

Asia Literacy Ambassadors: Partnering Businesses & Schools

AN EVALUATION

For the
ASIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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KEY FINDINGS

PROJECT OUTCOMES

1. In terms of the number of schools and Ambassadors who have committed to the project engaged, it was a marked success.

- Schools registered: 287
- Ambassadors registered: 283
- Partnerships established: 314
- Student participants: estimated to be in excess of 13,000

2. A wide range of activities was provided to the particular target group for the specified purposes.

Project element	Participants	Activity
One-to-one Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Years 8-11 students the dominant group, although Years 7 and 12 also included• A substantial number of interactions with school staff, the school community and parent groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A range of interactions and audiences, predominantly engaging students• Mostly related to the teaching of languages, but included in a wide range of other teaching areas as well• A large number of instances of multiple interactions
Ambassador Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Predominantly school staff• ANZ staff presented to students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 125 Presentations, adding value as a component of other relevant AEF programs and events
University partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior secondary students from 73 schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nine 'conference-like' events with a mixed program of presentations, workshops and other activities
Workplace Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mostly Year 9-11 students and some Year 12s	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 16 placements involving a wide range of activities• Four models proposed: the 'Asia Exploration' model most popular by far

3. Substantial impact was achieved in terms of each of the four aims of the project.

a) Inspire and motivate students, teachers and parents in the teaching and learning of Asian languages and/ or studies of Asia

From a sample of schools where nearly 5,500 students have had contact with the project:

- nearly 70% reported increased interest in Asian languages and cultures among their students
- half reported increased enrolment in Asian language study

Two-thirds of the feedback responses collected from participants in the 'Opening a Door into Asia' university events said the experience had broadened their mindset and that their intercultural understanding had improved.

b) Support the development of Asian languages and/ or studies of Asia programs in schools

70% of the schools applying to participate in the project did so to support the teaching of Asian languages or to support Asia-focused programs, thus seeing this project as an opportunity to achieve these purposes.

13% of school participants were schools 'beginning work on Asia-focused programs' and saw the project as an opportunity to bolster their plans.

c) Broaden awareness of the types of and variety of careers and opportunities that are available to those who are familiar with the languages and cultures of Asian countries

80% of school survey respondents suggested that their students displayed increased interest in investigating opportunities for working in Asian countries as a result of their partnership activities.

Of the 392 feedback responses collected from participants in the 'Opening a Door into Asia' events:

- 176 had 'become more aware of opportunities in the workforce and life generally';
- 72 commented on the new appreciation of the range of work for people with Asia skills and the new career pathways they were now aware of
- 50 were more alert to opportunities for study at university

This was also one of the great strengths of the Pilot Work Placement element of the project where school participants consistently commented on the impact of the experience in these terms: 'They saw Asia skills being demonstrated before their very eyes.'

d) Enable those working with the target countries to act as mentors or role models for those students wishing to pursue careers that require knowledge of Asian languages and cultures

283 people chose to do so. More than 70% were satisfied or highly satisfied with their experiences. No Ambassador, working in any element of the project, said they did not wish to continue to do so.

This project has proved that there is a substantial pool of people in Australia willing to support initiatives such as the Asia Literacy Ambassadors project.

LESSONS FROM THE PROJECT'S OPERATION

1. Building demand for 'Asia Literacy'

- **The data above indicate that the Asia Literacy Ambassadors Project was highly suitable for building demand for Asia Literacy**
 - Very high levels of satisfaction are evident among all groups of participants. From a schools' point of view it worked by having a 'new face' with real and recent Asian experience who is interesting and engaging with a good story to tell.
 - The data also suggest that that 'new face' will have much greater impact if they are present rather than a virtual presence. This is an important finding.
 - There were difficulties, but these were conventional and did not seriously impinge on the success of the project.
- **The significant operational changes made to the Asia Literacy Ambassadors Project throughout implementation have general implications for building demand**
 - Choosing to contact schools directly.
 - Extending the focus of the project beyond 'Asian languages'. Strategically, if progress is to be made in this task it will be through school administrators, curriculum coordinators and heads of department rather than language teachers. The teaching of Asian languages is more likely to be driven and sustained by a wider concern for learning about Asia rather than the opposite.
 - Increasing the variety of offerings through the project. An on going one-to-one 'partnership' between school and Ambassador would work in optimal circumstances. But different, discrete and more sharply defined and targeted opportunities emerged for interaction which were often preferred by participants. One size did not fit all; but neither did open-ended possibilities which were difficult to form into any specific shape.
 - Communication and other procedures were streamlined and made more direct and clear.
- **The term 'Asia literacy' remains an issue**
 - On the basis of the experience of this project, the general business/industry audience does not use and has little knowledge of the term; school educators a little but not much more. The problems this causes for a demand building exercise are profound. This is a well-rehearsed argument, but the experience of this project suggests that further reconsideration is required.

- **There is a significant group of secondary schools interested in improving their attention to Asia Education**
 - There is an identifiable group of secondary schools, possibly as many as 40 and possibly many more, which see themselves as 'Asia-focused schools'. The basis for this self-definition should be investigated and the results used for building demand.
 - There is an educational constituency which sees Asia-focused education as part of a 'good general' education. A subset of this group may be school personnel who want to broaden the cultural experience of their students, mostly because of their location and demographic. This latter is an important group to tap.

2. Defining partnerships

- **The sorts of partnerships set up through the project represent their own sort of 'partnership' which will be valuable to explore further**
 - There is no evidence of what might be commonly construed as conventional institution-to-institution partnerships forming through the project. What has been established, unequivocally, is relationships. What participants wanted was ideas related to the task in hand and very clear direction about how to make them work. For the purposes of the project that was what mattered.
 - This experience may, in fact, have extended the notion of what a partnership can be, a partnership more based on 'soft skills' and flexibility which may be more suitable for many types of school- business/industry interaction.

THIS TASK

At the point of commencement of this evaluation, the Asia Education Foundation (AEF) had entered the final months of delivering a 24-month pilot project — the Asia Literacy Ambassadors: Partnering Businesses & Schools project (shortened to ALAP here) — designed to ‘promote and stimulate and increase student interest in Asia literacy’¹ in Australian secondary schools.

The AEF proposed that in addition to the final Project Report an evaluation of the impacts of project activities on students and school communities be undertaken with the following goal in mind.

- The primary goal of the evaluation activity is to further understand the impact of the project’s school-business interactions on demand for Asia literacy among **students and school communities**. [emphasis in the original].

It was also intended that:

- The data and analysis gathered through this activity will help AEF, DEEWR and other stakeholders scope future strategies for engaging business and schools in the Asia literacy agenda.
- The data gathered and associated analysis will add knowledge to the broader bank of work occurring around school-business partnerships across Australia.

The AEF has gathered extensive data related to most aspects of the project and provided some analysis of these data in its reports. The outstanding job of collecting and organising as well as sharing and explaining these data by the AEF project team is warmly acknowledged here. Some of these data are included here for reasons of completeness and as evidence for the particular points of view advanced. But as indicated above, the specific task was to fill gaps relating to the experiences and views of students and school communities. To that end a survey was conducted of school participants and interviews were conducted with a randomly selected sample of school personnel who had been involved in the Project.

¹ Funding Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and University of Melbourne, 29 June 2009; C 1.1

EVALUATION

1. THE INTENTIONS

1.1 THE CONTEXT

The first major Project Workplan suggests that the ‘overarching context for this project was the recognised problem of lack of demand for the study of Asian languages and studies of Asia in Australian secondary schools at a time when our then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd had a vision for Australia to be the “most Asia-literate nation in the collective West”.’

The Workplan cited a range of key national policy documents and initiatives that were directed towards that end and indicated the scale of the problem by reference to findings contained in the ACER Research Report *Studies of Asia in Year 12*.

The vision that the AEF brought to the project specified that:

This project will establish and support partnerships between businesses and school communities, with business taking a lead role. The goal will be to stimulate and increase student and school community demand for Asia literacy by demonstrating the practical application of Asia-related skills, knowledge and understanding.

1.2 THE INITIAL DIRECTION

The Funding Agreement defining the project² states that its objective is to:

Promote Asia literacy in schools, and stimulate and increase student interest in Asia literacy. The focus of the project will be on the languages and cultures of the four target countries identified in the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program, namely China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea.

Four subsets of this objective are included in the Funding Agreement.

C.1.2 The Project will draw upon Your Business Alliance for Asia Literacy to establish strong and continuing partnerships between businesses and school communities to:

- a) Inspire and motivate students, teachers and parents in the teaching and learning of Asian languages and/ or studies of Asia;
- b) Support the development of Asian languages and/ or studies of Asia programs in schools;
- c) Broaden awareness of the types of and variety of careers and opportunities that are available to those who are familiar with the languages and cultures of Asian countries; and

² *ibid.*

- d) Enable those working with the target countries to act as mentors or role models for those students wishing to pursue careers that require knowledge of Asian languages and cultures.

As originally defined, the project would have two components: the work of Ambassadors with secondary schools, and the Pilot Work Placement Program.

C.1.3 The Project aims to identify and provide support for skilled professionals who will act as Asian Literacy Ambassadors and will work with secondary school teachers and students throughout Australia on a voluntary basis. The Asia Literacy Ambassadors will ideally be proficient in one or more target languages, and/or have undertaken tertiary study in one or more of the target countries, and/or have professional experience and connections with one or more of the target countries.

C.1.4 The Project also aims to strengthen business and school partnerships through establishing a Pilot Work Placement Program for students. The Placement must support high achieving senior secondary students (Years 11 and 12) studying a target Asian language or studies of Asia, or with an interest in working for an organisation with operations in the Asia Region.

Deliverables over the funding period included:

- at least 100 'skilled professionals' to be Ambassadors to work in secondary schools, and to be prepared to do so
- at least 500 schools to be involved in the project
- at least 15 organisations to work in the Pilot Work Placement Program
- an extensive communications strategy, and a website
- promote effective collaboration with state and territory government and non-government education authorities to maximise school participation in the project

Access for rural and remote schools to both elements of the project was to be assured.

1.3 ADDITIONAL WORK TO SHAPE THE NATURE OF THE PROJECT

Prior to the operation of the project, and in line with its operation as a pilot, the AEF engaged a research team to undertake a three-week consultation and review process to inform its design.

The research team contacted Peak Associations, Bi-lateral Business Councils, corporate members of the Business Alliance for Asia Literacy (BAAL), Asia Education Foundation State and Territory Advisors, School Principals, and other key stakeholders for their views.

The research team identified and described four related large-scale projects: 'Scientists in Schools', 'Schools First', 'Worlds of Work' and 'School-Community Learning Partnerships for Sustainability Project'. While there were some similarities with the ALAP, there were also significant differences, not least being the common

unfamiliarity with the term ‘Asia Literacy’³, entailing a major marketing and communication challenge which didn’t exist, for example, with the term ‘scientist’.

The research group made a number of recommendations. Some, but not all, were subsequently to prove prescient.

- Two additional forms of partnering were proposed: partnering with peak and other teacher professional associations to promote the project to teachers and ensure links to the curriculum across a range of subjects⁴; and partnering with bilateral and other business councils to promote the project to business people with Asian language skills and experience of working throughout the region.
- Training the business people acting as Ambassadors prior to their work in schools.
- Consider convening national symposia for project participants including all Ambassadors, state and territory project staff and teachers and teacher associations. (This idea was based on the success of a symposium for participants in the ‘Scientists in Schools’ program.)
- ‘The majority of consultations recommended that the project be expanded to Years 7-12. Longitudinal studies of Australian Youth show most participation in career-focused activities in middle years⁵. Our consultations with educators also emphasized that students are more open to career-focused activities earlier in their schooling years (in Years 7-10) as they concentrate on university entrance during Years 11-12. We propose a project reach of Years 7-12.’ (Research report)
- ‘The contract places the focus on China, Korea, Japan, and Indonesia. The general view is that this is too narrow. Business, for example, pointed to their work in Singapore, India, Vietnam, and Thailand.’ (ibid.) The recommendation of this group was to expand the range of countries to include the 10 ASEAN countries.
- On the basis of the structure of other similar successful programs, it was proposed that supporting project personnel be employed in each State and Territory.
- A high priority was proposed for web development and management.
- With relation to the Pilot Work Placement Program, ‘[t]here was “lukewarm” support from business for work placements in the traditional “work experience” mode. ... Caution was the note, not brisk enthusiasm. The contract requires a pilot program for Year 11 and 12 students. Few schools would be interested in involving Year 12 students.’ (ibid.) A limited pilot work placement to be undertaken with the operational partnership of the Career

³ Even by those who are ‘Asia literate’. There are four uses of the term (all from educators) among the 176 expressions of interest from potential Ambassadors.

⁴ ‘Educators know that in the current typical management of the curriculum it can be a struggle to “place” study about Asia.’ (Research team report)

⁵ Rothman, S and Hillman, K (2008) *Career Advice in Australian Secondary Schools: Use and Usefulness*, ACER, Victoria

Industry Council of Australia or Career Educators Association of Victoria was proposed.

1.4 REFINING THE OPERATION

The major focus of the work from November 2009 and through the first half of 2010 was setting up the platform for the project — establishment of procedures, the preparation of support materials and so on. It was formally launched at the Asia Education Foundation's national summit in May 2010 and the rest of that year was spent soliciting participants.

By November 2010 64 schools and 86 Ambassadors had been registered. The funding agreement targets of 500 school and 100 Ambassador participants made it clear that some rethinking of approach was required. The second progress report (November 2010) outlined these matters in some detail, both in the body of the report and in a special section.

The major issue to be resolved was participant numbers. The strategies proposed were:

- To reduce the targeted requirement. This was proposed in the context of a reshaping process. An emergent issue was the discrepancy between the number of schools to be involved (500) and the number of Ambassadors (100). It was already clear and subsequently confirmed through experience that an Ambassador would neither wish nor be able to be involved with five or more schools. The proposal agreed through a contract variation was to aim for 200 partnerships involving at least 250 schools and 200 Ambassadors by the end of the funding period. (In this context, and in the absence of other benchmarks, it is noted that the 500 schools registered with the 'Scientists in Schools' program had yielded fewer than 150 active partnerships.)
- To extend the target group to include primary schools. This would increase the possible pool by around 6,600, and had been one of the bases of the 'Scientists in Schools' program's success. This was not agreed. (It should be noted that most education agencies were at the time engaged in a significant promotion of science in primary schools and working out ways in which its teaching could be strengthened. Science, as the comparisons included in this report point out, is also a foundation of the curriculum whereas 'Asia literacy' was a notion that needed to be explained as well as sold.)
- To extend the timeline. An extra four months was requested and an extra three months granted. In the final analysis, this extension was useful for the project but the additional numbers had been realised before then.
- To transfer some of the funding to employ state-based consultants to recruit school participants. This idea was driven by the limitations for education agencies to do so. This was agreed but in the event only one person was employed for this task (in WA)⁶.

