








AUS4SKILLS

AUS4SKILLS IMPACT ON GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Aus4Skills, under Aus4Vietnam, is a ten-year partnership (2016-2025) between Vietnam and Australia, valued at A\$86.4 million. It is supporting Vietnam to build human resource capacity to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities and achieve long term development. It places a priority on advancing and building awareness of gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI). This booklet is a summary of a 2023 review of Aus4Skills achievements on GEDSI between 2016 and 2022.

Current Aus4Skills components

-  Australia Awards Scholarships
-  Alumni Engagement
-  Higher Education Capacity Building (previously Improving Quality in North Western Universities (QUNIS) 2016 - 2021)
-  Promoting Logistics Industry Linkages in Vocational Education and Training (VET)
-  The Vietnam Australia Centre (VAC), managed in partnership with the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics

Aus4Skills GEDSI achievements from survey findings



Target 50% women in Aus4Skills activities. **Actual: 58% from 1/2016-6/2021, 55% from 7/2021-12/2022.**

79%

Advancing Women in Leadership

71%

Supporting Australia's Aid Investment Plan (2016-2021)

70%

Australia Award Scholarships



98% participants surveyed had stronger GEDSI understanding and awareness



94% have used new knowledge and skills to address GEDSI issues at work, at home or in the community



GEDSI support and knowledge was relevant to **92% of participant's** organisation or individual needs



95% of VET and QUNIS partners improved capacity to understand and address GEDSI

79%

have more women in decision making roles

66%

have more professional development opportunities for staff from diverse backgrounds

63%

have more flexible work arrangements





Aus4Skills impacts

Aus4Skills has had meaningful positive GEDSI impact at multiple levels that is effective, relevant and sustainable.

Aus4Skills GEDSI achievements from survey findings



Individual

- Enhanced self-confidence and self-awareness on GEDSI issues
- Increased capabilities in creative thinking, critical analysis, GEDSI awareness and networking
- More alumni driven to 'give back' to communities and promote GEDSI



Interpersonal

- Many influential alumni networks and alliances established
- More positive perception of women leaders, people with disabilities, people from ethnic minority groups and people from the LGBTQIA+ community
- Alumni inspired to drive change with partner organisations
- Greater diversity in groups

Accessible environments work for everyone



"I am the Vice Chair of an organisation of people with disabilities (OPD). In VET teachers training, we had people with disabilities, and this meant everybody thought of people with disabilities straight away. This was the first time somebody asked me if I needed a personal assistant or not. I received a lot of support during the course. Aus4Skills promoted GEDSI very explicitly and I appreciated that. After taking part in Aus4Skills, VET colleges developed special policies for people with disabilities and strategies on how to support them in the best manner. They have policies to recruit students and even hiring teachers with disabilities."

Ms Dang Huong Giang - Vice Chair of Da Nang DPO



Organisational

- Increased number of women in leadership roles
- More people from ethnic minority groups and people with disabilities in leadership positions, especially in non-profit and social enterprises
- Inclusive and equitable teaching and assessment techniques embedded in VET, with introduction of competency based training and assessment
- VET and QUNIS leadership and procedures more inclusive
- Workplace projects increased awareness and action to apply GEDSI principles



Community

- Considerable ripple effect to creating changes in social norms and perceptions
- New role models planting the seeds for transformative change for future generations
- New networks established through alumni grant beneficiaries (women's performance and environment stewardship group)
- Alumni more motivated to build collective responsibility to call for change

Women can lead too

"Society thinks that women should support leaders, not become leaders. Aus4Skills did very well with female leaders to let them know that they are not lonely, they are on the right track. The program generated support for sisterhood."

Ms Mai Thi Buoi - Former Head of Training Department, Centre for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender, Family, Women & Adolescents. Women in Leadership Journey Participant

