

ABSTRACTS

Panel 1a – Good practice and emerging trends in locally-led development

This panel will explore the topic of locally-led development, sharing what DFAT is learning both internally from its own portfolio and lessons from other OECD donors. It will cover the taxonomy of locally-led development and localisation, introduce a spectrum of emerging to advanced localisation approaches and highlight some key features of our new locally-led development guidance, including flexible financing, and key measures of progress.

Case studies from DFAT's portfolio will be used to highlight good practice: the Building Community Engagement Program in Papua New Guinea and the SKALA and INKLUSI programs in Indonesia.

Chair: Andrew Egan, Acting First Assistant Secretary, Development Effectiveness and Enabling Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Panelists:

Doreen Iga, Team Leader, Building Community Engagement Program, Papua New Guinea

Petrarca Karetji, Team Leader, SKALA, Indonesia

Ramot Aritonang, Senior Program Manager, Australian Embassy, Jakarta

Kirsten Hawke, Lead Design Specialist, Development Performance and Advisory Services Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Panel 1b – Unlocking Agenda 2030: strengthening disability data and making it accessible

Uncounted too often means unseen and ignored. At the halfway mark, people with disabilities are the group left farthest behind in progress made so far toward Agenda 2030. Data marginalisation of people with disabilities has been well established in the literature.

One way to address this marginalisation is citizen generated data - both qualitative and quantitative - to fill data gaps and complement official data sources, particularly in the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Convention on the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities. People with disabilities are best placed to provide important context through their lived experience and it enables them to monitor, advocate and drive change that effects their constituents. The session will present research and initiatives related to citizen-generated data and its use from the community to national and international levels.

Chair: Conor Costello, Head of Policy and Advocacy, CBM Australia

Panelists:

Setareki Macanawai, Chief Executive Officer, Pacific Disability Forum

Hercules Paradiang, Country Director, CBM Philippines

Professor Sophie Mitra, Principal Investigator of the Disability Data Initiative, Fordham University [online]

Associate Professor Michael Palmer, Research Coordinator of the Asia and Pacific Hub of the Disability Data Initiative, University of Western Australia [online]

Panel 1c – Impact evaluations of aid interventions in Australia's region

This panel will highlight three ongoing studies which demonstrate the opportunities and also some of the challenges associated with rigorous impact evaluation of development programs.

First, we highlight a stream of work aligned with the World Bank to evaluate active labour market programs in Papua New Guinea. Second, we report on one of the first attempts to evaluate the causal impacts of Development Finance Institution funding, focusing on power plants. Third, as part of the Asian Development Bank's private sector development work in the Pacific, we report on the baseline results of an impact evaluation of a national reform based on a survey of 2,400 enterprises in Fiji in 2023.

Chair: Professor Shyamal Chowdhury, School of Economics, University of Sydney

Panelists:

Dr Russell Toth, Senior Lecturer, School of Economics, University of Sydney

Dr Darian Naidoo, Economist, World Bank

Aalya Sukkarieh, Analyst, Equity Economics [online]

Panel 1d - Gender analytics: organisations, crises and aid performance

Propelling gender equality and social justice from the inside out: organisational gender equality self-assessment

Sopheap Suong, Gender Equality and Inclusion Specialist, Save the Children International, Cambodia

Gender inequalities do not exist in isolation – rather, power inequalities show up in many ways and overlap with gender to create intersecting forms of discrimination. At Save the Children, we recognise that these inequalities exist within organisational contexts and that there is an inextricable link between how we operate internally and the programs we implement across the world. We believe that transformative change requires a whole-institution, inside-out approach by which we align the agency’s internal operations, programs and advocacy with gender equality principles.

Save the Children’s gender equality self-assessment is both a participatory evaluation tool and process that enables organisations to self-assess their progress towards embedding gender equality from the inside out. It serves as an important accountability mechanism that can accelerate change across organisational systems, policies, practices and culture, and drive commitment to and ownership of gender equality and broader social justice initiatives.

In this presentation we share the practical application of the gender equality self-assessment tool, which is grounded in gender equality and feminist principles. The result of conducting such an evaluation includes an action plan, which details how organisations will address gaps. This evaluation serves as a catalyst to move the needle on gender equality and broader diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. For example, these evaluations result in offices taking steps to embed gender equality accountability mechanisms within strategic plans and performance metrics; revamp workplace policies and practices to address harassment and discrimination; strengthen gender equality capacity expertise; and focus on building a working culture where every staff member feels they belong.

Australian aid for women’s empowerment: where does it go and how well does it work?

Dr Terence Wood, Research Fellow, Development Policy Centre, Australian National University

More than 40% of Australian bilateral aid is partially or principally focused on women’s empowerment. Over the last decade two major improvements have occurred in how Australia reports on this aid. In 2017, Australia started being more thorough when telling the OECD which of its projects had a gender focus. And in 2019, Australia started using external consultants to doublecheck internal appraisals of project performance, including gender outcomes.

In the study that this presentation is based on I take advantage of these changes to ask the following questions: Where does Australian aid focused on women’s empowerment go? Does more go to countries where women’s empowerment is worse? Do more rigorous appraisals change how effective the aid program claims its aid is at promoting women’s empowerment? And what features of aid projects are associated with better gender outcomes?

Key findings are that external doublechecking of internal appraisals of gender outcomes led to significant falls in reported women’s empowerment. Project managers are not reliable judges of their own projects’ performance for women. Also, projects with a focus on women’s empowerment have better gender outcomes. Education projects perform clearly better than projects focused on economic development. On average, projects in the Pacific perform worse. There is also some evidence that projects in countries where women’s empowerment is higher have better gender outcomes.

From analysis to action: the role of rapid gender analysis in crises

Dr Athena Nguyen, Senior Manager Capability and Impact, CARE Australia

Humanitarian crises can offer a window of opportunity to transform unequal gender relations and structures. As some crises become protracted, communities must adapt and cope with ongoing threats and stresses. But will communities cope by reverting to patriarchal systems to “protect”, or will all community members be protected through equal access to resources, services and decision-making power? And what can international humanitarian and aid agencies do to ensure that our responses support gender transformative outcomes?

CARE’s pioneering rapid gender analysis (RGA) offers a way to shift our humanitarian responses to be more locally driven and gender transformative. A global review of CARE’s RGAs – used now in over 50 crises around the world – found that a stronger understanding of gendered needs, opportunities and challenges enabled humanitarian responses to better meet immediate needs as well as address the ongoing and complex challenges of protracted crises and polycrises. This has been recognised by the Global Humanitarian Overview 2023 as being essential to promoting gender equality outcomes. This presentation will share the findings of the global study on what does and does not work in applying RGAs. What is needed to move from analysis to action? How can RGAs support scaling impact and influence? The global study highlights the dual role of RGAs as both a program input (improving interventions) as well as a programming output (supporting advocacy and influencing), in areas such as the gendered division of labour, control over productive assets, and participation in decision-making.

The presentation will also draw on CARE’s more recent RGAs, in PNG, Ukraine, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Sudan and Syria, to highlight challenges and opportunities experienced by women and girls, and discuss the practicalities of navigating evolving, protracted and polyfactorial crises to build programming interventions that progress gender equality.

Chair: Dr Sonia Palmieri, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Pacific Affairs, Australian National University

Panel 1e – Australian aid: purpose and partnerships

Regional perspectives on Australia as a development partner: findings from Indonesia, Philippines and Myanmar

Madeleine Flint, Senior Analyst, Development Intelligence Lab

After years of a Pacific Step Up and a Southeast Asian Step Down, Southeast Asia is back on the development agenda for Australia. But Australia faces re-engaging in a rapidly changing region whose development needs are a far cry from those of the Pacific. Added to this, Australia isn’t a major partner in this region and comes with a very different development offering compared to other donor countries.

The Development Intelligence Lab’s new Pulse Check survey is asking experts across Southeast Asia what they think about Australia, and about the critical development challenges facing their country.

This presentation focuses on Indonesia, Philippines and Myanmar, and the following key questions: What global disruptions will impact your country the most? What is the most effective way for Australia to connect with your country? How would you carve up the aid allocations pie in your country? What is the best way to achieve more effective states? And what would it look like for Australia to be a great development partner in your country?

The presentation will examine the findings from these three countries, and the implications for Australia as it implements the new development policy, drafts up its new country plans, and raises the gaze to consider what needs the development program must meet in 10-20 years’ time for Southeast Asia.

Media development as the lifeblood to achieving Australia’s aid and development goals

Dr Prashanth Pillay, Manager, Research and Evaluation, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (International Development)

Kathryn Seymour, Project Director, Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Media development is about more than just building media capacity. It is an investment in the access and flow of trusted information within regional communities, empowering people to make evidence-based decisions that are aligned with Australia’s aid program approach to topics such as climate change, disaster response, gender equity and social inclusion, and fostering a more sophisticated appreciation and increased support for Australia’s aid and development goals.

Through a series of case studies, our research asserts that these informational flows contribute to an “information ecosystem” that inspires regional-led and sustainable grassroots change built on the bedrock of community advocacy and principles of media independence, both of which are identified in Australia’s new international development policy as powerful national strengths that will help shape our development program. In each of the case examples, the role of media was critical in coordinating the flow of information and upholding civic space. The findings conclude that a strengthened regional media is an undeniable prerequisite for development sustainability, deepening regional partnerships and

emboldening ongoing soft power dividends.

ABC International Development (ABCID) is the media development arm of the ABC. We work with Pacific media practitioners and partners in building regional media capacity to be professional, inclusive and resilient. The research we will present is part of broader research on the operationalisation of media development across ABCID's portfolio of work within regional aid programs pertaining to citizen-government engagement, sport, health, disaster response and digital transformation. The analysis involved a robust desk review of technical program documents, impact assessments and partnerships between 2022 and mid-2023 to better understand both the conceptual linkages and practical contributions of media development towards achieving end-of-investment outcomes at various levels of implementation.

Australia-France development coordination in the Pacific

Heather Wrathall, Program Lead - Pacific, Asia-Pacific Development, Diplomacy and Defence Dialogue
Anna Gibert, Strategic Advisor, Vanuatu Skills Partnership

With the French development agency, Agence Française de Développement, on a trajectory to increase its presence and contribution in the Pacific, there will be a growing need for development coordination between Australia and France, to maximise the impact of scarce resources and ensure that the often-limited bandwidth of Pacific governments is not overwhelmed. Australia and France can not only align better bilaterally, but also help foster greater coordination of external actors. The positive trajectory of the Australia-France relationship offers an opportunity for both countries to work with the Pacific to address regional challenges. While Australia needs to be cognisant of reputational and relational risks of uncritically aligning itself too closely with France in the region –and ensure local perspectives are prioritised – there are several areas in which Franco-Australian development coordination would be of benefit. These include humanitarian assistance and disaster response, support for local media and civil society, advancing gender equality, sports development, education and infrastructure.

This paper has been informed through extensive consultations over five months with experts from Australia, France and the Pacific, including senior officials.

Transactional or transformational? Navigating the competing purposes of Australia's aid program

Heather Murphy, Senior Analyst, Development Intelligence Lab

When the Australian government launched its new international development policy in August 2023, public coverage, analysis and commentary appeared to be split on whether the policy was a direct response to geostrategic competition in the Indo-Pacific region, or an end-run around it.