⁶ The person employed had some success with schools, recruiting five. However, the need in this specific context was for more Ambassadors and a better alternative might have been to employ someone with business rather than education contacts.

- To extend the focus of the project beyond 'Asian languages' and thereby languages faculties and contacts. The strategy proposed was to engage Business Educators Australia and the Careers Industry Council of Australia to publicise and support the project. As will be seen the issue was correctly identified, but the solution emerged from a different quarter.
- To go directly to schools rather than through mediating bodies. The theory behind this idea was that: 'The key point regarding project promotions is that project awareness-raising strategies alone will not bring schools to the project (i.e. get them to register). Schools are generally seeking several discussions with the AEF about the commitment, the Ambassador, the value of the offer, available funding, reporting expectations, etc.' Again the issue and strategic direction were well identified, but a better medium was found.
- To emphasise the ALAP as a complement to existing programs rather than as an addition. This recommendation stemmed from understanding the difficult fit of 'Asia literacy', both the concept and the term, with conventional school practice.
- To increase the variety of offerings through the project. This was driven by the success of a first 'Opening a Door into Asia' program which had already occurred at the University of Melbourne and which was to be the precursor of eight more. At the same time ideas were emerging from the nature of the interactions between schools and Ambassadors that suggested the model of an on-going one-to-one 'partnership' between school and Ambassador would work sometimes in optimal circumstances; but different, discrete and more sharply defined and targeted opportunities were emerging for interaction which were often preferred by participants.
- To better integrate ALAP with other AEF programs ('Leading 21st Century Schools', 'Becoming Asia Literate Grants to Schools', 'BRIDGE', Study Tours). This idea and that immediately above produced a turning point in the growth of the project and were very important to the eventual quality, impact and reach of the project.

Preparation and consideration of these ideas provided major shifts in the nature of school and Ambassador recruitment to the project and to the activities it sponsored and promoted. They represent a shift towards more flexible and higher impact arrangements and thoroughly validate the project managers' focus on the investigatory nature of the project.

The next two sections, The Participants and Partnership Interactions, describe what happened in more detail.

2. THE PARTICIPANTS

At the time of writing (October, 2011), 287 schools⁷ and 283 Asia Literacy Ambassadors were registered with the ALAP, with 314 school-business partnerships

⁷ The AEF suggests this represents a penetration into about 8% of secondary schools. In 2009 there were 1,455 stand-alone secondary schools in Australia and 1,241 combined primary-secondary. The latter group are largely of two sorts: rural/remote government schools (the considerable majority) and

having taken place since March 2010. Eighteen months earlier there were none. How did this happen?

2.1 THE SCHOOLS

2.1.1 RECRUITING STRATEGY

To September 2010 the project's recruitment activities are described as: 'liaising with education sector representatives in each state and territory, conducting project briefings with school representatives, and following up with schools nominated by Ambassadors as potential project participants. ... The project has also been actively promoted through AEF e-news groups, with a call to "find out more" and "register now" included in the fortnightly publications.'

The importance of direct contact with a person who could actually explain what the project was about rather than just advocate for it in general terms was noted at this point. 'The key point regarding project promotions is that project awareness-raising strategies alone will not bring schools to the project (i.e. get them to register). Schools are generally seeking several discussions with the AEF about the commitment, the Ambassador, the value of the offer, available funding, reporting expectations, etc. They are very cautious and clearly have to 'tick-a-lot-of-boxes' before they will commit. Once the school contact has had the chance to talk through the opportunity with an AEF project team member, they generally register.'

The shift in approach towards the end of 2010 has been noted above. 'In addition to the promotion and advocacy through state and territory contacts, the project has been promoted through AEF E-News, Asia EdNet, direct to Becoming Asia Literate Grants to Schools (BALGS) schools (all successful and unsuccessful applicants), Leading 21st Century schools (L21CS), all past AEF Study Tour participants, through the peak principal groups (ASPA), peak professional associations (Business Educators, Career Practitioners), word-of-mouth, articles in journals and other miscellaneous promotional opportunities.'

As the Figure below illustrates, a very significant development occurred with the inclusion of project information and, more especially, contribution from Ambassadors to the 'Leading 21st Century Schools programs'⁸.

some independent schools. Collectively these schools enrol a very small proportion of Australian secondary students. It is realistic to suggest that, on these numbers, schools enrolling 15% or more of Australian secondary students have had some contact with the program.

⁸ Professional development programs for school leaders provided by the AEF in each state/territory except Victoria. Participants meet three times a year. As the table indicates, the big impact grew out of the first series of these of these for 2011.

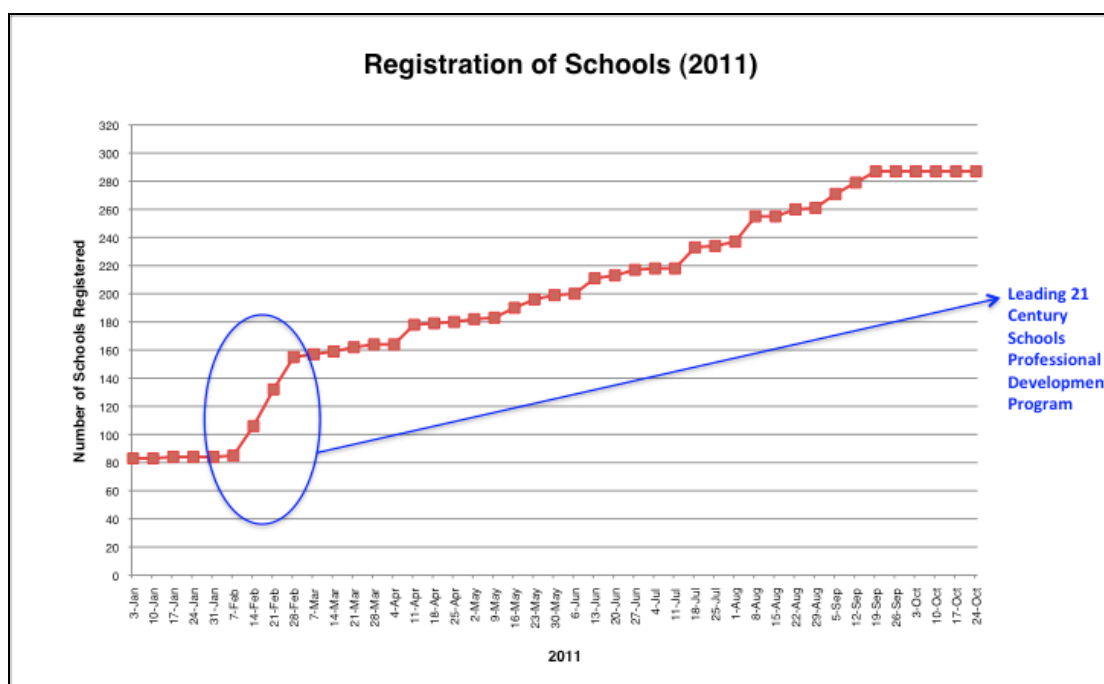


Figure 2.1 Registration of Schools, October 2011

The other big growth factor is the way in which the project has fed upon itself. When it had an identity, when it was operating, when some people had had experience of its operation, it was able to generate its own growth. This table indicates this very clearly.

Table 2.1 Schools involved in ALAP and method of sign-up

Method of sign-up	Number
Schools registered via Expression of Interest form	123
Schools registered via Ambassador presentations	83
Schools registered via 'Opening a Door into Asia' university event	58
Schools registered via Workplace Visits	4
Schools registered via BRIDGE project	5
Schools registered via Study Tours program	14
TOTAL	287

Of the 287 schools registered with the project at this point of data collection, 123 submitted separate on-line expressions of interest. (The majority of these appeared in 'phase one' of the project. Their motives are examined more closely below.) Nineteen came via other AEF programs (and none, oddly enough, on this categorisation via BALGS, although a number of participant schools were also recipients of BALGS). But *no less than 50% came via ALAP activities* (including contributions to L21CS programs).

2.1.2 SOURCE: 'Where did you hear about ALAP?'

Answers to the question on the expressions of interest about the source of participants' awareness of the project go some way to explaining how it evolved and who did the difficult work of engaging this interest. They also provide some insights into the most effective avenues of marketing a project of this nature. 120 respondents

(to the recorded expressions of interest) answered one of its questions: 'Where did you hear about the Asia Literacy Ambassadors project?' In summary form the answers are as follows.

Table 2.2 Categorised answers to 'Where did you hear about the Asia Literacy Ambassadors project?': Schools [From the Expressions of Interest: n=120]

Source	Number	TOTAL NUMBER	%
AEF*			
• Email	44	92	77
• Brochure/info pack	7		
• Newsletter	6		
• Website	5		
• Asialink email	3		
• Staff presentations/direct contact	12		
• AEF Forum	3		
• Asia Literacy conference (Sydney)	1		
• Via other AEF programs - L21CS (8) - BALGS (1) - BRIDGE (1) - Opening a Door into Asia event (1)	11		
EDUCATION AGENCIES			
• DEECD (Vic Dept) - via consultant (6) - via Dept. Bulletin (2)	8	16	13
• AISSA	3**		
• DET WA	1		
• CEO (Vic)	1		
• DET Qld	1		
• DECS	1		
• CEC (SA)	1		
WORD OF MOUTH FROM A FRIEND OR COLLEAGUE			
• In education	3	7	6
• From the principal [¶]	3		
• Unspecified	1		
OTHER			
• AsiaEdNet	1	5	3
• WAPPA languages forum	1		
• CECV workshop	1		
• MLTAV newsletter	1		
• Involved at previous school	1		

* The sub-categories are not necessarily reliable, but the source is firm.

** Following an AEF presentation.

¶ This probably means being passed a communication from the AEF.

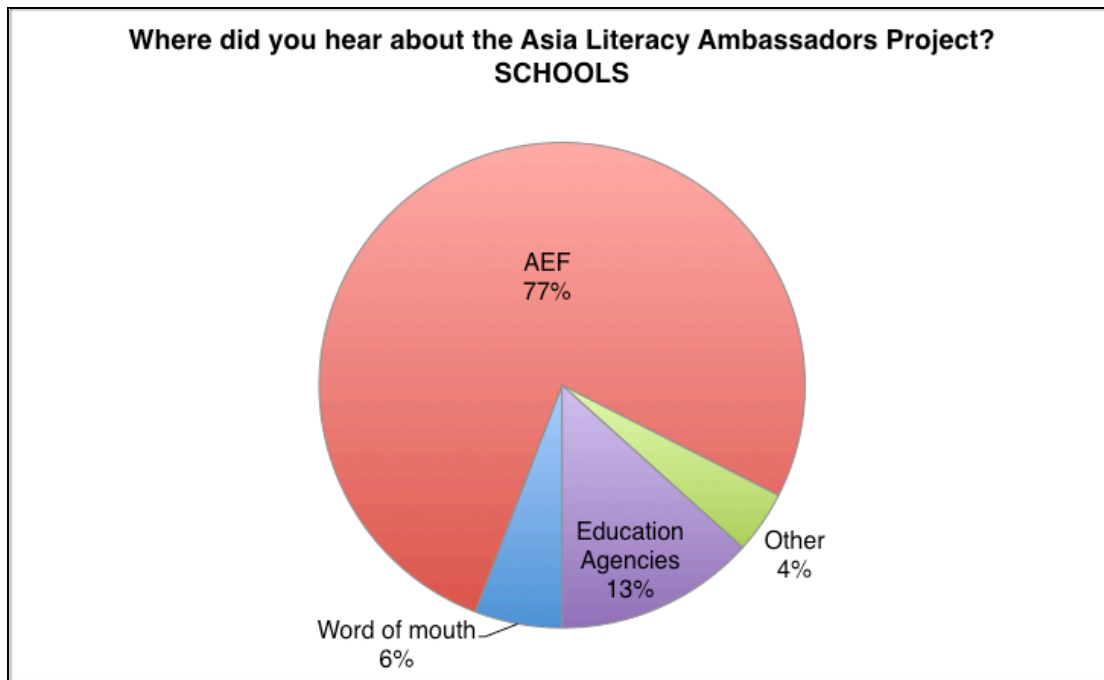


Figure 2.2 How Schools Heard about ALAP

Thus the vast bulk of participants were recruited directly by the efforts of the AEF using AEF media.

The funding agreement (at clauses C.2.1, C.2.7 and C.2.8), the preliminary research and the early project plans all contain the assumption that this would be a partnership process, that various peak bodies from both education (including state/territory agencies of the various sectors) and business/industry would publicise and support the project and find potential or actual participants, and that this would be basic to the project. Given this emphasis, it is significant to note that a very small proportion (less than five percent taken overall) of school registrations can be attributed to the work of education agencies.

The important lesson from this experience is the degree to which the project team were able to generate their own school registrations, and, especially, the accumulative effect of a going concern.

2.1.3 MOTIVATION: 'WHY WOULD YOUR SCHOOL LIKE TO BE INVOLVED IN THE ALAP?'

Investigating the reasons why schools say they chose to become involved in this project is valuable for a number of reasons. It helps describe the way in which the project was understood by participants and provides a reference point for considering its original intentions. It indicates the variety among the expectations with which the participants entered the process, and helps explicate their subsequent responses and levels of satisfaction. Most importantly, it provides a snapshot of the market for such projects.

The following information has been derived from the expressions of interest for participation in ALAP. Responses to the request 'Please tell us why your school would like to be involved in the Asia Literacy Ambassador project' were reviewed and grouped thematically. This is an inexact process.

However, most responses appeared to be singly-focused, ‘front of mind’ statements, and aggregating them was not a difficult task.