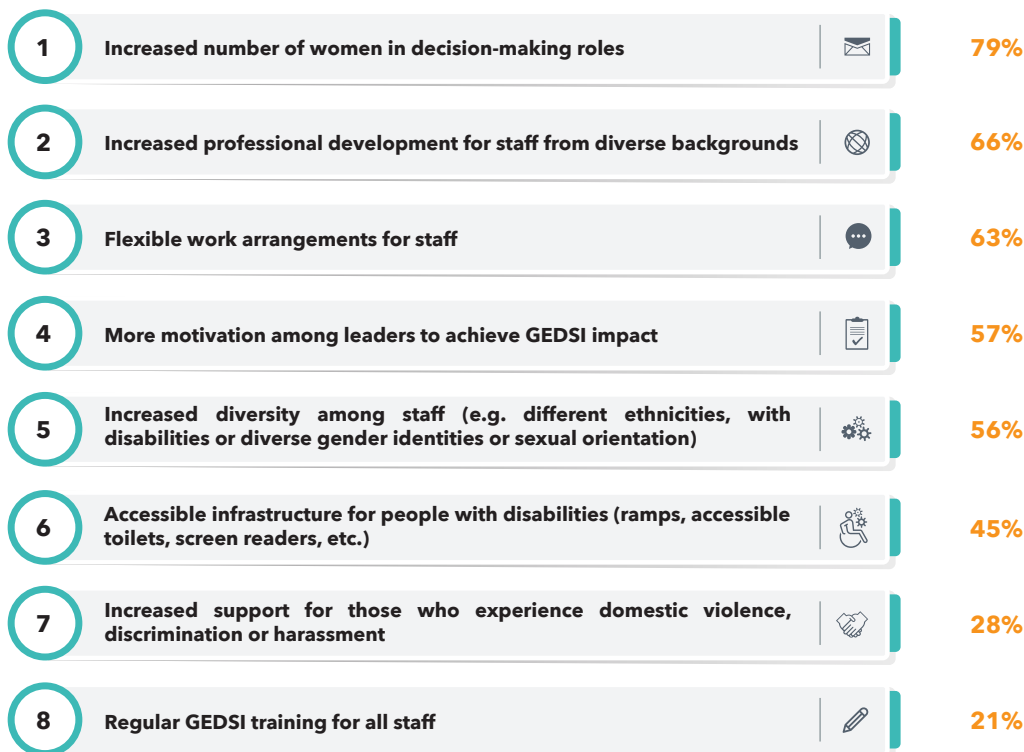


System

- Alumni making innovative and important contributions in health, education, governance, human rights, disability inclusion, gender-based violence, cultural heritage, and social enterprises
- Alumni influencing national change and progress
- More effective, inclusive, diverse and equitable learning environments for VET and higher education with improved curricula, assessment, teaching methods, student recruitment and organisational leadership

Leading the way for inclusive policies and practices

Australia Awards alumni are using their skills and networks to inspire change across Vietnam. A project co-managed by an Australia Awards alumni showed that ethnic minority children who learned their mother tongue first were then able to learn the dominant language very quickly and had a better transition to education. Based on this evidence, the Government of Vietnam has now approved a national action plan on strengthening the language of instruction based on children's mother tongue for preschool children and primary school students, bringing about better educational opportunities for all children in ethnic minority areas.





AUSTRALIA AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS AND AUSTRALIAN ALUMNI



94%

of alumni enhanced GEDSI understanding and awareness



91%

of alumni used new knowledge and skills to address GEDSI issues at work, at home or in the community



86%

of alumni found GEDSI support and knowledge relevant to their organisation's or individual needs

Revealing gender-based violence experienced by women with disabilities

In 2020, an alumna with disabilities used her Australian Alumni Grant to research gender-based violence among women with disabilities in rural areas. Working closely with local authorities in Nam Dinh province, she found an increase in abuse towards these women during the COVID-19 pandemic. This evidence was used to increase understanding among key stakeholders such as the Department of Health, Women's Union, Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, the police and health providers, and led to co-development of a manual to improve targeted support for women with disabilities.

5 Australian Alumni Grants Fund rounds (2016 - 2022)



182 projects



AUD2.47 million



25%

of all projects primarily
focused on GEDSI



51%

of projects provided credible
examples of contributions to
gender equality



26%

of projects provided credible examples
of empowerment and inclusion for
people with disabilities

Improving survival skills for the Deaf community (Grant Round 4)

"Our primary achievement was successfully implementing the first training opportunity for the Deaf community in Vietnam to gain knowledge and skills in first aid and safety. Four training sessions, including 11 local workshops, were provided to more than 100 people who are deaf or hard of hearing."

Ms Nguyen Thi Thuy Trang - Co-founder of Survival Skills Vietnam



Women with disabilities leadership training program in Vietnam (V-WILD) (Grant Round 3)

"Our project participants know how to protect themselves from being taken advantage of and abused and know how to avoid bad situations. For example, some participants with autism had previously been flirted with over the phone, experienced dating violence or been physically exploited. The project helped them gain the knowledge and skills to prevent sexual harassment."

Ms Tran Que Luong - Officer, Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin



Empowering lesbian, transgender men and women people in Hanoi, Lao Cai and Yen Bai via life writing and storytelling practice (Grant Round 3)

"Our project attracted the participation of lesbian and transgender men and women in the northern region of Vietnam, who are also identified as people of ethnic minority communities. The project organised activities where participants explored their lives and identities deeply. We collaborated with these individuals to create safe and self-empowered spaces to bring their stories of their emerging identities and other experiences of living to a broader public."