This presentation will look at the ways in which the Australian government reconciles two major objectives in its current foreign policy –competing for “influence” and pursuing development outcomes. It will explore whether it is indeed possible –as the new development policy's ministerial forewords promise –for Australia to be the region's “partner of choice”, while also delivering a program that is “not transactional in nature”.

This presentation is based on the Development Intelligence Lab's “First Impressions” analysis of the new policy, as well as supplementary analysis on geopolitics within the policy, currently in progress and due for publication prior to the conference on the Lab's digital platforms.

It will examine current practice and discourse around the purpose of Australian aid as a tool of statecraft, drawing on analysis of ministerial speeches and publicly available information and analysis of significant aid investments. It will analyse the building of “influence” as an objective of Australian foreign policy, and the ways in which the aid program has been instrumentalised to achieve this. The presentation will also draw on Lab analysis of how previous Australian governments have grappled with the challenge of defining the purpose of the Australian aid program.

Finally, it will consider the current state of play and choices facing Australian decisionmakers as they seek to balance geopolitical imperatives and development objectives, and offer an assessment of the strategic clarity within the 2023 policy in light of this.

Chair: Ken Xie, Assistant Director, Development Policy Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Panel 1f – Migration: diversity, debt and dividends

A very beautiful but heavy jacket: experiences of LGBTIQ+ migrant workers in Southeast Asia and implications for LGBTIQ+ inclusive development policy

Emily Dwyer, Chief Executive Officer, Edge Effect

Research by Edge Effect for the International Labour Organization demonstrates that labour migration stakeholders have opportunities to do more to ensure safe and fair pathways for LGBTIQ+ people who are low-wage migrant workers.

This research contributes to deeper awareness of LGBTIQ+ inclusion as a development issue. As donors develop LGBTIQ+ strategies (such as USAID's 2023 LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Development Policy and a forthcoming policy from DFAT), the aid sector needs to broaden the range of thematic areas within which it addresses LGBTIQ+ issues. This paper will discuss ways forward and explore what it means for the aid sector to positively address indirect discrimination experienced by LGBTIQ+ people, as well as taking broad non-discrimination positions.

Almost 150 low-wage migrant workers (countries of origin including Cambodia, Myanmar, Philippines and Vietnam) were surveyed and interviewed across their migrant work journeys. Interestingly there were many positive stories: 72% reported economic advancement as their primary motivation, with 63% reporting that they could meet basic needs and save or remit money to families. Among those who remitted funds, 43% reported that it improved relationships with their families.

However, migrant workers also shared stories of discrimination, violence and harassment at the hands of government officials, employers and other migrant workers. Many LGBTIQ+ migrant workers concealed their LGBTIQ+ identities, living in fear of discovery. Others avoided accessing services, reinforcing isolation. The longevity of positive economic outcomes and greater family acceptance was uncertain, and those positive stories occur in the context of systemic discrimination as a push factor for labour migration of LGBTIQ+ people.

Despite the challenges, interviews with 70 representatives of migrant worker service providers, trade unions and governments revealed that just 4% provide specialist LGBTIQ+ services and only 18% provide staff with training on LGBTIQ+ inclusion. The

analysis and recommendations are now informing training and other resource development.

Living and working in two worlds: a personal reflection on aged care support worker migration in regional Australia

Akeniti Tearau, Aged Care Support Worker, Highfields Manor, Port Macquarie, Australia (with Anthony Bailey, MEL Lead, Kiribati-Australia Skills for Employment Partnership)

The demand for aged care workers in Australia continues to grow with the population's increasing life expectancy and longevity. Aged care sector employers in Australia face a number of pressures filling vacancies for low-skilled and semi-skilled roles. Demand for aged care workers is particularly acute in rural and remote parts of the country. Filling the gap has presented an opportunity for workers from Pacific Island states, such as Kiribati, through the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme (PALM). Currently, there are more than 50 I-Kiribati PALM aged care workers working in Australia with numbers set to increase annually over the next 3–5 years.

This panel presentation will explore the rapid expansion of I-Kiribati aged care worker employment in Australia from different yet complementary perspectives: Australian employer, I-Kiribati aged care worker and aged care trainers from Kiribati Institute of Technology. Panellists will draw on data from a range of sources including the Kiribati Ministry of Employment and Human Resource in their analysis. Topics for discussion during the presentation include partner collaboration to improve recruitment and selection processes, strategies for upskilling and reskilling I-Kiribati workers for work in Australia, and the flow of social and economic benefits from overseas employment.

The expansion has not been without its challenges in both the sending and receiving countries. Panellists will discuss how challenges were identified and addressed, and how ongoing monitoring supports continuous improvement in aged care work recruitment and mobilisation. The findings from this panel presentation will help inform future upskilling of I-Kiribati and Pacific Islander workers for employment in the aged care sector in Australia and contribute to the broader debate on the role of skilled migration in addressing labour shortages in the aged care sector in Australia. Finally, the findings will contribute to early discussions on the

development of the aged care sector in Kiribati through PALM worker reintegration and skills and knowledge transfer.

Chair: Professor Alan Gamlen, Director, Migration Hub, School of Regulation and Global Governance, Australian National University

Panel 2a – From below: the role of sub-national governance efforts in state building

Building effective and accountable states has been placed at the heart of Australia's new International Development Policy as one of four pillars of focus. This panel explores the way in which these objectives are pursued at the sub-national level through programming on decentralisation, federalism and local level service delivery. It will draw on newly released research on the state of subnational governance in the region, and explore innovative programming responses that are in place to better understand how the critical role of subnational governance can be prioritised to support the building of effective and accountable states.

While Australia and other donors have long invested in subnational programming, significant shifts have occurred over the last five years, as subnational governments became critical during the COVID-19 pandemic and as political sensitivities have seen a re-prioritisation away from national level investments in some contexts. The panel will provide insight into the current state of subnational governance across the region and how to effectively assist this critical arena of development.

Chair: Peter Yates, Associate Director, The Asia Foundation. Local Public Sector Alliance - Advisory Board Member

Panelists:

Anna Winoto, Country Representative and Strategic Advisor, Abt Associates

Bishnu Adhikari, Nepal Governance Director, The Asia Foundation

Dr Anouk Ride, Research Fellow, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University

Panel 2b – Digital development: strategy, service delivery and information security

Applying mixed methods research to encourage help-seeking among survivors of gender-based violence in Indonesia

Caitlin Court, Senior Advisor, Behavioural Insights Team

Nihandini Santi, Technical Officer, Peace and Justice, UNDP Indonesia [online]

One in three women in Indonesia has experienced violence in their lives, and although there are various services offered by the government which are free or subsidised, survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) are either unaware of them or do not access them. UNDP Indonesia in collaboration with the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) carried out a mixed methods study to understand help-seeking behaviours and experiences of survivors of GBV.

Using immersive research, the barriers and facilitators to accessing services by GBV survivors were identified. Key barriers included social norms, role models and beliefs about consequences. It was identified that people within a GBV survivor's inner circle play a critical role in their help-seeking. Based on these research findings, UNDP and BIT co-designed an intervention in the form of a social media campaign to strengthen referral pathways. The campaign consisted of three behaviourally informed advertisements plus one control advertisement that aimed to encourage GBV survivors' inner circle to take action and contact an information provider (in the form of a WhatsApp hotline) that would refer them to relevant service providers.

To evaluate the effectiveness of this campaign, BIT ran a randomised controlled trial (N = 1,015,021) on Instagram targeting educated female Instagram users in Jakarta aged 21–55 years old. The trial measured the percentage of individuals who clicked the button to send a message to the WhatsApp hotline and the percentage of individuals who wanted to learn more, along with other exploratory variables. We found evidence in favour of one behaviourally informed advertisement (which used the behavioural principle of role modelling) leading to a higher click-through rate compared to the control advertisement.

The results of this evaluation suggest that mixed

research methods (qualitative and quantitative) can be effectively deployed to dissect a complex development challenge such as GBV.

Rethinking development through digital transformation: strategies for success

David Roach, Director and Co-Founder, Catalpa International

In an era of rapidly advancing technology, the role of digital platforms in supporting government programs has become increasingly vital. These platforms have the potential to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and inclusiveness of public services, ultimately contributing to sustainable development and improved governance.

The field of international development is not exempt from this digital revolution. In response to the digital age, development practitioners are adopting new approaches and business models, integrating artificial intelligence, digital identity, digital financial services, and geospatial visualisation into project design and implementation.

In this presentation I will examine the readiness of the development community to embrace digital technologies and approaches. I will stress the need to focus on how digital technology can be used as a tool to enhance the effectiveness of development programming, to understand its relevance and utility in achieving social impact, and to shift our thinking on how it becomes an integrated tool in an international development organisations toolkit.

Utilising digital technology for impact calls for a multidisciplinary approach, breaking down silos between technology, policy, and development practice. Whilst these silos remain, it will be hard to make significant progress, and utilise digital tools to drive improvements in effectiveness, efficiency, reach and impact.

I will discuss how international development organisations can best navigate the complex landscape of digital development by offering practical insights, best practices, and recommendations to better conceptualise the potential digitally enabled development, and to ensure the successful design, build, and implementation of sustainable digital solutions and digital transformation initiatives. This includes the importance of building and maintaining buy-in, embedding systems and knowledge in local institutions, and building local capacity to manage, scale and expand solutions over time – and with

this knowledge be empowered to solve their own challenges using relevant digital tools.

Information security in the development sector

Anastasia Kapetas, Program Lead, Asia-Pacific Development, Diplomacy and Defence Dialogue

Cyberattacks, cybercrime, disinformation and misinformation represent a growing challenge to society, and the development sector is not immune. For example, every development project now takes place in a highly polluted information environment, both globally and in-country. And the impact of the theft or ransomware of data, malware and other forms of information space disruption are becoming more pervasive, carrying big potential risks for development outcomes.

The development community is not perceived as having been an early adopter of digital technology, despite its huge potential to positively impact and support development outcomes across all sectors of Australia's development cooperation, including education, health, climate and economic development. But as it begins to embrace the promise of digital technology, the sector needs to better understand the more serious threat of digital disruptions in order to manage risks.

This paper explores some of the risks faced by development organisations in the information space. It outlines why building digital resilience – the ability to withstand incidents and criminal and malicious attacks and continue to operate, as well as countering disinformation – is critical, and outlines ways in which the sector can navigate the increasing pervasiveness of digital hazards.

Chair: Heather Wrathall, Program Lead - Pacific, Asia-Pacific Development, Diplomacy and Defence Dialogue

Panel 2c – Gender equality and inclusive development: finance, philanthropy and care

Shifting the power dynamics: understanding challenges and opportunities to build women's financial resilience

Dr Sara Niner, Senior Lecturer, Monash University

Inclusive finance, including microfinance or micro-credit (perhaps more accurately called micro-debt) programs, target people living in poverty, particularly women in middle to low development countries. This presentation provides a critical

perspective derived from research with women borrowers in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, including the effects on women and their thoughts on the programs and their preferences. While it is hoped that financial inclusion or microfinance programs (microcredit and savings) are a worthwhile development intervention to raise the status women, methods and outcomes are greatly contested.

For women-only groups, potential negative impacts are increased work burdens and a “backlash” against challenging strict gender roles and established power hierarchies leading to conflict in households. Vulnerable populations suffering from poor health and trauma, lack of social welfare systems and infrastructure, easily become trapped in debt cycles, leading to the “bicycling” of debt or using one loan to repay another leading to stress, conflict, bullying, physical abuse and tragically, suicides.

