were introduced to the club members but it was full of ministry people and they were calling themselves the ‘Mozzie Mafia’ or whatever … They were very big people from the ministry point of view but that was not really my concern. It was nice and I met several people and we had common ground so it makes you closer with those other people.

8MS also identified that the Mozzies were ‘sometimes referred to as the “Mozzie Mafia”’. Despite the Mozzies’ intention for this term to be an affectionate and humorous take on their network, some returned ADS scholars believed it to have elements of truth in the form of nepotism and a perceived divide between new members and ‘old boys’. While there was no strong evidence from this research to support these allegations, the perception posed a potential risk to the long-term success and reputation of the Association and something that would probably be best downplayed in favour of inclusiveness.

Nevertheless, 12MS did maintain that ‘as ADS graduates, we try to keep together and help each other in an appropriate way’. Indeed, the effective use of critical mass was supported by a number of examples provided by the Mongolia ADS scholars. 3MS recalled:

We had some former AusAID students teach us how to use the skills we learned in Australia. And we are still working together today. One … was working as the Head of the Department of Foreign Affairs in the
Ministry of Health, now working with the ADB. Another one is working with UNDP on anti-corruption in the health sector. I’m working on anti-corruption in licensing.

3MS provided an excellent example of how more senior ADS scholars were assisting others coming through the ADS program in how to apply their new knowledge and skills in practical work situations. Such practice not only suggests a level of mentoring but also a reinforcement of ADS scholar learning in real working life situations. Similarly, 6MS provided the following example:

Six students went to Australia and we have a good network. We support each other and when we need each other we get professional advice from each other. When we need some advice we can go and ask each other.

After returning to Mongolia and taking up a position as ‘an executive director of a private transport company’, 4MS was even encouraged by his Mozzie friends ‘to come back to the government sector’. 4MS explained:

In late 2004, my current director, who graduated from Canberra University, told me he was going to establish a new department at the Ministry of Industry and Trade and that he was recruiting his staff. He told me that the deputy director position was still empty. I received good support from the other Mozzie graduates. Moving from the private sector back to the public sector is not such an easy way – I had to pass all of these exams … I received good support from the State Secretary from the Ministry of Finance and … the current Minister for Foreign Affairs. So I joined in March 2005 into the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

4MS provided an important example of the effective use of critical mass, where a group of ADS scholars recognised the skills that another ADS scholar could bring to a position and then worked together to encourage and support his successful transition.

11MS also identified the support of the Mozzie network and how the success of ADS scholars encouraged and inspired those around them:

It is helpful though in the way that you belong to this community and share the same experience. Information sharing is the most help because we can call each other straightaway because we know each other and discuss what’s happening with each other’s programs, or current legislation or whatever. I often do that.
The advantage of having a network of well-trained and capable local leaders was also exemplified by 9MS when she revealed:

> We’ve even become critical of international consultants. We had a terrible international consultant but because we had a number of ADS scholars with Australian Masters degrees, we could work together and be very critical of the work.

This exemplifies the effective use of critical mass through the cooperation of ADS scholars in collectively critiquing the work of an international consultant for quality assurance. Importantly, 9MS believed that it was the knowledge and skills developed in Australia under the ADS program that gave the ADS scholars the confidence, ability and benchmark to perform such an activity.

In terms of helping to build good people-to-people links, 7MS recalled how the ADS scholar network was providing key links across government organisations for effective cooperation and coordination:

> We were able to kind of communicate with each other on different matters. If, for example, we needed to arrange a particular meeting with some highly ranked officials then I’d call up the person that I knew in that department who was an ADS scholar. So that has assisted.

2MS identified how he and his fellow ADS scholars ‘became very good friends while in Australia’ and that ‘the Mongolia community was very strong’ in terms of ‘the socialisation of families and discussions on all subjects’. Importantly, ‘this friendship continues through informal meetings twice a year and a snooker competition held by the Mongolia-Australia Association’ (2MS). Indeed, 2MS identified that the Mozzies have helped link people from outside the country in various ways, including for the ‘great Peking to Paris car expedition’ where ‘the Association was asked to help … the expedition to negotiate local conditions’. This was considered ‘a win win situation’ given that ‘it is a documentary now’.

This desire to assist others through the Mozzie network was also identified by 10MS when he declared that:

> If an Australian calls in and asks for something, that becomes something you need to do. It is just a pleasure to help another Australian or Mozzie because they’re people with really high quality education and if they ask for something, they ask for things that ought to be supported, that are worth supporting.
Certainly for the data collection of this research, the Mozzie network proved active in its assistance and was testimony to the conviction of its members. Moreover, the Mozzie network enabled access to many senior public figures that might not have ordinarily been so readily available or accommodating.

**Summary: Question 6**

On average, there was little to great support by ADS scholars from China and Mongolia that the ADS program was creating a critical mass (Theme 5) of scholars that were having an attributable impact in *strengthening human resource capacity* (Objective 1).

In terms of the ADS program producing a critical mass of well-trained and capable local leaders, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated little attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and great attribution for Mongolia. For China, the lack of adequate numbers of ADS scholars in a region in like disciplines was a major barrier. There was no evidence to suggest that the ADS scholars were aware of any objective towards building a critical mass of scholars. The lack of an ADS scholar alumni network in China was also a barrier. For Mongolia, the experience was quite different, with ADS scholars exhibiting a level of pride in their growing network of successful local leaders. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of evidence of the effective use of critical mass (e.g. within the organisation or alumni network for mentoring, discussion of ideas and ways forward), the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated little attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and great attribution for Mongolia. For China, there were some examples of ADS scholars supporting one another through the exchange of ideas and working within and across organisations, however, this was shared by a minority. For Mongolia, there were numerous examples of ADS scholars supporting one another through networking, mentoring and sharing information and advice. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of the ADS program building good people-to-people links, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated little attribution towards the *indicator of*
success for China and great attribution for Mongolia. For China, there were some examples of ADS scholar linkages however the lack of numbers of ADS scholars across a large share of organisations and locations and the absence of a formal alumni network was a significant barrier. For Mongolia, there was strong evidence that the ADS alumni network was building and maintaining tangible links across diverse levels and sectors, both domestically and abroad. While some ADS scholars chose not to be a part of the Mozzie network, almost all acknowledged links with other ADS scholars at either a professional or personal level. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 6.2).

**Question 7:** Since your return, have you been involved with anything to do with poverty alleviation or an area which would impact on the poor in any way?

**Relevance to:** Objective 2: To achieve poverty alleviation

**Indicator of success:**
- Scholars working on poverty reduction policies and programs

**China Results**

In terms of China ADS scholars working on poverty reduction policies and programs, 9CS maintained that, after returning, ‘I was the focal point for a clear development mechanism under the Millennium Development Goals’. According to 9CS:

I worked on projects in developing countries to plant trees to help counter climate change. I was also involved in a number of other forestry projects, working with NGOs such as the World Wildlife Fund, Nature Conservation, etc. In Yunnan Province, we worked on the conservation of biodiversity to improve people’s livelihood. The current project I am working on involves the conversion of croplands to grasslands and forests to assist farmers’ livelihoods.

Similarly, 1CS confirmed that ‘my day-to-day work is related to poverty alleviation’:

My role as project officer is to manage and coordinate poverty alleviation projects. They’re sometimes implemented at the county or village level so my role is to manage and coordinate between different departments.

3CS also noted a number of projects related to poverty alleviation that he had been involved in since his return to China, including the successfully completed
AUD20 million, AusAID funded, Australia-China Chongqing Vocational Education and Training Project:

Another specific program in western China was a technical and vocational education program in Chongqing. This was sponsored by AusAID. I am the father of this project. I can tell you this is the truth because at that time we were finishing the AusAID Institutional Linkages Program and I saw that the Australian aid program had shifted from higher education to basic and technical education for poverty alleviation. So I called a meeting with my colleagues in basic education and technical education to ask how we could follow this change in priorities and to get AusAID to help us develop western China. At the time we thought vocational and technical education was the appropriate area because it could contribute directly to the economic and social development … We put the proposal to MOFTEC [Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation] and then to AusAID and eventually we got it … This is very beneficial to people in that part of China who are behind other regions.

That 3CS returned to China and was able to align AusAID’s new poverty reduction strategy with China’s education and training needs in western China is noteworthy. Indeed, despite some early teething problems, at its closing ceremony the Chongqing Vocational Education and Training Project was held up by both the Chinese and Australian Governments as a highly successful model of best practice, to be considered for other regions throughout China.

4CS also identified that ‘almost all the projects that I deal with are involved with poverty alleviation’. 4CS gave the example of ‘the Qinghai Forest Resource Management Project’ which was being funded by the Australian Government ‘to establish forests and other water conservancy projects to help the local people to get better livelihoods’. After having recently visited ‘one of the project villages’, 4CS explained:

I think that project is very interesting because although it’s called a forest management project, part of its job was dealing with the water issue. They tried a lot of methods in order to help the local people … solar heaters, water channels, wells, otherwise if you just planted more trees they would go and take them again. It was very interesting and I’m happy to know that the Australian Government had approved an extension for that project. We have invited the Ambassador to go and have a look.
5CS believed that his work in agriculture was always connected to poverty alleviation and provided a good example of his work on a targeted intervention with the Canadian International Development Agency:

Agriculture is related to poverty alleviation. So when I engage in work with agriculture I can say that it is related closely to poverty alleviation. Currently, my personal work is related to poverty alleviation. For instance, I was invited as an expert to work for the Canadian International Development Agency … This is one example.

7CS believed that ‘poverty alleviation is every government department’s responsibility – every department, every section’ and gave an example of her recent work in ‘mediating water disputes along the Zhang He River’:

It’s a small river involving three provinces. We help them to build the river bank to protect the cultivated land, improve their living and working conditions and I think this definitely increases their income. Also we gave funding help for them to develop their water saving irrigation skills.

While 6CS admitted that poverty alleviation was ‘not directly related’ to her job, she still believed that ‘the HIV/AIDS project that I was working on would have an impact on people in poorer regions’.

**Mongolia Results**

There were some significant examples of Mongolia ADS scholars contributing to the alleviation of poverty since their return to Mongolia. Upon his return, 2MS ‘created the Centre for Social Development’ which, after a decade, remains ‘a professional NGO doing research for the World Bank’. According to 2MS, ‘my partner from the Academy of Management heads the centre and its five researchers’ which was originally ‘part of the Academy of Management but then moved out to become an NGO … surviving on the income generated from research activities’. Indeed, 2MS revealed that ‘the last research project I participated in was a participatory approach analysing livelihoods in Mongolia’. This involved ‘visiting eight aimags [provinces] to understand the social problems in terms of income, public services, gender issues, households coping with change’ and so on.
Another significant example was from 2MS, who had introduced professional training for social workers in Mongolia. Importantly, 2MS revealed that the initiative was based on his own research in Australia under the ADS program:

When I was in Australia I wrote a paper on how to create social workers in Mongolia … We wrote a project submission and Save the Children Fund financed the project and started a class for social work. Now we have 1000 people trained through short-term training. We had the first Mongolian certified teachers in social work through the Ministry of Education and the Centre for Social Development. We organised a four-year summer training program. We generated resources from Save the Children Fund, UNICEF and Columbia and Washington Universities who sent professors for these seminars. Twenty people got their certificate after four years last week.

3MS had also ‘changed some of the regulation’ in Mongolia through ‘recommending a scholarship for new students from rural areas, across 21 aimags, who can be involved in the State Fund [loans/grants] for their tuition’. 3MS had also recently secured funding for a ‘project activity … in health policy system research with WHO’ to ‘implement scholarships of US$8000 to eight students to undertake their Masters studies’. As part of this project, 3MS would ‘also establish a new Centre for Health Policy Research’ in Mongolia.

In her role as national program manager for the International Labour Organization’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, 5MS ‘organised non-formal classes’ and undertook ‘advocacy work to improve access to skills training and non-formal education’ which ‘in the broader sense … helps to prevent children from being more poor in the future’ and supports the ‘goal to eliminate child labour and in particular the worst forms of child labour’ in Mongolia.

Since returning, 6MS had also ‘worked as a project manager for a World Bank project involved in poverty reduction strategies and program loans’. 6MS revealed that ‘in Mongolia, 36 per cent of the population lives in poverty’ and so her work aligned closely with the World Bank recommendations to ‘reduce poverty and improve public sector service delivery, particularly in education and health, and in rightsizing the civil service and improving the capacity, qualifications, effectiveness and efficiency within the civil service’.
7MS returned and worked as project manager for the Mongolian Government/UNDP Project ‘ICT for Sustainable Human Development’ which ‘set up CICs to provide access to information and technology for those who didn’t have the facilities or the opportunities to have access to them’. According to 7MS:

One of the missions is to develop civil society in the country to address the needs and demands of those who are needy, poor and marginalised. So we’ve been developing projects and supporting initiatives to try to reduce this gap between those who have money and access to information and technology and those who do not. We try to look at the policy level – if there are laws and regulations that need to be developed – and involve experts.

Similarly, 9MS also confirmed that her current project relating to the provision of IT was ‘pro-poor’. Funded by ‘Japanese Government money’, the ‘pilot two-year project aimed to eliminate poverty by focusing on village schools and nomadic children’ and ‘the digital divide’. The project was ‘providing Internet connection and new IT skills so that these rural children wouldn’t be disadvantaged’. The success of the project meant that there was now ‘talk about prolonging the project’. 9MS explained:

We did this big forum with exhibitions. All these village teachers came and showed their skills and the ADB was very impressed – so it’s been successful. At least the model of the project will be used in other programs. It will be sustainable because if there are ten teachers in one village school, 80 per cent of them were covered by the project.

While 11MS felt that she was ‘not directly in charge of poverty alleviation’, she did believe that her organisation’s approach is that ‘governance is the precondition of achievements and success in the other two areas of poverty and the environment’. 11MS admitted that ‘because of Mongolia’s lack of transparency, lack of accountability, lots of poverty-related problems occur and environmental mismanagement occurs in the country’. Therefore, ‘we work with the government and try to involve and encourage as much participation as possible in decision making’. Importantly, 11MS saw this as ‘indirectly trying to establish a system where poor people can get better benefits out of the system and are not left behind’. 11MS was also ‘currently working in the area of human rights and access to justice for poor and vulnerable groups’, including administering ‘a small grants scheme for NGOs to reach out to herders and women or other established groups’, as well as
developing ‘a project on free legal aid to criminal suspects’. The benefits to the poor were clear, with 11MS explaining:

In Mongolia, 80 per cent of criminal suspects are poor. That means they don’t have money to pay for lawyers. If we start implementing this project, that means those people whose human rights were violated because they were not able to pay for legal services will be able to access justice and have their human rights protected.

Summary: Question 7

On average, there was great support by ADS scholars from China and Mongolia that the ADS program was having an attributable impact in achieving poverty alleviation (Objective 2).