Mr Hoang Anh Nguyen, former Inclusive Education Officer, Education section, UNICEF Viet Nam





IMPROVING QUALITY IN NORTH WESTERN UNIVERSITIES

The Improving Quality in North Western Universities (QUNIS) component was delivered under Aus4Skills from 2016 to 2021. It provided capacity building for regional higher education institutions such as Thai Nguyen University and Tay Bac University, focusing on women's leadership, inclusion and GEDSI awareness.



100% of participants enhanced GEDSI understanding and awareness



98% of QUNIS participants used new knowledge and skills to address GEDSI issues



GEDSI support and knowledge was relevant to **96%** of participant's needs



All organisations better able to address GEDSI challenges and progress towards equitable and inclusive human resource development



More inclusive policies and procedures that attract diverse students.



New role models for students on positive change and inclusion

The Ethnic Minority Girls Club at Tay Bac University, established as a result of Aus4Skills support, has increased female students' understanding of gender equity and equality issues, with activities like a writing content, a gender equality forum with teachers from 26 local secondary schools, and self-defence training.



INSPIRING PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

"After participating in the program, I became the director of the Northwest People from Ethnic Minority Groups Studies Centre. With this position, I could secure more resources to work on preservation of cultural heritage. There was a topic on ethnic minority people's cultures taught only for pedagogical studies for 10 years. With my role at the centre, I managed to make this course mandatory for all students, raising the importance of culture. It attracts more students' attention and now students are a lot more informed about ethnic minority groups. We set up a learning hub for 200 female ethnic minority students to study and receive psychological consultations. Students got more confident to apply for jobs. One Thai student in fact has used this model and opened three centres for Thai children and became a role model on TV and mass media."

Ms Luong Hoai Thanh - Head of Ethnic Cultural Research for Northwest Region, Tay Bac (Northwest University), QUNIS participant



PROMOTING LOGISTICS INDUSTRY LINKAGES IN VET

The Promoting Logistics Industry Linkages in VET component of Aus4Skills is strengthening training to better meet needs in Vietnam's logistics sector, by building connections between industry and VET.

2016 - 2021: 10 partner colleges 2021 - present: 16 partner colleges

Female enrolment

42% in 2021

60% in 2022



99% of participants had enhanced GEDSI understanding and awareness



Stronger organisational capacity to address GEDSI challenges and progress towards equitable and inclusive human resource development for **97%** of participants



96% of participants have used new knowledge and skills to address GEDSI issues



GEDSI support and knowledge was relevant to **94%** of participant's needs

Impact of Aus4Skills on disability inclusion in Vietnam's VET sector



More inclusive and equitable teaching and assessment techniques



Tailored curriculum and assessments that better support students with disabilities



Inclusive college policies and procedures



New student recruitment strategies that attract and support students from diverse backgrounds



More support for education and employment needs of people with disabilities



Increased positive perception among businesses about employing people with disabilities

REPAIRING BROKEN WHEELCHAIRS FOR FREE IN DA NANG

The "Loving Wheelchair" project works with Da Nang Organisation for People with Disabilities to collect and repair broken wheelchairs, and refurbish old ones for people in need, free of charge. All repairs are conducted by teachers and students at the Da Nang Vocational Training College, who established the project as part of an Aus4Skills activity.

The project lets students use their training in practice and build their skills, especially when applying innovative thinking to fix or rebuild hard-to-find components. It demonstrates the benefits from creative solutions to increase vocational education and training student skills and relevance before graduation, and better link these to community and market needs.





VIETNAM AUSTRALIA CENTRE

"We feel less alone in our individual struggles and better able to push for equity!"

The Vietnam Australia Centre (VAC) draws together Australian and Vietnamese experts to support Vietnam's future leadership in addressing national, regional and international challenges. The VAC's foundational partners are the Ho Chi Minh National Academic of Politics (HCMA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office of Government and External Relations Commission.

The VAC facilitates the Advancing Women in Leadership (AWIL) initiative, including the Women in Leadership Journey (WILJ) short course. The WILJ aims to address challenges for female alumni in accessing supervisor support and promotions upon return to Vietnam, by strengthening women's confidence and skills, networks, and improving conditions for gender equality in organisations.