Our findings include recommendations to focus on savings rather than credit and debt; not-for-profit institutions with capped interest rates under 3%; slowly building up the skills, confidence and well-being of women living in extreme poverty, hardship and conflict; creating enabling environments for women’s empowerment; including gender experts and women’s representative organisations in the participatory design of programs; and financial regulations and consumer protection.

Shifting power – equity in the philanthropic sector

Yifat Susskind, Executive Director, MADRE [online]

The speaker will present MADRE’s best practices to leverage funding and strategic advocacy to shift power to the grassroots, thereby strengthening the philanthropic sector.

MADRE is an international human rights organisation and feminist fund that partners with community-based, women-led organisations on the frontlines of war, climate breakdown, and their aftermath. Our mission is to advance human rights and social justice by meeting urgent needs in communities and by supporting social movements to create lasting solutions to crises. MADRE actively shifts resources to grassroots movements in the Global South, and we influence philanthropy to support grassroots collective activism. MADRE uplifts the leadership of visionary women and girls, Indigenous women, Afro-descendant women, LGBTIQ+ people, and people with disabilities, including making their voices heard in village councils, parliaments, and even the UN Security Council. Since our founding 40 years ago,

MADRE has distributed more than \$67 million in grants to partners globally, including in Asia.

MADRE prioritises partnerships in the most challenging contexts where most funders cannot reach. Our philanthropy fills a niche in a context where only 2% of international human rights and development aid goes to disability communities and less than 1% of international giving is directed for Indigenous communities. We support partners tackling issues of racial justice, as well as the adverse effects of extractive industries, and environmental pressures resulting from climate breakdown. We create access for grassroots leaders to bring just solutions to their governments, and to justice mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court. We bring these lessons to the philanthropic sector through donor affinity groups and publications.

In 2021, Yifat Susskind founded the Executive Director Working Group on Racial Equity and Justice to deepen anti-racist practices in feminist public foundations and work toward sector-wide changes needed to uproot vestiges of colonialism in feminist public philanthropy.

Government policy and aid interventions around the care economy: a case study of Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia

Dr Betty Barkha, Research Coordinator - Investing in Women [online]

Dr Elise Stephenson, Deputy Director, The Global Institute for Women’s Leadership, Australian National University [online]

Necessitated by increased burdens under COVID-19 and invigorated by the G20 Indonesia presidency in 2022, the care economy has come into sharp focus across regional government and development policy. With rapidly growing aging populations and sustainable development targets looming, the “business case” for better care (from healthcare to childcare, aging and beyond) has been made. Yet, many policymakers are restricted by limited resources and evidence, restrictive cultural norms and practices surrounding care, and a near non-existent track record in successfully delivering care at a national scale.

This paper takes the current momentum surrounding the care economy to understand what drives the current prioritisation of care, how governments are setting policy on care, and how the international aid community is responding to gaps, across the case

studies of Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia. These countries represent key cases – all have made legislative movement on care in recent years and are at varying levels of wider gender equality and development. Yet, they also demonstrate significant differences, particularly in the development and implementation of policy. Through this study, we take an intersectional critical feminist approach, which, alongside other objectives, attempts to make known the gendered politics and implications of existing research and policy. Extending feminist institutional theories, our study argues that policies are often siloed and narrow in application and rely heavily on critical actors that expose policy to political expediency and de-prioritisation amongst other goals, like regional COVID-19 recovery. Further, policy approaches are often paradoxical to development and gender equality objectives and may engrain further inequalities without critical attention. Limited data and research on care in Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia, coupled with entrenched norms and elements of anti-rights, anti-West pushback, makes it difficult for development policy and government policy to set the care agenda on the right trajectory.

Chair: Bettina Baldeschi, Chief Executive Officer, International Women’s Development Agency

Panel 2d – New approaches to localisation and risk management

Beyond avoidance: AIFFP’s journey to strengthen environmental and social safeguards in Pacific infrastructure

Joanna Buldeski, Practice Lead - Impact and Safeguards, Asia Pacific, DT Global

Kate Thelander, Assistant Director, Environmental and Social Safeguards, Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Pacific governments and businesses can face difficult choices about safeguard conditionalities on infrastructure loans. On the one hand, cheap or fast projects may be especially attractive due to short-term economic drivers but present larger environmental and social (E&S) risks and costs. On the other hand, established partner safeguards may reduce E&S risks upfront but at the cost of complex management and reporting processes for already stretched national agencies. In this context, the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for

the Pacific (AIFFP) was announced in 2019 with a mandate to work with the Pacific to drive higher quality infrastructure outcomes. AIFFP loans must satisfy DFAT requirements, International Finance Corporation Performance Standards (IFC PS), and Equator Principles (EPIV), while being responsive to Pacific realities. In its four years of operation, AIFFP has sought to apply these safeguard policies in ways that enable good projects by applying proportionate and considered approaches to risk assessment and mitigation throughout the project cycle. In this paper, we reflect on AIFFP’s iterative efforts to improve projects through attention to IFC PS and EPIV considerations over the lifecycle of projects in a way that works with the realities of the context, the actors, and the resources available. While avoidance is at the top of the mitigation hierarchy, risk is ever-present and unavoidable for actors in Pacific infrastructure and should be utilised for spurring innovation and improvement in E&S management rather than as a roadblock to investment and development.

Levelling the playing field: integrating budget training into the project application process. A case study from the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives

Manon Dumas, Deputy High Commissioner of Canada to Australia

Alexandra Croyle, Manager, Canada Fund for Local Initiatives

The High Commission of Canada in Australia manages the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Nauru, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands and Palau. The CFLI is targeted towards local civil society organisations and provides modest funding for small-scale, high-impact projects. Projects are funded to a maximum of C\$50,000, have a timeframe of approximately 6 months and must fit the criteria for official development assistance (ODA).

In recent years, the High Commission has sought to reduce the administration burden for the CFLI, to make it easier for local organisations to access funding and implement projects. Lack of familiarity with donor budgeting systems was identified as a key barrier in funding local organisations. To mitigate this, the High Commission designed a pilot project that integrated budget training into the application process.

The application process has two rounds. Round one is a two-page concept note which attracts approximately 200 applicants. In round two, a small number of applicants are invited to submit a full application and budget. Through the pilot project, the 25 local organisations that were accepted into round two were given access to a four-week online budget training course for NGOs (NGO Budgeting Essentials, provided by Humentum Global), which ran concurrently as they prepared their applications. Although not all invited applicants would ultimately be successful in securing funding, the pilot was designed so they would all have the opportunity to undertake the training.

Engagement in the course was tracked and participant feedback was also received. We will present the preliminary results of the budget pilot, to contribute to a broader discussion on how aid funding can be more accessible to local organisations and capacity building can be integrated into the funding process.

Time for change: fiduciary and integrity risk in locally led development

Oliver May, Partner, Deloitte

Consensus on the critical importance of localisation has never been stronger. Australia's new international development policy uses the word "local" 44 times, for example. The next decade will not tell whether development is localised – it will tell the story of how it happened. But first, there are barriers to address, and practitioners and researchers still highlight that the perceived capacity of local actors to manage fiduciary risk remains a problem – particularly around fraud and corruption. A collection of assumptions are at play, underpinned by both human and systemic factors.

Oliver May, Oxfam GB's former head of counter-fraud and now the leader of Deloitte Australia's international development practice, will challenge that narrative. Drawing on both research and practitioner observations, Oliver will tackle these assumptions, make the case that there are ways that local actors can manage fraud and corruption risks more effectively than international agencies, and show how those same agencies unintentionally elevate their own risks.

This session will argue for the adoption of more nuanced, forward-thinking approaches to fraud, corruption and wider risks – and that the way we think about risk management in localised development needs to change.

A locally led development approach in a climate-resilient WASH project in Indonesia

Wahyu Triwahyudi, Senior Advisor WASH, Plan International Australia

The development sector has notably shifted to realise, expect, and in some cases lead inclusive approaches towards transformative changes, particularly for those most marginalised. However, the global pandemic impacted work in the sector. While COVID-19 did not discriminate, impacting every person in the world, it did exacerbate existing harmful norms, particularly for those already vulnerable based on their different identities and situations, including gender, disabilities, and poverty. While in some instances COVID-19 restrictions provided opportunities, including North-South partnerships to embrace more localised ways of working, there was also a concerning rise in racial discrimination.

For the presenter, a long-term practitioner in the sector, this has driven explorations around localisation, and more broadly decolonisation or post-colonisation. This is complex, challenging, and uncomfortable work involving questioning power, privileges, biases, and discrimination of ourselves and others in the sectors and society. The presenter hypothesises that localisation contributes to tackling discrimination and to genuine sectoral change, and that sustainable and equitable development outcomes cannot be achieved until our sector shifts to localised approaches.

The presentation seeks to surface and encourage healthy discussions around localisation in the development sector. It will explore the importance of localisation at different levels (e.g. civil society partnerships with rights-holder and research organisations). Development sector evidence around localisation will be drawn together with a reflection process to share experiences and perspectives including from Plan International Australia's work in Indonesia and Laos. This evidence and experiences will contribute to a practical framework to support individuals and partnerships in the sector to consistently reflect and take constructive steps forward in localisation, while helping fill this evidence gap. Collectively, we can play our part to evolve practices, challenging and reducing systemic power imbalances.

Chair: Jocelyn Condon, Chief Operating Officer, Australian Council for International Development

Panel 2e – Australian aid elites: inside the black box

The (even more) cautious consensus on aid: updated reflections from Australian parliamentarians

Dr Tamas Wells, Research Fellow, University of Melbourne

Dr Benjamin Day, Lecturer, Department of International Relations, Australian National University

After a decade of partisan disagreement over foreign aid budgets in Australia, a cautious consensus has emerged amongst parliamentarians over the place of foreign aid and its benefits and limitations. This paper draws on interviews with 30 parliamentarians and key informants in 2023 and explores shifting perspectives on the role of Australia's aid program. In particular it examines perceptions of geopolitics, the future of aid spending, and how well the aid sector communicates its impact.

What Canberra policymakers really think

Bridi Rice, Chief Executive Officer, Development Intelligence Lab

As Australia's development program increases its prominence in foreign policy and security policy discourse, it's become apparent that there is little consensus over why Australia does development, what the development program's primary focus should be, and how we measure its success. This is due to a range of external dynamics that have shifted over the last decade, such as shifts in demographics, poverty, inequality and other intersecting trends.

Much of this is well documented. But this rich literature cannot fully explain the real-world confusion and frustration policymakers and development practitioners are experiencing as they meet around a table to discuss a new development policy, program investment or future direction of travel for Australia's development portfolio.

This session will present Development Intelligence Lab analysis of how Canberra policymakers view development, and the implications of this for decisions relating to development program expenditure. This analysis is based on the Lab's project "Mental models: Canberra's competing perspectives on development", co-funded by the Lab and DFAT. The session will present the prototypes of six mental models that dominate decision-making on development, based on analysis conducted with

government officials and a range of university-based development researchers, due for publication in November.

The political economy of research uptake at DFAT: bureaucratic perceptions, institutional imperatives, intrinsic biases, and individual motivations

Ujjwal Krishna, PhD Candidate, Institute for Human Security and Social Change, La Trobe University

Australia's long-awaited and nearly 12,000-word-long international development policy, released in August 2023, makes a total of four references each to "research" and "evidence". Consultations organised by DFAT that informed the process of preparing the new policy had focused on promoting "effectiveness and learning", even as the Minister for International Development remarked that he wants "AusAID to take over DFAT".