In terms of ADS scholars working on poverty reduction policies and programs, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated great attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. For China, there was a surprising number of ADS scholars working on policies and programs to which they attributed a close connection to poverty alleviation. For Mongolia, the vast majority of returned ADS scholars were able to provide concrete examples of their involvement in work closely related to poverty alleviation. Indeed, many of the Mongolia ADS scholars had made quite significant contributions to their country in this regard. These findings resulted in a green TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).

Question 8: Do you think that your Australian education has provided you with the skills needed for development, policy formulation or leadership? Can you give an example of this?

Relevance to: Objective 3: To achieve sustainable development
Indicators of success:
- Supporting improvements in governance
- Training of local people in skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership

China Results

In terms of ADS scholars supporting improvements in governance, 2CS felt that while ‘policy decisions were made above’ her, she was ‘confident to do that if promoted and given the opportunity’. Unfortunately for 2CS, she could see where
improvements could be made but felt that her current position, and indeed her culture, prevented her from acting:

It’s not appropriate for me to speak out. This may be the Western way but it’s not the Chinese way. I find I have to talk in a different way at work. It does sometimes make me a little bit uncomfortable because I know there are shortcomings in the way things are done but they would prefer to follow the formalities rather than find better solutions.

Indeed, 2CS declared ‘probably I need guanxi, but I don’t have any guanxi at the moment [laughing]’. That 2CS alluded to her need to use ‘guanxi’ in order to safely project her thoughts on how to support improvements in governance is noteworthy. In China, guanxi or the dynamic of personalised networks of influence (connections, relationships, contacts, nepotism, cronyism) is commonplace, advantaging those party to it.

6CS made a similar assessment, maintaining that ‘while I wanted to apply the knowledge I had learned in Australia’ to support improvements in governance, she was resigned to the fact that ‘China is such a big country and the structure is fixed’. 6CS felt that this meant that ‘if you want to change something, it takes time’ and ‘it’s not easy’.

While 2CS and 6CS had found it difficult to enact improvements in governance, 4CS was ‘trying to do my best as a leader in my current position’ in policy formulation. 4CS believed that his Australian Masters degree had given him ‘the ability to analyse things from another point of view’ which proved ‘very interesting and very useful for me to be able to make my own judgment based on different views and positions’. Indeed, 4CS recognised that ‘for policy formulation you need to hear different views and try to incorporate all those views that are sometimes contradictory to each other’. Such analysis assumes support for improvements in governance by incorporating diverse views of society in the policy formulation process. It also suggests the acquisition of skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership.

5CS confirmed that he had ‘worked on policy review, policy analysis and administrative management’ since his return to China, and while it was ‘hard to make direct connections’ with regards to his work supporting improvements in governance, 5CS believed that ‘even my writing implies that I have this knowledge
or way of thinking … developed from overseas’. 5CS believed this was evident by ‘my way of talking and style of writing and working style’ which had ‘become more pragmatic’. 5CS commented that ‘I very much appreciate this learning from Australia’ for his work in policy formulation and leadership.

9CS also maintained that ‘for development and policy formulation my Australian education was very important and helpful’ and ‘the independent research required in my Masters degree assisted me with the skills necessary to also work in developing countries’. While not directly working to improve governance, 9CS had supported improvements in sustainable conservation and biodiversity management in both China and other developing countries. Such activity reflects the acquisition of skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership.

**Mongolia Results**

In terms of the Mongolia ADS scholars supporting improvements in governance, 2MS maintained that studying in Australia under the ADS program provided him with ‘a lot of formal training on organisational training, style and the shape of leadership’ which ‘helped a lot’ in both influencing improvements as well as training others in the skills needed for development and policy formulation. According to 2MS, ‘if you don’t know all this stuff, you wouldn’t do much’. Indeed, 2MS utilised his skills to ‘create the Association of Mongolian Insurers’ to ‘try to put people together in an informal way to lobby the government and influence insurance law in the right manner’. 2MS ‘acted like the chairperson of this association’ which ‘had been structured to help contribute to policy formulation’.

3MS proudly displayed his work as ‘assistant editor of the Mongolian Journal of Health Sciences which is the first English professional journal in Mongolia’. The journal ‘started in December 2004’ and 3MS and his colleagues were ‘trying to develop this journal further’ for broader dissemination of research in health sciences in Mongolia.

While 3MS admitted that the effect such research may have on improving Mongolia’s health sector was difficult to quantify, 4MS believed that ‘my day-to-day operations of the research centre’ for which he was responsible ‘supported foreign trade policy formulation through research’.
5MS confirmed that in her work she ‘very much focused on policy changes, mainstreaming policies, improving policy and legislation, methodology and approaches, capacity building of different agencies in service delivery and advocating issues’. 5MS defined her work as ‘mobilising different agencies’ and developing ‘sustainability’ by utilising ‘individuals who can continue to improve and bring things to the next level’. 5MS was mindful that her Australian education provided her with the skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership to support improvements in governance. In working on issues related to the elimination of child labour in Mongolia, 5MS maintained that:

The general skills of building knowledge within yourself, this is very important to influence policy and analyse the gaps or areas where more impact is needed … as well as influencing and mobilising different institutions to areas or issues that aren’t too attractive.

6MS ‘studied the economics of development in Australia and the experience of developing countries in how they manage foreign aid, what are the lessons learned and the good achievements in foreign aid’ and has since ‘really tried to apply this knowledge in Mongolia’. Importantly, 6MS revealed that she ‘returned to teach other target ministries on how to do their own job analysis’.

Since returning to Mongolia, 7MS had ‘been involved in the development of draft laws in IT’ in Mongolia and recognised that the opportunity to develop the skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership was through her experience under the ADS program:

It allows you to look at the broad sense of the matter. Because I’m in the IT area, I now look at programming, hardware, people, training, policy issues … If I had not gone to Australia, I may have worked in the same area because I like it very much but I may not have been so developed or grown-up in terms of being involved in different methods.

That 7MS returned to Mongolia with more advanced and holistic skills in IT compared to her peers, positioned her well for influencing emerging IT policy, legislation and private industry within her country.

9MS became involved in ‘policy-level work’ in e-learning in Mongolia by being ‘involved in training needed to be done’ and ‘influencing the content of the training’ in terms of ‘whom and how and when people should be involved’. 9MS believed that
‘my Australian education provided me with those skills’ and ‘the confidence to provide input’. In this sense, 9MS ‘realised that the learning in Australia was quite beneficial’ for her and her country. However, 9MS also recognised the importance of ‘putting your skills into practice straightaway’ in order to ‘give you perspective and enrich you’ and avoid ‘forgetting what you’ve learned’.

As a governance specialist, 11MS believed ‘in general, the Australian Government’s contribution through the ADS program does a lot for human resource development in Mongolia’ and maintained that ‘it helps and contributes to everything I do’. Indeed, 11MS attributed ‘what I am now is formed directly by my Australian education’.

However, the influence of the ADS program in providing ADS scholars with the skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership, and in supporting improvements in governance in Mongolia, was perhaps best summed up by 8MS when he stated:

The change of minds and personal change is the most important factor in development of this country. One or two educated people can make change because they know how things can function. Many ADS scholars in Mongolia are in key policy-making positions within the public sector. This is so important for Mongolia’s long-term sustainability and development.

**Summary: Question 8**

On average, there was moderate to great support by ADS scholars from China and Mongolia that the ADS program was having an attributable impact in achieving sustainable development (Objective 3).

In terms of the ADS program supporting improvements in governance, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated moderate attribution towards the indicator of success for China and great attribution for Mongolia. For China, ADS scholars were identifying shortcomings in governance and, where improvements could be made, analysing issues and making judgments based on a variety of perspectives, reviewing and developing policy and administration, and showing a desire and ability to apply knowledge to improve policies and practices across a variety of working environments. However, ADS scholars also acknowledged significant barriers affecting their capacity to improve governance, including their level, personal
networks and influence within the organisation. For Mongolia, there were significant examples of ADS scholars implementing their own systems and activities for improved governance. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of the ADS program training local people in the skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated moderate attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and great attribution for Mongolia. For China, ADS scholars were in development, policy formulation and leadership positions and showed confidence in their ability to apply their knowledge and improve governance, recognise shortcomings and find better solutions, and research and analyse various perspectives and apply judgment. However, it was acknowledged that these skills were sometimes negated by the significant barriers previously raised. For Mongolia, ADS scholars placed strong emphasis on the skills acquired in Australia and their relevance to their work in development, policy formulation and leadership. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 6.2).

**Question 9:** What benefits do you think Australia receives from sponsoring students such as you?

**Relevance to:** Objective 4: To advance Australia’s national interest

**Indicators of success:**
- AusAID (Australian Government) closely identified with the ADS program
- Promotion of AusAID (Australian Government) as the scholarship provider through media and information strategies
- Scholars maintaining links with Australia
- Promotion of cross-cultural awareness and cooperation
- Promotion of Australia as a quality exporter of educational services
- Supporting the interests of domestic educational institutions

**China Results**

There was limited evidence to suggest that AusAID (Australian Government) was closely identified with the ADS program in China. 1CS admitted that ‘it is a problem in Tibet that not enough people know about the ADS program’. While 6CS
maintained that ‘AusAID sponsored students feel very grateful to the Australian Government and AusAID for granting ADS to them’, this was accompanied by suggestions that the program, its objectives and its Australian Government support were not well known in China. Certainly 1CS felt that ‘there needs to be more advertising and offerings of this type of scholarship’.

There were some examples of China ADS scholars maintaining links with Australia, usually with their Australian university lecturers or supervisors. However, some China ADS scholars had also built and maintained links with other international students from across the wider Asia-Pacific region whom they met while studying in Australia.

6CS confirmed that ‘I still communicate with my teacher at the University of Queensland’ and ‘a year after my return to China … I invited him to attend an international seminar’, arranging for her ministry to ‘pay all the fees for him to come and speak at the seminar on wage determination in China’.

8CS also admitted that ‘at the work level, I sometimes worked with professors from Australian universities’ and knew ‘another classmate who … worked for the Ministry of Forestry in China’ and ‘developed a long-term project with her professor’ as well as returning to Australia ‘to do a PhD’.

5CS explained that ‘my Masters degree thesis was about beef industry development in Australia and development opportunities for China’ which saw him return to China but continue ‘working with my supervisor at the University of Queensland’. With his supervisor, 5CS ‘successfully applied for a project through ACIAR’ which gave him ‘the chance to return to Australia once a year as part of that project’. Together they ‘published a series of papers in both Chinese and English’ which 5CS considered important ‘because at that time, in the 1990s in China, the beef industry was in fast development’. According to 5CS:

I have maintained these links with Australia, I am still in contact with my supervisor … and because of my current position, sometimes I have the chance to see the director of ACIAR because he’s now my counterpart.
5CS provided a tangible example of an ADS scholar maintaining successful links with Australia through collaborative research activities. However, such cross-border collaboration and linkages as a result of the ADS program were also found to extend more broadly throughout the Asia-Pacific region. 3CS described how:

When I was on the ADS program I met a lady from the Vietnam Ministry of Education. We became friends very quickly because we had the same vocational background … After two or three years she came to China with a group of educators in vocational and technical education and we met. In May, I went to Vietnam … and she gave me a lot of information and even helped me to set up meetings with the Vietnam ministry to understand their regulations on foreign investment in education … This is the best kind of example of cross-border linkages.

3CS also ‘knew a lady from the medical sector who has since organised a lot of programs between China and Australia’ after having been on the ADS program. While such examples added strength to the notion of ADS scholars maintaining effective links with Australia, some experienced barriers in doing so. For example, 1CS admitted that while ‘the university often sends newsletters and sometimes holds cocktail receptions in Shanghai and Beijing’ providing ongoing networking opportunities, her physical location in Tibet prevented her from ‘going to Shanghai just for a day’.

There was strong attribution from the China ADS scholars towards the ADS program promoting cross-cultural awareness and cooperation. 8CS believed that the ADS program was building ‘more understanding of Australia, like their policies … their culture, their economy’. In doing so, 2CS believed that the ADS program ‘benefited Australia in the long run’ by having ADS scholars ‘introduce many things about Australia to other people who never get a chance to go out’ of China. 5CS agreed, describing it as a ‘kind of invisible benefit from Australia’s side’ and admitting that:

In my position I influence the people around me in a way of thinking, in a way of working, in a way of writing and I tell them what Australia is really like … So I help the Chinese people to learn and to understand Australia. Sometimes I talk with Australian businessmen or government people and … they know that I know both countries, both cultures, both traditions so it’s easy to understand and communicate with each other.

8CS agreed, seeing value in ‘having more people understand Australia’ and declaring that ‘more communication means higher level cooperation, which makes it easier to
make policies or develop projects together’. This view was also shared by 2CS who believed that ‘in terms of diplomatic relations with China or Tibet, Australia may know more about what is happening and what is needed to be done to help Tibet to develop’. In this sense, 2CS recognised the value of having ‘ADS scholars in Australia so they can pass on what is happening’ as well as maintaining the selection of scholars from Tibet so that once they return they may assist the Australian Government in its successful facilitation of development programs offered in China.

2CS explained:

Sometimes there are failures in communication but with people who have experience in both countries and know how to communicate the Chinese way, the Western way, the Australian way, it’s good for Australia and its programs.

4CS also revealed how being an ADS scholar gave him an advantage when communicating with Australians:

It makes it much easier to communicate, especially with Australians, because whenever I tell them I’m an AusAID student they are very surprised and happy to talk with me. That’s a bonus.

Importantly, 2CS revealed a positive attitude held by ADS scholars in wanting to assist Australia in achieving successful and efficient outcomes in China:

If we’re doing a project for the Australian Government, for AusAID, then we want to help to make it effective and use the money in the right way to help the right people.

Just as importantly, 3CS also identified the inclination for ADS scholars to consider Australia first when developing cooperative activities:

Whatever sector they end up in, when they have the opportunity to build international links, Australia should be one of the first for them to consider. Even for me, when I was director of the North America and South Pacific Division … Australia was always my priority. I could not say that openly but how can you deny it when you stayed there for two years … I also have had contact with other students who have returned from studying in Australia, not on the AusAID program, and they all have a special feeling towards Australia … and they always consider Australia as the country for further exchanges.

This attitude was also supported by 6CS when she stated:
I’m always thinking how I can do something which will be beneficial for Australia in the future. I’m sure other AusAID students will have the same feeling as me. I think we not only have the feeling of wanting to do something for Australia but also we try to seek the opportunity to do that.

Indeed, the view was shared by many China ADS scholars, including 4CS when he declared that ‘the friendship … will be an influence for the next 30 to 50 years because a lot of people … who like Australia may, while they do their job in China, think about Australia’. 4CS saw particular advantage in this for Australia in terms of ‘when there is a chance to do business together with Australians it makes it much easier’. This positive influence was attributed by 4CS to the fact that ‘almost all the Australians I met were very friendly and so I got to love them – they are true blue’.