Table 2.3 Summary of reasons given for wishing to participate in the project: Schools [from on-line Expressions of Interest; n=120]

Reason	Number
SUPPORT THE TEACHING OF ASIAN LANGUAGES	
To encourage students to see value in Asian language study ...	25
To provide a ‘living resource’ for students	8
For students to see the relationship of Asian languages to employment	6
SUPPORT ASIA-FOCUSED PROGRAMS	
To enhance our current Asia-focused program, mature programs	27
To enhance our current Asia-focused program, beginning programs	16
ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF BUSINESS EDUCATION	
Establish new links with the business community	10
ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF GENERAL EDUCATION	
Improve school’s Asia literacy/ general educational quality	15
Increase students’ range of experiences	6
Help accommodate the new Australian Curriculum	3
BECAUSE I CAN ...	
Capacity and/or experience of school personnel	4

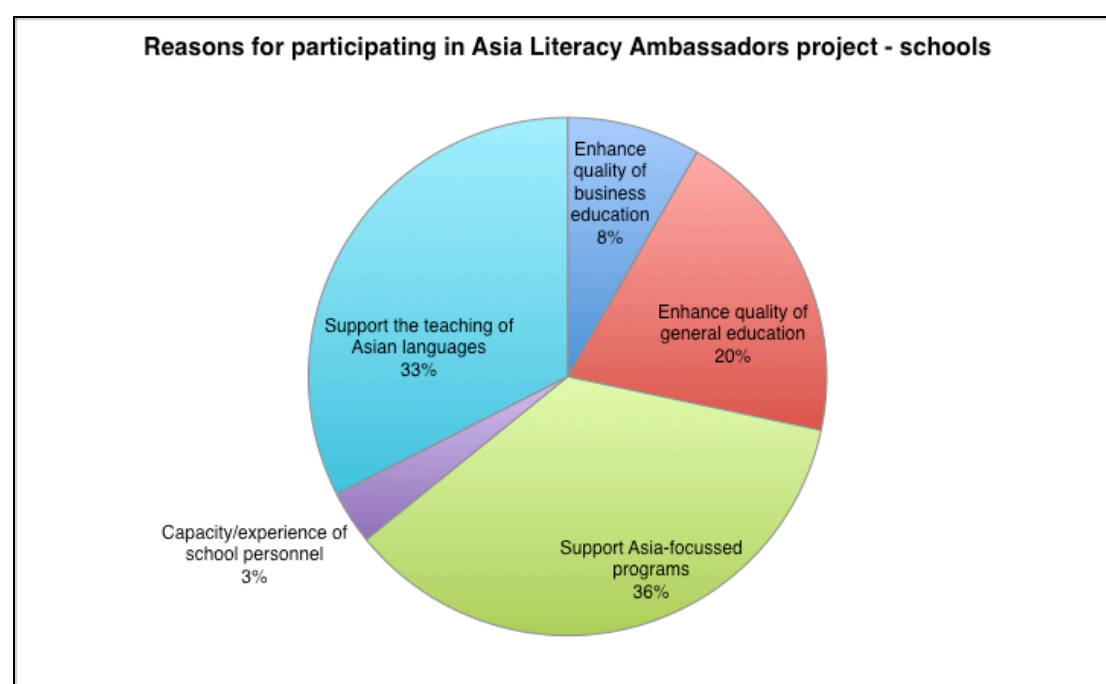


Figure 2.3 Motivation for being involved in ALAP - Schools

A more detailed account of these reasons can be found with examples in *Appendix 1*.

2.1.4 THE LOCATIONS AND ROLES OF PARTICIPANTS

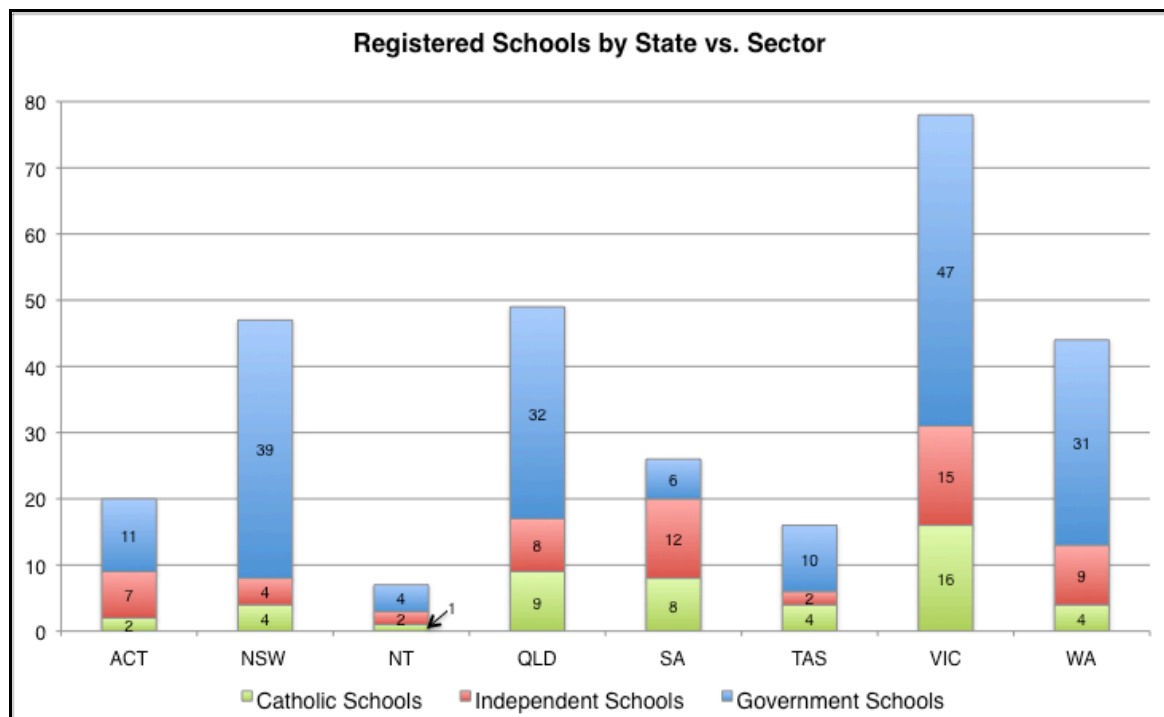


Figure 2.4 Number of schools registering for ALAP by state and sector

The Figure above suggests a disproportionately strong response by Victorian schools. But the Figure below provides another perspective, suggesting that, with the exception of NSW, the proportion of schools responding by state/territory (using student enrolment as a surrogate for school numbers which are problematic) was consistent with or better than proportionate.

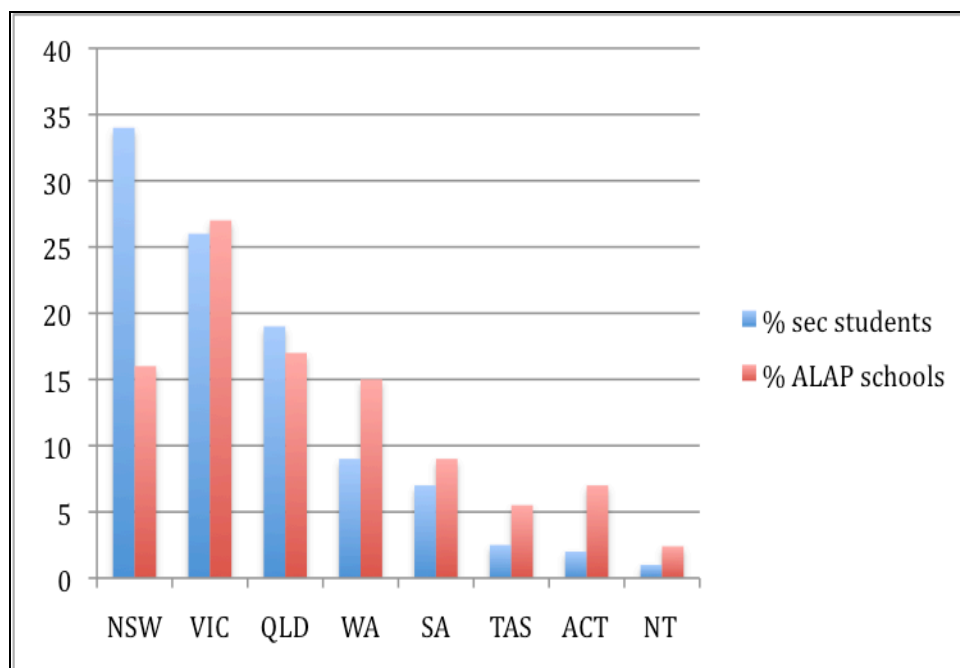


Figure 2.5 Percentage of students and ALAP take-up by schools by state/territory as a proportion of total registrants

With some modest differentiation, the distribution across sectors was consistent with the national sectoral distribution of secondary students.

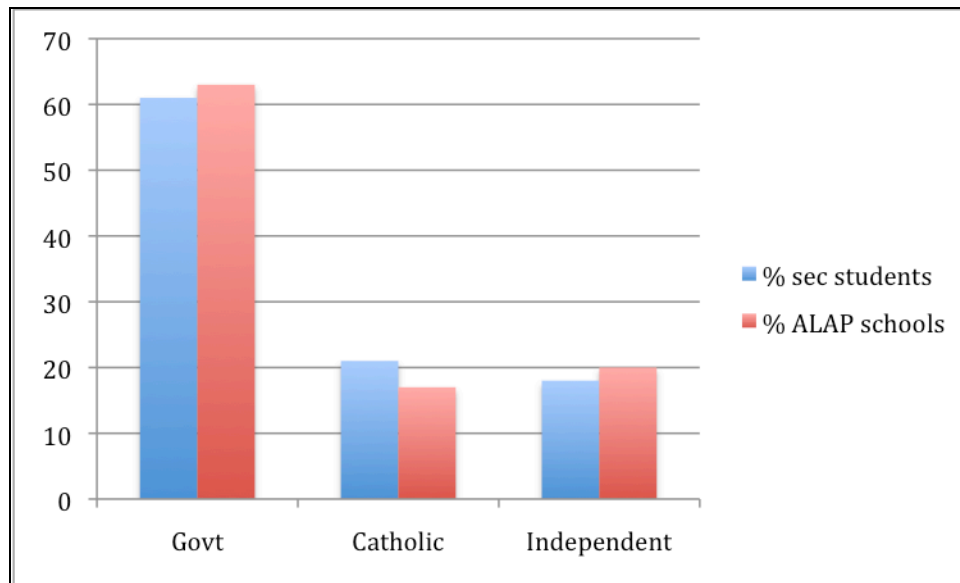


Figure 2.6 Sectoral distribution: % of students, % of ALAP schools

The Funding Agreement calls for 'ensur[ing] that rural and remote schools have access to Asia Literate [sic] Ambassadors' and, to this end, that travel expenses should be provided (C.2.11).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines Australia's 'rural' population as being approximately 30% of the total and the 'remote' population as 2.3%, with the capital cities containing the rest.⁹ The categories used to assign data collected via the project are not consistent with the terms in the Funding Agreement but, focusing on the location of schools registering, the project had moved significantly beyond the problem of overemphasis on urban/capital city participants.

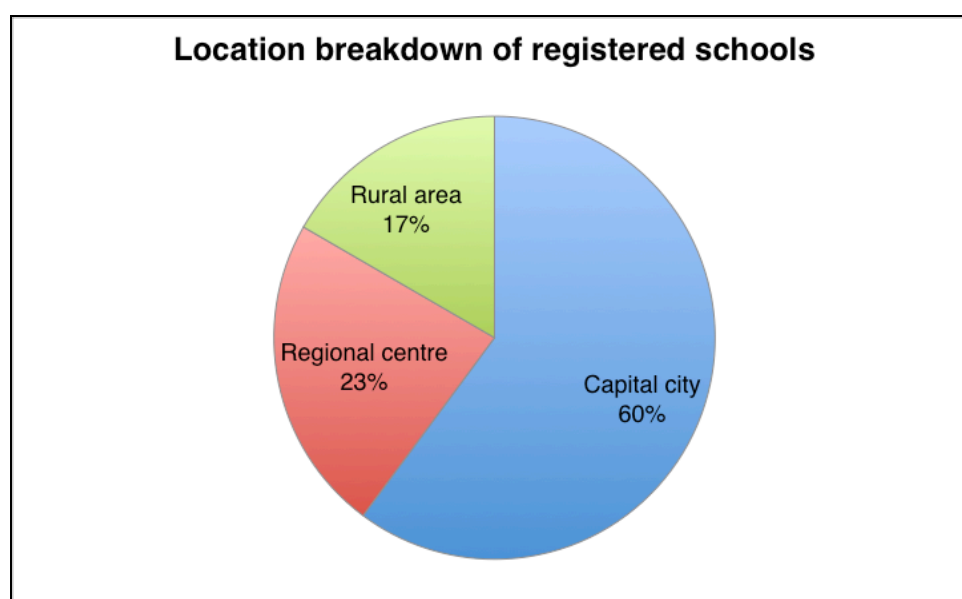


Figure 2.7 Location of registered schools

⁹ ABS 4102.0 - Australian Social Trends, 2008

This is a good outcome given the Ambassadors were overwhelmingly located in capital cities¹⁰. But it also suggests an appetite for Asia-focused activities outside the major urban areas. This is congruent with the concern expressed in motivations for project involvement about the monocultural and potentially insular nature of some of the communities in which these schools are located.

Finally, who was it who took it up in schools? What roles did the key school contacts have? The Figure below provides an indication.

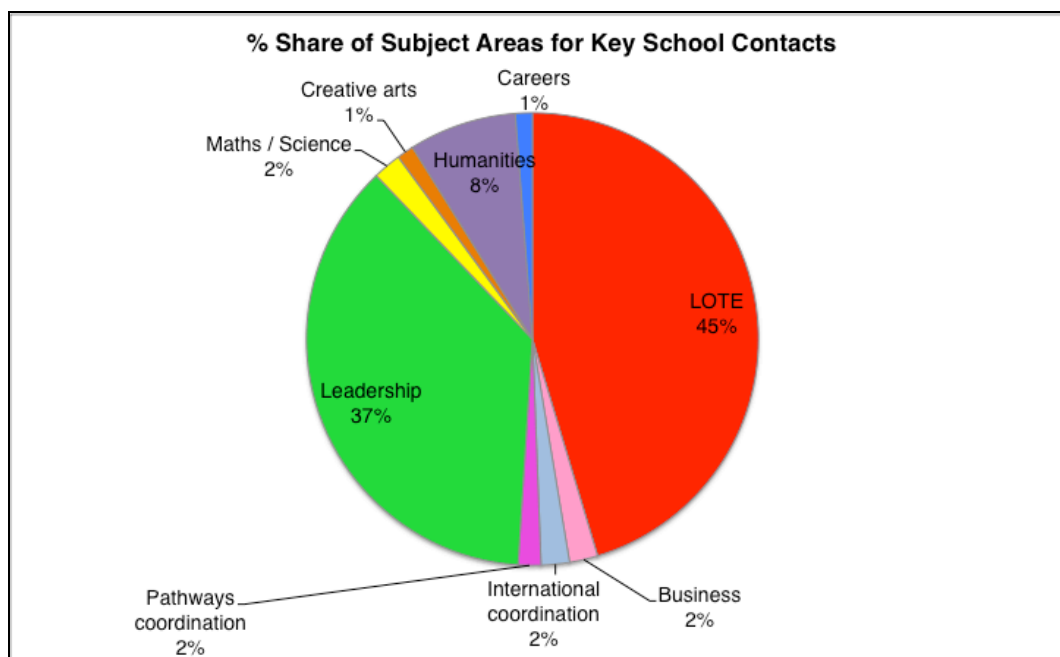


Figure 2.8 Role of Key School Contacts

The Figure does not show the significant variations over time. A very considerable majority of the applicants during the first phase were languages (LOTE) teachers. This is unsurprising given the prominence devoted to the support of Asian languages in the definition and conduct of the project. The way it is described tends to suggest that Asian languages differ from studies of Asia for example and it is not entirely clear how both relate to the project's overarching objective: 'to promote Asia literacy in schools, and stimulate and increase student interest in Asia literacy.'¹¹

Asian language teachers are almost never the locus of power in a school. This is why the inclusion of a large group of school administrators acting as key school contacts, solicited mostly but not entirely via the L21CS program, has been important. That is the locus of power in schools, with a capacity not just for wide influence but with a chance to define 'Asia literacy' in practice and to support its potential impact across a whole school more effectively.