The new policy lays considerable emphasis on strengthening DFAT's development capability, and focuses largely on investing in their staff's skills training and learning, as well as ensuring their exposure to Indo-Pacific contexts through postings. However, despite frequent references to DFAT's monitoring, evaluation and learning processes, the policy makes no direct mention of rebuilding DFAT's capabilities to effectively engage with research and evidence, which have suffered considerably in the decade since the integration of AusAID into DFAT.

This paper presents findings from a three-and-a-half-year period of embedded doctoral research with a DFAT-funded international research program which consisted of a portfolio of seven research projects across the Asia-Pacific region. The embedded research involved long-term, multi-sited, multi-modal, and sustained observation of the program's engagement with DFAT and with project teams over a period of considerable upheaval during COVID-19. This was complemented with data from over 50 interviews with officials, diplomats, locally engaged staff, managing contractors, consultants, academics, researchers, and development professionals, on their experiences of research uptake with DFAT and DFAT-funded programs. It analyses individual motivations, intrinsic biases, perceptions and interpretations of research, and how they influence bureaucratic strategies for using research to inform policy and programming. It also explores the use of research in DFAT's design, implementation and evaluation processes, and the influence of foreign policy priorities and DFAT's institutional dynamics and organisational culture

on research use. Recommendations to strengthen DFAT's capabilities to effectively engage with research and evidence are also discussed.

Chair: Dr Cameron Hill, Senior Researcher, Development Policy Centre, Australian National University

Panel 2f – Private sector incentives for investing in climate action

As the realities of a changing climate have become more evident, commitment to finding solutions has grown. Climate change is likely to be the most significant economic disruptor of the next 30 years as economies seek to rapidly decarbonise, while also being increasingly exposed to shifts in weather patterns. Aid investment can stimulate private sector activity and innovation in climate change adaptation and mitigation by de-risking investment and accelerating uptake of climate change solutions.

This panel will discuss ways in which Australia's Market Development Facility has worked with local entrepreneurs to leverage private sector incentives and innovation, to take advantage of opportunities to support climate change adaptation and mitigation outcomes for their businesses and communities. The audience will hear directly from two entrepreneurs from the Pacific and Timor-Leste on their experience of adapting businesses to the emerging realities of climate change.

Chair: Natalie Mckelleher, Assistant Director, Agriculture and Food Security Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Panelists:

Angus Towart, Climate Change Manager, Market Development Facility

Yogesh Chand, Director – Solar Hub, New Zealand and Fiji

Mariano Da Costa Alves, Director, Mara Mresa Café Lda, Timor-Leste

Panel 3a – Harnessing transformative gender action to influence national policy in Indonesia

This panel explores how Indonesian feminist and women's civil society organisations have used collective action to take transformative gender action in the creation of Indonesia's national medium- and long-term development strategies.

The inaugural National Women's Development Consultation (Musyawarah Perempuan) in 2023

provided a unique opportunity for women and Civil Society Organisations across Indonesia to influence development of the two strategies and to share grassroots initiatives that promote gender equality and social inclusion. For many women involved with Musyawarah Perempuan, it was their first experience in contributing to a national policy making process.

Chair: Dr Endah Trista Agustiana, Senior GEDSI Advisor, Australia-Indonesia Partnership Towards an Inclusive Society (INKLUSI)

Panelists:

Qurrota A'yun, Acting Director for Family, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS), Indonesia

Lenny Rosalin, Deputy for Gender Equality, Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Indonesia

Misiyah, Chair of the Executive Board, KAPAL Perempuan, Indonesia

Panel 3b - Asian donors: China, India and Korea

Coloniality and decoloniality in Korean aid and development

Dr Jae-Eun Noh, Research Fellow, Australian Catholic University [online]

The colonial roots and legacy of aid and development have been widely discussed. However, most critiques have focused on Western donor countries due to their colonial history and white supremacy. Korea has positioned itself as an "empathetic postcolonial donor" with its history of experiencing colonisation and extreme poverty. Drawing on the concept of "coloniality" and "decoloniality", this paper examines the historical and ongoing coloniality in Korean aid and development, and suggests decolonising development practices.

The concept of "coloniality" emphasises the connection between colonial history and contemporary inequality, as well as its significant impact on the politics of knowledge production. In the case of Korea, developmentalism is suggested to have originated with its colonial history. Furthermore, Korea's experience of receiving aid from foreign Christian missionaries after the Korean war has shaped the dominance of Christian-affiliated development NGOs in the country. As a

latecomer to the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Korea has tried to align with the norms established by the Western-dominated DAC, following the theory of norm diffusion.

Decoloniality involves questioning the coloniality of power, knowledge and being. Korean aid has pursued a unique development model, based on its own experience and strengths, going beyond following the norms agreed upon by traditional donors, who have largely dominated knowledge production. While the Korean model has received mixed evaluations, greater attention should be given to the localisation of aid and development. The power of decoloniality lies in provoking critical reflection and developing alternatives that reflect the lived experience and views of affected people. By exploring the potentials of decoloniality in relation to power, knowledge and being, this paper proposes deconstructing and reconstructing the perspectives and practices within Korean aid and development.

“Complementary convergence”: the case of Belt and Road Initiative and Sustainable Development Goals integration

Hannah McNicol, Cookson Scholar and joint PhD Candidate, University of Melbourne and University of Manchester

China's aid and development model, including its institutions, norms, modalities, actors and underpinning economic model, has traditionally been understood, and positioned itself, as divergent from the dominant liberal development model. However, scholars are increasingly exploring how the Chinese development model also converges with the dominant post-1945 liberal development model. Recently, scholars have also explored a phenomenon whereby China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) deliberately converge to offer a complementary policy framework for sustainable development ("BRI-SDG integration"). This paper names this process "complementary convergence" and evaluates the potential for this concept to capture changing relations between the two models by bringing current BRI-SDG integration scholarship into closer dialogue with social sciences convergence theory. Through this framework, the paper demonstrates that BRI-SDG integration scholars conceptualise a novel and interactive process of material, ontological and ideational convergence that denotes both North-

South and South-North movement. Moreover, the paper demonstrates that when a more dynamic, multidirectional understanding of convergence that rejects Euro-centricity is employed, the most significant process of convergence is the UN advocating for and leveraging strategies anchored in the Chinese development model to achieve the SDGs. BRI-SDG integration thus rejects unidirectional conceptualisations of development convergence under contemporary neoliberalism and globalisation.

Pen, politics and power: how China and India wield soft power through education diplomacy in South Asia

Saumitra Neupane, Executive Director, Policy Entrepreneurs Inc.

Education diplomacy plays a crucial role in the development cooperation strategies of China and India in South Asia, intertwining their efforts to achieve foreign policy goals while fostering regional prosperity and influence. Both states continue to expand their prominence in the region. This paper (supported by The Asia Foundation) examines the history of India and China's education diplomacy, its contemporary manifestations, and how this translates into soft power influence in South Asia. The paper also discusses how educational diplomacy relates to India and China's foreign policy and international development cooperation objectives as compared to Western approaches. The study captures survey and interview results from students and key stakeholders in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka to understand the push and pull factors that compel South Asia students to pursue studies in China or India, and their perspectives on the outcomes of this educational experience. Finally, the paper assesses where both China and India land on the soft power influence scale using education diplomacy as a measure.

Chair: Michael Wilson, Group Chief Executive, eWater Limited

Panel 3c – Using and scaling evidence: what works in global education

The world faces a persistent challenge of low and stagnant learning levels despite remarkable progress in increasing school enrolment. This panel brings together education researchers and implementers to explore evidence-backed programs

and strategies that drive impactful change and improve learning.

The panel presentations will highlight the critical role of quality implementation in maximising program impact and scalability. They will also share insights on how governments and implementers can draw on evidence on cost-effective programs from around the world to improve learning outcomes and address the global learning crisis.

Chair: Rob Christie, Assistant Secretary, Development Finance and Economics Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Panelists:

Dr Rachael Meager, Associate Professor of Economics, University of New South Wales

Dr Noam Angrist, Academic Director, What Works Hub for Global Education, Oxford University [online]

Rene Marlon Panti, Research Manager, Philippines Socioeconomic Panel Survey, Innovations for Poverty Action

Panel 3d – Integrating local research into development programs: lessons from Asia and the Pacific

This panel will critically explore the opportunities and consequences of integrating research into development programs from the initial design phase. The panel will bring together local researchers from three different development programs currently being implemented across the Pacific and Asia – namely, Balance of Power, Investing in Women and The Asia Foundation, Pacific.

The panelists will discuss the use of research as an intentional strategy to broker new partnerships (including with non-usual suspects), identify alternative programmatic entry points, and build a range of research-relevant skills. In each program, research is, and will be undertaken as more than just a mechanism by which to ‘produce knowledge’. While there are clear benefits to this approach in terms of development outcomes, not least of which is a stronger cohort of local researchers able to gather valuable, robust evidence to inform policy solutions, there are also unintended consequences.

Chair: Julianne Cowley, Assistant Secretary, Pacific Development Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Panelists:

Vani Nailumu, Research Coordinator, Balance of Power

Kim Patria, Director for Campaigns and Communities of Practice, Investing in Women

Lavenia Rokovucago, Senior Program Officer (Pacific), The Asia Foundation

Panel 3e – Focus on Timor-Leste: economy, equality and development

An internationally engaged Timor-Leste economy? Past, present and future

Professor Brett Inder, Monash University

Since restoration of Independence in 2002, Timor-Leste has taken an active policy as an open and internationally engaged economy. This paper will explore the current situation with Timor-Leste’s level of engagement - trade, foreign investment, remittances, people movement, etc. We will also look at past trends in these various indicators. Building on this understanding of the current situation, we will seek to paint a realistic picture of how, in the next stage of Timor-Leste’s development, the economy and the people of Timor-Leste can best benefit from having an international focus. Important areas for policy and investment priorities will follow from this analysis.

“This is our right”: social protection and fairness in Timor-Leste

Dr Kate Pruce, Institute of Development Studies, UK

Social protection can be a tool for stabilisation in post-conflict settings, but can also undermine state legitimacy, depending on local perceptions of fairness. Following a violent independence campaign against Indonesian occupation, Timor-Leste became a sovereign state in 2002. The government introduced several social protection programs in response to civil unrest in 2006 that caused high levels of internal displacement and humanitarian crises. Government expenditure on social protection is high in Timor-Leste by regional and international standards, with the largest amount going to cash payments for veterans. And yet Timor-Leste is also facing a fiscal cliff as oil revenues cease and the Petroleum Fund declines, bringing the sustainability of these payments into question. This paper investigates the relationship between

social protection and state legitimacy, examining perceptions of fairness and deservingness in relation to social assistance allocation in Timor-Leste. Building on the initial observations from fieldwork presented previously, this paper analyses primary data from workshops conducted with community members in selected districts. An innovative methodology combines a “lab-in-the-field” experiment to reveal targeting preferences among participants with focus group discussions to gain qualitative insights into the results of the experimental data.

Drawing on this mixed-methods data, the paper considers how perceptions of fairness and deservingness may shape the prospects for social protection in a context where support for veterans is politically charged. It finds that there is a significant level of social motivation for assisting others, rather than purely economic, but also finds equity concerns due to the differences in the respective transfer amounts. Different generations diverge on prioritisation for government payments, with young people giving less to veterans than respondents over 30. Nonetheless, deeply embedded ideas mean that any policy changes will need to be framed in alignment with existing values, rather than challenging them completely.