9CS also identified that ‘after returning, ADS scholars have a lot of connections in terms of people and feelings for Australia’ and maintained that ‘the impact was positive’. 9CS recognised its benefit in ‘promoting bilateral trade as ADS scholars know Australia better and understand the social context in both countries’. 9CS explained further:

They know the Australian way of thinking and know the Chinese context which can play a very positive role in cooperative projects. This is very important to implement projects successfully. I think there are both tangible and intangible benefits – tangible in terms of what I just explained and intangible in terms of image probably. In my conversations with friends and colleagues I speak of the good things Australia has to offer.

More specifically, 4CS revealed how ‘I learned a lot from the way Australia manages resources’ and recognised how ADS scholars ‘helped Australia to increase its influence and introduce its knowledge to other countries like China’. 4CS considered this particularly important considering that China ‘was a developing country with many similarities to Australia’.

7CS made a similar assessment, claiming that ADS scholars ‘learn more about Australian culture’ which was important ‘for cultural exchange because the more Chinese people know about Australia … people will help this relationship’. Further, 7CS believed that ‘when ADS scholars make policy … the experience in Australia will have an influence’ and declared that already ‘in my work if someone asks me to recognise, for example, which country is good for something such as water rights …
I always recommend Australia’. Indeed, 7CS revealed how China was ‘now building a water rights legal system’ and so ‘many Chinese delegations now go to Australia to learn and to exchange experiences on how Australia transfers rights, for example, from agriculture to industry’.

8CS also recognised how ‘compared to China, it is quite obvious that there are more organisations working on the environment from the point of view of environmental education’ in Australia and that ‘even in cities there are many places or signs to make people aware of the environment’. That ADS scholars are able to acquire such knowledge of Australian practice and then relay that learning to others in China is worthwhile, albeit a mechanism for directing Chinese attention to Australian approaches.

In terms of the promotion of Australia as a quality exporter of educational services, 1CS suggested that ‘those who graduate from Australia also pass lots of information about Australia to other people’ and that she ‘always encourages others to try to apply for scholarships to Australia’ because ‘there are a lot of people who don’t know about Australia and … in Tibet there are lots of people who don’t know about studying overseas’. In particular, 1CS believed that ‘it’s a good thing for Australia if it has lots of students who have graduated from the country and are now doing good work in other countries, particularly the very underdeveloped countries, regions and cities’. Moreover, the educational qualifications obtained from Australia were reputable. 1CS admitted:

It’s good advertising for Australia because each time we have a delegation, not only from China but also other countries, our Director-General always mentions to others that I am an Australian university graduate.

Importantly, 1CS also perceived that Australian education was ‘on par with the US or the UK’, Australia’s traditional international education competitors, and recognised that:

More and more international students want to study in Australia because of the price advantage. If you study in European countries, like the UK, you have to pay a lot of money.
6CS also observed that in addition to ADS scholars ‘more and more Chinese students were going to study in Australia, either in university or in secondary school’ which was bringing ‘some benefits for Australia’. Most importantly, 6CS believed that:

Like me, they will often disseminate information to colleagues, relatives or friends that Australia has an advanced educational system with excellent teaching methods and state-of-the-art facilities in the universities. Also, I think the degrees awarded by Australian universities are first class in the world.

Indeed, 6CS maintained that ‘other people are very jealous of ADS scholars’ because ‘everyone wants to get a degree from a foreign country like Australia, America and the UK so it’s very valuable to have an overseas scholarship and degree’. Interestingly, 6CS believed that:

A Masters degree from Australia is more valuable than one from China, even from Beijing University or Tsinghua University which are very famous universities. An Australian university degree is much more valuable. Australia has a very good reputation, it is very famous.

Such attribution was supported by the actions of ADS scholars which were directly supporting the interests of Australian education institutions. 3CS maintained that ‘my personal experience on the campus of the University of Sydney helped me to promote the university’ upon his return and that he ‘was able to build personal linkages with academics’ and ‘organise ministers’ visits’ to Australia. Indeed, 3CS believed that he had ‘probably influenced China’s university reform in a way that cannot be seen directly’ through ‘organising a visit for my minister to go to Australia’ at a time when ‘university amalgamation was a priority’ in China, and Australia had already experienced this type of reform.

Moreover, 3CS proved a resource for the NSW Department of Education during his study period in Australia:

While I was doing my Masters program I had time to help the NSW Department of Education to coordinate a program with some Chinese institutions. So I worked in that organisation for two years part time, two and a half days a week.

Conversely, 3CS believed that this experience ‘gave me the opportunity to understand how Australian education administration operates’ as well as ‘a lot of opportunity to understand what the interests of schools were in developing linkages
with schools in other countries’. 3CS considered this ‘a very good experience’ and one that has since benefited him in continuing to build linkages between foreign and Chinese universities. Since his return, 3CS had also ‘hosted the Vice-Chancellor, Gavin Brown, when he was visiting China’ who was ‘very happy to hear that I was a graduate from his university’.

9CS felt that the ADS experience had ‘changed my life’ and returned to her previous Australian university to undertake further study. Indeed, 9CS believed ‘if I hadn’t gone to [Australian university] to do my Masters, I probably wouldn’t have had the opportunity to also do my PhD and receive another scholarship’.

**Mongolia Results**

Despite good support from the Mongolia ADS scholars that AusAID was closely identified with the ADS program in Mongolia, like their Chinese counterparts the Mongolia ADS scholars identified that AusAID could better promote itself through the ADS program and its outcomes. While 5MS maintained that ‘ADS is a government scholarship’ and, as a result, ‘people know AusAID’ in Mongolia, 1MS claimed that among ‘people in the ministries and universities the ADS program is well known but not for other people’. 7MS also suggested that ‘because ADS was focused mainly on the development of public servants … it’s very famous in the public sector, rather than in the private’.

Certainly in Mongolia, the Mozzie network and its members’ local vocational success did much to promote AusAID as the scholarship provider. With ‘two Masters’ including ‘one from an American university’, 7MS recalled how she ‘recently received a call regarding setting up a US alumni association in Mongolia’ and acknowledged:

One of the questions I was asked was ‘Are you a member of any other association?’ I said, ‘Yes, actually I am a member of the Mozzies’. And the comment made was ‘Oh yes, Mozzies are so famous’. I think that says everything – Mozzies are strong, Mozzies are famous. I think it gives credit to the people who are working as government officials in high-ranking positions, also those working in the different private sectors, our network which we keep very strong. We are the only one that is strong in our unity. That’s the difference. The second point is that from year-to-year there is very high competition for Australian
scholarships. The number of applicants is proof of how AusAID’s assistance is regarded as a way to make changes in society.

However, beyond the promotional activities of the Mozzie network, there was limited support from the Mongolia ADS scholars that AusAID (Australian Government) was adequately promoted through media and information strategies. Interestingly, this was despite CaBSAF having an office located centrally in Ulaanbaatar with its own website and active involvement in the Mozzie alumni network. Such discrepancy suggests that more could be done in actively promoting AusAID and the Australian Government’s contribution through the ADS program via more strategic media and information strategies.

There was some evidence to suggest that Mongolia ADS scholars were maintaining links with Australia in a variety of ways. 3MS believed that the ADS program helped to ‘develop contacts and communication with other countries’ and saw himself as ‘a bridge between Australia and Mongolia’. Indeed, 3MS admitted that ‘I was regularly in contact with Curtin University … to develop new joint programs in Mongolia’ via ‘distance learning’. 3MS explained further:

My supervisor has helped me to contact people responsible for international collaboration and we are developing ideas for a joint program in Mongolia – a Graduate Diploma of Health Management via distance learning.

3MS was also exploring opportunities for ‘students to go to Curtin University to do research projects or to do them here in Mongolia’.

1MS was also ‘in contact with my university and my supervisor’ and admitted that ‘if they are conducting any research and if they ask me to participate I would welcome it’. Similarly, 6MS ‘visited ANU last year through work and met up with my teachers’, while 8MS had ‘maintained links with my friends in Australia, including the Honorary Consul-General of Mongolia, Peter Sloane’. 2MS also confirmed maintaining ‘a very good relationship with Peter Sloane’.

While 10MS admitted that ‘I once had very good contact with my professor but I haven’t contacted him for quite awhile’, he revealed a sense of gratitude which made him want to maintain linkages with Australians:
I try to be grateful to Australia for what it did for me. I try to keep my friendships from there … I still have permanent contact with Australians. I just came from a meeting with an Australian. Being a Mozzie means that you’re always known by the Australians and they want to come to you and talk to you. It’s a very good thing.

11MS revealed that, since her graduation, she has had her ‘professor at the university come to Mongolia’ as ‘he’s very interested in the development of democracy in Mongolia’ and has maintained ‘communication by email … with Sri Lankan, Bangladesh and Indonesian students with whom I studied’. However, 11MS claimed that such linkages were ‘not only about human communication’, explaining that:

Because I’m familiar with the Australian system I can easily access the department I need or know where to find information, such as Australian websites related to what I’m doing. If I was not familiar with the Australian system then even if I got the information I wouldn’t be able to place it in context with what is being discussed in Mongolia.

Maintaining links with Australian systems was also adopted by 10MS when he revealed that he ‘very often went back to the Australian Legal Information Institute database’ to assist him in his work.

Like their Chinese counterparts, there was strong attribution from the Mongolia ADS scholars towards the ADS program promoting cross-cultural awareness and cooperation. 4MS believed ‘the cultural exchange is a good benefit to help cooperation between our two countries’ governments’. 11MS agreed, maintaining that:

It is beneficial for Australia to develop ties and connections with Mongolia. It means that in the future there will be even more interested relations between the two countries. This is itself, as a process, a very good thing. ADS are a good mechanism to build those stronger ties.

9MS maintained that ‘on a political level, the benefits are on both sides’ and that ‘in Mongolia, all the people who went on ADS are quite successful’ with ‘some receiving high positions’ which was ‘good because on the policy-making decision level … Australia is closer’. Indeed, the strength of ADS scholars in Mongolia was reflected by 9MS when she recalled how ‘my friend in the ministry said, “You know the Mozzie Mafia is very strong in my ministry”’.
8MS believed that ‘through the increase of awareness we try to expand our cooperation with Australia’. 8MS even revealed ‘the idea of opening a Mongolian embassy back in Australia’. While 8MS clarified that ‘this was just an idea at the moment’ and was ‘not sure when and how it would eventuate’, particularly given that ‘funding was an issue’, he suggested that ‘the promoters of this idea were actually Australian graduates in the Mongolian Government’.

Importantly, 5MS believed that Australia was ‘one of the leaders in the region’ and that the ADS program had enabled an important ‘broadening in cooperation’ between Australia and Mongolia. 5MS added:

By providing scholarships, Australia is contributing to the development of Mongolia which will probably improve the relations between the two countries in different areas, including economic, political and cultural.

The importance of this was exemplified by 5MS when she admitted:

Australia is very far away from us and we only knew of kangaroo … so this exchange promotes the cultural understanding between who we are … that’s very important. Australia also promotes its way of development … very egalitarian with good social protection, worker protection, good social services – this promotes the Australian approach to society.

However, perhaps just as importantly, 5MS acknowledged how the ADS program enabled deep learning through the act of actually exposing scholars to Australia by living and studying there. 5MS claimed that while she had ‘travelled before’ her ‘learning from living within the country was really different’ and enabled opportunity to ‘reflect more’. 5MS described this as ‘not a surface reflection but a more grounded reflection’ on learning.

Moreover, 4MS revealed how ‘many people don’t know at all about Mongolia – Australian and other international students’ and that ‘when we go to Australia we talk a lot about Mongolia’ so ‘Australia was helping developing countries to exchange and communicate cross-cultural awareness’.

6MS explained that ‘from 1991, Mongolia had its transition to a market economy and is still moving in this direction’. As such, 6MS felt that ‘ADS helped to promote ideas of a free market economy and democracy in Mongolia’ through returned ADS
scholars. 6MS suggested that ‘since there are so many Australian graduates in Mongolia … this helps to build better relations between Australia and Mongolia … and to build good cooperation between our countries’. 6MS felt that this was particularly important ‘since Mongolia was part of the Asia-Pacific region’.

The notion of Mongolia being an ally of Australia at international fora was also raised by 10MS when he suggested:

You get altruistic supporters of Australia. For example, when I worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, if Australia came up with certain international initiatives you tried to help. Remember that Mongolia is located right between two big neighbours so their concerns come first, so nobody will be raising Australia’s concerns at international fora. International includes every country. Even small countries like Mongolia are part of that internationalism.

A number of Mongolia ADS scholars also identified benefits to Australian industry through support, information sharing and key contacts in Mongolia. While 2MS admitted that Mongolia ‘can’t make a lot of money to help the Oz economy’, he did acknowledge that ADS scholars ‘can disseminate information … right practice and behaviour in the Asia region’ to ‘help its neighbour’ Australia. 2MS wisely acknowledged that ‘we can’t count its value but, in general, it is doing the right thing’. Indeed, 2MS believed:

I’m very positive for BHP [laughs] … For any business, reputation is very important for marketing purposes, like a trademark, kangaroo! All foreign people that come here know the Mozzies so they have informal contacts. And they know we do the right things, not the wrong things. Reliable information comes out to Australia from the Mozzies. In terms of getting information, mining companies and Australian businesses here find it a little easier in comparison to others.

7MS supported this view, acknowledging that ‘good networks’ were a product of Australia’s investment in Mongolia through the ADS program. 7MS noted that ‘as part of the networking, there is a return on investment in terms of Australia being known and visible in Mongolia’ and recalled how ‘before I went to Australia I talked to many people trying to find out about Australia and not many people could say much’, with some even suggesting ‘that Melbourne was the capital of Australia’. According to 7MS:
It is a linkage. Australians investing in students like me to study there enables them to also be welcomed in Mongolia and known to Mongolia. For example, my company now is providing consulting services for BHP Australia. So when people get to know that you lived in Australia, that you know Australia, then you have a kind of understanding of the people, the culture, the custom. Mutual understanding leads to mutual cooperation.

For 8MS, the ADS program represented ‘cultural awareness, cooperation in the future’ and suggested that ‘any time any Australians come here to Mongolia they will have friends here in the Mozzies’. 8MS believed that as a result of the ADS program ‘the awareness of Australia in Mongolia has increased’ and that ‘people at least know where Australia is now and what sort of country it is’. Indeed, 8MS confirmed that ‘Australia has a very, very good profile in Mongolia’ which was ‘an important thing’ considering that ‘the mining sector is booming and is on the increase’ and that ‘many foreign investors are coming to Mongolia in the mining sector, even BHP Billiton’. Importantly, 8MS was aware that ‘Australia was recognised as one of the leading mining countries’ and that ‘Australian graduates were working with BHP Billiton’ in Mongolia.

10MS also identified that ‘now in the mining sector the biggest investor is Canada and then comes Australia’ and that ‘many Australian investors were putting their money in Mongolia for geological exploration’. 10MS believed that the ADS program had done much to build an awareness of Australia which was now returning support from Mongolia towards Australian investment:

When it comes to Australian investment here in Mongolia, it’s natural that people here, especially those educated in Australia, will be supportive. It’s not only paying dues, it’s a conviction that Australian companies have good technologies, good ethics. So it is the knowledge of the system, knowledge of the real value that they can bring. So in that respect, they enjoy support.

