

VANUATU- AUSTRALIA POLICING AND JUSTICE PROGRAM

PHASE I STRATEGIC REVIEW DEC 2019



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- Long history of engagement with different agencies, but separately, through Other Government Departments (AGO), AFP etc
- Phase I design (\$24 million 2017-19) massive change in approach
 - Sector wide, collaboration, one design with Police and Justice; joint oversight and management between DFAT/AFP, Contractor program management across the program, Police deployees and contracted Advisors working together
- Violence against women and children a binding theme and priority
- Sophisticated capacity development and gender strategies over laid across the program
- Extremely adaptive: additional funding for Step Up (police recruits and infrastructure); response to TC Harold, all based on annual planning process


KEY MESSAGES: WHAT IS WORKING WELL

- Being able to work across the Chain of Justice means you can see if there is impact and change at a systems level (and there is, increase in reports to police on GBV to prosecution and sentencing)
- Collective commitment and focus on gender based violence
- Responding and addressing emerging and immediate priorities (both political and practical)
- ‘balancing’ operational support with capacity development support
- Advisers working creatively and supportively with counterparts, fit for purpose (sometimes not knowingly but intuitively)
- Division of labour between donors (NZ working in corrections and community policing)
- Governance and management recognising internal political economy of PG system and structures (working with opportunities, avoiding blockages) – not forced on top (therefore very messy)
- Adept policy engagement at AHC between ADF, AFP, DFAT optimising resources and relationships (and even engaging through Contractor) – genuine policy coherence
- Kept space and ‘coverage’ for critical interventions that may not exist without Aust support: Professional Standards Unit, Community outreach and community based Temporary Protection Orders
- A programmatic and fit for purpose engagement – not “theoretically perfect” or complete or comprehensive – at first glance may look disjointed and ad hoc, but not

- Sustainability a pipe dream, design overly ambitious and unrealistic
 - Lack of financing and accountability in GOV system means ongoing operational support a necessary foundation
- TA heavy, but wanted by the partner government and is in Aust strategic interests
- Lack of transparency (on budget and decision making) with PG and multiple lines of management and decision making – caused by too many internal political and relationship dynamics to attempt to structure and align
- Volatility of the context: practically (disasters) and politically (appointments, Ministers) and policy (priorities like police recruits or infrastructure which become deal breakers/incentives to cooperate)
 - Some things are not done for ‘design’ reasons but purely for goodwill
- Impact of strategic interests (potential destabilising role of other actors diffuses Australia’s leverage)
- Underlying constraints are governance and political economy, not technical, capacity or even financing (the demand and expectation for quality services, and the lack of consequences for failure to provide)
 - Outside the influence of the Program



THE
CHALLENGES:
COMPLEX
AND WICKED
PROBLEMS



HOW THIS
REVIEW HAS
CONTRIBUTED
TO
“LEARNING”

- Through the **process** of the evaluation methodology
 - Open ended enquiry
 - Participative, spaces for different views to be shared
 - Open feedback and debrief to all stakeholders (prior to report)
- Through the **finalisation** of the Report with DFAT (primary client)
 - First draft with direct hard hitting statements, challenging assumptions and ways of working
 - Retain all key evidence and ‘negotiate’ shared understanding of meaning
- Through **recommendations**, leading to specific actions in management response
 - Updated design, key lessons incorporated into next phase
- Through **facilitation** of discussions across whole of government partners
 - About development approaches (and underlying theories of change)
 - About management alternatives and previous experiences and lessons

SOME KEY LESSONS WITH BROADER APPLICATION

- Being adaptive is more than being flexible, requires a different paradigm for the design (different theory of change)
 - Need embedded structured systems and agreed processes : eg the Annual Workplan process, how M&E is conducted, how policy changes and new priorities are reflected in planning and reporting
 - DFAT internal systems and requirements push against being adaptive and require highly skilled and influential internal decision makers
- Fundamental shift in thinking about what the program is about: not 'just' development, but operational support and strategic interests, and can be reflected in one design
- Holding a mirror back to policy makers (DFAT/AFP) and implementers (Contractor, PG, Advisers) and giving all an opportunity to share their own thoughts has charged up the reflective and learning processes
 - Understanding and appreciating what it is they are doing and achieving in new ways
 - Seeking ways to improve without feeling defensive or being criticised
 - The process of the evaluation as (or more?) important than the product in terms of learning (and you can't control or force it, depends on the responsiveness of participants)
- Can (maybe) create space for those within Partner Government who want to reflect and learn to influence change, but there is a tricky balance in working and thinking and politically between reinforcing existing power dynamics and creating space for change
 - Things like open meetings for feedback and informal Q&A discussions direct from the team
 - Giving PG officials permission to say (outrageous or challenging) things direct to DFAT, AFP or their own peers in a safe space. Need to take some risks.