Institutional challenges for economic diversification and implication for development partnerships

Guteriano Neves, PROVISU

Economic diversification is one of the biggest public policy issues facing petroleum-rich countries. Its main objective is to reduce dependence on a single commodity and reduce the vulnerability of oil-dependent economies to external economic shocks. In Timor-Leste’s context, the need for economic diversification has been one of the major development issues over the last decade. It aims to reduce the state’s fiscal dependence on the Petroleum Fund, and economic dependence on public spending. It is even more critical in the current context, where Timor-Leste’s economy is proven to be highly vulnerable to external shocks, exemplified by COVID-19 and the Ukraine War. Despite various efforts, statistical evidence does not show that Timor’s economy is being diversified, or any reduction in Timor’s dependence on the Petroleum Fund. While there has been a lot of criticism of the policy failures or misguided policies, this presentation takes a look at the institutional

setting that underpins the existing policy and makes the existing policy viable. This institutional setting is sustained by the external rent, which is derived from exporting its petroleum resources and the investment return of its sovereign wealth fund. This presentation provides the current political economy context which is important for development partnerships in Timor-Leste. Lessons learned can be useful for other small natural resources-dependent countries in the Pacific and elsewhere.

Chair: Philippa Venning, Vice President, Program Quality and Strategy, Abt Associates

Panel 4a – How can managing contractors contribute to localisation?

Aid and development have rightly come under fire for perpetuating systematic power imbalances, exposing both racial and gendered fault lines within the architecture of international development. Australia’s new International Development Policy highlights the priority to support local leadership, solutions and accountability, including by channeling funding to local actors. But the question remains: to what extent can aid practices be transformed better to serve local communities?

Donors have a direct interest in retaining some degree of power and authority over the use of resources – it is, after all, their taxpayers’ money. But it is not only donors that have interests and incentives: managing contractors have them too. While donors remain the main clients for managing contractors, the contracts they sign and the commitments they make influence, if not determine, their organisational behaviour. They also reduce the incentives to reduce their own control. The barriers to effective localisation may be inherent in the overall development system, rather than in any malevolence on behalf of ‘northern’ actors.

Chair: Dr Henry Ivarature, Deputy Director, Australia Pacific Security College, Australian National University

Panelists:

Graham Teskey, Global Lead for Governance, Abt Associates

Farheen Khurram, Director, International Programs, Palladium

Joanne Choe, Head of Program Quality and Gender, DT Global

Panel 4b – Feminist foreign policy and practical strategies for transforming systems of power

This session will explore practical strategies for transforming the power structures associated with patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism through presentations by authors of the Australian Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition's Issues Paper Series, a bi-monthly publication exploring opportunities and challenges of implementing a feminist foreign policy.

The discussion will include an exploration of the themes of a First Nations Foreign Policy in depth, discussing how Australian government should engage First Nations communities in implementation of this commitment, as well as the interconnections between feminist and First Nations approaches. It will also explore the idea of a feminist economy of wellbeing and how such an economy might be measured. And it will highlight the importance of a feminist approach to DFAT's new International Gender Strategy and to operationalising Australia's commitment to addressing unequal power structures in its development approaches and programs.

Chair: Jo Crawford, Strategic Advisor, Equality Insights, International Women's Development Agency

Panelists:

Dr James Blackwell, Research Fellow in Indigenous Diplomacy, Australian National University

Professor Naila Kabeer, London School of Economics and Political Science [online]

Dr Annabel Dulhunty, Lecturer, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University

Panel 4c – Architectures of evidence: how development agencies deliver impact through knowledge, learning and research

This session includes a diversity of panelists who will represent a variety of perspectives and practical examples of how organisations create cultures of learning and use evaluation and research.

The panelists will reflect on what can be done to shift systems, structures and processes such that development practice and policy is evidence-led. Discussions on the interface of evaluation/

research – policy/practice will highlight the need to move beyond isolated reporting to cultural practices of learning embedded within policy and programming agendas and informed by co-production processes by multiple stakeholders.

Chair: Dr Keren Winterford, Research Director, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney

Panelists:

Tom Davis, Director, Diplomatic Academy, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Sophie Jenkins, Strategy and Organisational Performance Associate Director, Caritas Australia

Bethany Davies, Research Program Manager, Portfolio Planning and Impact Evaluation, Australian Centre for International Development Research

Panel 4d – Pre-crisis response: anticipatory action in the Pacific and Timor-Leste

Anticipatory action (AA) is redefining the humanitarian sector and creating new opportunities for how humanitarian actors do business. By shifting the focus of response to the pre-crisis space, AA is allowing humanitarians and affected communities to make informed decisions ahead of disaster events – saving time and money; preventing displacement, disease, loss of livelihood; and preserving the dignity of those affected.

AA has been trialed South Asia, Southeast Asia, Latin America and Africa and there is increasing interest in understanding the effectiveness of anticipatory actions in the Pacific and Timor-Leste, identified as one of the world's most disaster-prone regions.

This panel will bring together and showcase the collective efforts of key AA actors in the region. It will combine brief presentations from key humanitarian actors on AA programming underway in the Pacific and Timor-Leste and an expert-led discussion on lessons learned to date, and the challenges, opportunities and priorities facing the sector as these actors test the next big shift in humanitarian action.

Chair: Dave Vosen, Assistant Secretary, Humanitarian Preparedness and Response Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Panelists:

Catherine Jones, Anticipatory Action Lead, Asia-Pacific, Food and Agricultural Organization

Jason Brown, Partnership Director, Australian Humanitarian Partnership Support Unit

Zito Afranio Soares, Australian Humanitarian Partnership Disaster READY Coordinator, World Vision Timor-Leste

Panel 4e – Development in a rapidly ageing region

In Asia and the Pacific, one in four people will be over 60 years old by 2050; close to 1.3 billion people. In many countries, such as Viet Nam and China, this transition will happen rapidly, leaving little time to adapt to new demographic profiles. Population ageing impacts every aspect of society, including economics, trade, and health systems.

This panel brings together national and global experts in ageing to explore: why population ageing must be prioritised as a development issue in the Asia-Pacific region; what donors like the Asian Development Bank are doing to foster healthy ageing; and what lessons can be learned from high and lower-middle income countries like Singapore and Viet Nam that can be trialed and replicated in the region.

Chair: Dr Vânia de la Fuente-Núñez, Senior Advisor - Healthy Ageing, Fred Hollows Foundation

Panelists:

Wendy Walker, Director of Human and Social Development Sector Office, Asian Development Bank

Thuy Tran, Country Director, HelpAge International Viet Nam

Dr Paul Ong, Chief Strategy Officer, Tsao Foundation, Singapore

Panel 4f – Leaning in: why the Australian development sector is critical to high-integrity regional carbon markets

There is a consistent, negative discourse in the media about problematic carbon projects and this creates a sense of distrust and unwillingness to engage. However, Australian development actors are actually uniquely placed to engage in carbon

markets through advocacy or implementation. Arguably, we have a responsibility to learn more, and to support our partners in government and communities to benefit from these markets.

The panel will unpack the role that carbon markets can play in mobilising climate finance, starting with the proposition that carbon projects can offer significant benefits to nature, climate, and communities when done right. They will interrogate how high integrity project developers and brokers/sellers of credits should operate, how development actors can be involved and incentivise that behaviour, and how Indo-Pacific governments can mandate that behaviour. They will explore lessons that carbon projects continue to offer for national regulatory settings for countries in the region.

Chair: Georgia Davis, Evaluation and Learning Lead, Nature-Based Solutions, World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF)

Panelists:

Ellis Mackenzie, Senior Consultant, Sustineo

Alex McClean, Chief Operating Officer, Nakau

Dr Sarah Milne, Senior Lecturer, Resources, Environment and Development Group, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University

Panel 5a – First Nations' engagement in the new International Development Policy

For much of our history, the crucial role of Australia's First Nations in foreign policy and international development program has been overshadowed. 2023 signalled a transformative shift in this narrative. The government took the step of appointing Justin Mohamed as Australia's inaugural Ambassador for First Nations People. This was closely followed by the launch of the new International Development Policy, which underscores the significance of embedding First Nations Australians' perspectives into the nation's international development program. While this policy elevates First Nations to the core of the development agenda, it candidly acknowledges the challenges ahead, necessitating innovative approaches and a recalibration of traditional ways of working.

In response to these shifts, this yarn delves into the policy's implications for First Nations engagement across the Indo-Pacific and regional partners. It will explore the policy's potential impact on the international development industry, probe its

potential influence on regional partners in the Indo-Pacific, and chart the path forward.

This dialogue represents an opportunity for strategic engagement, where historical legacies inform present-day policies, guiding us towards a more inclusive and collaborative future in international development.

Chair: Renee Cremer, Chief Executive Officer, Young Australians in International Affairs

Panelists:

Darren Godwell, Chief Executive Officer, i2i Global

Jacqui De Lacy, Chief Global Development Officer, Abt Associates

Professor Dave Peebles, Director, Australia Pacific Security College, Australian National University

Alice Tamang, Indigenous Programs Manager, Australian Volunteers Program

Panel 5b – Governance, fragility and conflict: building states, communities and peace

What's wellbeing got to do with state building? Reflections on organisational effectiveness in Australia and the Pacific

Dr Abby McLeod, Director, Ideate (on behalf of Mardi Grundy, International Development Practitioner)

Supporting partners to “build effective, accountable states” and “enhance state and community resilience” are two of four key areas of focus in Australia’s new international development policy. Complementing these traditional areas of focus, the new policy simultaneously commits to both deeper listening and locally-led change, creating opportunities to rethink old approaches to enduring challenges, such as supporting the development of effective state institutions.

Drawing upon our lived experience of major organisational reform in Australia (in the Australian Federal Police), and three recent organisational reviews that we have undertaken with Pacific policing institutions, we suggest that attention to employee wellbeing is a critical component of any effort to enhance organisational effectiveness. Framing our suggestion against the backdrop of literature demonstrating a strong association between employee wellbeing and organisational effectiveness (in a variety of cultural contexts), we suggest that to date, institutional strengthening

approaches have neglected to address this important element of organisational effectiveness, the focus having long been on technical skills, leadership and organisational policy, strategy and practice.

Harnessing the many Pacific Islands policy commitments to the promotion of wellbeing and exploring key findings from the three organisational reviews (during which we conducted focus groups with over 300 people), we offer a compelling case for framing wellbeing as an essential ingredient of any effort to build effective state institutions. Indeed, when we dream big, we’d like to see wellbeing situated alongside gender and climate change, as a cross-cutting issue to be addressed in all development programs.

A review of conflict mediation and multi-stakeholder security coordination in Sulu, Philippines

Maria Carmen Fernandez, PhD Candidate, University of Cambridge

Rosemain Abduraji, Executive Director, Tumikang Sama Sama

Ensuring peace and stability requires strong lines of communication and trust between the security sector and local stakeholders, particularly in areas where communal violence persists and signed peace agreements with non-state armed groups do not include clear pathways to unarmed civilian life. This paper reviews the conflict mediation and multi-stakeholder security coordination efforts implemented by local mediation group Tumikang Sama-Sama (TSS) with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) in the island province of Sulu in Southern Philippines from 2010 to the present, focusing on challenges as well as the innovations undertaken to overcome them.