Importantly, 10MS also identified that returned ADS scholars were recognised as ‘experts of the Australian system’ and were influencing Mongolia’s own system approaches. Though providing an example of Mongolia’s adoption of New Zealand legislation, 10MS highlighted Mongolia’s focus on policy and legislation approaches from ‘Down Under’:
In this country, the government’s revenue expenditure law, I believe, is based on New Zealand experience … again done by the Mozzies. Basically, people look Down Under. It ended up based on New Zealand, it went a little beyond Australia but nevertheless, you know, people know this orientation, in that part of the world you have these systems and laws that are in place and are good for looking at.

In terms of the promotion of Australia as a quality exporter of educational services, the Mongolia ADS scholars were in strong support. 1MS felt that Australia was ‘a good place to live and study’ and 2MS identified that ‘the quality of education is very high, the professors were really good and very knowledgeable’. 3MS agreed, maintaining that ‘Australia has a very good system of education’ and admitted to ‘recommending Australian unis and my uni’. 4MS did the same, admitting to ‘always telling staff and colleagues to go to Australia’ because ‘English is the official language, it is a very international country and the universities provide quality education’. 4MS claimed that he often ‘recommended Australia to friends’ and thought ‘they had gone there because of my encouragement’. Indeed, 4MS admitted to being ‘quite proud of that’.

9MS felt that through the ADS program the Australian Government was ‘promoting its universities’ and that ‘previously, English and American universities were known but now Australian universities are promoted’. 9MS believed Australia offered ‘good schooling’ and said that ‘before I went to Australia I never really appreciated, or had an idea, about Australian schooling’. 9MS was now an active supporter of Australia as a quality education destination, maintaining that ‘now when I lecture to my students I always say Australian Masters could be a very good option … Masters programs are very strong in Australia’.

Interestingly, 10MS attributed the quality of ADS graduates as a means of promotion for Australian education when he stated:

I think it promotes the Australian education system because when you’re here in this environment you compete with those who get education elsewhere – the United States, United Kingdom, European Union countries, and so on – and if you have created a good record here, that is already showing how good the system of education is. So I think in that respect it’s very important.

Indeed, 12MS identified that ‘the ADS program in Mongolia has been very good because it has maintained a quality selection of applicants’. This aspect of the ADS
program was considered particularly important given the admission of 11MS that ‘at the introduction of the ADS program in Mongolia, there were not many other scholarship programs to compare with but now we have US and Japanese scholarships’. Nevertheless, 11MS believed that ‘because Australia is an English speaking country and because of the environment … the culture and university teaching … Australia is a competitive destination for Mongolians’.

There were various examples provided by the Mongolia ADS scholars of how the ADS program, as well as their own actions, was supporting the interests of Australian education institutions. 9MS observed:

You are promoting Australian universities and you are also putting money back into your own universities. It’s a win win for Australia. We pay for living costs there, for food there, everything there. Of course, personally we benefit and the country of Mongolia benefits but Australia does too.

2MS also noted ‘we were trained in Australia so the money stays in Australia’ and has since assisted his university in finding other quality international students. 2MS recalled ‘I met my director of the school at the ANU two years ago and introduced some good guys who wanted to study in Australia’. Indeed, 2MS revealed that ‘three went to do Masters degrees overseas … to advance their ideas and get the skills needed’.

1MS had also ‘encouraged my colleagues to apply for ADS and told them about studying in Australia’. Indeed, 1MS revealed that ‘one of my colleagues went to Monash and the other is going to UTS very soon’. Such success in attracting others to study in Australia was also experienced by 6MS when she explained:

When I worked as a project manager I had several staff working under me, all young people. I was always telling them that they should go and study in Australia. Two of my staff are now studying in Australia – one under ADS and another under an IMF scholarship.

Importantly, 6MS revealed ‘I want to continue my study so I may apply in the future to study again at the ANU’.

As a result of ADS, 1MS ‘experienced how the Australian education, and especially tertiary education, works’ so now she has the knowledge to ‘speak to my students
about the education system in Australia’ and encourage them to study there. 1MS explained further:

When I ask my students … they don’t know much about the Australian education system so I am able to give a lecture on Australia and the Australian education system. I advertise Australia to senior students as they will finish soon and most of them want to study abroad.

Similarly, 4MS admitted to ‘telling all of my staff that to go and study abroad is a very good experience’ and claimed that he continued to ‘push my young staff to do their best and go and study abroad’. While 4MS admitted that his encouragement was for them to study in ‘any sorts of programs’, not just exclusively in Australia, he claimed that ‘of course I studied in Australia so I told them my experiences in Australia’.

**Summary: Question 9**

On average, there was moderate support by ADS scholars from China and Mongolia that the ADS program was having an attributable impact in *advancing Australia’s national interest* (Objective 4).

In terms of AusAID (Australian Government) being closely identified with the ADS program, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated little attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and moderate attribution for Mongolia. For China, there was very limited evidence to suggest that AusAID was closely identified with the ADS program. ADS scholars attributed this to a lack of knowledge throughout China of the program, its objectives and its Australian Government support. For Mongolia, the ‘famous’ Mozzie alumni network and the success of ADS scholars did much to promote AusAID and its scholarships. However, given AusAID’s focus through ADS to strengthen Mongolia’s public sector, it was acknowledged that this awareness was largely confined to that sector. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and a yellow TL rating for Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of the promotion of AusAID as the scholarship provider through media and information strategies, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated little attribution towards the *indicator of success* for China and Mongolia. For China, there was a perceived lack of knowledge of AusAID and ADS which justified the need for
better and wider promotion. For Mongolia, despite CaBSAF’s local office, website and active involvement with the Mozzies, ADS scholars felt more could be done through strategic media and information strategies to better promote AusAID and its contribution through ADS. These findings resulted in a red TL rating for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of ADS scholars maintaining links with Australia, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated moderate attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. For China, there were some good examples of ADS scholars building and maintaining links with their Australian university lecturers/supervisors and with other international students across the Asia-Pacific region. However, while the examples of such linkages were positive, the number of ADS scholars maintaining links with Australia was low. Moreover, the physical location of ADS scholars in Tibet proved problematic in maintaining meaningful links. For Mongolia, the links maintained by ADS scholars were similar to those of their Chinese counterparts, except that the Mongolia ADS scholars also identified continued links with Australian resources for work purposes. These findings resulted in yellow TL ratings for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of the promotion of cross-cultural awareness and cooperation, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated great attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. For China, almost all ADS scholars provided evidence to support the indicator of success, with the ADS program contributing by building a better understanding of Australia, its culture, policies and economy. This in turn enabled ADS scholars to pass on their knowledge of Australia to others in China, building understanding and positive attitudes towards Australia. The positive feelings ADS scholars held towards Australia meant that they were more inclined to assist Australians through key networks, information sharing and a ‘first choice’ approach. Conversely, ADS scholars derived satisfaction in being able to build Australia’s understanding of their own culture and society. For Mongolia, the ADS program was attributed to building stronger political ties, particularly with the success of many ADS scholars in reaching high positions in government. ADS was considered a good mechanism for building those stronger ties and a benefit to both countries. It not only helped to promote a deep understanding of Australia and its
systems but also enabled the ADS scholars to share their own culture with Australians and other international students. The number of ADS scholars in Mongolia was seen to benefit Australia in providing greater access, information, cooperation and support from Mongolia. Good relations, networks and cultural awareness were considered key outcomes from Australia’s investment in Mongolia through the ADS program. These findings resulted in green TL ratings for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of the promotion of Australia as a quality exporter of educational services, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated moderate attribution towards the indicator of success for China and great attribution for Mongolia. For China, there was some evidence that ADS scholars were promoting Australia as a quality exporter of educational services. Australian qualifications were generally more valued than domestic qualifications; they were considered world class and valued for being internationally recognised. For Mongolia, the findings were similar, however, ADS scholars were found to be more active in encouraging others to go to Australia for a quality education. The quality and success of ADS graduates were also a form of promotion in itself for Australian education. These findings resulted in a yellow TL rating for China and a green TL rating for Mongolia (Table 6.2).

In terms of the ADS program supporting the interests of domestic educational institutions, the sum of responses by ADS scholars indicated moderate attribution towards the indicator of success for China and Mongolia. For China, ADS scholars were promoting Australian education and in particular the university at which they studied, continuing to utilise personal links with academics for bilateral activities, using knowledge of Australian university administration and collaboration interests to build institutional linkages, as well as returning to Australia for further study. However, examples of such support were shared by relatively few scholars. For Mongolia, ADS scholars recognised support for Australian educational institutions, the referral of other quality international students to Australian scholarships and universities, the return of ADS scholars to Australia for higher learning opportunities and the promotion of Australian education to local students and staff wanting to study abroad. However, examples of such support were also shared by relatively few
scholars. These findings resulted in yellow TL ratings for China and Mongolia (Table 6.2).

**Question 10:** Has your experience in Australia or as an ADS scholar positively influenced other parts of your life?

Indicator of success:
- Other incidental benefits occurring from the ADS program

**China Results**

The China ADS scholars identified a wide variety of other incidental benefits occurring from the ADS program. Due to the breadth of examples, those that were common have been discussed in this section. A number of China ADS scholars identified that one of the most important aspects of the ADS program was the option of having family accompany them to Australia throughout the period of their scholarship. 1CS maintained that:

> It is really good that you get to take your family with you to Australia under the ADS program. My family came to visit me for three months – my husband and son.

7CS made a similar assessment, maintaining that:

> It was quite important to have my daughter with me because as a mother I couldn’t stand it otherwise. I think the Australian Government is quite good – they not only allow us to bring family with us to Australia but also they cover the living expenses for the family members.

The option for ADS scholars to have their family with them was an important one, providing benefits to both scholar and family members. 2CS took her daughter to Australia and recalled how ‘before she went she didn’t speak a word of English but she went to school and even after two weeks she was communicating’. In fact, so positive was the experience for her daughter that 2CS exclaimed:

> She still remembers this experience and she was telling me … ‘I’m never ever going anywhere else except Tibet and Australia … I want to study in Australia and visit my friends’. I have told her that if she still has this idea when she’s older then I may send her to study there. She’s very happy about that.
7CS provided a similar example, explaining that her daughter ‘definitely wants to go back to Australia to study’. 7CS was amused by her advice to her daughter that she would ‘have to get a scholarship for herself’.

5CS had his wife and daughter live with him in Australia ‘for the last seven months’ of his degree and explained how ‘they loved Australia very much’ and ‘often asked me to work or learn there again’. 5CS considered the experience particularly ‘good because they now know the real world outside of China’. Moreover, 5CS found that his daughter preferred the Australian approach to schooling:

My daughter was only ten years old and she found that the study was not too hard. She had a lot of free time, relaxing, and she enjoyed that kind of life and study atmosphere … It was hard for her to study hard again once she returned to China. She kept saying to me that in Australia the teacher always asked her to do what she was interested in. In China, the teacher always tells her to do things … She has found that the teacher and student are more equal to talk with each other and the classroom atmosphere is also friendly. She likes that environment.

For 5CS, the ‘experience of living and studying overseas made me want my daughter to do the same, particularly because of the way of the education system’.

7CS also felt that Australia ‘was quite good for my daughter’s education’ and believed that ‘it definitely helped my daughter a lot, particularly her personal development’.

Not only were ADS scholars sharing their knowledge of Australia upon their return to their home country but so too were their children. 1CS described how her ‘son returned after three months in Australia’ and ‘his teacher asked him to make a presentation at school’. This meant that the ADS program was enabling the transfer of knowledge of Australia to also be shared among children and at a young age.

The ADS program was also promoting Australia as a holiday destination. 3CS maintained that:

If I ever think about travelling or holidays I will always think about Australia … even my wife has mentioned many times that we should go back to Australia for a holiday. So personally, Australia is almost a second home and that’s why I’m thinking of going back for holidays. Also, even people around me, when we talk about holidays I always recommend Australia.
This attitude was shared by 7CS who felt that ‘Australia left a very good impression’ on her family and admitted that she and her husband decided that ‘when we retire we will go back to Australia for travel’. 4CS also revealed that ‘my wife came to Australia and she is always asking me when am I going to take her back again’. Indeed, 8CS even admitted that if she decided in the future to ‘go abroad I would go to Australia … to live somewhere familiar’. 6CS also admitted her ‘want to go back to Australia in the near future’ and admitted to ‘often dreaming of going back’.

ADS scholars also proved advantageous to Australian tourism while studying in Australia, with 7CS providing one of a number of examples:

I travelled a lot in Australia. I went with my daughter to Sydney and Melbourne and when my husband visited I also went to many other parts of Australia.

China ADS scholars also favoured Australia’s relaxed lifestyle. 4CS believed ‘one of the most important philosophies learned from Australia was to take it easy, don’t work too hard – life and health come first’. 4CS went on to admit:

One of the most interesting things I learned from Australia was that the lifestyle is very relaxed, very laid back. China is a developing country and that’s why most people in China are having pressures in their life, both personally and in business. It’s like we are climbing mountains. We have something in front of us, like we either need to get money, success, promotion, whatever. But while I was in Australia … my daily life was very enjoyable.

While 4CS admitted to ‘staying most of the time with Chinese’ when in Australia, he also had ‘local Australians living with me and I enjoyed life with them’. 6CS also acknowledged that ‘the majority of my friends in Australia were Chinese’ but, importantly, told how ‘some were from mainland China and others were even from Taiwan or Hong Kong’. 6CS had remained ‘very good friends’ with them all as well as ‘four others from Asian countries’ in the Asia-Pacific region. On a regional perspective, the building of such friendships can only be beneficial towards cultural awareness and mutual respect. Indeed, the tensions sometimes felt between mainland China and neighbouring economies, including Taiwan, amplify the positives of such friendships.
For 6CS, the experience of the ADS program ‘had a very big influence on my life’, including ‘paying much more attention to environmental issues’. 6CS felt that ‘I learned that from Australia because Australian people have a very strong sense and awareness of environmental protection’. 6CS admitted that Australia’s protection of ‘forests and the land and animals … left a very deep impression’ on her and how she now views the environment.

**Mongolia Results**

Though many incidental benefits were the same or similar to those identified by the China ADS scholars, the Mongolia ADS scholars identified a wider variety of incidental benefits and also appeared to place stronger emphasis on their influence towards the overall success of ADS.

For 4MS, an essential factor in his decision to undertake an ADS award was that his family was permitted to ‘go to Australia to be together’ with him. This ‘was invaluable’ to 4MS and considered ‘a very good thing compared to USA sponsorships’. In this regard, 4MS recognised that ‘AusAID had a good advantage’ over competitor countries.