¹⁰ All but two of those surveyed, ie 96% of the total, lived and worked in capital cities.

¹¹ This is a terminological problem which extends beyond this project and is a subject discussed further in the final section of this report. A comment made by one Ambassador in his/her response to the survey is salient.

Is this another example of the tendency to give Asia Education to the Asian Language teachers again? These teachers are usually rushed off their feet and are rarely well connected to the rest of the school program. (I used to be one.) The program would be much more successful with articulation between the broader school curriculum (business, geography, global studies, economics) and the Ambassador to maximise benefit and to provide more support for the school doing the project.

2.2 THE AMBASSADORS

2.2.1 RECRUITING STRATEGY

Recruitment of the Ambassadors did not present the same challenge as the recruitment of schools, not least because the target of 100 'skilled professionals' was considerably fewer than the 500 schools initially sought. After a few months work (at 31 August 2010), 73 Ambassadors had been registered. Thus, even at that comparatively early stage, progress towards the overall target was well on track. At the time of writing it has been exceeded by more than 300%, an extremely positive and important outcome.

There were three strategies chosen for recruitment of Ambassadors: the targeting of specific organisations, promotion of the project through existing Asialink/AEF networks, and direct requests to individuals.

Different sorts of strategic partnerships were sought with PricewaterhouseCoopers, Australian Volunteers International (AVI), ANZ, Santos, Westpac, IBM and Surfaid. The intention of these partnerships was to involve a large cohort of employees from each organization to become Ambassadors. PricewaterhouseCoopers and AVI provided a very substantial group of Ambassadors, and a new sub-element of the project was supported by ANZ employees. (The figure below illustrates the impact of their cooperation.) Individual Ambassadors came from each of the other organisations but strategic relationships have not yet resulted.

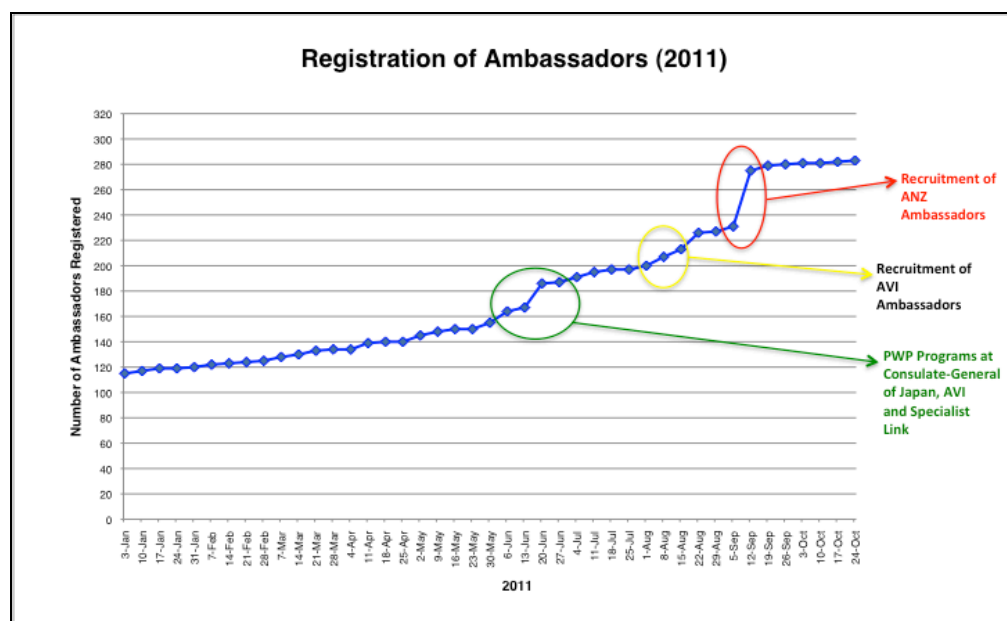


Figure 2.9 Registration of Ambassadors to October 2011

Ambassadors were also drawn from existing AEF and Asialink networks. The Asialink Leaders program was a fertile source of suitable candidates.

As another strategy, a banner advertisement calling for Ambassadors was placed in the 'Learning Asia' supplement of *The Australian* on the 21 May 2010. The advertisement generated interest with individuals beyond the current Asialink networks and produced a number of enquiries and emails. Six Ambassadors completed a registration as a direct result of this advertisement.

The project team also made some efforts to connect the project to other similar school-business partnership projects and initiatives occurring nationally, such as the DEEWR-supported Business-School Connections Roundtable, School-Business-Community Partnership Brokers nationally and the Victorian Government's Business Working with Education Foundation. These efforts have not been obviously productive to date, but this is an ongoing priority.

2.2.2 SOURCE: 'WHERE DID YOU HEAR ABOUT ALAP?'

The same process as was applied to schools' recorded expressions of interest was used to categorise the sources of potential Ambassadors' interest in the project.

Table 2.4 Categorised answers to 'Where did you hear about the Asia Literacy Ambassadors project?': Ambassadors [From the Expressions of Interest: n=174]

Source	Number	TOTAL NUMBER	%
AEF/Asialink*			
• Mailout (letter from S Myer)	5	103	78
• website	7		
• Asialink newsletter	13		
• Staff presentations/direct approach	48		
• Asialink leaders briefing	19		
• Asialink (unspecified)	7		
• via other AEF programs — Endeavour program (2) — Prime Minister Asia Awards (1) — Arts residency (1)	4		
BUSINESS/INDUSTRY (briefings or in-house media)			
— PricewaterhouseCoopers	16	37	13
— AVI	15		
— Engineers without borders	3		
— Santos	1		
— CSIRO	1		
— Unspecified	1		
WORD OF MOUTH FROM A FRIEND OR COLLEAGUE			
• unspecified	9	23	6
• In education	9		
• In business	5		
OTHER			
• Advertisement in the Australian	6	12	3
• AsiaEdNet	3		
• Australia-India Business Council website	1		
• Consulate General of Japan newsletter	1		
• Australian Consortium for 'In-Country' Indonesian Studies	1		

* These categories are not necessarily reliable, but, as previously noted, the source is firm.

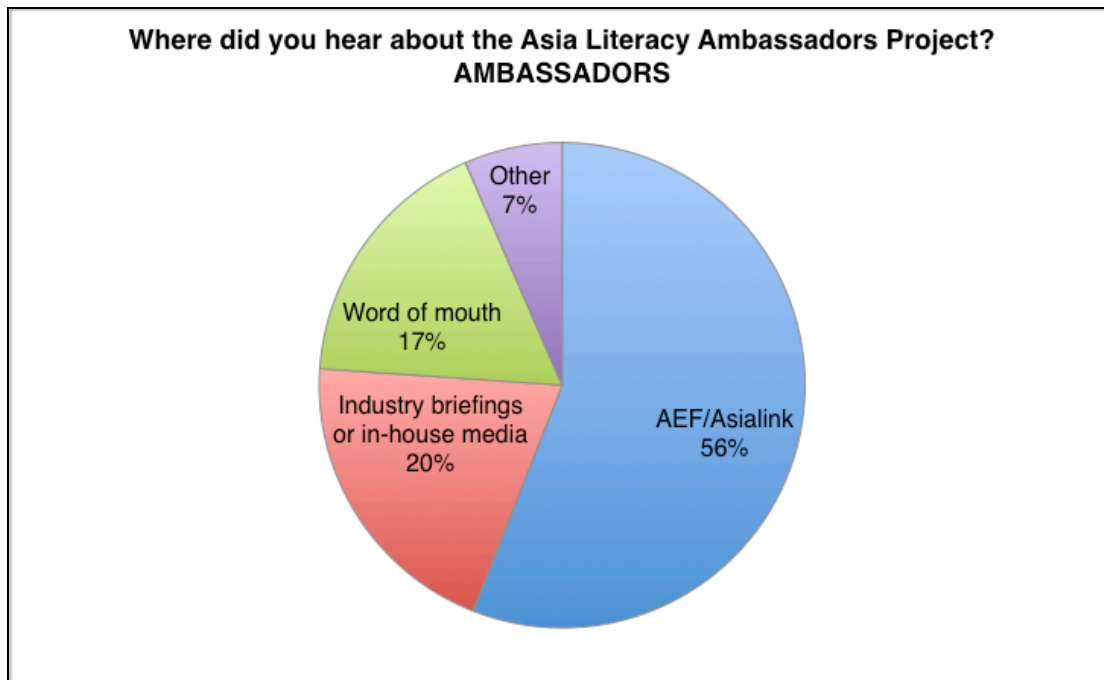


Figure 2.10 How Ambassadors Heard about ALAP

Again, these data are drawn from a sample of the total group of Ambassadors but as with schools the trends are clear. The very considerable majority come from direct contact with Asialink/AEF and project team members. The figure of 48 largely from direct approach indicates the effort which went into initial recruitment and face-to-face work. The big contributions from PricewaterhouseCoopers and AVI are evident in this table. Those from ANZ are not recorded here.

In section 2.1.2 above there is some discussion of the role of the partners to the project. It was noted that the funding agreement, the preliminary research and the early project plans all contain the assumption that this would be a partnership process, that various peak bodies from both education and business/industry would publicise and support the project and help find potential or actual participants. The failure of education agencies to provide effective support is noted there, and the same was largely true of peak business/ industry bodies nominated for help.

The project team worked with the Australian Industry Group (AiG), Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), and the Business Council of Australia (BCA) to identify businesses that might have been in a position to provide Asia Literacy Ambassadors. Articles and briefs about the project appeared in a number of peak body and individual organisation/business council newsletters and publications, and on various websites. With hindsight it is clear that there are limits as to how much reach these peak bodies have into their respective member organisations and are unable to do the sort of work that would help the recruitment process for this type of project. Their value as partners lay elsewhere.

In the equivalent section related to schools the conclusion focused on the degree to which the project team were able to generate their own school registrations. The same comment applies here. The results of this process are an unambiguous tribute to the efforts of the members of the project team.

2.2.3 MOTIVATION: 'WHY WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE INVOLVED IN THE ALAP?'

The Ambassadors online expressions of interest were searched in the same way as those of the schools to see how applicants had responded to the question: 'Why would you like to be involved in the Asia Literacy Ambassador project?' The answers (about 60% of the total registered Ambassadors) were equally interesting. They are summarised in this table.

Table 2.5 Summary of reasons given for wishing to participate in the project: Ambassadors [from online Expressions of Interest; n=176]

Reason	Number
A PASSION	
... to share my experience	61
... to communicate the huge opportunities Asia experience provides	31
... for language learning	10
... to share my own cultural heritage	7
THE NEED FOR ASIA LITERACY	
Asia literacy is a core requirement for all young Australians	28
VALUE OF VOLUNTARY SERVICE	
... in Asian countries	8
... generally	10
OF PERSONAL VALUE	
Relates to my job	4
Confidence in the project	2
Sounds like fun	3
Want to develop networks	4
Good for my business	1
I WAS ASKED	
I was asked	7

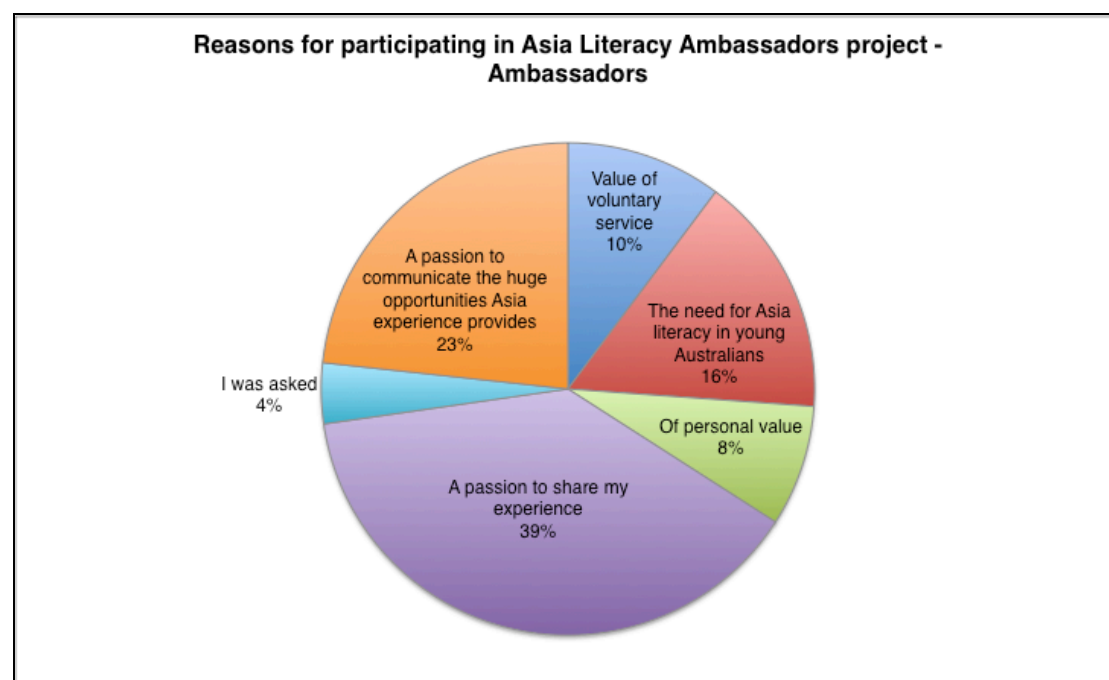


Figure 2.11 Motivation for being involved in ALAP – Ambassadors

The project team discovered two important things about motivation of business/industry participants. Most of the Ambassadors were driven by their personal passion about Asia and Asia-related knowledge and experience. There was, in fact, a deep well to draw from in this regard and this project was a useful medium for doing so. It has already been noted that the target included in the funding agreement was exceeded by 300%. The second matter is that, while Asia literacy is not a cause in the sense of poverty, famine, or other areas of injustice or hardship, with the right message and the right contact it can find a place in corporate social responsibility programs. These two factors were very important in recruiting Ambassadors to the project.

A more detailed account of this group's reasons for participation is available in *Appendix 2*.

2.2.4 THE LOCATIONS AND ROLES OF PARTICIPANTS

Victoria was a fertile recruiting ground for school participants in this project; the same was true for Ambassadors. It is, of course, the location of the large corporate contributors to the project.