TSS – which translates in Sinug as “together we move forward” – began as a group of Tausug civil society leaders and HD consultants supporting peace dialogues with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and other groups engaged in conflict. With its gradual transformation as an independent NGO in 2014, TSS presents a model of long-term, discreet, and locally led private diplomacy that is able to retain high trust and local ownership while maintaining healthy relationships with its partner INGOs and donors.

Our research found that TSS was able to use hybrid dialogue tools for mediating clan conflict in a way

that bridges customary and traditional mediation practices with the formal justice and public order system. This has facilitated security coordination between local stakeholders, notably the military, police, and members of the MNLF and other hard-to-reach groups, and in recent years, has been the foundation for post-settlement education and livelihood support pilots. In spaces where customary practice often trumps formal institutions in terms of community legitimacy, this spells out implications for the security and localisation agenda, particularly on the role of local mediators in sustaining local peace.

Community building as state building in Melanesia

Professor Miranda Forsyth, School of Regulation and Global Governance, Australian National University

Dr Sinclair Dinnen, Research Fellow, Department of Pacific Affairs, Australian National University

How do you build and govern an effective state? Many governments, international organisations and donors start at the top and work downwards. While there is increased recognition today of the importance of the local in policy documents and official rhetoric, in reality little has changed in practice. In terms of time and resources allocation, the top levels of state still get the lion’s share. But when we look at where effective governance and sustainable communities actually exist, we often find the key governance mechanisms behind them to be at the hyper-local level. We explore this conundrum through three case studies of local rule-making in Fiji, PNG and Vanuatu. In all three sites, communities have engaged in deliberate efforts to create new governance arrangements that aim to build on local knowledge and legitimacy and at the same time engage with the state. These efforts – entailing innovative forms of local problem-solving – are often obscured by dominant narratives centred on the fragility and dysfunction of state structures. As we show, the state’s relationship with these governance practices occurring at the hyper-local level is highly varied in the different contexts.

Balancing development and regulation: the case of Vanuatu citizenship by investment

Henrietta McNeill, PhD Candidate, Department of Pacific Affairs, Australian National University

Dr Grant Walton, Associate Professor, Development Policy Centre, Australian National University

Vanuatu is one of more than 60 countries worldwide to offer a citizenship by investment program, also known as a “golden passport”. The program has been in place for almost a decade, but has seen controversy around who has been given citizenship. In this paper, we examine the public discourse around Vanuatu’s citizenship by investment program, looking at how issues of governance and geopolitics have been brought into what is effectively another mechanism for development. While there are challenges with the program, we argue that the potential economic benefits of the program if managed in a transparent manner are largely ignored. We ask how regulatory mechanisms for development could be better supported to be effective, transparent, and less corruptible.

Chair: Jessica Mackenzie, Chief of Policy and Advocacy, Australian Council for International Development

Panel 5c – Cash transfer and social protection programs: South and Southeast Asia and the Pacific

Beyond introductory theory: cash vs in-kind transfers and the Indian welfare state

Adit Seth, NMIMS, Mumbai [online]

Introductory models in public economics find cash transfers as welfare-maximising policies. However, a large body of literature finds support for in-kind transfers in the context of the developing world. Focusing on India, this paper outlines two streams of thought on how welfare programs can be structured for maximisation of welfare both from an empirical and theoretical basis. The arguments in favour of cash transfers move beyond the general concerns of paternalism and highlight how cash transfers minimise the costs associated with rent-seeking, low state capacity, and political economy concerns. The arguments for in-kind transfers highlight the misuse of transfers due to intra-household conflicts, the reduction of the real value of the transfers due to poorly developed markets, and highlight the nature of in-kind transfers as insurances against price volatility in such markets. This paper synthesises the two streams of thoughts and finds the optimality of either policy design to be linked with specific contexts, and shows that a blanket policy design may lead to suboptimal results in India and other developing countries with similar characteristics.

Paving the way for a cashless society and embedded finance: insights from G2P disbursement in Indonesia

Dr Hilman Palaon, Research Fellow, Indo-Pacific Development Centre, Lowy Institute [online]

The digitisation of government-to-person (G2P) aid disbursement programs has emerged as a transformative approach to fostering financial inclusion. The poor and vulnerable, most of whom are unbanked, have gained access to formal financial institutions by establishing bank accounts and electronic wallets. Leveraging digital technology, aid funds from social assistance programs are seamlessly channelled directly into beneficiaries' accounts, promising efficient and equitable disbursement processes.

Previous studies have unveiled a noteworthy outcome of this digitisation effort. A closer examination reveals a recurring pattern wherein the disbursed funds are promptly withdrawn and subsequently engaged in cash-based transactions. The potential for sustained engagement with formal financial institutions remains largely untapped, rendering these accounts dormant until the next influx of funds. In this trajectory towards a cashless paradigm, the upcoming hurdle centres on nurturing consistent engagement and utilisation of various digital financial services.

A myriad of factors intricately interplays in influencing usage behaviour. Among these factors are: (i) financial literacy (empowering individuals with knowledge and confidence), (ii) trust (emerging as beneficiaries must feel secure and assured in conducting transactions), (iii) transaction costs (encompassing fees associated with the comparative convenience of cash transactions), and (iv) customer protection and service (addressing potential grievances and concerns that may arise in the digital financial ecosystem).

To delve into these dynamics in the real world, this paper explores Indonesia's context. The study hones in on a G2P program as a case, investigating its aid disbursement through the Fintech platform, specifically using electronic money. It aims to inform the current findings and the design of interventions that not only foster initial account adoption but also cultivate potential usage with digital financial services to promote future embedded finance.

Local politics and adaptive aid management in less developed regions: lessons from Papua programming

Theodore Weohau, Director – Implementation, Australia–Indonesia Partnership Program (SKALA)

Local politics are understood to play a crucial role in determining whether development programs progress well and are sustained, or not. This paper explores how local politics affect program delivery, and key lessons on adaptive aid management, from government programming in the Papua region supported by the Australia–Indonesia Partnership Program.

Papua is the poorest province in Indonesia and since 2001, under a special autonomy arrangement, has received significant additional funding to boost local development. Despite this, the province continues to be the poorest. Australian development programs have been supporting the Government of Indonesia to address Papuan development challenges, including through studies to support policy improvement, pilots and capacity building. Designed to be flexible and adaptive, Australian development assistance usually starts with political economy and situational analysis before engaging on technical intervention.

In 2017, following a study on special autonomy fund effectiveness and its recommendations, a pilot program called BANGGA Papua was designed with support from Australian development assistance. BANGGA Papua provided cash transfers to indigenous Papuan children aged 4 years and below through their mothers' bank accounts, most of which were opened during the pilot preparation. The then governor of Papua used BANGGA Papua to support his campaign for a second term and gain trust from the Papuans. A significant amount of the provincial government budget was allocated for the 2018–19 pilot phase, which was done successfully. However, as the replication plan was being developed, there was a sharp turn in the governor's interest in 2020. The replication budget, despite already being allocated, was suddenly diverted to finance another new priority: construction of a sports stadium for a national sports event. This stopped BANGGA Papua, despite its earlier success. Operating in such a politically complex environment required adaptive program management. This paper explores the approach and lessons learned in detail.

Evidence and narratives on social protection in the Pacific and Timor-Leste

Kate Lanyon, Consultant, Sustineo

Ginevra Jarman, Program Manager, Partnerships for Social Protection (P4SP)

Social protection systems and programming continue to expand and improve across the Pacific and Timor-Leste. However, these countries remain relatively under-represented in the social protection literature. Global and regional social protection research often fails to capture the varied experiences of social protection in Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste. Despite this, there is a growing research interest in the role of social protection across the region, both as a means of regularised support and as a tool for shock response, particularly in light of COVID-19 and other recent disasters.

P4SP's forthcoming publication "Evidence review of social protection in the Pacific and Timor-Leste" aims to take stock of the publicly available literature on social protection across these countries. Recognising the varied terminology that may be used in relation to social protection in the region, the review casts an intentionally wide net to identify literature on social protection and related concepts. The review includes more readily available publications from development partners, but also seeks out academic literature, particularly that produced by Pacific and Timor-Leste researchers and organisations.

Importantly, the review will also identify research gaps, with an aim to encourage greater research interest in social protection amongst academics and organisations in the Pacific and Timor-Leste. From this perspective, it will be a useful resource for researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and advocates of social protection throughout the region.

Chair: Dung Doan, Social Protection Economist, World Bank

Panel 5d - Learning from DFAT's investment performance data

DFAT is committed to delivering an effective development program and a performance based culture is key to effectiveness. The new development policy outlines the elements that will improve DFAT's performance culture: Country and Regional Development Partnership Plans, performance

indicators, strategic partnerships with global partners, and investment level monitoring and evaluation systems.

A key element of DFAT's investment level M&E systems are its investment monitoring reports. However, recent research highlights that only two in five programs are rated at completion as satisfactory for effectiveness and efficiency.

This research raises two important questions: first, why are ratings so low given DFAT's focus on performance and, second, what can be done to improve performance management and reporting? The three panelists will provide their perspectives on what factors help and hinder DFAT's program performance management and an assessment of the implications.

Chair: Sofia Ericsson, Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Panelists:

Terence Wood, Research Fellow, Development Policy Centre, Australian National University

Farida Fleming, Team Leader, Bluebird Consultants

Adri Darman, Manager, Quality and Risk Unit, Australian Embassy Jakarta

Panel 5e – The localisation agenda: decolonising and shifting power for an equitable future

Beginning in 2020, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), started interrogating its own internal racism and colonial history. This included an anti-racism review followed by focused research into power structures about how coloniality has impacted the sexual and reproductive health sector, examining systemic and structural exclusion, and how silencing and powerlessness affects the everyday realities of people with compounded intersecting marginalities such as the LGBTQI+ community, people living with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDs and sex workers.

IPPF has now integrated decolonisation and anti-racism as a core pillar of its new organisational strategy, with a commitment that by 2028 IPPF will be recognised as a champion for anti-racism with an intersectional approach to non-discrimination and equity. IPPF will reflect this in the balance of power between global north and south in decision making and resource mobilisation.

Chair: Nihal Said, Senior Technical Advisor, Research and Partnerships, International Planned Parenthood Federation

Panelists:

Julius Ssenabulya, Vanuatu Family Health Organisation

Norma Yeeting, Executive Director, Kiribati Family Health Association

Panel 5f – Climate change: regional and donor perspectives

Developing a shared knowledge system for climate risks across our region

Dr Tayanah O'Donnell, Partner, Deloitte Climate and Sustainability

Dr Annette Hirsch, Senior Specialist, Deloitte Climate and Sustainability

Tori Laniakea, Senior Manager, Deloitte Climate & Sustainability

Developing frameworks to understand and respond to climate risks, together with traceability between actions and outcomes, is complex work. Focus should be placed on the end goal, or rather, how risk information guides decision-making, including prioritisation of actions to manage climate risks and opportunities. A multi-dimensional climate capability can support the Asia-Pacific region to adapt at speed and scale to the impacts of climate change that directly threaten the region's livelihoods, infrastructure, economics and ecosystems.

