

The end of AYAD: youth ambassador program retired

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With minimal fanfare, the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYAD) brand was retired as of July 1, in line with the recommendation of the [Office of Development Effectiveness evaluation](#) released earlier this year.

The former AYAD program has now been rolled into the wider Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program, without a dedicated stream or assignments for people under 30.

If you try to go to AYAD's website, you simply get redirected to Austraining's [main volunteer site](#) for its portion of the AVID program (AVID is also delivered by Red Cross and Australian Volunteers International). There is now a special tab for '[early career opportunities](#)'—these are assignments that require three years or less of professional experience. But they are open to anyone regardless of age.

During our forum on the ODE evaluation in March, there were questions raised on whether there would be any kind of quota on assignments targeted to younger people, as there were concerns that they would not be able to compete with more experienced candidates. From a quick glance, it is hard to tell if the proportion of early career assignments is similar to what it was in the past and there has been no mention in public of any kind of quota.

Considering that the evaluation advocated for more involvement of even younger people than the current AYAD average (Stephen Howes [criticised this](#) in one of his posts on the evaluation), this seems like a curious way to achieve this.

In its management response to the evaluation, DFAT itself also committed to “expand the availability of volunteering to those from regional and rural areas, Indigenous Australians and youth from the younger age range (18 to 24 years of age compared to AYAD's 18 to 30 years of age)”. It is still unclear how this will be carried out.

With or without AYAD, AVID is still confusing anyway. For outsiders, the whole Austraining versus Red Cross versus AVI thing makes very little sense. AYAD seemed like the stronger brand compared to AVID, with a more vibrant alumni network—yet AYAD is no more.

It will be interesting to see in any future evaluation or surveys what impact the elimination of the AYAD stream has on the overall demographics of volunteers. That is, if these reports are made public—access to such reports has been an issue in the past.

[\(You can read our previous posts on the volunteer program here\)](#)