Women in Leadership Journey:

4 cohorts with 20-25 participants/cohort by December 2022

Cohorts 1 & 2:
QUNIS participants

Cohort 3:
Gender Machinery, Women's Union,
and Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs

Cohort 4:
HCMA

- | | |
|--|--|
|  100% of WILJ alumni have enhanced GEDSI understanding and awareness |  GEDSI support and knowledge relevant to 96% of WILJ alumni organisation's or individual needs |
|  96% of WILJ alumni have used new knowledge and skills to address GEDSI issues |  increased self-belief and motivation to become leaders |
|  increased capabilities in creative thinking, critical analysis, teamworking and networking |  participants report promotions or career advancement to positions of influence |

Alumni of the Women in Leadership Journey referred to it as 'life changing' and unlike any previous course, with an impact on thinking patterns and understanding of self. Key features of the course included its intersectional and trauma informed nature, with counselling offered to participating women, as well as extensive time in Australia forming connections with mentors and role models, professional development activities in Vietnam, and work based projects demonstrating interconnecting and intersecting activities.

The WILJ created a strong sense of sisterhood among women with different life experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives, and has empowered participants to share experiences and heighten collective awareness.

Advancing the growing GEDSI movement from the very top of Vietnam's public sector



Do Thi Thanh Binh is the Head of the Training Division of the Department of Personnel, Office of the Government. After participating in WILJ, she is "more determined now to close gaps in exclusion and inequality", using her new-found knowledge, networks, and her positional power. Binh has supported many of the 100 WILJ participants to build networks and capabilities by initiating GEDSI and advancing women in leadership training initiative, which aims to reach 1,500 women leaders in central agencies. She wants to extend local delivery of WILJ principles to create a whole-of-family, a whole-of-community, and a whole-of-society approach to gender equality. Using her position with the Office of the Government, Binh is supporting social and gender-equitable change across Vietnam.

Improving livelihoods, and preserving culture and the environment in rural disadvantaged areas



Cao Thi Hong Minh, Deputy Head of Law at the Vietnam Women's Union is working in some of Vietnam's most disadvantaged rural areas to empower women and improve livelihoods while preserving their customs and traditions. She initiated groups of women to deliver traditional dance performances at local home-stay businesses. Not only did this give the women income, but it also inspired them to increase focus on conservation to attract more tourists through eco-tourism.

Alumna promotes women leadership across central agencies



Luong Thu Hien is the Director of the Centre for Gender Studies and Women's Leadership at HCMA (VAC foundational partner) and was a trainer in the first WILJ in 2017. Since then, she has continued to be involved with other Aus4Skills Advancing Women in Leadership initiatives in other capacities.

Her capability as a trainer and influencer has grown with her stronger understanding of, and practice in, intersectional analysis. She is passionate about ensuring diversity of participants and accessibility of events, and looks at every possible way to close gaps, including for women with disabilities, and gender diverse and non-binary people. Under her leadership, there is now a greater focus on equality and inclusion in training for political leaders, including a new, compulsory course on gender in management and leadership.

Connecting women from ethnic minority groups and mountainous areas



Bui Thi Huong Giang, Former Deputy Head of International Cooperation Department at Thai Nguyen University, WILJ alumna, and a grants activity participant, established the 'Females from Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Area Research and Development Centre - Thai Nguyen University' (FEMMA) with the support of Australian expertise and networks built during participation in QUNIS. FEMMA aims to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and engages with women to find local solutions to their challenges, including developing tourism models, building business and tourism skills among women, and teaching English. It has created a network of 135 people from ethnic minority groups, 70% women, who are more confident and connected than ever.



AUS4SKILLS FOR GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY AND INCLUSION (GEDSI)

Aus4Skills integrates the interests of women, people with disabilities, people from disadvantaged rural locations, including those from ethnic minority groups and other disadvantaged groups into all its activities and outcomes. This includes:

- Implementing GEDSI-specific activities to tackle persistent challenges and barriers preventing excluded groups from achieving their full potential.
- Mainstreaming GEDSI activities to embed equality and inclusivity in all activities.

AUS4SKILLS GEDSI OBJECTIVES



Ensure targeted GEDSI groups benefit equally



Build human resource capacity for GEDSI, women's leadership and safeguarding



Promote GEDSI and women's leadership and safeguarding as development priorities

GEDSI CASE STUDY

This data is sourced from a 2023 review of Aus4Skills achievements on GEDSI between 2016 and 2022, based on 347 survey responses, 53 in-depth consultations conducted through interviews and focus group discussions.



79% women



21% people with disabilities



9% people from ethnic minority groups

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Aus4Skills

Level 9, Tower A, Handi Resco Tower, 521 Kim Ma, Ba Dinh, Hanoi

Tel. +84 24 3939 3991

Information on Aus4Skills and Australia Awards
info@australiaawardsvietnam.org

Information on Australian Alumni and Grants Fund
alumni@aus4skills.org & aagf@aus4skills.org

Information on the Vietnam Australia Centre
info@vietauscentre.org

Information on GEDSI initiatives
equityfund@aus4skills.org