Through Deloitte's experience in climate risk management, we have gained critical experience that provides important learnings for the development sector, relating to:

- Embedding resilience through public sector tools that draw upon population dynamics and power (i.e. gendered poverty);
- Addressing interdependencies and interconnections to avoid unintentional cascades or miscalculation of risks or missed opportunities for adaptation action;
- Integrating climate and development policies to avoid contradictions and work as an amplifier of each other (as opposed to working on trade-offs);
- Translating and operationalising significant amounts of technically and scientifically robust

data to enable local communities to lead and deliver actionable insights; and

- Bringing together visibility around different knowledge systems, grounded by the perspectives, knowledge, and rights of Indigenous peoples.

Governments, policymakers and academia have a significant role to play, but so does industry and community. Each has different duties and important obligations. Creating opportunity through a consortium based on these differences is the job of good policy and managing the risk of different interests, is the job of good regulation. There is an economic, a regulatory and a human dimension to this challenge and there is enormous opportunity when done well. Getting to that future requires all of us to have a willingness to think carefully about policy, opportunity and individual agency.

Mobilising private investment for adaptation to climate change

Elizabeth Gogoi, Principal Consultant, Oxford Policy Management, India

This paper explores the scale and nature of commercial opportunities from adaptation to climate change in low- and middle-income countries, whilst stressing that adaptation to climate change is also a public good.

It presents research on a sample of 77 enterprises in the real economy in India that produce adaptation goods and non-financial services, such as flood forecasting and drought-resistant seeds. This illustrates the diversity, size and potential of these markets and the various policy as well as the financial barriers and other hurdles that these enterprises face. A deep-dive assessment of seven adaptation solutions, such as solar-powered desalination and waste-water technology, green ports, rainwater harvesting systems, climate services, solar-powered cold storage, hydroponics etc., provides a detailed picture of their market size and investment potential.

The paper highlights some global attempts to mobilise greater volumes of private investment in adaptation, including the Green Climate Fund and Climate Resilience and Adaptation Finance and Technology Transfer Facility. It provides a series of recommendations to national governments, development finance institutions and others for how to build and strengthen markets for adaptation solutions in low- and middle-income countries. This includes designing new innovative financing

instruments to de-risk investments, advancing how adaptation is defined in green taxonomies, and encouraging national policy reform to break down barriers to private investment in adaptation.

Assuring the aid is green – establishment of a carbon emissions inventory for Taiwan's official development assistance projects in the Pacific

Regine Liu, Senior Specialist, Research, Development and Evaluation Department, International Cooperation and Development Fund, Taiwan

Climate change has emerged as the foremost concern in the realm of international development. While many aid agencies are inclined towards green solutions, research indicates a positive correlation between increased ODA input and carbon emissions. This highlights an intricate relationship between ODA programs and the carbon footprints of recipient countries, raising serious questions about the environmental impact of international aid. Thus, aid agencies must carefully evaluate if the solutions provided by ODA are in fact green. This article examines efforts by Taiwan's International Cooperation and Development Fund (TaiwanICDF) to ensure sustainability in its projects through integrated carbon emission assessments.

As Taiwan's professional development aid agency, TaiwanICDF has dedicated itself to climate adaptation and food security for vulnerable Pacific Island states for decades, and we have a responsibility to ensure our cure is not worse than the disease itself. Recently, we initiated a preliminary carbon emissions inventory and analysis of our projects in the Pacific. This endeavour seeks to uncover the influence of development aid on local carbon emissions, thereby revealing green pathways and facilitating future carbon-neutral initiatives. By obtaining comprehensive carbon emission data, identifying emission hotspots, and setting baselines, we are laying the strategic groundwork for carbon reduction and sustainable management in Taiwan's foreign aid projects.

This paper focuses on TaiwanICDF development projects in Nauru as a case study. It illustrates how carbon emission assessments can be integrated into projects to support sustainability and ensure green development in ODA recipients.

Chair: Matt Spannagle, Director, Climate and Nature, Palladium

Panel 6a – Transforming the regional care economy: policy, delivery and justice

In recent years, ongoing conflicts and crises have spurred the urgent need for action and political will to support a resilient care economy. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragility, inadequacy, and injustice of global childcare, eldercare, and disability care infrastructure.

Women's disproportionate share of unpaid care responsibilities increased significantly due to school and daycare closures, heightened eldercare and disability care needs, lockdowns, and other disruptions. This has been exacerbated by more frequent climate emergencies and conflicts.

Despite these widening inequities, the care economy remains underinvested and understudied, particularly among resource-constrained countries.

This session is designed to explore how governments, the private sector, and the civil society are advancing the care economy in their region through diverse approaches. These approaches include the use of: (a) coordinated policy making, (b) blended financing, (c) movement building and advocacy, (d) innovative delivery models, and (e) transforming care norms. Through this discussion, there will be an articulation of the priorities for a global roadmap for action to collectively build resilient care economies.

Chair: Jane Sloane, Senior Director, Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, The Asia Foundation

Panelists:

Nalini Singh, Executive Director, Fiji Women's Rights Movement

Akshat Singhal, Co-founder and Director, Gender Lab

Susan Nio, Chief Executive Officer, LoveCare

Panel 6b – Realising the double-dividend: gender and climate change

This session will share a recent research paper 'Looking Through the Lens of Gender Responsive Alternatives to Climate Change (GRACC)' and discuss climate finance. The GRACC framework argues that gender-responsive alternative climate change responses can be enhanced by increasing the mutual awareness of scientific and women's localised knowledge of climate change, by ensuring women's active participation and leadership

in community work, and by fostering women's collective action that enables integrated responses to interrelated crises.

The research paper demonstrates that bridging the gaps between scientific and women's localised knowledge helps to achieve positive Disaster Risk Reduction outcomes at the community level.

The session will present these findings, alongside sharing how the GRACC framework has been successfully implemented on the ground in Vanuatu. It will explore opportunities within the new International Development Policy to ensure the mainstreaming of gender equality and climate change realises its full potential, and the chance to reap a double dividend through an integrated focus on both areas including. Panelists will also present insights into how practical and trust-based grant-making approaches can enable a scaling up of targeted funding for gender transformative climate programming using modalities that foster the critical work of women's rights organisations and feminist movements.

Chair: Sally Henderson, Head of Programs, ActionAid Australia

Panelists:

Dr Joyce Das, Executive Director, Go Equal

Michelle Higelin, Executive Director, ActionAid Australia

Flora Vano, Country Manager, ActionAid Vanuatu

Panel 6c – International NGOs: leadership, effectiveness and trends

Navigating an uncertain future through eco-leadership

Archie Law, Principal Leadership Advisor, Humanitarian Leadership Academy

The term eco-leadership describes a new leadership approach which is currently being applied by development and humanitarian organisations to their work. Eco-leadership theory evolved from academic research and consultancy work in leading organisations and emerged as a response to three key disruptions:

- technological revolution
- environmental emergency
- globalisation, social change and rising social inequity.

In addition, over 50 NGO leaders who were surveyed by Nuffield College from Oxford University for a

recent report entitled “International NGOs and the long humanitarian century” reported that they are feeling “stuck”. They feel stuck, as they know they need to change how their organisations look and operate to meet the above challenges as well as other burning priorities such as supporting local actors; however, a web of excessive managerialist approaches and compliance requirements are restricting their ability to create the adaptive and flexible humanitarian and development organisations that are required.

This is where eco-leadership can help. Eco-leadership maximises the use of people, resources and power to increase the impact of humanitarian and development organisations. Eco-leadership decentralises leadership – moving away from top-down approaches to enable everybody to take leadership when appropriate, creating more adaptive, participative and dynamic organisations.

This eco-systemic approach is similar to directed networked approaches utilised by many campaigning organisations which focus on self-organising while maintaining enough centralised structure to focus on clear goals. This approach leads us to moving beyond our silos and linear thinking to engaging more with marginalised voices through shifting power to the edge and bringing fresh ideas, experience, knowledge and resources to the forefront of critical discussions.

This presentation will highlight some of the core concepts of eco-leadership, present some case studies where eco-leadership has reshaped development and humanitarian organisations, and promote discussions about a new leadership approach for development and humanitarian organisations.

The Australian NGO Cooperation Program evaluation: adapting a long-standing modality at a time of rapid global change

Selvi Vikan, Director NGO Programs and Partnerships Section, Global Programs and Partnerships Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Grace Nicholas, Associate Director, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Practice, Tetra Tech International Development

In 2021, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade commissioned Tetra Tech International Development (Tetra Tech) to conduct an independent evaluation of the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). In this session, the evaluation

commissioner and evaluation team leader will co-present the evaluation, and outline how the findings and recommendations have influenced the program, nearly a year since the evaluation was completed. Tetra Tech will present the conceptual frameworks that underpinned the analysis of data, provided clarity around the findings and offered DFAT actionable insights to take forward. DFAT will provide the client's perspective, and explain how the evaluation has influenced changes to the program.

ANCP is Australia's flagship program for Australian NGOs, running since 1974. The evaluation's primary focus was on the program's modality, and whether it remained fit for purpose to facilitate development outcomes in the context of the rapidly shifting global and aid environment. A secondary focus was the high-level impacts of the ANCP. After nearly 50 years working with more than 50 Australian NGO partners, the ANCP modality and its functions had evolved. Global themes, including the humanitarian-development nexus, localisation, COVID-19 impacts, climate change and shrinking civil society space, were directly affecting ANCP delivery partners, communities and results. The evaluation required a fresh approach to review past entrenched ways of working, and understand how the modality was effectively supporting – or otherwise – the program's goals and impact.

The ANCP evaluation demonstrated that ANCP remains a highly valued mechanism for Australian NGOs that extends the reach of the development program. However, it also identified potential to strengthen partnerships and links with other DFAT programs, address challenges for partners in accessing accreditation and funding, and focus more on evaluation of outcomes. DFAT largely accepted the findings and has taken steps to implement and update the modality.

Latest research from the international development and humanitarian aid sector – An Aotearoa New Zealand perspective

Peter Rudd, Executive Director, Council for International Development, Aotearoa New Zealand [online]

The Council for International Development Annual Membership Survey is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and is used for a number of different things. It provides information on the sector, where we work, priority areas and so on, and is a requirement for all CID members – Full, Affiliate and Individual/ Consultant. While it does

not purport to be robust research, the survey's results are shared with various government agencies including MFAT and Statistics New Zealand who include the value of foreign aid that we send overseas in New Zealand's International Accounts, as well as being shared with members and the general public.

The results of the survey provide insight around the countries Aotearoa New Zealand-based organisations focus on, the areas of greatest need, how much money is being spent on international development and more, from organisations that are funded by MFAT, as well as those that aren't.

This information supports decisions around government involvement in our sector. We also use the data collected to calculate our membership fees. The responses we receive remain confidential to CID, in that no publicly shared answers are attributed to specific respondents.

This report provides analysis and comparison on certain areas of the survey that we believe are relevant and of use to the wider sector and public.

If you took part in the survey, you might notice that not all questions included in the survey are included in the report; this is because we use different responses for different things. If you would like information on a question you answered that you don't see included in this report, please feel free to get in touch with us. We greatly appreciate the time and mahi everyone puts into the survey each year and appreciate ongoing feedback on ways we can improve it.

Chair: Ashlee Betteridge, Lead Consultant, Better Things Consulting

Panel 6d – Civic peacebuilding, regional stability, and “Indo-Pacific” pivots

This panel explores the effectiveness of current efforts to prevent and resolve conflict at the subnational, national and regional level. The discussion draws from ‘The State of Civic Peacebuilding in South and Southeast Asia’, 2023 – a new paper from The Asia Foundation and the Initiative for Peacebuilding at the University of Melbourne – that highlights the tensions and experiences of civil society peacebuilders, indicating the potential for conflict resolution and the ongoing challenges that frame their daily experiences.