8MS made a similar assessment, claiming that ‘I chose ADS because … I heard from previous graduates that family could also go’. 7MS also found that ADS was ‘beneficial for the whole family because ADS allowed us to bring all of our family members to Australia’. In fact, 7MS highlighted:

> That is a very sensitive issue for the people who are going for two or three years to study in a foreign country. Living by yourself is not a nice feeling but if you have your family with you, you work harder and enjoy the life much better. My husband and my two kids went with me. I also had a third child when I was there. He would love to have Australian citizenship. He’s ten years old now and that’s what he’s always asking for. An important thing for any human being I think is family union.

Improved educational opportunities for family as well as health benefits were important incidental benefits raised by Mongolia ADS scholars. 2MS felt that all ADS scholars from Mongolia ‘were fortunate to be able to take their families’ and was pleased that his ‘kids picked up English’ in Australia. Indeed, 2MS revealed that his ‘boy now works for the Central Bank’ and ‘Australia had a very positive impact
on him for learning’ and now ‘wants to continue his Masters in Finance’. 2MS also revealed how his young ‘daughter now asks why Ulaanbaatar isn’t like Canberra’.

7MS also noted ‘now all of my kids speak English’ and was amused that ‘the younger one who was born there strongly believes that he is Australian – not Mongolian but Australian!’ 7MS maintained that ‘by enabling my family to also go to Australia and live together, we were able to experience the same things in the same way’ and that because ‘we lived together we were able to combine our gaps of knowledge and understanding together’.

8MS could also see that his ‘family benefited too’, particularly because ‘there was excellent English study for my daughter, and my wife was also able to work’. For 8MS, ‘the way of life in Australia was good’ for his family and he believed that, as a result, his ‘family’s life has improved’. In fact, as a result of his wife’s work experience in Australia, she was able to return to better work opportunities in Mongolia, resulting in their ability to move into ‘a new apartment’ in Ulaanbaatar.

10MS also revealed how his ‘family also got great benefits from living in Australia’ including his wife who had ‘never studied English formally but when we went to Australia her English improved’. As a result, 10MS explained that it had ‘really helped her to get a scholarship in Britain and join the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine’ which was considered ‘one of the best schools in Britain’. 10MS was also pleased that ‘my daughter joined an Australian school so she picked up English there’. This was particularly beneficial for 10MS and his family because ‘for all this, in Mongolia, I would have had to pay money and it wouldn’t have been affordable’. 10MS proudly exclaimed that ‘I got all of that besides my education’.

9MS acknowledged that ‘when I sent my son to school I didn’t have to pay the tuition fee’ and felt that ‘ADS is such a very good program, a strong program’ because ADS scholars ‘are provided with all the privileges as a native Australian person’. It was a disappointment, however, that some parents at the school had become jealous of 9MS for being granted this privilege by the Australian Government.
In terms of benefits for her family, 9MS also noted that ‘the food was really good in Australia because in Mongolia you can never be guaranteed very good quality’ and ‘the weather was great too’ for her family’s health.

4MS also noted that his ADS scholarship meant that his young daughter was able to escape the harsh climate of Mongolia during her early growing years. 4MS felt that ‘the weather was very good for children in Australia, not severe like in Mongolia’. Indeed, 4MS had ‘very good memories and feelings thinking about my experience in Australia’, including that ‘one of my daughter’s first words was an English word – “No” [laughing]’.

1MS revealed how ‘personally I made a lot of friends in Australia’ and was ‘still in contact through email with many international students from different cultures’. 1MS found it ‘so very interesting to meet people from different countries … in similar fields’ and continued to ‘discuss with them how to teach’.

4MS admitted that ‘I used my education in Australia to help with my career and it’s still helping a lot’, even through ‘free time’ activities when ‘I usually contact Mozzie friends to play snooker, sport or have a beer’.

11MS claimed that ADS ‘has positively influenced my life’ and ‘opened a lot of work opportunities and career opportunities’ which ‘also contribute to my personal life – lots of optimism’.

A number of ADS scholars ‘learned how to swim for the first time’ (5MS), ‘learned to play a little bit of tennis’ (11MS) or were introduced to other forms of sport in Australia. Others, such as 5MS, revealed how their ‘friendships still continued’ with ‘other AusAID students’ and that they sometimes ‘visited them overseas’. Mongolia ADS scholars also often suggested a desire ‘to go back to Oz and see other parts’ of Australia.

Another incidental benefit was through ADS scholars taking ideas back to Mongolia from what they had seen in Australia. 11MS identified that ‘children are only supposed to watch programs in Australia on the TV with a G rating’ and recalled how when ‘I returned home my daughter would ask if she was allowed to watch a particular show’. 11MS acknowledged that ‘there is no rating for TV programs in
Mongolia’ which was ‘a worry for me’ and that she intended to suggest introducing this advisory service to Mongolian television.

**Summary: Question 10**

ADS scholars from both China and Mongolia identified a wide variety of other incidental benefits occurring from the ADS program. The option to have family accompany ADS scholars throughout their scholarship period was identified as a common incidental benefit which proved a major incentive for ADS scholars applying and successfully completing ADS. Flow-on benefits to family members included the acquisition of English language and other educational opportunities, work experience, and exposure to multiculturalism and sport. Flow-on benefits to Australia included an overall positive view of Australia, tourism (including a strong desire to return or encourage others to visit Australia), continuing international education activity (including ADS scholars returning to study in Australia or sending their children overseas) and an awareness of Australian practices that may be influential to others.

This question was designed to identify other incidental benefits arising from the ADS program. Application of a TL rating is therefore not appropriate.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented and analysed data collected from in-depth interviews with 21 scholars of the ADS program. The chapter confirmed the extent to which indicators of success were being met, based on the perceptions of returned ADS scholars in China and Mongolia.

The following Table 6.2 provides a graphical representation of the level of attribution (great, moderate or little) by ADS scholars towards the contribution of the indicators of success. It provides trends which represent the degree to which certain indicators of success are being met, as perceived by ADS scholars through their experience on the ADS program. It provides a useful analysis of consolidated ratings and a cross-reference between the ADS program in China and Mongolia in relation to its perceived contribution.
Table 6.2: Consolidated Ratings of Indicators of Success – ADS Scholars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Mongolia</th>
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<tr>
<td>Theme 1: Program relevance to country</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indicators of success:</td>
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<td>Qualifications valued in country</td>
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| Theme 2: The Australian experience               |       |          |
| Indicators of success:                           |       |          |
| Meeting and working with people from different cultures |       |          |
| Developing confidence and competence in English language proficiency |       |          |
| Exposure to international practices              |       |          |
| Adopting self-directed and participatory teaching/learning methods |       |          |

| Theme 3: Characteristics of returning scholars   |       |          |
| Indicators of success:                           |       |          |
| Scholars return from Australia and remain in country |       |          |
| Scholars return to their original place of employ (sponsoring agency) |       |          |
| Scholars move to other organisations (public, private or non-government) but continue in work relevant to the objectives of the ADS program |       |          |
| Scholars given greater responsibilities/promoted upon returning from Australia |       |          |
| Scholars reform minded/have confidence and skills to drive reform |       |          |
| Scholars in positions of authority to make their own systems adapt and work better |       |          |

| Theme 4: Institutional targeting and capacity building objectives |       |          |
| Indicators of success:                                          |       |          |
| Scholars return to a supportive work environment with a commitment to adopting strategies for utilising the graduate’s new knowledge, skills and qualifications |       |          |
| Scholars are valued for their new skills and knowledge by employer/colleagues |       |          |
Scholars are able to use their new skills and knowledge in the work environment.

Scholars are utilising learning in various types of work.

Scholars are passing their new skills and knowledge to others.

Scholars are helped to address specific knowledge and skills gaps of the agency.

Scholars fulfilled all obligations to the employer and vice versa (e.g. contractual agreement, action plan, etc.).

Access and commitment to further education and professional development opportunities.

**Theme 5: ‘Critical mass’ theory**

**Indicators of success:**

- A critical mass of well-trained and capable local leaders
- The effective use of critical mass (e.g. within the organisation or alumni network for mentoring, discussion of ideas and ways forward)
- Building of good people-to-people links

**Objective 2: To achieve poverty alleviation**

**Indicator of success:**

- Scholars working on poverty reduction policies and programs

**Objective 3: To achieve sustainable development**

**Indicators of success:**

- Supporting improvements in governance
- Training of local people in skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership

**Objective 4: To advance Australia’s national interest**

**Indicators of success:**

- AusAID (Australian Government) closely identified with the ADS program
- Promotion of AusAID (Australian Government) as the scholarship provider through media and information strategies
- Scholars maintaining links with Australia
- Promotion of cross-cultural awareness and cooperation
Based on the overall responses of ADS scholars, there was moderate to great support that the ADS program was meeting *Objective 1: To strengthen human resource capacity*. Like ADS facilitators, there was higher attribution from ADS scholars towards the achievement of this objective in Mongolia than China. Notable reasons for this difference included stronger support towards:

- the Australian experience and its perceived benefit to Mongolian ADS scholars in terms of –
  - developing confidence and competence in English language proficiency where English was now the working language at ministries and work responsibilities were sometimes based on English language proficiency, including writing papers for overseas audiences and staff reports;
- the characteristics of Mongolian ADS scholars in –
  - continuing to work in areas relevant to the objectives of the ADS program when moving to other organisations (public, private or non-government);
  - gaining greater responsibilities or promotion upon their return, with most excelling in their career progression after returning from Australia and a significant presence of ADS scholars now in senior levels of government and business;
  - returning reform minded or having the confidence and skills to drive reform and, unlike many of their Chinese counterparts, being provided the opportunity to make significant contributions to public and private sector reform in country;
  - being afforded the authority to influence decisions and apply their own ways of doing things in the workplace based on their new knowledge and skills;
- ADS scholars in Mongolia utilising learning in various types of work and passing their new skills and knowledge to others through –
o a greater tendency for work movement, providing the opportunity to utilise learning in various types of work across the public, private and non-government sectors, both domestically and abroad;

o a sense of obligation to share new skills and knowledge with others and a greater expectation by employers to disseminate learning within the organisation;

- a critical mass of ADS scholars beginning to take shape in Mongolia, as opposed to China, thanks to –
  o the return of almost all ADS scholars to the centralised hub of Ulaanbaatar;
  o the efforts of the Mozzies in building and maintaining close networks of returned ADS scholars across diverse levels and sectors;
  o local pride in the growing network of successful local leaders;
  o the Mozzies supporting one another through networking, mentoring and sharing information and advice;
  o a strong comradeship and collegiality among Mozzie members and a willingness to support one another in their careers and towards the betterment of the Mongolian community;
  o almost all ADS scholars, whether part of the Mozzie alumni association or not, maintaining links with other ADS scholars at either a professional or personal level.

Based on the overall responses of ADS facilitators, there was great support that the ADS program was meeting Objective 2: To achieve poverty alleviation. For both China and Mongolia, ADS scholars were working on policies and programs across a range of areas to which they attributed a close connection to poverty alleviation and were making significant contributions to improving people’s livelihoods across various disadvantaged and ethnic groups.

There was moderate to great support that the ADS program was meeting Objective 3: To achieve sustainable development, with higher attribution towards the achievement of this objective in Mongolia. ADS scholars in Mongolia placed strong emphasis on the skills acquired in Australia and their relevance to their work in development, policy formulation and leadership. This was supported by the significant examples showcasing how Mongolia ADS scholars were contributing to positive
improvements in governance. While China ADS scholars held a desire and ability to improve policies and practices across a variety of working environments, they also experienced significant barriers affecting their capacity to influence and achieve outcomes.

There was also moderate to great support that the ADS program was meeting Objective 4: To advance Australia’s national interest, with slightly higher attribution towards the achievement of this objective in Mongolia but only in terms of AusAID (Australian Government) being closely identified with the ADS program. Lack of knowledge in China of the ADS program, its objectives and its Australian Government support was in direct contrast to the success and reputation of the Mozzies, who were doing much to promote AusAID (Australian Government) and its scholarships program in Mongolia.
Chapter 7
Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

Introduction

Chapters 5 and 6 presented and analysed data collected from in-depth interviews with facilitators and scholars of the ADS program. The chapters highlighted the extent to which indicators of success were being met, based on the perceptions of returned ADS facilitators and scholars in China and Mongolia.

This chapter presents the major findings of this study. It includes a consolidated graphical presentation of the achievement of the ADS program in China and Mongolia against its stated objectives (Table 7.1). The perceptions of ADS facilitators and scholars towards the contribution of the ADS program, and comparisons in their overall views, are analysed. Finally, implications and recommendations for future theory, practice and research are presented. This chapter represents the final stage (Stage 9) of the Research Plan (see Figure 4.1).

Major Findings of the Study

This study aimed to address a primary research question and two subordinate research questions:

- Is the ADS program in China and Mongolia successful in terms of its stated objectives (1996–2006)?
  i. Has the experience of being an ADS recipient positively influenced the recipient’s work life?
  ii. Is there evidence of other positive outcomes as a result of the ADS program?

The concept or idea of this study was to identify the degree of success of the ADS program in meeting its stated objectives as perceived by those who were either facilitating or had participated in the program.
Primary Research Question: Is the ADS program in China and Mongolia successful in terms of its stated objectives (1996–2006)?

Analysis of the data based on Contribution Analysis revealed that the ADS program in China and Mongolia was, for the most part, successful in terms of its stated objectives (1996–2006). That is, it contributed to strengthening human resource capacity in priority sectors of partner countries consistent with country program strategies and Australia’s national interest. However, this was not without varying degrees of success according to given objectives and their relative performance indicators (indicators of success), as presented in Table 7.1.

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Scholars move to other organisations (public, private or non-government) but continue in work relevant to the objectives of the ADS program

Scholars given greater responsibilities/promoted upon returning from Australia

Scholars reform minded/have confidence and skills to drive reform

Scholars in positions of authority to make their own systems adapt and work better

**Theme 4: Institutional targeting and capacity building objectives**

**Indicators of success:**

Scholars return to a supportive work environment with a commitment to adopting strategies for utilising the graduate’s new knowledge, skills and qualifications

Scholars are valued for their new skills and knowledge by employer/colleagues

Scholars are able to use their new skills and knowledge in the work environment

Scholars are utilising learning in various types of work

Scholars are passing their new skills and knowledge to others

Scholars helped to address specific knowledge and skills gaps of the agency

Scholars fulfilled all obligations to the employer and vice versa (e.g. contractual agreement, action plan, etc.)

Access and commitment to further education and professional development opportunities

**Theme 5: ‘Critical mass’ theory**

**Indicators of success:**

A critical mass of well-trained and capable local leaders

The effective use of critical mass (e.g. within the organisation or alumni)
network for mentoring, discussion of ideas and ways forward)
Building of good people-to-people links

**Objective 2: To achieve poverty alleviation**

**Indicator of success:**
Scholars working on poverty reduction policies and programs

**Objective 3: To achieve sustainable development**

**Indicators of success:**
Supporting improvements in governance
Training of local people in skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership

**Objective 4: To advance Australia’s national interest**

**Indicators of success:**
AusAID (Australian Government) closely identified with the ADS program
Promotion of AusAID (Australian Government) as the scholarship provider through media and information strategies
Scholars maintaining links with Australia
Promotion of cross-cultural awareness and cooperation
Promotion of Australia as a quality exporter of educational services
Supporting the interests of domestic educational institutions

Table 7.1 provides a useful matrix through which the performance of the program against *indicators of success* may be viewed; as well, it is useful for identifying significant comparisons between the two countries.