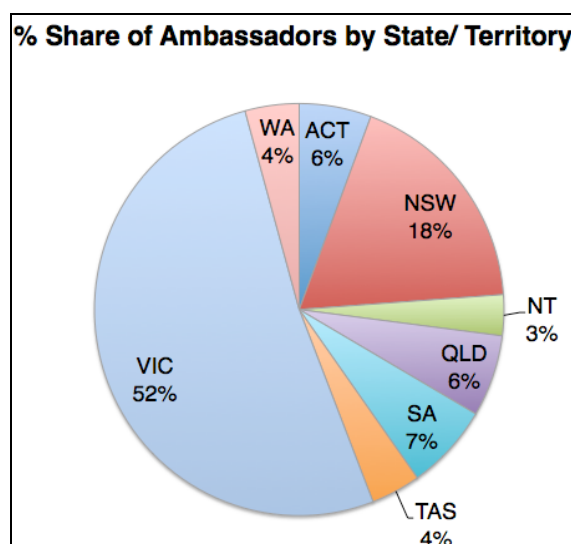


Figure 2.12 Share of Registered Ambassadors by State/Territory

One of the issues generated by this imbalance is obvious in the Figure 2.13. This issue could have been anticipated but has required management. The strategy adopted was to offer schools a 'virtual' online partnership. Across the whole group of partnerships this was only taken up in five cases. It is understandable that those seeking 'real live' examples of a person who has worked in Asia or speaks an Asian language might be disappointed by a virtual stand in. Other schools were encouraged to seek out alumni or other people in business more locally who might be suitable candidates as Ambassadors. Some were also invited to 'Opening a Door into Asia' activities. But, at the time of writing a number of schools that applied to the project remain 'un-partnered', mainly in QLD and WA. This has to be accepted as a problem endemic to the function of the project, especially a project delivered over a short timeframe and considering Australia's population spread and economic/business 'hot-spots'.

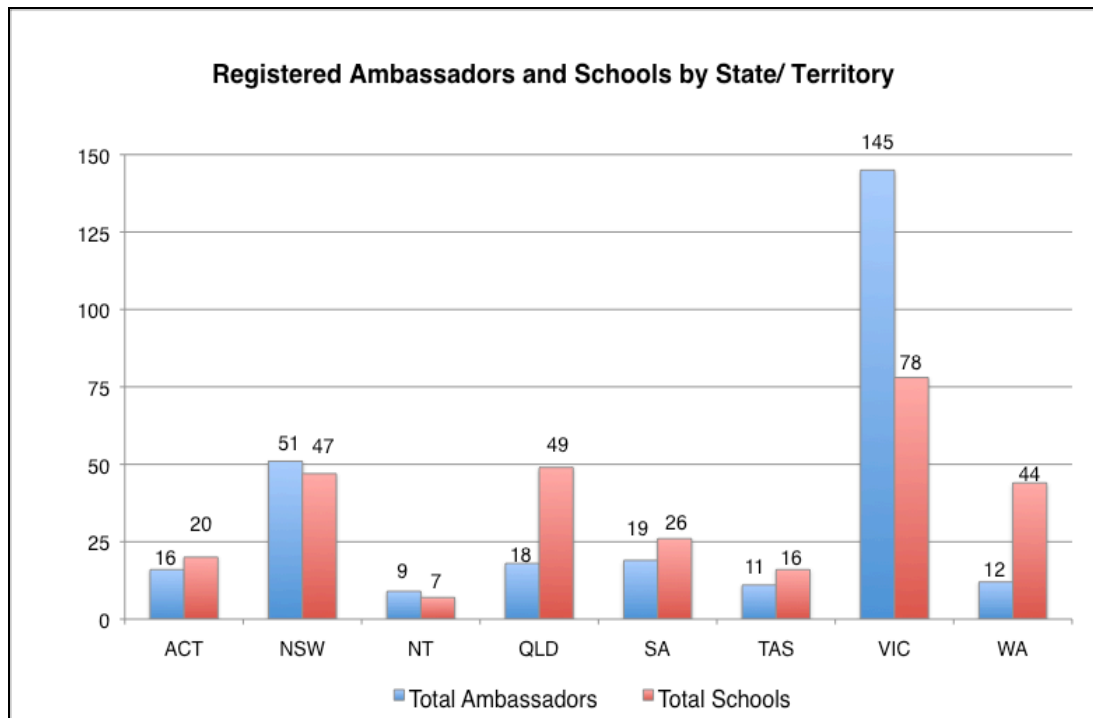


Figure 2.13 Ambassadors and Schools by state/territory

The range of industry/business areas from which the Ambassadors come is shown in the following Figure. Given the low degree of control possible over this issue, the engagement of a broad range of industries and sectors is impressive.

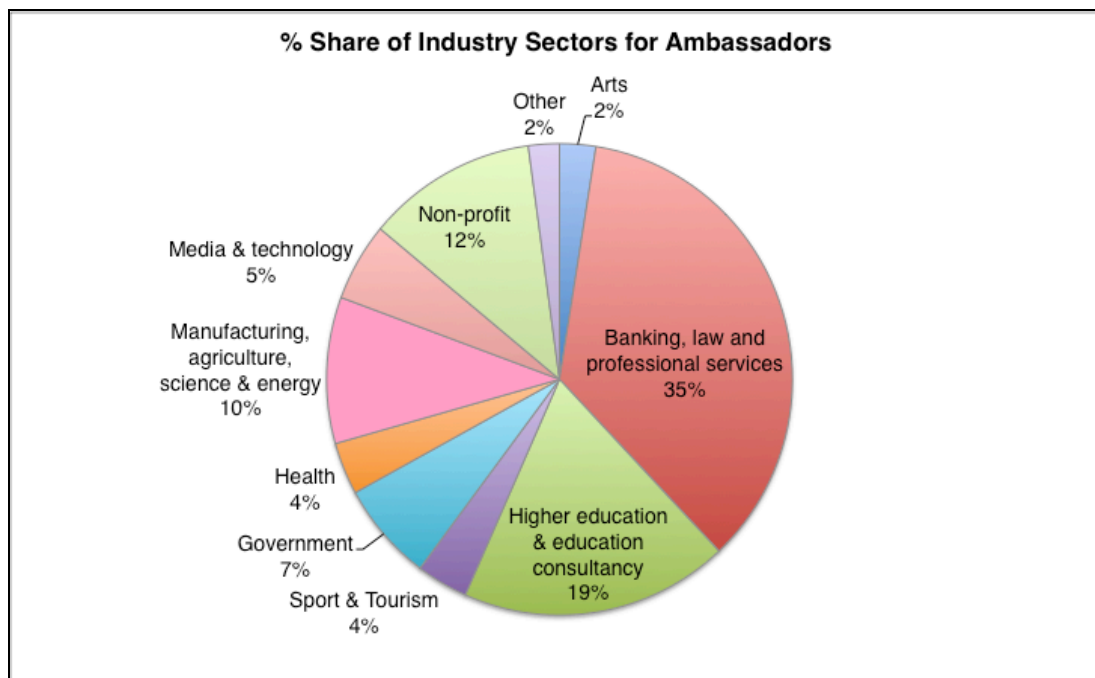


Figure 2.14 Industry/business backgrounds of Ambassadors

The overarching objective of the project specified that ‘the focus of the project will be on the languages and cultures of the four target countries identified in the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program, namely China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea.’ The research group advising on the set-up of the project suggested broadening that list to include ASEAN countries. As it turned out quite a substantial

proportion of the Ambassadors came from the initial list of countries, but the numbers were clearly enhanced (almost doubled) by the inclusion of people with experience in the more widely-defined countries.

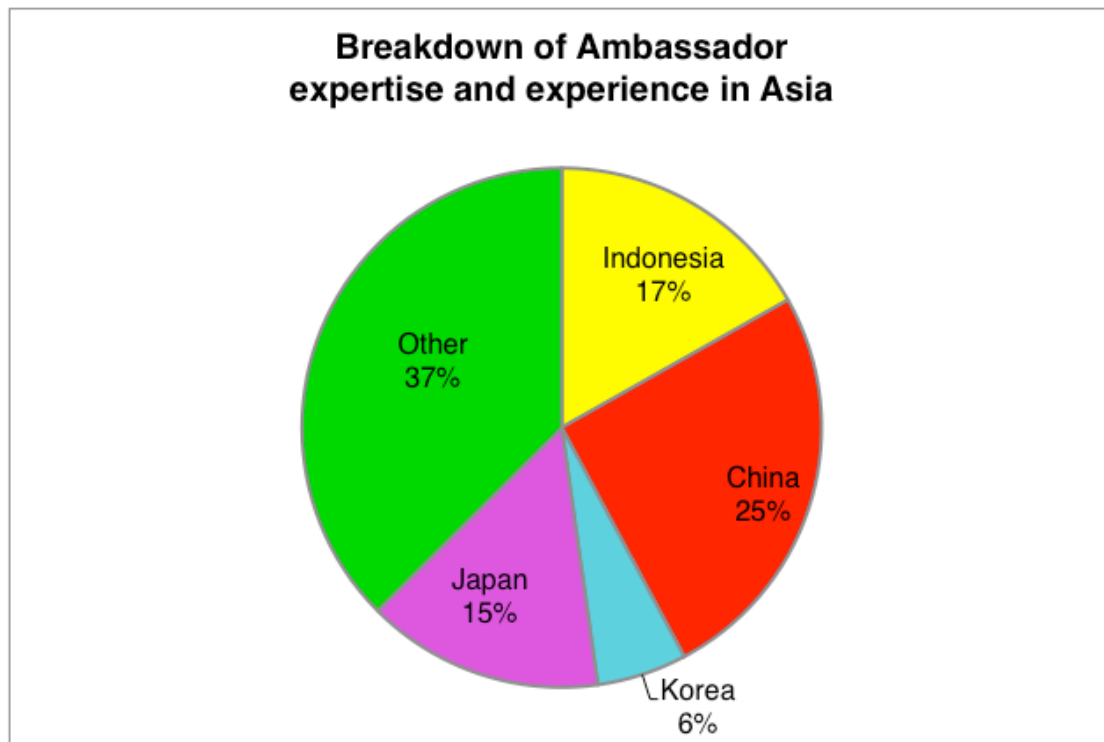


Figure 2.15 Number of Ambassadors with experience in Asia by location

3. PARTNERSHIP INTERACTIONS

The project began consisting of two specified activities: the establishment of partnership arrangements between schools and Asia Literacy Ambassadors, and the conduct of Pilot Work Placement Program for 'high achieving senior secondary students studying a target Asian language or studies of Asia, or with an interest in working for an organisation with operations in the Asia Region'.

The Funding Agreement suggested the sorts of activities that would occur through the partnerships.

- Presentations to students and/or school communities (including parents) on the benefits of being Asia literate.
- Attending careers conferences or similar events in schools to deliver presentations on careers which call for knowledge of Asian languages and cultures.
- Attending languages and/or studies of Asia classes so that students have the opportunity to engage with Ambassadors in their school environment.
- Presenting their story online via the project website using Web 2.0 strategies that are attractive to young people.
- Supporting leading principals and careers teachers to spend a negotiated period of time with a partner organisation to learn first hand about their business relationship with one or more of the target countries and the skills and capabilities required of their employees.

Two other types of activities were added to the two specified in the Agreement. These additional activities were not just responsible for a greater number and range of interactions between Ambassadors and school personnel, both staff and students. They also proved a fertile recruiting ground for all parties to the process and provided a solution to some of the generic problems emerging from the effort to build one-to-one partnerships.

Some of the major data from the ‘Ambassador presentations’, the Pilot Work Placement Program and the ‘Opening a Door into Asia’ events has been incorporated into project reports already. Most of the new material, used in section 3.1, focuses on the one-to-one partnerships. This is drawn from two main sources: a survey of schools and Ambassadors who have been involved with these partnerships, and a series of interviews conducted with a sample of ten key school contacts. This information has been helpfully underpinned by additional material made available by the project team.

3.1 ONE-TO-ONE PARTNERSHIPS

Eighty-two schools to which Ambassadors had been assigned were invited to respond to a survey¹². More than half (44 of 82) did so. This sample conformed very closely to the total group in terms of state/territory location and sector (with a modest under representation of Catholic schools). It is interesting to note that almost half of these schools had enrolments of more than 1000. Two had fewer than 250 students, a reminder of the diversity of the institutions being worked with. Thirty of the schools were in capital cities and fourteen were located elsewhere.

A survey of Ambassadors who had had active experience of the project was also conducted which produced a gratifying return rate of over 40% (46/113). On a number of issues the data collected this way provide useful confirmation or, less often, variation on the school view.

Ten interviews were also conducted with key school contacts. To ensure a spread, the sample was stratified by state/territory and all were participants in the one-to-one partnerships program, but other than that every eighth school was chosen from the list of registrations until a sample of 10 schools was reached.

3.1.1 WHAT HAPPENED?

As might be expected the subject area where there was most attention was languages. But the survey responses indicate that the project tapped into a wide range of other contexts and school activities.

Table 3.1 School contexts in which the ALAP occurred [no. of responses: 44; more than one response possible]

Context	# mentions
Languages	30
Careers sessions	9

¹² It was decided not to involve the 20 schools which were already the subject of short case studies included on the project website at http://ambassador.asiaeducation.edu.au/site/partnership_stories.html

Business studies	7
English	2
Mentoring students	1
Yr 9 Alternative program	1
'Science and social justice'	1
Whole school assembly	1
'Yrs 9-10 general'	1
Sciences, Religion, boarding group, ethics	1
'English, Civics and citizenship, ESL, International Studies, Art, Music, Business Studies, Science, Maths, PE'	1
Social Science, Home Economics	1

The sorts of activities which were pursued were also varied. Perhaps the most interesting thing about these data is the number of times multiple contacts are mentioned. Five of the 41 respondents said nothing had happened yet but something was planned, and one said nothing had happened and probably wouldn't because the school was too busy. The 'online contact' may mean exchange of email, although there were two direct references to contact with students via Skype.

Table 3.2 Types of ALAP activity and the number of times they occurred [no. of responses: 41]

Activity	Once	Twice	Three times	Four or more
Presentation to staff	9	3		
Presentation to students	10	6		10
Presentation to school community inc. parents	3	3		
Participation in careers/information event	4	2		
Workplace visit	5	1		1
Informal visit to the school	13	5	1	3
Online contact (2 mentions of Skype contact with students)	3	2	3	17

Apart from Year 7 (still a primary year in some states) and Year 12, the exam year, the year levels of students who were involved with the project were quite evenly spread.

Table 3.3 Year levels of students involved [no. of responses: 38]

Year level	# mentions
Year 7	9
Year 8	20
Year 9	21
Year 10	25
Year 11	20
Year 12	14

Finally, the total number of students involved from this group (with 38 schools responding) was 5,419, a fairly striking figure given that the figure for seven of the respondents was 0. Seven of the responses were 30 or less students suggesting a

class, five were 250 or more suggesting large scale activity (eg a whole school assembly).

The participation figure is likely to be reliable, extrapolations across the whole group of schools involved less so. But given that the 20 case study schools omitted from the survey were success stories and the expectation that at least 30-50 % of the schools which didn't respond might have had a similar level of activity, the likelihood that more than 10,000 students may have been involved in this element¹³ of the project is not unreasonable.

3.1.2 WITH WHAT IMPACT?

The survey requested three responses to estimations of impact: a general view, one related to the more specific outcomes of the project, and an invitation to comment.

These are the results of the request to nominate 'which of the following statements best describes the impact of the project at your school'.

