

MFAT Management Response to Cambodia and Laos Young Leaders Programme (CLYLP) Evaluation

Evaluation:	An assessment of the effectiveness, objectives, and delivery model of the Pilot Young Leaders Programme in Cambodia and Lao PDR (CLYLP).
Background:	MFAT has partnered with the Unions Aotearoa International Development Trust (UnionAID) since 2009 to deliver the Young Leaders Programmes (YLPs). The programmes target emerging civil society young leaders who work and/or volunteer for NGOs, trade unions or labour rights organisations or social enterprises. The overall objective of the programmes is to contribute to sustainable development and good governance in participating countries through a stronger and more connected civil society. This evaluation covers the pilot, integrated Cambodia and Lao Programme.
Evaluators:	Alinea

Recommendation	Agree/Disagree
1. CLYLP should be considered a priority investment in any future funding cycle	Disagree To the extent this implies MFAT will always prioritise this investment in any funding cycle we disagree. The Young Leaders Programmes (YLPs) are a long-standing and valuable component of MFAT's International Development Co-operation (IDC) support. MFAT will weigh competing priorities against goals of New Zealand's IDC. MFAT has invited UnionAID to submit a design for consolidated future IDC support, bringing the Young Leaders Programmes (YLPs) into one medium-term funding arrangement.
2. Integrated YLP model is still appropriate if funding is not available to establish stand-alone country programmes in Lao PDR and Cambodia	Agree Action: MFAT is working to consolidate future IDC support to UnionAID for the Young Leaders Programmes (YLPs) into one medium-term funding arrangement. This will require a new Activity design (by UnionAid), including an overarching Theory of Change and coherent MERL framework across the country programmes to support achieving key development outcomes.
3. Agree a medium-term funding pathway for CLYLP (or its inclusion in any consolidated YLP), reflecting decisions on whether the pilot is extended, scaled, or transitioned into the consolidated YLP portfolio.	Agree Action: See previous
4. Review budget assumptions to reflect real operating costs in Cambodia and Lao PDR, including delivery, partner staffing, duty of care, and alumni/network costs.	Agree Action: Budget pressures on delivery partners will be considered further by UnionAid in the new Activity design. MFAT and UnionAID will coordinate to agree on a programme budget that reflects the scope, complexity and ambition of the programme.
5. Seek to strengthen and formalise local partnership arrangements, including reviewing KFP's fit for a future phase and exploring other potential Cambodia implementing partners, while supporting PAKA to play a deeper role in delivery and learning and continuing to enhance coordination with their training programs.	Agree Action: UnionAID to keep under review and explore as part of new Activity design. MFAT will assess the design as part of its business process.
6. Consider Resourcing local partners to contribute beyond delivery—including contextual appropriate pastoral care and support for participants, continuous monitoring of action projects and other MERL inputs, alumni coordination, and quality assurance to enhance locally-led development.	Agree Action: UnionAID to explore as part of new Activity design amid consideration of capacities and resourcing. MFAT will assess the design as part of its business process.

Recommendation	Agree/Disagree
7. Seek to reduce employment and financial risk for participants by setting clearer expectations with host organisations, improving scheduling flexibility where possible and embedding minimum standards for workplace support.	Agree Action: UnionAID to address as part of new Activity design. MFAT will assess the design as part of its business process.
8. Review curriculum pacing and intensity to improve retention, application and reduce burnout including fewer sessions per day where feasible, more reflection time, and stronger emphasis on practical (rather than academic theoretical) learning and action projects.	Agree Action: UnionAID to keep under review and explore as part of new Activity design. MFAT will assess the design as part of its business process.
9. Maintain and expand English “bridging” pathways to protect inclusion of potential participants experiencing heightened barriers to inclusion. This can include pre-departure English language training support, in-programme support and mentoring.	Agree Action: UnionAid to keep under review and explore as part of new Activity design. MFAT will assess the design as part of its business process.
10. Resource a fit-for-purpose MERL function for CLYLP (and ideally across YLP), including a unified results framework, clear outcome indicators, and alumni tracking beyond the pilot period. This can both provide an evidence base for the program’s impact story and act as a risk mitigation function.	Agree Action: MFAT is supportive of UnionAID taking responsive action to this recommendation. A new MERL framework will be designed for the consolidated programme.
11. Introduce a structured approach to action-project quality and learning, including providing clear guidance on expectations and timelines, enhancing safeguards and verifying outputs and outcomes through monitoring and in-person support from local implementing partners.	Agree Action: UnionAID to keep under review and explore as part of new Activity design. MFAT will assess the design as part of its business process.
12. Strengthen civic space and political risk management, including scenario planning, risk triggers, clear partner protocols, and contingency planning if operating conditions tighten in either country (especially relevant for Lao PDR).	Agree Action: UnionAID to keep under review and explore as part of new Activity design. MFAT will assess the design as part of its business process.
13. Develop a scalable alumni model that reflects cohort growth and cross-border constraints, potentially using hybrid engagement, cohort-based structures, and periodic convening rather than large annual conferences.	Agree Action: UnionAID to explore as part of new Activity design. MFAT will assess the design as part of its business process.
14. Use CLYLP learning to shape consolidated portfolio options, including criteria for when multi-country models are appropriate, and a “stairway model” via local partners to broaden access (including for candidates with lower English capacity, people with disability, ethnic minorities and people of diverse SOGIESC).	Agree Action: UnionAID to explore as part of new Activity design. MFAT will assess the design as part of its business process.
15. Develop and embed a GEDSI strategy for CLYLP (and ideally across YLP), with clear objectives, practical minimum standards for delivery partners, and measurable indicators integrated into the MERL framework.	Agree Action: UnionAid to prioritise this in the new Activity design.