Building from this, the panel will then explore ongoing conflict and related tensions in the region, juxtaposing the experiences of civil society peace actors in post-coup Myanmar with the recent international focus of Western donors on regional dynamics and “Indo-Pacific” pivots. The discussion will focus on development funding and foreign policy implications, particularly as relates to preventing conflict while encouraging increased aid localisation, supporting regional networks, and promoting the role of women and youth in peacebuilding.

Chair: Dr Adam Burke, Senior Director, Conflict and Fragility, The Asia Foundation

Panelists:

Fanny Coussy, Senior Leader, Humanitarian Advisory Group

Nathan Shea, Assistant Director, Conflict and Fragility, The Asia Foundation

Sophia Htwe, PhD candidate, University of Melbourne

Panel 6e – Locally-led development: insights from humanitarian, development and community programs

Walking the talk of locally led humanitarian response: an Australian perspective

Dr Yaseen Ayobi, Lecturer, University of Melbourne

Laura Holbeck, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Manager, Australian Humanitarian Partnership Support Unit

The Grand Bargain commitments of 2016, which aimed to strengthen support and funding for local and national responders, have become a central topic in discussions about humanitarian practice. Australia’s new international development policy boldly emphasises the importance of fostering partnerships with local communities and civil society organisations. But how do these commitments and proclamations genuinely play out in the realm of humanitarian aid?

The paper presents evidence-based data derived from extensive research conducted throughout the Asia-Pacific region. This included extensive consultations with local governments, NGOs and the community in the Asia-Pacific.

Local insights into social resilience and climate change in Solomon Islands

Dr Darian Naidoo, Economist, World Bank

Dr John Cox, Senior Research Associate, Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne

This paper presents research in climate change affected communities in Solomon Islands to gain insights into social resilience. Using research tools such as focus group discussion and a household-level survey tailored to the local context and the issue of social resilience, the study asked people in the communities – each of which experiences some form of multidimensional disadvantage linked, in part, to their restricted access to services and markets – about their understanding of climate change, their experiences of environmental hazards and shocks, and their engagement with external community-based adaptation programs. The analysis provides insights into the key factors necessary for building and sustaining social resilience and community-based adaptation that are grounded in local strengths, cultural norms, and institutions. It identifies optimisation points for policies and programs to build the social resilience of communities at the local level as the threats to livelihoods and wellbeing presented by climate change increase.

The data reveals that communities are generally familiar with scientific climate change narratives, and are observing deteriorating local environmental conditions. Communities have adopted short-to medium-term coping strategies to manage risk, including traditional disaster preparedness practices, innovations in livelihoods, and local-level governance and mobility (including migration). However, repeated climate-related shocks are exhausting the social resilience of communities. A key implication for policy is that programs to date have often failed to recognise and build on local perspectives and practices (not least on questions of gender, social inclusion and traditional practices). Therefore, investments in social inclusion and human capital development are also essential to building resilience. To effectively tackle broader systemic and structural challenges, the policy response to support social resilience, therefore, should be state-led, multi-sectoral and appropriately calibrated to the local context.

Realising localisation: evolving our thinking and sharing practical insights

Dr Alwyn Chilver, Director Inclusive Growth, Palladium

Angus Towart, Climate Change Adviser, Palladium

The discourse around localisation in Australian aid has ramped up in recent years, perhaps catalysed more by the practical realities of COVID-19 rather than a fundamental shift in aid philosophy and approaches. Teskey and Chattier engage constructively on the “realpolitik” that drives what localisation can reasonably be expected to mean in practice in the current context. They also develop a localisation scoring matrix in an effort to impose some kind of rigour onto a highly subjective issue, comparing two government-centric programs in the very different contexts of Timor-Leste and Indonesia.

We commend this attempt to advance the discourse and seek to build upon it in two ways. First, we propose an adaptation of the framework itself, shifting from a solely government-centric approach concerned with the aid investment being “on-budget” and “on-plan”, to a stronger focus on alignment and integration with “local systems and actors” that includes the business and civil society sectors; and second, we propose applying the scoring matrix and adapted framework to a single multi-country program with a common approach and results framework, thereby removing the variability inherent in comparing different programs in different contexts.

We will share insights on how far localisation ambitions can be realised across different contexts in the Asia-Pacific. We reflect on the lessons for aid management including on the appropriate role of external expertise and catalysing and managing sustainable changes through the aid program.

Between finance, logistics, and expertise: a grounded appraisal of localisation

Sovit Subedi, Senior Program Officer, The Asia Foundation

Localisation has been put forth as a ubiquitous response to many challenges faced by development agencies in bringing about desired changes in the “developing localities”. It is assumed that localisation is cost-effective; creates more equitable partnerships; and leads towards sustainable development outcome through enhanced capacities. However, localisation as a concept has been criticised for building a reductionist binary of

“international” and “local”, and a more analytical approach is argued for. Even though widely in use, it is difficult to find a cogent frame that satisfactorily demonstrates localisation as a normative and an analytical concept useful for development practitioners and theorists alike.

We use two case studies built through grounded appraisals of actors from a peacebuilding program implemented in Nepal to argue that conceptual clarity of localisation hinges on demystifying three aspects necessary in every development intervention: finance, logistics and expertise. In these case studies, atypically localised arrangements were made for these three aspects to achieve “conflict transformation” – sustainable resolution of conflict. However, the two cases resulted in differing outcomes – the conflict was transformed in one case at least in a partial sense, while in the other the conflict has been managed but is ongoing. Analytically, this provides a comparative study on the limits of similar localised approaches. Case studies from a particular peacebuilding program were used for this study because the program uses approaches from community development which is believed to have inspired a movement towards localisation in development.

Additionally, localisation in conflict and peacebuilding offers opportunities to investigate the complicated and tiered relationship of “locals” with the “sub-national”, “national” and “international” – domains crucial to contend in any localisation initiative.

Chair: Fiona Tarpey, independent expert on humanitarian policy and governance

Panel 6f – Evaluations and effectiveness: from analysis to action

A best practice approach to development programming in Melanesia? Connecting citizens to the state and justice sector in Solomon Islands

Dr Colin Wiltshire, Fellow, Department of Pacific Affairs, Australian National University

David Oakeshott, Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Pacific Affairs, Australian National University

Nicole Haley, Professor, Australian National University

Drawing on findings from a detailed field-based impact assessment which involved over 1,400

participants across 25 communities in four participating provinces, this presentation explores factors that underpinned the success of the Solomon Islands Community Governance and Grievance Management (CGGM) project. Funded by donors, managed by a national ministry, and administered through provinces, the CGGM project installed “community officers” (COs) in participating communities. These COs worked with pillars of the local justice sector, secular, religious and state actors, to make them more accessible to citizens. At the same time, COs sought to improve linkages between communities and both provincial governments and the police. The presentation shows that citizens surveyed were supportive of placing COs in village settings, noting that disputes were less frequent and better managed since the CGGM project commenced. Indeed COs with pre-existing experience and relationships were better able to establish a niche for themselves in the local justice and governance scene than COs that lacked these same connections and local knowledge.

Moreover, the CGGM project exemplifies several aspects of “best practice” development programming. It was informed by extensive research that incorporated deep sectoral analysis, as well as rigorous baseline and mid-term reviews, and was delivered through a partnership approach that remained iterative and adaptive over ten years.

Writ large, the CGGM project illustrates the potential of development interventions built on rigorous research and offers lessons for measuring the performance of aid more broadly across Melanesia.

An improved approach to providing technical assistance: a modest proposal

Sam Durland, PhD Candidate, Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University

The technical assistance (TA) provided to developing countries by international development agencies usually involves engagement of expatriate advisers, who work with host government departments and agencies as in-house technical experts. Typically, these advisers are charged with tasks intended to develop individual and organisational capacity, support organisational change, or provide policy advice. The ultimate aim of such engagements is to improve organisational service delivery. Many advisers’ terms of reference include a specific requirement to pass on their knowledge and skills to local counterparts, by acting as trainers, coaches or mentors. Sadly, in the author’s experience,

this requirement is frequently ignored or only partially fulfilled. There are a number of reasons for this apparent gap in TA delivery, including that advisers are often not adequately equipped to act in the role of trainer, coach or mentor. This paper suggests ways in which this deficiency could be overcome through application of basic adult learning principles. A case study is provided as an illustration. The author draws on his experience of over 30 years as an adviser providing TA to countries ranging from Papua New Guinea to more than 20 other developing countries in Africa, the Asia-Pacific and South America.

Insights into use of research and evaluation for international development: beyond the report

Dr Keren Winterford, Research Director, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology

Jessie Meaney-Davis, Research Principal, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney

Dr Soytavanh Mienmany, Independent Researcher

The production of program evaluations and research is core to the practice of international development, but how well is this knowledge used to inform policy and programming relevant to international development practice and contribute to development outcomes in countries where we work? This paper explores how we could more intentionally maximise use and impact of knowledge, learning and evidence produced within the international development sector. We introduce different ways of thinking about how knowledge (from evaluations or research) is produced and used. We reveal common linear simplistic perspectives, co-production, and policy windows as examples of different ways that research informs policy and programs. These different perspectives provide insights into the processes required to maximise use of evaluation and research findings. We explore these issues informed by an evaluation commissioned by the Australian Centre for International Agriculture Research (ACIAR) which explored how and why research interfaced with policymaking in Laos. Examples from the evaluation illustrate these different perspectives. The “research contribution framework” is also introduced as practical guidance to prioritise processes that strengthen potential for research uptake and use, and ultimately benefits from evaluation and research.

The paper suggests that we can and need to think more broadly about how knowledge is produced in

the sector and how it is used. Examples of ACIAR-funded research in Laos demonstrate that putting research into policy and practice requires more than producing reports. Informed by these different perspectives, the paper highlights implications for planning and conduct of evaluation and research. This includes the need to not only focus on quality of outputs, but processes which enable end-user engagement and collaborative practices in design and conduct of evaluation or research – intentional strategies to promote uptake and ultimately use of findings to inform and drive change.

Solidarity: what can international development programs do to enhance the solidarity mechanism? And what is a mechanism anyway?

Jo Hall, PhD candidate, Australian National University

Many of us who have worked in international development for a long time will be familiar with Paulo Freire’s influential work in community mobilisation from Brazil in the 1960s and 1970s. His work was very much about local community empowerment through participatory approaches and collective action. The mechanism of solidarity is at the core of Freire’s work. Solidarity is a mechanism, or force, that can transform individual action to collective action. It comes about spontaneously among groups with a common identity and common goals.

International development programs can help enhance the solidarity mechanism. Drawing on evaluations of the Sonagachi Project to reduce HIV rates among female sex workers in Kolkata, India, and attempts to replicate this approach elsewhere, this presentation will explore how projects can work to help strengthen solidarity.

The presentation draws on these evaluations and others to help explain what constitutes a mechanism. Projects are not transferable, but mechanisms are, across similar contexts. The trick is being able to identify the key mechanisms at work, the key features of the context that enable the mechanisms to work, and what projects do to alter the context to enable the mechanism to work. This new way of thinking about how projects work offers new ways of thinking about international development work.

Chair: David Kelly, Senior Consultant, Alinea International