In terms of **strengthening human resource capacity** (Objective 1), there was moderate to strong agreement that the study ADS scholars undertook and the work
that they returned to was largely consistent with country strategies or priorities for development. This was in large part due to AusAID working with key ministries within country to ensure that scholars selected represented key target areas. As a consequence, the qualifications obtained by ADS scholars were considered to be moderately to greatly valued by employers.

There was moderate to strong support for the benefits of meeting and working with people from different cultures through the ADS program. While developing confidence and competence in English language proficiency was not supported strongly by the Chinese, generally due to an already high level of English language proficiency held by Chinese applicants, this indicator of success was more strongly supported by the Mongolians. Indeed, for Mongolia, English language competence was regarded as a contributor to establishing greater contacts, cooperation and trade with the Western world. This is perhaps less important in China, where English language learning and proficiency is increasingly common, particularly for business and trade. Interestingly, exposure to international practices as a result of international education was on average moderately supported by both countries. The Australian study experience was also found to be particularly advantageous to ADS scholars’ exposure to self-directed and participatory teaching/learning methods. These methods continued to be adopted by ADS scholars after their return to country and received a great level of support from ADS scholars from both countries.

As an immediate outcome, the vast majority of ADS scholars returned from Australia after graduating to remain in country and in their original place of employ (sponsoring agency). However, there was evidence that some scholars returned to organisational restructuring which meant that their original position was no longer available and a move within the organisation was required. While some ADS scholars moved within a relatively short amount of time into other employ, including in the private and non-government sectors, there was overall moderate support that they remained working in areas important to the skills needs of their country. It was found that scholars generally returned to greater work responsibilities or were promoted to higher duties within a reasonable time, particularly in Mongolia. There was also strong and moderate support that ADS scholars returned more reform minded and, importantly, had the confidence and skills to drive reform. Evidence of
this was particularly strong in Mongolia. However, there was less support towards ADS scholars being in appropriate positions of authority to make their own systems adapt and work better, particularly in China. This was largely attributed to work roles within often large, hierarchical and bureaucratic organisational environments of the Chinese and Mongolian Governments, where individual change was difficult beyond immediate work teams.

The notion of ADS scholars returning to a supportive work environment with a commitment to adopting strategies for utilising new knowledge, skills and qualifications was only moderately supported. This influenced scholars feeling valuable for their new skills and knowledge by their employer and colleagues, and also their ability to use their new skills and knowledge in the work environment. Similarly, there was little to moderate support that ADS scholars were utilising their learning in various types of work, as well as the opportunity to pass their new skills and knowledge to others. This was viewed by the researcher as a significant lost opportunity which, if properly utilised, has the potential for far greater impacts towards institutional capacity building objectives. Nonetheless, there was generally little support that ADS scholars were actually helping to address specific knowledge and skills gaps of their agencies. Surprisingly, there was very little evidence of any post-ADS award obligations by scholars to their employers and vice versa. Some ADS scholars provided minor briefings on their experiences and learning, however, this was rarely distributed beyond their immediate supervisors. The lack of any contractual agreements or action plans meant that there was little planning, guidance or instruction on how ADS scholars could best contribute to their organisation upon their return and how the organisation could take advantage of an ADS scholar as part of their own organisational learning.

Respondents revealed little opportunity for ADS scholars to continue to access further education and professional development opportunities. While some ADS scholars showed interest in doing so, their commitment was often negated by inadequate opportunity afforded by their employers. This was usually justified by the respondents in terms of their employer having already invested a significant amount to their learning and development by allowing them to leave the organisation for an extended period to obtain their ADS award.
There was little support in China that the ADS program was building a critical mass of well-trained and capable local leaders within and across government organisations. In contrast, in Mongolia there was strong support of this taking shape. This was largely attributed to the locale of most Mongolian ADS scholars in the single and smaller capital of Ulaanbaatar, where returned ADS scholars represented a group of well-educated leaders and where the active Mozzie network was also playing a crucial role. These aspects were also reflected in responses supporting the effective use of critical mass and the building of good people-to-people links.

In terms of helping to *achieve poverty alleviation* (Objective 2), there was moderate support from ADS facilitators that ADS scholars were indeed contributing and, interestingly, great support from ADS scholars themselves. While many ADS scholars were not working on specific targeted interventions, they were often in roles that could be seen to be contributing to poverty reduction, whether in education, health or the environment. Some ADS scholars were working very closely with communities and making an important contribution to poverty alleviation outcomes, while others were only peripherally involved.

In terms of contributing to *achieve sustainable development* (Objective 3), the ADS program was attributed to being moderately supportive of improvements in governance in China, with greater support for this occurring in Mongolia. This was also true of the program’s achievement in the training of local people in the skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership. ADS scholars in particular believed this to be a strength, recounting numerous examples of how the program had influenced their approaches and focus in work.

In terms of *advancing Australia’s national interest* (Objective 4), there was little to moderate support that AusAID (Australian Government) was closely identified with the ADS program in China. This was in contrast to Mongolia, where AusAID and its ADS program was considered more well known, largely through the success of its graduates and the active Mozzie alumni network. However, almost all ADS facilitators and ADS scholars recognised an opportunity for better in-country promotion of AusAID and its contribution through the ADS program, particularly in China. Some ADS scholars were found to be maintaining links with Australia
however these were often personal as opposed to work related. There was moderate to strong support that the ADS program was successfully promoting cross-cultural awareness and cooperation, which was particularly evident amongst the Mongolian ADS scholars. There was moderate support that through the ADS program Australia was being promoted as a quality exporter of educational services and moderate to strong support that it was supporting the interests of Australian educational institutions.

While the data revealed that the ADS program in China and Mongolia was, for the most part, successful in terms of its stated objectives, there was opportunity for improving performance outcomes across a range of areas to achieve greater ‘green’ ratings. This includes in particular:

- strategies to better enable ADS scholars to implement their own systems for improving work practice;
- greater attention to institutional targeting and capacity building objectives in general, particularly in relation to:
  - scholars addressing specific knowledge and skills gaps of the agency;
  - scholars and employers committing to the full implementation of action plans;
  - access and commitment to further education and professional development opportunities; and
- better promotion of AusAID (Australian Government) as the scholarship provider through media and information strategies.

**Subordinate Research Question 1: Has the experience of being an ADS recipient positively influenced the recipient’s work life?**

In answering the first subordinate research question, for the most part, the experience of being an ADS recipient was considered to have had a positive influence on the recipient’s work life. In particular, ADS scholars were in the competitive position of having attained internationally recognised qualifications that were valued highly in their country; they were provided with unique exposure to international practices that then influenced their own ideas and approaches to working and learning; they predominantly remained in country and returned to their original sponsoring agency to continue to be a valuable resource for their country and employer; they were
invariably given greater responsibilities and promoted after their return; they tended to exhibit more willingness towards reform and had the confidence and skills to then drive that reform; they also had the necessary training in skills needed for development, policy formulation and leadership, and a cross-cultural awareness that continued to help them, and Australia, in progressing cooperation; and, finally, they held a very positive view of AusAID and the Australian Government in affording them these opportunities through the ADS program and actively promoted it to others.

**Subordinate Research Question 2: Is there evidence of other positive outcomes as a result of the ADS program?**

In answering the second and final subordinate research question, there was evidence of other positive outcomes, or beneficial unintended consequences, as a result of the ADS program. These included:

- English-language proficiency – extending to all family members who spent time living in Australia;
- work experience – for ADS scholars and, just as importantly, for their partners while living in Australia, providing invaluable overseas working experience and professional development opportunities that often converted into better employment outcomes once they returned home;
- education – for all family members but particularly for children through their quality Australian schooling;
- international education – with some ADS scholars later sending their children back to Australia to build on their education, or ADS scholars themselves continuing their tertiary studies through Australian universities;
- cross-cultural awareness – through meeting other international students and living in multicultural Australia;
- building and maintaining friendships – with many ADS scholars and their families still in contact with their overseas friends today;
- working relationships – with some ADS scholars collaborating with their Australian contacts through work and research;
- knowledge and skills – such as computing skills, with ADS scholars then relaying their knowledge and skills on to others;
• writing and research skills – through undertaking Masters-level study which has improved the way in which ADS scholars structure reports, reference sources and research information in their work; and
• life skills – such as even learning how to swim which is a rare skill for many Chinese and Mongolians.

This study shows that the returns on investment in delivering the ADS program go well beyond the main objectives, contributing to positive outcomes not only for the ADS recipient, but also for their families, their country and Australia.

**Implications for Theory**

This study sought to understand the perceptions of people in the ADS program in order to ascertain whether the program had been successful in terms of its stated objectives. In doing so, the study used Contribution Analysis to measure the attributable impact of the program and how it was making a difference. By doing so, the study has contributed to the current literature on Contribution Analysis.

In particular, the study developed a series of *indicators of success* drawn from the existing literature and consolidated through in-depth interviews with ADS facilitators. The act of developing *indicators of success* in this way, by drawing on existing theory with the empirical awareness of facilitators in the field, provided a thorough and comprehensive means by which to assess performance. This approach not only consolidated a set of *indicators of success* based on the existing ADS program literature but also expanded on it by deciphering new and previously unexplored *indicators of success*. These proved to be important and valid additions in gaining additional understanding of the contribution of the ADS program.

Additional testing through the application of Contribution Analysis to other similar programs, with a view to expanding and refining the *indicators of success*, would further develop and progress this approach.

Identified problems and strengths associated with the chosen methodology for this study are briefly reviewed at *Appendix G: Methodology Revisited.*
Implications for Practice

A number of problems were identified that, if acted upon, have the potential to further benefit the success of the ADS program. The data identified monitoring and contribution analysis, post-ADS support for scholars, alumni support, promotion of the contribution of the ADS program and IELTS resources for disadvantaged shortlisted applicants as most important (Table 7.2).

Table 7.2: Identified Problems, Recommended Action and Foreseeable Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified Problems</th>
<th>Recommended Action</th>
<th>Foreseeable Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring and contribution analysis</td>
<td>• Clarify objectives of ADS program specific to country</td>
<td>• Clear country specific ADS program objectives understood for monitoring and contribution analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Establish ongoing monitoring and contribution analysis of ADS program (6 ADS scholars per country per year)</td>
<td>• Up-to-date contact details of returned ADS scholars maintained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maintain up-to-date database of returned ADS scholars in Mongolia</td>
<td>• Improved and expanding knowledge of ADS scholar success and whether objectives of program are being met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Establish up-to-date database of returned ADS scholars in China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-ADS support for scholars</td>
<td>• Reintegration agreements between all ADS scholars and employers developed, monitored and evaluated upon completion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Clear reintegration strategies agreed between ADS scholars and employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Scholars provided with adequate post-ADS support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Employers able to fully capitalise on ADS scholars’ new knowledge and skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni support</td>
<td>• Continue Australian Government support (financial and in-kind) for expansion of existing Mongolia-Australia Alumni Association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Establish ADS alumni association in China</td>
<td>• Expansion of membership and activities of successful Mongolia-Australia Alumni Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Continued building of critical mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Establishment of ADS alumni network in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of the contribution of the ADS program</td>
<td>• Employ increased and strategic media and information strategies</td>
<td>• Better promotion of Australian Government and its contribution through ADS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Increased reputation of ADS program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Increased attraction of quality applicants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IELTS resources for disadvantaged shortlisted applicants

- Introduce additional support arrangements for disadvantaged shortlisted applicants without access to IELTS resources
- Access to IELTS information and resources, including IELTS testing centres, for disadvantaged shortlisted applicants
- Increased number of quality applicants

### Monitoring and Contribution Analysis

This study represents the first major contribution analysis of the ADS program in China and Mongolia. Using this study as a basis, ongoing monitoring and contribution analysis of the ADS program could continue to improve and expand on knowledge of the success of returning ADS scholars and whether the objectives of the ADS program are met. It would also enable ongoing analysis so that continual improvements to the ADS program may be made, using this study as a benchmark from which to focus efforts to achieve greater ‘green’ ratings using the TL approach.

Clarifying objectives of the ADS program for each country is recommended for delineating clear country specific objectives for monitoring and contribution analysis purposes.

The data collection phase of this study revealed the absence of an up-to-date database of returned ADS scholars in China. Establishing this in China and continuing to maintain this in Mongolia is recommended to ensure that up-to-date contact details of returned ADS scholars are maintained.

In order to minimalise time and cost in undertaking ongoing monitoring and contribution analysis, it is recommended that AusAID consider randomly selecting six ADS scholars (three male and three female) per country per year to agree to be tracked throughout their study in Australia and after their return to country for a period of ten years. After one decade, this would ensure the continual tracking of 60 ADS scholars per country, providing an accumulation of rich data of the experiences of ADS scholars and their contribution to the objectives of the ADS program. Contact could be in the form of annual surveys, with more in-depth interviews conducted every five years. Rather than attempting to track all returned ADS scholars, it is proposed that this strategy would be more manageable for AusAID by focusing on fewer scholars and their stories well. By travelling alongside ADS
sigh into how the ADS program is affecting change in the individual as well as the broader objectives of the program.

Further, these recommendations support a logical and manageable response to AusAID’s (2008:27) *Annual Review of Development Effectiveness 2007* which identified that:

> In the case of scholarships, at a basic level there is uncertainty about what objectives to use when judging effectiveness, given the long-term nature of many of the anticipated benefits. A number of country programs have sponsored periodic tracer studies to track what has happened to scholars following their training but to date there has been no systematic approach to assessing post-award effects.

**Post-ADS Support for Scholars**

The data identified a lack of post-ADS support for scholars to fully capitalise on their new knowledge and skills. While the use of action plans was identified by some ADS scholars and ADS facilitators, there was little evidence to support their proper and effective management, monitoring and evaluation upon completion. This represented an undervaluing of ADS scholars and their potential contribution to organisational learning.

It is recommended that, as a condition of ADS, all ADS scholars and their employers negotiate and establish reintegration agreements prior to departing for Australia. These agreements will set out the expectations of ADS scholars and employers in maintaining regular contact during the study period in Australia, as well as the process for reintegrating and capitalising on ADS scholars for the 12-month period after their return to the organisation. The ADS scholars and their employers are responsible for implementing the reintegration agreement, with AusAID (or relevant program facility in country) responsible for monitoring its implementation. Upon completion, all parties will be responsible for sharing the evaluation of the reintegration process. The option to review and re-sign the reintegration agreement would be available at any time so as to best tailor it to the changing needs and preferences of the individual and organisation. A signed copy of the reintegration agreement would be kept by the ADS scholar, the employer and AusAID.
The reintegration agreement may include:

- name of ADS scholar;
- original home/work area;
- ADS commencement date;
- expected ADS scholar return date;
- Australian university and courses to be undertaken;
- support and links to the workplace whilst absent – for example, regular email/phone contact, providing information on changes to the workplace including structural changes and/or significant changes in work priorities, forwarding of staff circulars and other information where appropriate;
- reorientation support to return to work – for example, eight weeks prior to return ADS scholar notifies employer of actual return date, manager briefs returning ADS scholar on changes to work area and organisation, preferred placement in organisation discussed, ADS scholar matched to set of duties considering skills and preferences, ADS scholar may circulate résumé seeking possible vacancies;
- capitalisation strategy – for example, strategies to best utilise and transfer ADS scholar’s new skills and knowledge within the organisation (briefings, presentations, mentoring and training of staff), targeted work placement; and
- signed and dated page by ADS scholar, employer and AusAID representative.