Table 3.4 General impact of the project [no. of responses: 37]

Statement	# responses	%
Nothing has happened as a result.	7*	19
Some of the participating students have responded to its purpose	18	47
Many of the participating students have responded to its purpose.	10	27
All of the participating students have responded to its purpose.	2	5

* It is not possible to match individual responses, but of these seven it is likely that a number mean this literally rather than as an estimate of the impact of something that has happened.

Table 3.5 Specific impact of the project [total respondents: 37]

Outcome	None	Some degree	A good deal
Increased enrolment in language study (31 responses)	15	13	3
Increased enthusiasm for language study by those currently doing so (31 responses)	12	13	6
Increased interest in Asian languages and cultures (35 responses)	11	16	8
Increased interest in investigating opportunities for working in Asian countries (34 responses)	7	24	3

¹³ Noting here that there are three other elements to the project all of which had participants. The total estimate is suggested as 13,000+.

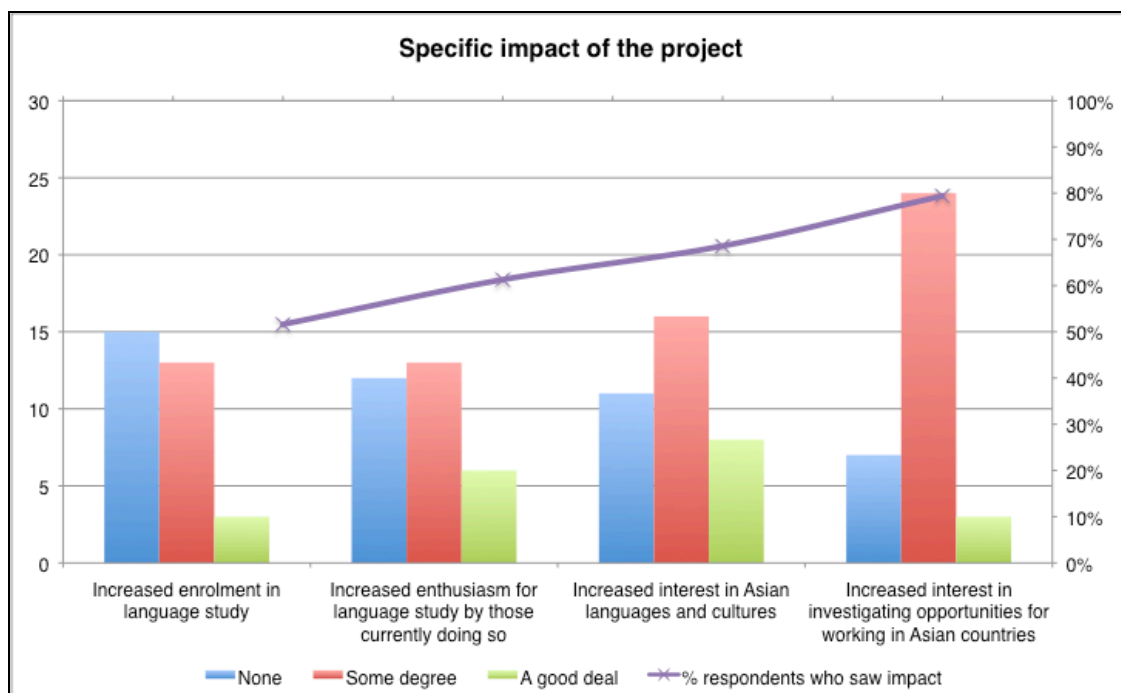


Figure 3.1 Impact of ALAP

These are significant outcomes: 80% of those answering from 27 sites saying that ALAP activities have ‘increased interest in investigating opportunities for working in Asian countries’ to some degree or a good deal is an important justification for the project. While project activity didn’t produce increased enrolment in Asian language study in half these cases, somewhat remarkably in half the cases it did. This is a useful way to construe the project: imperfect but a very useful addition to efforts¹⁴ to build demand for Asia education.

There were 22 comments. Four noted that it was too early to tell what impact the project might have in the school; others followed or provided an expansion on the four options provided. Several said how delighted they were with their Ambassador and what an excellent fit it turned out to be. Three noted that the project and the Ambassador had actually enabled the realisation of work and volunteer opportunities for students — a very practical outcome.

They weren’t all as positive as this comment below, but it does give a sense of what might be possible.

The results are reflective of early days as we are in the first five months of our partnership. Positive outcomes are evident from the interaction. We have a dynamic wiki space where our Ambassador responds to classroom dialogue and questions, we have begun to explore active civics and citizenship as a whole school and we are rethinking our curriculum in line with authentic projects working with communities in Vietnam, sister schools in Japan and international students in our setting, to name a few immediate outcomes of the work so far.

¹⁴ As is noted elsewhere, a very fruitful and harmonious complement to the BALGS and L21CS programs.

3.1.3 LEVELS OF SATISFACTION

The data in the figure below indicates that the participants were largely satisfied with the operation of the project.

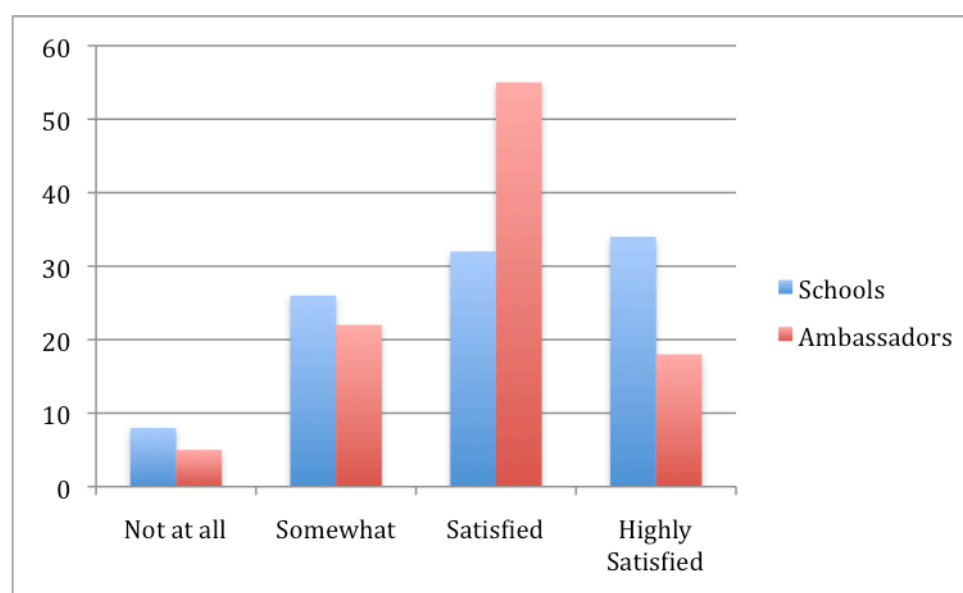


Figure 3.2 Levels of satisfaction with ALAP from school contacts and Ambassadors surveyed [n=38 (schools) and 36 (Ambassadors): shown as percentages of each cohort]

Given the option to nominate aspects of the project that contributed to its success, the results were as follows.

Table 3.6 Aspects of the project that contributed to success, schools and Ambassadors [in both cases n=35, multiple responses possible]

Aspect	Schools	Ambassadors
Opportunity for students to engage with someone from outside the school	30	-
Availability of the Ambassador at suitable times	21	12
Flexibility of the Ambassador in responding to the school's needs	21	-
Relevance to students' interests and needs of the content delivered	20	18
Communicative skills and capacity to engage students of the Ambassador	20	21
Administrative support from the AEF	15	15
School leadership support	12	16
Ambassador's familiarity with schools and their operation	12	7
Whole school participation	6	1
Clarity of the school's expectations	-	6

The top five (from schools' perspectives) might be summarised into three ideas: a new, interesting and suitable person, logistical feasibility and a capacity to communicate and teach. The Ambassadors were grateful for support by school leadership (and several emphasised the importance of this in their additional comments).

The main topic of the school-added comments was commentary on the desirable qualities which their Ambassador had shown — patience, generosity, enthusiasm, approachability and so on. The same was true of those from the Ambassadors about their schools — good relationship, excellent communication, admiration for the job being done, etc.

Where things went wrong, what were the causes of failure?

There were 13 comments from schools on this topic. One person had misunderstood the question and merely added further exclamations of delight. Five pointed out that their work was in train and they would like to suspend judgment until the project at their location was further advanced. There were two longer explanations of why nothing had happened. One noted that their Ambassador was ‘very busy, can’t get a response from him, no communication and nothing has happened.’ Ambassadors too complained of uncommunicative schools.

Problems generated by the distance between the school and the Ambassador’s home/ work place recur. Defrayal of travel costs was appreciated, but time is the telling factor and little can be done about that. As noted above, virtual relationships can provide some help but they are not a substitute when the precise quality being sought is ‘realness’.

Inflexibility was a problem for both parties along with sudden changes of arrangements. There were also cases of other forms of ‘bad fit’. Absence of recent in-country experience was a problem which surfaced at times with academics. Turnover of staff could also leave schools without an appropriate contact point.

But these problems did not seem enough to deter either party from participation in the future. These were the results of the question Will you be involved in the future?

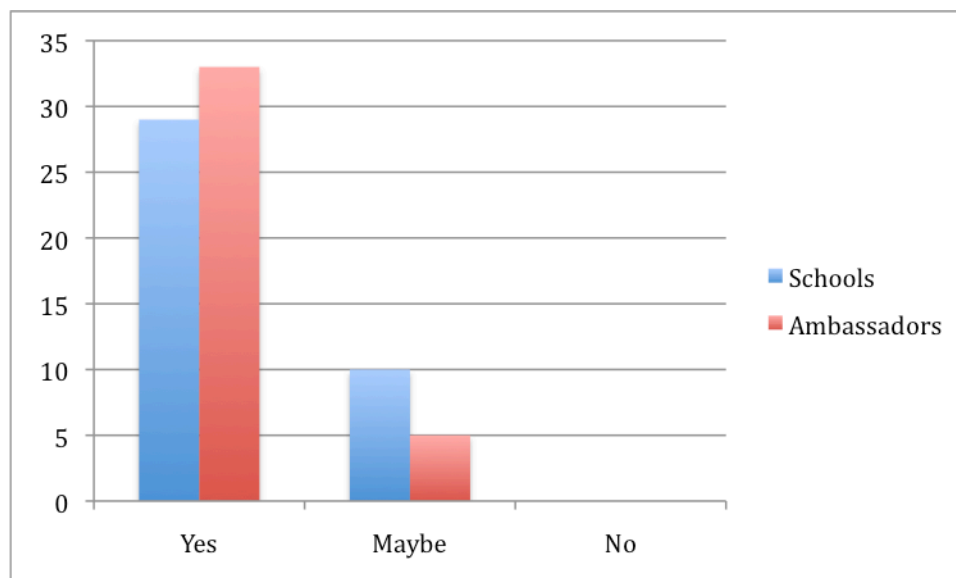


Figure 3.3 Answers to the question: ‘Will you be involved in the future?’
[n=39 (schools) and 38 (Ambassadors): shown as raw scores]

No one from either group of respondents said no. But a number provided comments.

The majority from schools were positive: ‘A rare opportunity for a thoroughly Asia literate person to be available to our school’; ‘Absolutely crucial to our school’;

‘fantastic opportunity’; ‘great for rural kids’; ‘first hand chance to hear from people using the language’. There were four that saw the project as incomplete or in need of improvement and so they would like to continue. Three wanted to change their Ambassador, and three were leaving their school.

Most of the comments from Ambassadors signalled that they too felt the work was incomplete, several saying how much they had enjoyed it and that they were looking forward to continuing for that reason. Several noted that their reasons for participating had not altered. A couple wanted to be reassured of their school’s commitment, and a number noted problems with time and the uncertainty of their work futures.

* * * * *

By and large, this information produces a very positive picture of this element of the project. In the considerable majority of cases respondents to these surveys — schools and Ambassadors — were very positive about what has happened. There is a good spread of activity evident across a wide range and a very substantial number of students. The reported outcomes are those for which the project was established and the project’s activities are fulfilling a valuable role which otherwise would not be filled. Participants are in the main satisfied or highly satisfied and most want to continue its work. None have been paid.¹⁵

At the same time it is necessary to remember that these happy respondents represent perhaps one quarter of school registrants for this element of the project. About 30 could not be serviced; for various reasons 30% of the Ambassadors registering were not or could not be used. As far as these data can be read, of the 44 school respondents, nothing has happened in three cases and very little in another four. In other words, what has happened is normal, or actually quite a bit better than normal. The interviews with key school contacts serve to remind us that that is the case and of a number of the characteristic features of the environment in which the project was operating.

3.1.4 THE INTERVIEWS

The interviews were very useful in providing a realistic insight into the environment in which the project ran. See *Appendix 3* for short school-by-school accounts.

At two of the schools it appeared to go well or very well, even though one of the interviewees thought ‘not a great deal had happened’ which illustrates the variety in expectations brought to bear on a project like this.¹⁶

In four schools activity was planned for the future. One thing that must be said emphatically is that as far as many of these respondents were concerned the project had barely begun. Some had had their Ambassadors for only a relatively short time (three months or less); in one case the first Ambassador had left the country and another one had just been assigned to the school. But also there is a sign of the

¹⁵ This evaluation is not required to comment on the efficiency of the project but this project has operated for rockbottom outlay for the scale of its achievements.

¹⁶ One of the school respondents to the survey indicated deep disappointment with the Ambassador used at her school because a significant increase in Japanese enrolment didn’t occur. The Ambassador (whose response could be matched in this instance) commented on what she felt was the extraordinary inflexibility of the school contact and how frequently last minute changes were made to arrangements.

busyness and slightly anarchic nature of schools: ‘we just couldn’t arrange things’, ‘we seemed to forget about it’. The ALAP is bidding for a place in a very crowded and active environment (school AND business) in which there are ongoing priorities which cannot and will not be ignored.

In two instances something had happened but things had gone poorly, both cases of not finding the right match. In the first instance, the priorities of the two partners were as wide apart as their home locations (different states); and in the second the Ambassador couldn’t seem to deliver on what appeared to be fairly nebulous goals. In the latter case there had been some turnover in personnel with staff leaving for a time then returning and the contact job was shared. Both schools and businesses are places of fluid employment, and in both cases the choices and interests of the former staff are not necessarily those of their replacements.

And this is what happened in one of the two cases where no activity has occurred or will occur. It was a story of thwarted ambitions, the initiative of a single staff member (correctly and authoritatively placed at the time). But, when there was a shift in the circumstances of that single staff member, there was also a shift in the circumstances of the project at that location. The other case was also a less than happy story, a reminder of human fragility and how new projects have to work in an exploratory environment with levels of both enthusiasm and commitment that are sometimes not easily justified.

3.2 AMBASSADOR PRESENTATIONS

The ‘Presentations’ began as an offshoot of other AEF programs, ‘Leading 21st Century Schools’ in particular, although Table 3.7 indicates other activities where Ambassador contributions occurred.