Alumni Support

The data identified the absence of an ADS alumni network in China. This contributed to a lack of knowledge of ADS scholar details, movements and outcomes as well as support for ongoing networking opportunities. It is therefore recommended that an ADS alumni association, including an online interface for overcoming any geographical divide, be established to promote greater knowledge and networking of ADS scholars throughout China. Alternatively, the existing and growing Australia China Alumni Network (www.austchinaalumni.org) administered by the Beijing Consulting Group, could be utilised for a similar purpose.

The Mongolia-Australia Alumni Association was found to be highly successful with high-level representation including the ex-Mongolian Minister for Foreign Affairs as President, and the CEO of Intec Co Ltd (a successful Mongolian IT consulting
company) as Executive Director. Other members include ministers and members of Parliament, agency executives, project managers from the World Bank, the ADB and other international organisations, and numerous other people representing the public, private and non-government sectors. The Association has recently broadened its approach under the new Mongolia Australia Society nomenclature. The Society is keen to build membership and broaden participation with anyone who has either lived or worked in Australia and Mongolia, or who has an association with the two countries in any way. This includes Australian Youth Ambassadors working in Mongolia, Mongolians currently studying at Australian universities, project staff from AusAID’s CaBSAF, representatives of BHP Billiton Mongolia office, business people and other supporters. The approach is a positive one and may dispel any future risk of the Mozzies being dubbed an ‘old boys club’ or the ‘Mozzie Mafia’.

Various activities are planned to improve communication and networking among Mozzies, as well as provide support for job opportunities for new graduates and the sharing of experiences. Proposed activities include a series of public lectures jointly prepared and presented by five to six pairs of senior and junior Mozzies. This will not only serve as a means through which more experienced Mozzies may act as mentors to their younger counterpart, but will also enable those junior members who have recently studied in Australia to impart their fresh ideas and knowledge to others. It is envisaged that the lecture series will be in areas of Public Policy, Economy and Finance, Law, International Relations, IT, as well as aspects of studying and living in Australia. The gender ratio is intended to be largely equal, with lectures aimed towards the interested public, including university academics and students in the relevant fields. There are also plans to have the lectures published and made available through public and university libraries.

Other organisations have already committed support. In 2007–08, BHP Billiton provided AUD5000 to develop and launch a new website (www.mozzies.mn). In the same fiscal year, DEEWR provided AUD10,000 to further assist the Society in its development and ongoing activities. It is recommended that the Australian Government continue to provide support (through financial and in-kind assistance) for the further expansion of the Society.
Promotion of the Contribution of the ADS Program

The data support the need for better promotion of the contribution of the Australian Government through the ADS program. Positive promotion of the contribution of ADS, including the diverse incidental benefits that also result, will do much to increase the reputation of the Australian Government program and attract quality future applicants. It is recommended that increased and strategic media and information strategies be employed to this end. This might include:

- utilising the rich stories of returned ADS scholars in print, radio and television;
- an annual reception at Australian embassies and high commissions for successful ADS applicants and past scholars; and
- an Australian Government award of excellence for outstanding contribution to the objectives of the ADS program by ADS scholars in their home country.

IELTS Resources for Disadvantaged Shortlisted Applicants

The data identify a need for additional support for shortlisted applicants who are disadvantaged by not having adequate access to IELTS resources or testing centres. This includes applicants from remote areas such as Tibet. Support could include advice on accessing IELTS information, posting resources to remote applicants, and additional funding for accommodation and transport costs for travel to the nearest IELTS testing centre.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study contributes to the theory of Contribution Analysis by exploring and demonstrating through the perceptions of ADS facilitators and ADS scholars that the intended outcomes of the ADS program actually occurred, and that the program contributed to those outcomes. Moreover, the study identified a consolidated set of indicators of success from which to assess the success of the ADS program, utilising both existing AusAID literature and the empirical awareness of ADS facilitators in its design. The study also provided a unique insight into other incidental benefits occurring as a result of the ADS program.

Replication and expansion of this methodology for other ADS program countries would re-test and refine the indicators of success and build on knowledge of the
contribution of the ADS program. Extending the research to other ADS program countries would also help in gaining a more global perspective on the success of the ADS program and provide an opportunity for a comparative analysis to be undertaken for the identification of best practice and the development of performance recommendations.

Two areas that this study did not investigate that are viewed as important for further research involve the strategic promotional strategies and selection of quality ADS applicants. The success of the ADS program will depend in part on the quality of scholarship holders. The promotion of ADS to attract high quality applicants and the selection of the best candidates are therefore crucial to its success. Research associated with these aspects of the ADS program will further add to the knowledge of current practices and outcomes and the identification of best practice.

Analysis of the data based on Contribution Analysis revealed that the ADS program in China and Mongolia was, for the most part, successful in terms of its stated objectives (1996–2006). It contributed to strengthening human resource capacity in priority sectors of partner countries consistent with country program strategies and Australia’s national interest. The experience of being an ADS recipient was considered to have a positive influence on the recipient’s work life and there was evidence of a range of other positive outcomes, or beneficial unintended consequences, as a result of the ADS program. The research identifies a number of areas where the program is achieving a high level of success in China and Mongolia, as well as other aspects that could benefit from greater attention to improve outcomes.

If the ADS program is to continue to enhance its success, then further examination through Contribution Analysis is suggested to assess the continuing relevance and appropriateness of objectives and indicators of success, provide information about all types of impacts (including unintended or unexpected consequences), and demonstrate causality or attribution to determine results to make informed decisions on future actions.
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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Profile of Research Participants

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Consent to Publish Name/ Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>1AF</td>
<td>Mark Waltham</td>
<td>Principal Education Advisor, AusAID, Canberra</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>2AF</td>
<td>Kai Detto</td>
<td>Consultant &amp; Author of ADS Issues Paper, Canberra</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>3AF</td>
<td>Peter Sloane</td>
<td>Honorary Consul-General, Consulate-General of Mongolia, Sydney</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>1CF</td>
<td>Beth Delaney</td>
<td>First Secretary (Development Cooperation), AusAID, Beijing</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>2CF</td>
<td>Peter Jensen</td>
<td>Counsellor (Development Cooperation), AusAID, Beijing</td>
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<tr>
<td>3CF</td>
<td>Ma Zhigang</td>
<td>Senior Program Officer (Development Cooperation), AusAID, Beijing</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>4CF</td>
<td>Tracey Cui</td>
<td>Administrator, ADS China Project, China Australia Governance Program, Hassall &amp; Associates International, Beijing</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5CF</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Division Director, Chinese ministry responsible for coordinating Australia’s aid to China, Beijing</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No (consent to publish position only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1MF</td>
<td>Jane Daniels</td>
<td>Senior Program Officer (Mongolia), AusAID, Beijing</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>2MF</td>
<td>Yu Tsetsgee</td>
<td>Deputy Facility Director, CaBSAF, Ulaanbaatar</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>3MF</td>
<td>L. Enkhtuvshin</td>
<td>Program Officer, CaBSAF, Ulaanbaatar</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>4MF</td>
<td>Ochirkhuu Erdembileg</td>
<td>Director-General, Department of Policy &amp; Coordination for Loans &amp; Aid, Mongolia Ministry of Finance, Ulaanbaatar</td>
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Total: 7 Male (58%)  
5 Female (42%)  
1 No (8%)
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Degree</th>
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<tr>
<td>1MS</td>
<td>Marav Daariimaa</td>
<td>Lecturer, Department of British &amp; America Studies, School of Foreign Languages &amp; Culture, National University of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar</td>
<td>Master of Education (TESOL)</td>
<td>Monash University</td>
<td>2004–2005</td>
<td>Current position</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>2MS</td>
<td>Badarch Enkhbat</td>
<td>CEO, Mongol Daatgal National Insurance &amp; Reinsurance Company, Ulaanbaatar</td>
<td>Master of Business Administration</td>
<td>Australian National University</td>
<td>1995–1996</td>
<td>Director, Academy of Management (Mongolia Government), Ulaanbaatar (6 years) Director, Credit Department, Trade &amp; Development Bank of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar (2 years) Director, Credit Department, Genghis Khan Bank (1.5 years)</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>3MS</td>
<td>Byambaa Ganbat</td>
<td>Dean for Graduate Training, Health Sciences University of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar</td>
<td>Master of Health Services Management</td>
<td>Curtin University of Technology</td>
<td>2002–2003</td>
<td>Current position</td>
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<tr>
<td>4MS</td>
<td>A. Erdenepurev</td>
<td>Deputy Director, Policy Coordination, Strategic Planning Department, Mongolia Ministry of Industry &amp; Trade, Ulaanbaatar</td>
<td>Master of Commerce</td>
<td>The University of Sydney</td>
<td>1997–1998</td>
<td>Senior Officer, Marketing Department, Mongolia Chamber of Commerce &amp; Industry, Ulaanbaatar (3–4 months) Assistant to International Advisor, European Bank for Reconstruction &amp; Development, Ulaanbaatar (period unknown)</td>
<td>M</td>
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| 6MS  | Jamba Uranbileg      | Consultant, Civil Service Reform, Institutional Development Fund, the World Bank, Government Service Council, Ulaanbaatar | Graduate Diploma in Economics Development | Australian National University | 1996      | Economist, Treasury Division, Fiscal Policy Department, Mongolia Ministry of Finance, Ulaanbaatar (2 years)  
Special Appointee, International Monetary Fund (1.5 years)  
Project Manager, Fiscal Technical Assistance Project, the World Bank, Ulaanbaatar (5 years)  
Senior Officer, Government Service Council, Ulaanbaatar (2 years) | F | Yes |
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<td>8MS</td>
<td>S. Davaadorj</td>
<td>Third Secretary, Department of Americas, Middle East &amp; Africa, Mongolia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ulaanbaatar</td>
<td>Master of Economics</td>
<td>Australian National University</td>
<td>2002–2004</td>
<td>Current position</td>
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<tr>
<td>9MS</td>
<td>D. Ayush</td>
<td>Lecturer, University of the Humanities, Ulaanbaatar</td>
<td>Master of e-Learning</td>
<td>University of Technology, Sydney</td>
<td>2004–2005</td>
<td>Current position</td>
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<td>10MS</td>
<td>Damdin Tsogtbaatar</td>
<td>Foreign Policy Advisor to the President of Mongolia, Office of the President of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar</td>
<td>Master in Legal Studies/International Law</td>
<td>Australian National University</td>
<td>1997–1998</td>
<td>Officer, Economic Trade &amp; Cooperation Department, Mongolia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ulaanbaatar (period unknown)</td>
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<td>Deputy Director, Department of Multilateral Cooperation, Mongolia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ulaanbaatar (period unknown)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11MS</td>
<td>L. Barhas</td>
<td>Governance Specialist, United Nations Development Programme, Ulaanbaatar</td>
<td>Master in Public Policy &amp; Management</td>
<td>Monash University</td>
<td>1998–1999</td>
<td>Consultant, Strategic Planning, National University of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar (period unknown)</td>
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<td>Code</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position, Organization, Location</td>
<td>Education, Institution</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>Role, Details, Location</td>
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<td>12MS</td>
<td>N. Enkhbold</td>
<td>Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ulaanbaatar</td>
<td>Master of Economics, The University of Sydney</td>
<td>1995–1997</td>
<td>Press Speaker of the President of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar (3 years)</td>
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<td>1CS</td>
<td>Tsering Yudren</td>
<td>Deputy Division Chief, International Trade &amp; Economic Cooperation Division, Lhasa</td>
<td>Master of Public Administration, The University of Queensland</td>
<td>2002–2003</td>
<td>Program Officer, International Trade &amp; Economic Cooperation Division, Department of Commerce of the Tibet Autonomous Region, Lhasa (2 years)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2CS</td>
<td>Renchen Chodren</td>
<td>Bank Supervisor, Tibet Banking Regulatory Bureau, Lhasa</td>
<td>Master of Commerce, The University of Sydney</td>
<td>2001–2003</td>
<td>Vice Manager, Tibet Jinxhu Group, Foreign Trade Import &amp; Export Corporation, Lhasa (1 year)</td>
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<td>3CS</td>
<td>Chengmao Wang</td>
<td>Executive Director, Peicheng Education Consulting Co. &amp; Board Member, Wall Street English (China), Beijing</td>
<td>Master of Education Administration, The University of Sydney</td>
<td>1994–1996</td>
<td>Program Officer, North America &amp; South Pacific Division, Chinese Ministry of Education, Beijing (6 months)</td>
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<td>4CS</td>
<td>Xia Jun</td>
<td>Deputy Division Director, Department of International Cooperation, State Forestry Administration, Beijing</td>
<td>Master of Natural Resource Management</td>
<td>The University of Queensland</td>
<td>2005–2006</td>
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<td>5CS</td>
<td>Xiaoping Lu</td>
<td>Deputy Director General, Department of International Cooperation, Chinese Ministry of Agriculture, Beijing</td>
<td>Master of Agriculture Economics</td>
<td>The University of Queensland</td>
<td>1993–1994</td>
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<td>6CS</td>
<td>Meng Tong</td>
<td>Senior Research Fellow, Institute for International Labour Studies, Chinese Ministry</td>
<td>Master of Social Development &amp; Planning</td>
<td>The University of Queensland</td>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>F</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>of Labour &amp; Social Security, Beijing</td>
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<td>7CS</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>8CS</td>
<td>Cui Dandan</td>
<td>Deputy Director, General Affairs Section, Centre for Environmental Education &amp;</td>
<td>Master of Environmental Management &amp;</td>
<td>Australian National University</td>
<td>2003-2004</td>
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<td>Communication, State Environmental Protection Administration, Beijing</td>
<td>Development</td>
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<td>Anonymous</td>
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<td>Masters</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>F</td>
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Total 9 Male (43%) 12 Female (57%) 19 Yes (90%) 2 No (10%)
## Stocktake Matrix of ADS Programs – China and Mongolia