3.2.1 WHAT HAPPENED?

By October 2011 no fewer than 114 Ambassador presentations had taken place involving 107 schools and 19 Ambassadors. A further 11 ANZ presentations took place by December. (Twenty of the 48 respondents to the Ambassador survey indicated that they had provided ‘one-off’ presentations, and so the data about levels of satisfaction are also relevant here.)

Table 3.7 Ambassador Presentations Information

Ambassador Presentations – Participant data	
Number of schools involved in Ambassador presentations	118
Number of Ambassadors involved in Ambassador presentations	30
Number of organisations involved in Ambassador presentations	19
Ambassador Presentations – Nature of presentation	
L21CS PD Program interactions	87
Interactions with an Ambassador as part of a teacher professional development activity	1
Interactions with an Ambassador as part of a Study Tour	11

Interactions with an Ambassador as part of a Language Immersion Camp	5
Interactions with an Ambassador as part of Learning Community Development Day	7
Interactions with an Ambassador as part of Essay Competition Winner's Presentation	3
Interactions with an ANZ Ambassador	11
TOTAL AMBASSADOR PRESENTATIONS	125

3.2.2 WITH WHAT IMPACT?

This element of the project obviously made a contribution to the overall impact of the project, but perhaps its greatest importance was to recruit schools for other parts of the project. Its existence attests to the willingness to take any opportunity to promote the overarching work of the project with, in this case, a very positive and useful outcome.

3.2.3 CASE STUDY OF THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH ANZ

In mid-October, November and December 2011, Ambassadors who signed up through ANZ conducted 11 Ambassador presentations. This is a brief case study which illustrates one version of what could happen when the right circumstances align and when the 'streamlining' processes introduced in the later phases were put into place.

Contact was first made with the ANZ bank in mid 2010. A follow-up meeting was held but little appeared to come of it at the time. In March 2011 contact was made with an ANZ staff member participating in the Asialink Leaders Program, which was productive. Not long after this a meeting was held with the ANZ's Senior Manager, Corporate Responsibility, with a short document outlining the purpose and nature of the collaboration as the focus. Twelve months experience of the project made this possible. It was agreed to pursue some form of appropriate action.

An email with a tone of urgency was sent to all registered Victorian schools offering them a chance to host an ANZ Ambassador for a single visit. Schools responded quickly and 20 schools signed up immediately.

In September, a briefing for ANZ staff was held at ANZ headquarters. A shortened registration form was loaded onto the ANZ intranet following the briefing. Staff began signing up immediately — 10 in the first hour after the briefing session and 30 within a week of this briefing.

Planning between schools and ANZ Ambassadors commenced and seemed 'remarkably easy' compared that which had occurred with other partnerships.

Ambassador presentations began in mid-October and eleven were completed by mid-December. The seven of these events for which participant numbers are available show that just under 800 students were involved. The feedback available from these interactions has been exclusively favourable from both

parties. 100 percent of the schools wanted to repeat the visits, and the vast majority of ANZ Ambassadors wanted to be involved again.

The report of this element of the project suggests that: 'This timeline shows that it's crucial to get to the correct person within an organisation at the right time in order for collaboration like this to occur. The Senior Manager, Corporate Responsibility was looking to boost her corporate social responsibility hours and the ALA project provided a way that her staff could do this in a way that suited their skills and interests.'

There were a number of important differences in this process from the earlier efforts to develop partnerships.

- **School recruitment was prompt and successful**
The directness and clarity of the offer and the requirement to respond quickly will almost certainly have contributed to this development.
- **A new group of teachers within schools was accessed**
Although the first email was sent to registered Key School Contacts (KSC) and their principals, a quarter of the respondents were teachers previously unknown to the ALA project. These new teachers were largely business studies/economics and careers teachers who had been forwarded the ALA email by the KSC who had received it. It was thus possible to gain interest from a group of teachers who the project had previously struggled to access.
- **Ambassador recruitment was comparatively easy**
The actions, and support, by the ANZ senior staff were obviously factors in this process. But another influence may have been the new simplicity of the sign-up sheet which was supplied online on the ANZ intranet after the briefing session. This form was in a much simpler form to that used previously (fewer than half the items). The project had been able to identify the essential information requirements.
- **Planning was much easier**
Compared to the months of correspondence (but often little action) that preceded earlier partnerships, planning for these interactions was remarkably simple. It is likely that this is because the event being planned was tangible and comprehensible, as compared with the task of planning a 6-12 month partnership without clear direction or boundaries. The simple briefing materials) were also short and explicit. This may have assisted the ANZ staff and teachers to swiftly understand what was expected of them. The various responsibilities were also very clearly explained and this appears to have had a very positive impact.
- **One interaction evolving into an ongoing relationship**
There is evidence to suggest that the model of a one-off interaction to get the ball rolling, with a possibility of it developing into an ongoing relationship often works successfully. This is in comparison with the strategy of starting partnerships with larger but unclear ambitions which were less often realised. It appears that schools that have seen what an Ambassador can bring to the classroom are more likely to be proactive in wanting to establish a partnership.

3.3 UNIVERSITY EVENTS

This is another example of an opportunity seized. The first of these ‘Opening a Door into Asia’ events (in September 2010) came from contact with the University of Melbourne’s Asia Institute with a view to cooperatively provide an activity for intending tertiary students. The success of this event suggested pursuing this process more widely.

3.3.1 WHAT HAPPENED?

Table 3.8 provides an overview of what happened in regard to this element of the project. The numbers of schools (73) and students (1,226) involved are substantial.

Table 3.8 ‘Opening a Door into Asia’ event Information

	Host University	Event Title	Date	No. Schools	No. Students	No. Ambassadors
VIC	University of Melbourne	Opening a Door into Asia	Sept 2010	4	65	1
ACT	Australian National University	Asia-Pacific Day	12/08/2011	17	252	9
NSW	University of New South Wales	Opening a Door into Asia	06/09/2011	6	114	8
NT	Charles Darwin University	Opening a Door into Asia	05/08/2011	4	77	9
QLD	University of the Sunshine Coast	Japanese/ Indonesian Language Immersion Day	22/07/2011	12	231	6
SA	University of Adelaide	2011 Economics Student Conference	07/09/2011	6	172	5
TAS	University of Tasmania	Opening a Door into Asia	25/08/2011	9	120	10
VIC	University of Melbourne	Opening a Door into Asia	20/09/2011	7	92	14
WA	Murdoch University	Opening a Door into Asia	16/09/2011	8	103	3
TOTAL				73	1,226	65

The 2010 event provided an idea rather than a template and each of the eight events that followed differed. Below is an example of a program running for four hours integrated into 'Asia-Pacific Day' at the ANU, held on 12 August 2011.

- Overview of Asia-Pacific Studies and Degree Options
- Asia-Pacific Studies Society Talk
- Talk from current students
- Lecture 1: Asia-Pacific Languages – students to select one of four language-focused lectures: Japanese, Chinese, Indonesian and Korean
- Asia Literacy Ambassadors Panel – Ambassadors sharing stories of their Asia studies background, what sustains their motivation to study and work with Asia, and their goals and expectations for the future.
- Lecture 2: Asia and the Pacific – students to select one of the following cultural lectures to attend:
 - Australia's strategic options in a changing Asia
 - How could a blind man become President? And other vexing questions about Indonesia
 - Why the West is irrational
 - Many tongues, many minds: Language diversity in the Pacific
- Live and Study in Asia and the Pacific
- Q&A/ Evaluation/ Wrap up

These events were particularly valuable in terms of managing distance issues and provided an avenue for schools in regional and rural areas to participate in the project. They could 'make a day of it', but there are two other aspects of this element of the project which were valuable. The program above suggests the richness and interest possible in a short but intensive period of time along with access to a range of experiences and high quality presenters which would be unlikely to occur through one-to-one partnerships. The second is the chance to meet and mix with students from other schools, an opportunity which students appreciate and which helps to make the experience more memorable.

3.3.2 WITH WHAT IMPACT?

Participant feedback was collected from five of the eight events (and from 392 or about one-third of the total number of students involved). They gave very encouraging responses to the questions which were put to them.

What do you now know about the importance of Asia Skills that you did not know before?

From an open response about two-thirds said the experience had broadened their mindset and that their intercultural understanding had improved. Sixty-five had 'become more aware of opportunities in the workforce and life generally; 39 commented on their new appreciation of the range of work for people with Asia skills; another 33 could see new career pathways. Fifty were more alert to opportunities for study at university. These are very satisfactory results.

What have you enjoyed most about today's event?

Almost half mentioned the talks by the Ambassadors and the university students, with an additional 67 mentioning the lectures. Just under 100 enjoyed the workshops and 23 mentioned that they had enjoyed meeting new people.

3.4 WORKPLACE VISITS

The Presentations and the 'Opening a Door into Asia' events were additions to the deliverables specified in the funding agreement. The requirement for a Pilot Work Placement Program was included from the beginning.

'The Project also aims to strengthen business and school partnerships through establishing a Pilot Work Placement Program for students. The Placement must support high achieving senior secondary students (Years 11 and 12) studying a target Asian language or studies of Asia, or with an interest in working for an organisation with operations in the Asia Region.'

Fifteen Work Placements were specified. It might be recalled that the research group that provided advice about the project were wary of this element. They noted that, '[t]here was "lukewarm" support from business for work placements in the traditional "work experience" mode. ... The contract requires a pilot program for Year 11 and 12 students. Few schools would be interested in involving Year 12 students.'

The Year levels of the students who eventually participated in the workplace visits are noted below and to some degree confirm the research group's presentiments about schools' willingness to involve Year 12 students. The project team took on the other issue, ie of not directly replicating the sorts of work experience which had occurred in the past. This was an important initiative.

Four differing models of activity were proposed.

1) Asia exploration model

This model was to involve groups of students visiting the workplace for a single short visit with facilitated activities.

- A short overview visit could comprise a welcome presentation, a tour of the facility and an opportunity for students to interview selected staff to gain an understanding of the organisation's Asia literacy, over a period of 2 to 3 hours.
- Alternately, organisations could offer an observation-focussed visit, whereby groups of students visit the workplace to observe specific meetings, presentations or teleconferences to view first-hand how an organisation engages with Asia.

2) Workplace problem model

This model could occur as a short visit or as a single day activity. In preparation for the visit, the participating business proposes a problem or situation pertinent to its Asia-related work. Students research this issue then, as a group, visit the workplace. Activities at the workplace could include a workshop, facilitated by business staff and the students' teachers or

interviews with selected staff to find out answers to the problem posed. Following their return to school the students engage in further follow-up activities with their teacher.

3) Traditional model

Similar to a traditional work experience placement, a group of 2-4 students would spend a period of 2-5 days at the participating business, performing conventional work experience tasks. They would also be required to complete a detailed worksheet and questionnaire to explore the Asia focus of organisation (provided by the AEF) and gain a better understanding of the Asia skills required by the staff.

4) Staff-shadowing model

The staff-shadowing model would involve 'work shadowing' by school principals or careers practitioners, for a period of 1-2 days, as an alternative to a student work placement. The visiting school principal/careers practitioner would be expected to receive briefings and then attend meetings and presentations with key staff at the participating business to gain an overview of the ways in which the business engages with Asia.

3.4.1 WHAT HAPPENED?

This table summarises the activity of this element of the project. It all occurred in 2011.

Table 3.9 Workplace Visit Activity

	Name of Organisation	Name of School	Rural or regional	Date of visit	Model	# Students	Student Subject Area	Existing partnership
1	Australia Network	Macarthur Anglican School	-	15 April	#3 – Traditional	2	Year 10 Indonesian	Y
2	Japanese Consulate	Wanganui Park SC	Y	9 June	#1 – Asia Exploration	22	Year 9-10 Japanese	N
3	Specialist Link	Eltham HS	-	16 June	#2 – Problem Solving	10	Year 9-10 Indonesian	N
4	AVI	Firbank GGS	-	24 June	#1 – Asia Exploration	15	Year 10-12 school trip to Thailand	N
5	Santos	Le Fevre HS	-	10 August	#1 – Asia Exploration	20	Year 9 Indonesian	Y
6	New Wave International Movers	Elwood College	-	11-12 August	#3 – Traditional	1	Year 10 Japanese	Y
7	Hospira	Ruyton GGS	-	18 August	#1 – Asia Exploration	5	Year 10-11 Chinese	N
8	Origin Energy	Ballarat GS	Y	24 August	#1 – Asia Exploration	22	Year 10-12 Science	Y

9	Cocoon Republic	St Michaels' GS	-	12 September	#1 – Asia Exploration	8	Year 11 Design & Technology	N
10	URS	Mary Mackillop College	-	15 September	#1 – Asia Exploration	6	Mixed	N
11	SurfAid	Ku-ring-gai HS	-	19-20 September	#3 – Traditional	2	Year 10	N
12	AEF	Wodonga SSC	Y	22 September	#1 – Asia Exploration	23	Year 10	Y
13	Harvey Heavy Industries	Harvey Senior HS	Y	13 October	#1 – Asia Exploration	2	Japanese	Y
14	Long Weekend	Cobram HS	Y	20 October	#1 – Asia Exploration	11	Japanese	Y
15	World Vision	Bairnsdale SC	Y	23 November	#1 – Asia Exploration	12	Mixed	N
16	ANZ	Mt Clear Secondary College	Y	24 November	#1 – Asia Exploration	21	Japanese	N

A survey of participants in this element of the project provided considerable additional information.

More than 180 students participated in total in groups ranging from 2 to 25. Of the 16 placements, 12 chose the 'Asia Exploration' model. One went for the 'Workplace Problem' and three chose the traditional model. The average amount of time spent was half a day, although one group was involved for two days. Two hours was the minimum time. The majority of students were in Years 9-11. They undertook their placements related to a wide range of studies: Science, Geography, IT, Maths, Workplace Studies and Business Management as well as language studies.

The businesses were very generous with their employees. Twenty worked with one group and two or more worked with all the rest except one. 'Five or six gave presentations but we interacted with many more', was one comment from a teacher. The activities provided were diverse: interviews, a quiz, workshop discussions, organisational briefing and tours of work sites.

3.4.2 WITH WHAT IMPACT?

They 'saw Asia skills being demonstrated before their very eyes.'

This quote seems to capture the general sentiment of the responses. The students had 'exposure to a global workspace that connects with Asia.' 'They were given a face-to-face interaction with individuals who are working in Asia and have applied Asia skills. Being such a practical and out-of-school experience is a powerful learning tool.' '[It was a] wonderful opportunity for students of Japanese to witness first hand how a diplomatic mission operate and how learning an Asian language can open many doors in the future.' And so on.

The comments from all quarters, including the businesses ('re-energising', 'the staff all loved it', etc) are glowing. This appears to be one of those rare instances where everything worked to everyone's satisfaction. Even the recommendations are mostly concerned with praise. 'This project was fantastic — why aren't there more like it?'

3.5 ASSOCIATED MATERIALS

A very considerable quantum of materials has been produced through this project. The second progress report describes them at some length and there is an account of the dedicated website and its usage rates in the third report.