### Management Arrangements, Targeting and Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>No. of Scholarships</th>
<th>Management Arrangements</th>
<th>Targeting and Fit with Country Strategy</th>
<th>Award Level</th>
<th>Selection Process</th>
<th>Alumni Association</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>• Since mid 2004 the ADS program has been administered by an Australian Managing Contractor (AMC) under a new Governance Program. The AMC provides administrative support. Strategic development and selection are managed by AusAID, Beijing.</td>
<td>• Awards are restricted to Country Strategy priority areas and all in the area of governance broadly defined.</td>
<td>• Masters</td>
<td>• The AMC managing a new Governance Program Facility provides administrative support to the selection process which includes receiving ADS nominations from Chinese Government ministries through the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), verifying eligibility, arranging IELTS tests and preparing a report for AusAID.</td>
<td>• There is no formal alumni association.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• A joint AusAID/MOFCOM selection panel then assesses, ranks and selects eligible candidates.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>• An AMC manages ADS under the Mongolia Australia Targeted Capacity Building and Small Activity Facility (CaBSAF) that commenced in 2003.</td>
<td>• CaBSAF provides a mechanism to strengthen the capacity of targeted Mongolian Government ministries by providing targeted ADS and DES and capacity building in support of their HRD programs. The objective of the targeting approach is to develop a critical mass of graduates in areas aligned with Country Strategy priorities.</td>
<td>• Postgraduate – Masters and Diploma and 1 or 2 PhDs including DES awards</td>
<td>• The Project Design Document specifies selection processes that are open and transparent, support action planning, performance management and overall accountability.</td>
<td>• There is an active alumni association (the ‘Mozzies’) whose members have achieved high office in government and the private sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The AMC is responsible for screening, interviewing and selecting candidates with Mongolian Government ministries and AusAID participation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ministry working groups functioning within each of the seven target ministries, comprising HRD staff, are responsible for action planning and involved in the process of advertisement, ranking and selection of ADS applicants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• More recently, two factions have developed. The first covers those who studied in Australia prior to 1999, many of whom have obtained high office. The second covers more recent graduates including from other countries who may develop into an industry group of senior professionals.</td>
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## Post-award Activities, Outcomes and Lessons

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Post-award activities</th>
<th>Reviews</th>
<th>What is working/not working</th>
<th>Lessons learned/good practice</th>
<th>Examples of prominent alumni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>• There was no post-award activity under the previous project and it is not specified for ADS in the current Governance Program design.</td>
<td>• Project Completion Report in 2004</td>
<td>• The former project successfully administered the ADS nomination and placement process for four years. 130 scholarships were awarded and placed and graduates returned to China. Based on anecdotal evidence, ADS graduates are said to be using their skills to improve services through introducing international approaches and innovations. • There has been no post-award monitoring to assess and validate scholarship outcomes and impact.</td>
<td>• ADS outcomes need to be monitored in some way to inform future decisions about the value of such programs and to improve targeting. • Outsourcing ADS management to an AMC does not necessarily achieve quick workload gains for Post staff. A great deal of coaching may initially be required. More attention needs to be given to the expertise/skills claims of contractors during the tender process.</td>
<td>• Not available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>• Post-award activities have commenced with graduates interviewed on a six-monthly basis for two years. For graduates selected under the Facility, action plans will be an important M&amp;E tool.</td>
<td>• Design process in 2002</td>
<td>• The targeting and capacity building objectives are being met although their sustainability is questioned at this time. • Ministry working groups are functioning within each of the seven target ministries responsible for developing action plans for facility capacity building support within the ministries covering both ADS/DES and small capacity building activities. A peak ministry body is functioning and coordinates the Facility's human resource development activities across target ministries and with the Government's Civil Service Reform Program. • The DES component is not yet functioning with few applicants and Australian institutional unwillingness to support one-off DES investments.</td>
<td>• English language training in country is the main constraint to ADS. • Considerable facilitation is required to change management culture in the target ministries. The difficulty in moving from an appreciation of individual benefit to a situation of both individual and institutional benefit has proved to be a considerable challenge. • The action planning process is functioning well particularly at the individual level with progress slower at the ministry level. Monitoring of individual action plans is under way.</td>
<td>• A large number of alumni are in important positions including a Member of Parliament; and Advisor to the President and the State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance. • Australian educated graduates play a role in the reform process implementing decisions that have been taken including a Deputy in the Ministry of Industry and Trade who worked with donors in harmonising approaches following a High Level Donors Meeting in Japan in 2003.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Source:** Dettò, 2005
APPENDIX C

**ADS Designs, Major Reviews and Studies**

The list of ADS designs, major reviews and studies in the Detto (2005) stocktake (much of which was consequently accessed fromAusAID to help inform the design of this research study) include:

- ADS Management Review (February 1999)
- Effectiveness Review of the Philippines ADS Program (December 2000)
- Philippines Impact Study (September 2000)
- PNG Training Facility Design (July 2001)
- Australia (Asia Regional) – IMF Scholarship Program Review (March 2002)
- Vietnam AC Nielsen Impact Study (July 2002)
- Vietnam ADS Selection Issues Study (July 2002)
- Vietnam ADS Program Design (October 2002)
- Indonesia ADS Concept Paper (November 2002)
- Mongolia ADS/STT/SAS Program Design (December 2002)
- Vietnam ADS Review (December 2002)
- Review of the French Territories ADS and STT Programs (May 2003)
- Laos AC Nielsen Impact Study (October 2003)
- Philippines HRD Facility Design (October 2003)
- Cambodia Impact Study (2004)
- Mid-term Review of the PNG ADS/STT Facility (September 2004)
- Review of China Country Strategy (including ADS) (December 2004)
- Mid-term Review of the Vietnam ADS Program (April 2005)
- Review of the Cambodia ADS Program (June 2005)
- Draft Design of the East Timor ADS Program (June 2005)

**Note:** Full titles appear in the *Bibliography* section.
APPENDIX D

Primary Interview Questions – ADS Facilitators and Scholars

ADS Facilitators

1. How is the ADS program relevant to China and/or Mongolia? (Objective 1: Program relevance to country)
2. How would the experience of living and studying in Australia benefit the ADS recipient? (Objective 1: The Australian experience)
3. What do scholars do after their study? How are they different? (Objective 1: Characteristics of returning scholars)
4. Do employers support returning scholars? How? (Objective 1: Institutional targeting and capacity building objectives)
5. Do returned scholars assist one another? How? (Objective 1: ‘Critical mass’ theory)
6. How do you think the ADS program helps to alleviate poverty? (Objective 2)
7. How do you think the ADS program helps to achieve sustainable development? (Objective 3)
8. What benefits does Australia receive from providing this type of educational aid? (Objective 4)
9. Do any other incidental benefits occur from the program?

ADS Scholars

1. Do you think that your Australian degree has been relevant to your work in Mongolia/China? How?
2. How did your experience of living and studying in Australia benefit you?
3. What did you do after your study?
4. Do you think your educational experience in Australia made you different in the way you approached things at work? In what way?
5. Did your employer support you when you returned? How?
6. Have other returned scholars assisted you in your work? How?
7. Since your return, have you been involved with anything to do with poverty alleviation or an area which would impact on the poor in any way?
8. Do you think that your Australian education has provided you with the skills needed for development, policy formulation or leadership? Can you give an example of this?

9. What benefits do you think Australia receives from sponsoring students such as you?

10. Has your experience in Australia or as an ADS scholar positively influenced other parts of your life?
APPENDIX E

Information Sheet for Participants

Note: Prior to change of candidature, this PhD was through the University of New England. Therefore, the following was provided to research participants based on enrolment at that institution at the time of data collection.

School of Professional Development and Leadership
Armidale NSW 2351 Australia
Telephone (02) 6773 2581 Facsimile (02) 6773 3363
Telephone International +61 2 6773 2581 Facsimile +61 2 6773 3363

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

I am seeking your cooperation in gathering data for my PhD thesis entitled, Australian Development Scholarships: the return on investment. I would like to interview you in your role as a facilitator or recipient of the Australian Development Scholarship program. I am inviting other participants from Australia, China and Mongolia to be part of my research.

The research aims to identify what makes the Australian Development Scholarship program a success or otherwise. In doing so, the research will not only identify whether the overall objectives of the program are being met, but also any broader incidental returns borne from the program.

I anticipate the interview will take around 45 minutes. Participation is completely voluntary and you will be free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation at any time. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate. Taped interviews will remain securely stored by the researcher and will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Tapes will be destroyed after five years of completing the research study. It is anticipated that the research will be published in a thesis available in 2008. Individuals will not be personally identifiable in the thesis, unless express permission is sought by the researcher.
If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me directly. Alternatively, you may contact my supervisors Professor Lynn Meek and Associate Professor Leo Goedegebuure at the School of Professional Development and Leadership, University of New England, on the contact numbers provided at the top of this Information Sheet for Participants.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Nolan
Tel: (86 10) 64677969
Email: peter_nolan75@yahoo.com.au

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE06/076, Valid to 28/06/2007). Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at the following address:
Research Services
University of New England
Armidale, NSW 2351
Tel: (61 2) 67733113
Fax: (61 2) 67733543
Email: Ethics@pobox.une.edu.au
APPENDIX F

Consent Forms

CONSENT FORM (1)

Australian Development Scholarships: the return on investment

Mr Peter Nolan
Professor Lynn Meek
Associate Professor Leo Goedegebuure

I, ………………………………………., have read the information contained in the Information Sheet for Participants and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I am 18 years of age or older and agree to participate in this activity, realising that I may withdraw at any time. I agree to have the interview taped and that research data gathered for the study may be published, provided my name is not used.

………………………………………………….. ……………………………………….
Participant or Authorised Representative Date

………………………………………………….. ……………………………………….
Investigator Date
CONSENT FORM (2)

Australian Development Scholarships: the return on investment

Mr Peter Nolan
Professor Lynn Meek
Associate Professor Leo Goedegebuure

I, .............................................., have read the information contained in the Information Sheet for Participants and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I am 18 years of age or older and agree to participate in this activity, realising that I may withdraw at any time. I agree to have the interview taped and that research data gathered for the study may be published, including my name and position.

.......................................................... ..........................................................
Participant or Authorised Representative Date

.......................................................... ..........................................................
Investigator Date
APPENDIX G

Methodology Revisited

**Identified Problems**

The main problems associated with the chosen methodology centred on challenges with cross-cultural communication, a lack of up-to-date information to track ADS scholars, the geographic location of participants, the logistics of travel and accommodation and associated costs, the time taken to collect data, accommodating the preferred interview times and locations of the participants including rescheduling, and undertaking a Contribution Analysis with few previous good practice examples to emulate.

While all participants interviewed for the study held a reasonable grasp of the English language, due in large part to their time studying in Australia, cross-cultural research challenges still remained. Cultural behaviours and expectations meant that to secure access to participants I often needed to go through formal channels, particularly where participants held senior positions within the Chinese and Mongolian Government ministries. A lack of up-to-date records of ADS alumni meant that many of the research participants were sourced through a variety of channels, including acquaintances, colleagues, friends and informal ADS scholar networks. There was often a hesitation or wariness on the part of participants until they had come to understand my background and the purpose of the research. Indeed, gaining the full trust and confidence of participants was a common challenge in China and Mongolia, but one that was overcome. Full cooperation was obtained from all participants and ‘shooting the breeze’ to initiate conversation and adopting a ‘Daoist-type dictum’ to develop rapport proved effective techniques before delving into any detail (refer Solinger, 2006 in Method of Data Collection, Chapter 4 of this thesis).

The geographic location of research participants was diverse, ranging from the urban and highly populated city of Beijing through to the isolated communities of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia and the Himalayan city of Lhasa, Tibet. Travel to destinations required a variety of transport, including air, road and rail, and difficulties in sourcing appropriate accommodation within close proximity to participants and locating addresses were common challenges. While the research participants could speak English, most of the people in the environments where they worked could not. This presented significant challenges in finding participants once on site. The result is many humorous recollections of communicating through broken Chinese-English or Mongolian-English, combined with impromptu sign
language, polite smiles and puzzled expressions from both sides, and a sense of real achievement after having successfully reached our communication objective.

Travel and accommodation costs, as well as the time associated with data collection, could be viewed as disadvantageous. Nevertheless, the researcher chose to bear these costs in order to obtain the rich data and personal contact vital to in-depth qualitative research.

Accommodating the preferred interview times and locations of the participants meant that a high degree of flexibility, including once on site, was required. For example, in Mongolia the researcher arrived for an interview which had been confirmed the previous day, only to learn that the participant had ‘gone to the country’. This was presented as a perfectly reasonable excuse and resulted in the interview having to be rescheduled for another time and location. Similarly, an interview with a senior Mongolian Government official was cut short when a conflicting representative engagement was brought forward. This resulted in answers being shortened in order to satisfy both commitments. Early starts and late ends to the day, long trips and waiting times, changed itineraries and missed meals were also experienced throughout the data collection period.

A review of Contribution Analysis research revealed few good practice examples to emulate. This was disadvantageous in terms of identifying how other researchers had actively applied the theory within a practical research context. Nevertheless, Contribution Analysis proved to be a valid methodology for this study.

**Identified Strengths**

The major strengths of the chosen methodology were the ability for the researcher to become familiar with the research sites, the opportunity for the researcher to meet ADS scholars in situ, having returned to their work lives in country, and gaining an appreciation of the respondents’ roles, responsibilities and perceptions, as well as the ability for the researcher, through in-depth interviews that provided the necessary flexibility, adaptability and opportunity for human interaction, to obtain rich, deep and accurate data.

The decision to conduct in-depth interviews with ADS facilitators and ADS scholars in Australia, China and Mongolia meant travelling extensively throughout the regions. This was particularly advantageous in enabling the researcher to build knowledge of the region and develop informed views of the research sites.
Personal interviews also enabled the researcher to visit, and become acquainted with, participants in their working environments, witnessing first hand their roles and responsibilities since receiving their ADS award. Many participants appreciated the effort of the researcher in coming to meet them and the opportunity to reflect on their experiences throughout and following their ADS award.

In-depth interviews provided flexibility to ask additional probing questions in order to extrapolate richer, fuller and more accurate data. Additional questions were often asked to seek further elaboration on interesting points or to ensure clarity. Interviews also allowed for greater time in understanding participant perspectives fully. Likewise, interviews provided adaptability so that the respondents could seek their own clarification on questions, or have the same question rephrased in order to help them understand. This was especially important considering English was not the first language of many of the respondents.

Importantly, interviews gave the researcher the necessary human interaction to come to understand a respondent's perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, aspirations and achievements.
### APPENDIX H

**Abbreviations and Acronyms**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<td>ACIAR</td>
<td>Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research</td>
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<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<td>CaBSAF</td>
<td>Mongolia Australia Targeted Capacity Building and Small Activity Facility</td>
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<td>CAGP</td>
<td>China Australia Governance Program</td>
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<td>CIA</td>
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<td>Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
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<td>DPMC</td>
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<td>DUC</td>
<td>Democratic Union Coalition</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
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<td>IELTS</td>
<td>International English Language Testing System</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>Information Technology</td>
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<td>Japan International Corporation of Welfare Services</td>
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<td>MCBP</td>
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<td>RBM</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIAC</td>
<td>Western Australian Technology and Industry Advisory Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>‘Traffic Light’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Fund for Population Activities</td>
</tr>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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