It is not intended to deal with these at length here apart from the following observations.

The project significantly overdelivered on requirements in this regard. The website is accessible and neat. It would meet the needs of a variety of users. There are 17 concise and interesting case studies uploaded to it along with a number of short videos. It is noted in passing that intelligent and productive use has been made of the associated AEF 'Asia Skills in Action' video materials.

The second observation is that the shift from the first set of instructions and support documents for participants to those which were provided to participants in the ANZ-focussed subset of the project (see *Appendix 4*) is profound. It is understandable that a degree of padding for 'insurance' purposes would be included in the first 40-page effort. But the later product, conforming with the higher degree of flexibility and directness (in content and tone) implicit in the project over time, suggests more accurately is what is required.

4. OUTCOMES

4.1 How successful has THE PROJECT been?

In short, remarkably successful in a very short space of time.

In reading what follows it should be borne in mind that, in important respects, the project is only just beginning. In genuinely operational terms it has been running for 14 or 15 months. There have been some very modest signs of institutionalisation, but what has really occurred is set-up.

The rich array of support materials has just been finished. Many participants in the partnerships have been notified of their contacts in the last three-six months. Expressions of interest are still coming in from both schools and potential Ambassadors. The activities now have a communicable shape; examples can be provided about possibilities; interest and momentum have been generated. It has been noted above how significant this was with relation to recruitment of school participants. It would need to run for at least three years for its impact to be properly determined.

That said, it has still been remarkably successful.

4.1.1 IN TERMS OF DELIVERABLES

The deliverables have been met.

- **At least 100 ‘skilled professionals’ to be Ambassadors to work in secondary schools, and to be prepared to do so.**

This table indicates by how much this initial target (subsequently changed to 200) was exceeded. At present the number of registered Ambassadors, coming from a wide range of occupational backgrounds, is 283. The table below provides further information about activity and suggest that nearly 70% have been actively involved in the project.

Table 4.1 Official Ambassador registration numbers at September, 2011)

TOTAL AMBASSADORS REGISTERED	283
Number of Ambassadors that are involved in a partnership or have had an interaction with a school	196
Number of Ambassadors that have not yet had an interaction with a school	74
Number of Ambassadors who have withdrawn before a partnership or are unable to participate at this time	13
Number of organisations at which these Ambassadors work	117

The geographical mismatch between the number of registering schools and Ambassadors was one of the issues responsible for the number of ‘inactive’ registrants. While a great deal of effort, a considerable amount of background knowledge and a degree of inventiveness was spent locating and persuading these people to act as Ambassadors, the project has proved that there is a substantial pool of people in Australia willing to support initiatives such as this and their motives are generally based on a deep interest in and commitment to the causes espoused. Other data suggest that their experiences of the project were generally very favourable.

- **At least 500 schools to be involved in the project**

When this target was deemed to be out of reach (and it was more than one-third of all stand-alone secondary schools in Australia), it was modified to 250 with 200 active partnerships. The following information indicates that this new target has been exceeded.

Table 4.2 Official School registration numbers (October, 2011)

TOTAL SCHOOLS REGISTERED	287
Number of schools that have been partnered or have had an interaction with an Ambassador	257
Number of schools that have not yet had an interaction with an Ambassador	29
Number of schools which have withdrawn before a partnership	1

Recruiting this many schools was one of the striking achievements of the project. How this occurred is discussed in Section 2 of this report but, again, it illustrates a very committed approach to overcoming what seemed 12 months ago to be highly problematic odds.

- **At least 15 organisations to work in the Pilot Work Placement Program**

As noted in Section 3, the Pilot Work Placement Program met and slightly exceeded this requirement and on the basis of all available information appears to have been an unalloyed success.

- **An extensive communications strategy, and a website**

These were produced. The website is accessible, detailed and easily navigated, and contains a great deal of information about the program, 46 profiles of Ambassadors, 17 well constructed stories of partnerships in action, and five more detailed videos of the project in action — a very rich resource for whatever may come next related to work with this purpose and nature.

- **Promote effective collaboration with state and territory government and non-government education authorities to maximise school participation in the project.**

While this did not occur in ways or to the extent first envisaged, the project team made all reasonable efforts to make this occur, and the fact is that education authorities have limits as to how much direct support they can offer such projects. It might be noted that this deliverable is a strategy based on an assumption about what might produce success in terms of the overarching objective of the project. Other strategies were found to be more effective.

4.1.2 IN TERMS OF ACTIVITY

It is certain that around 7,000 students have been engaged in ALAP activities. This count does not include what might have happened in approximately 80 one-to-one partnerships for which we don't have figures. Extrapolating from the data to hand, it would be correct to assume that the total number would be at least 13,000 across all elements of the project.

The majority of these students are likely to have been in Years 9-11, although the other secondary years are represented (senior years heavily in the 'Opening a Door into Asia' element of the project).

Although languages initially provided the largest interested learning area, finally the majority of key school contacts came from other areas. This is an important result.

The information contained in Section 3. indicates the diversity of the activities participants engaged in. These were enriched considerably by the 'Opening a Door into Asia' gatherings and the Pilot Work Placement Program where the set of possible models of activity provided an importantly interesting new approach to 'work experience'.

The table below summarises what happened.

Table 4.3 Summary of activity across the project

Project element	Participants	Activity	No. students involved
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Years 8-11 students the dominant group, although Years 7 and 12 also included. A substantial number of presentations to staff and some to school community and parent groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of presentations and audiences, but predominantly to students Mostly related to the teaching a languages, but included in a wide range of other teaching areas as well A large number of instances of multiple contacts 	<p>10,000+ (est.)</p> <p>(5,419 in the 41 schools surveyed)</p>
Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly school staff ANZ Ambassadors presented to students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 125 Presentations, mostly as a component of other relevant AEF programs and events 	<p>Personnel from 118 schools</p> <p>Approx 800 students at ANZ presentations</p>
‘Opening a Door into Asia’ events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior secondary students from 73 schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nine conference-like events with a mixed program of presentations, workshops and other activities. 	<p>1,226</p>
Pilot Work Placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly Years 9-11 students with some Year 12s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 placements including a wide range of activities Four models proposed; the ‘Asia Exploration’ model most popular by far 	<p>180+</p>

4.1.3 IN TERMS OF IMPACT

The four sub-objectives for the project were to:

- Inspire and motivate students, teachers and parents in the teaching and learning of Asian languages and/ or studies of Asia;
- Support the development of Asian languages and/ or studies of Asia programs in schools;
- Broaden awareness of the types of and variety of careers and opportunities that are available to those who are familiar with the languages and cultures of Asian countries; and
- Enable those working with the target countries to act as mentors or role models for those students wishing to pursue careers that require knowledge of Asian languages and cultures.

a) Inspire and motivate students, teachers and parents in the teaching and learning of Asian languages and/ or studies of Asia

This table of information drawn from the partnership schools responding to the survey is repeated here. The data is likely to be reliable even though from a smallish sample of the total activity. It is nonetheless from a sample of schools where nearly 5,500 students have had contact with the project.

Table 4.4 Specific impact of the project [total respondents: 37]

Outcome	None	Some degree	A good deal
Increased enrolment in language study (31 responses)	15	13	3
Increased enthusiasm for language study by those currently doing so (31 responses)	12	13	6
Increased interest in Asian languages and cultures (35 responses)	11	16	8
Increased interest in investigating opportunities for working in Asian countries (34 responses)	7	24	3

These data indicate that nearly 70% reported increased interest in Asian languages and cultures among their students. Half reported increased enrolment in Asian language study which, in this environment is a most unusually positive outcome.

There are many additional partial data sources and comments which reinforce the positive aspect of the information in this table. For example, of the 392 feedback responses collected from participants in the 'Opening a Door into Asia' events two-thirds said the experience had broadened their mindset and that their intercultural understanding had improved. Several of the teachers involved in the Pilot Workplace Program commented that their students could now see the importance of having Asian language skills as part of a larger relevant skill set.

b) Support the development of Asian languages and/ or studies of Asia programs in schools

The information above suggests an increase in the push factor from student demand in this regard. But attention is also directed to the information collected about reasons for schools choosing to participate. Almost 70% of the schools applying to participate in the project did so to support the teaching of Asian languages or to support Asia-focused programs. This is unsurprising given that these were its purposes. But the fact that 70% of nearly 300 secondary schools (the latter number representing approximately one-fifth of stand-alone secondary schools in Australia) saw this project as an opportunity to achieve these purposes is telling. In the material on this topic in this evaluation, 13% of participants are characterised as being schools beginning

work on Asia-focused programs and see the project as an opportunity to bolster their plans. This, too, is an important outcome.

c) *Broaden awareness of the types of and variety of careers and opportunities that are available to those who are familiar with the languages and cultures of Asian countries*

This is the most positive result from the partnership school survey data. 80% of the respondents suggested that their students displayed increased interest in investigating opportunities for working in Asian countries.

Of the 392 feedback responses collected from participants in the ‘Opening a Door into Asia’ events:

- 65 had ‘become more aware of opportunities in the workforce and life generally’;
- 39 commented on the new appreciation of the range of work for people with Asia skills, another 33 could see new career pathways.
- 50 were more alert to opportunities for study at university.

This was also one of the great strengths of the Pilot Work Placement element of the project where school participants consistently commented on the impact of the experience in these terms: ‘They saw Asia skills being demonstrated before their very eyes.’

d) *Enable those working with the target countries to act as mentors or role models for those students wishing to pursue careers that require knowledge of Asian languages and cultures*

This, of course, is fundamental to the operation of the project; 339 people chose to do so. Not all were suitable or ‘fitted’ the purposes of the school to which they were assigned. But the vast majority — more than 70% — were satisfied or highly satisfied with their experiences. No Ambassador, working in any element of the project, said they did not wish to continue. As noted above, the project has proved that there is a substantial pool of people in Australia willing to support initiatives such as this.

5. LESSONS FROM THE PROJECT’S OPERATION

Among the purposes of this evaluation was to provide advice to AEF, DEEWR and other stakeholders to scope future strategies for engaging business and schools in the Asia literacy agenda, and to add to the broader bank of work occurring around school-business partnerships across Australia. This section takes up that task.

5.1 WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNT ABOUT BUILDING DEMAND FOR ‘ASIA LITERACY’?

5.1.1 THE MEDIUM: THE ASIA LITERACY AMBASSADORS PROJECT WAS, IN THE END, HIGHLY SUITABLE FOR THIS PROCESS.

- The information and discussion above clearly indicate that this is the case. It was a sound idea validated, with some modifications, in practice.

- The very high levels of satisfaction evident among all groups of participants have been noted. From a schools' point of view it worked by having a 'new face' with real and recent Asian experience who is interesting and engaging with a good story to tell. The data also suggest that that 'new face' will have much greater impact if they are present rather than a virtual presence. In the current environment where digital communication is so prevalent and assumed to be an adequate surrogate for 'live' activity this is an important finding, and one which the project was able to realise. The qualities that school personnel and students valued — patience, generosity, enthusiasm, approachability and so on — were generally available. The Ambassadors, in turn, were grateful for quality and thoughtful communication, support by school leadership and were pleased by the capacity to form good relationships.
- There were difficulties — crowded work agendas among both parties, matches which didn't work well, logistical problems, changes in participants' circumstances being chief among them. It is also correct to say that, in the early work at least, many partnerships were nursed along by the assiduity of the project team. But these are difficulties to be expected in a pilot project of this nature and in the overall conduct of the project their impact was minor compared to what was achieved.
- ALAP was a pilot project and significant changes were made to its operation during its comparatively short life. The most important of these were as follows:
 - In terms of recruitment (and this is about building demand), to work through schools directly rather than through mediating bodies. A dominant theme in the operation of schooling, and especially secondary schooling, at present, is self-management, and this proved to be the case in this project.
 - Extending the focus of the project beyond 'Asian languages' and thereby languages-based contacts. Over several decades, research and public discussion has identified languages teachers and especially teachers of Asian languages, as often at the margins in school situations. Strategically, if progress is to be made it will be through school administrators, curriculum coordinators and heads of department. There are more than a few examples among the schools in this project where it has been understood that a strong language program is a function of a focus on Asia, a part of a more general focus on Asia, and that the teaching of Asian languages is likely to be driven and sustained by a wider concern for learning about Asia. The targeting of school principals through the L21CS program was a most important contribution to the success of this project.
 - Increasing the variety of offerings through the project. This was driven by the success of the first 'Opening a Door into Asia' program which occurred at the University of Melbourne and which was to be the precursor of eight more of these events. But at the same time ideas were emerging from the nature of the interactions between schools and Ambassadors that suggested the model of an on-going one-to-one

‘partnership’ between school and Ambassador would work sometimes in optimal circumstances; but different, discrete and more sharply defined and targeted opportunities were emerging for interaction which were often preferred by participants. One size did not fit all; but neither did open-ended possibilities which were difficult to form into any specific shape. The final results of the project’s offerings were possibilities tailored to the pattern of interest and requirements of the participants.

- The point made above goes hand-in-hand with the streamlining and improvements in the efficiency, and brevity, of procedures that were put into place initially. Direct, clear and essential communication coupled with a note of urgency was the hallmark of this change. This could not have occurred without the initial experience of the project or the confidence implicit in having a going concern.

5.1.2 THE MESSAGE: THE TERM ‘ASIA LITERACY’ REMAINS AN ISSUE

‘Asia Literacy’ appears in the name of the project. It was used publicly and as a policy marker by former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in 2007. ‘Asia literate’ appears in the ‘Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians’, and there is now a National Statement on Asia Literacy in Australian Schools 2011-2012. The Business Alliance for Asia Literacy and the Education Alliance for Asia Literacy exist. However, if the desired outcome is to give life and purpose to the actualisation of what the term implies rather than simply to encourage its use, none of these things justify its use per se.

Like education, a building demand exercise requires the ‘builders’ connect with what the intended audience knows and understands. On the basis of the experience of this project, the general business/industry audience does not use and has little knowledge of the term, school educators a little but not much more. (One can discern the awareness of this in the operation of the project as it moved towards the use of ‘Asia skills’ by both participants and managers of the project. ‘Asia education’ has been used quite widely in this report.)

‘Asia Literacy’ is a problem when used anywhere near ‘languages’. It is not used in the Australian Curriculum. It does not have a simple or agreed definition; and it is suggested that its use actually excludes those not ‘in the know’, with all the negative connotations that that implies. The problems this causes when trying to build demand are profound.

This is a well-rehearsed argument, but the experience of this project suggests that further reconsideration is required if the number of schools supporting ‘Asia literacy’ is to increase.

5.1.3 THE AUDIENCE: THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT GROUP OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS INTERESTED IN IMPROVING THEIR ATTENTION TO ASIA EDUCATION.

The existence of a substantial pool of ‘Ambassadors’ who are suitably qualified and committed to encourage learning about Asia including languages has been noted regularly above. A bigger question is whether there is a group of schools which is

interested in and willing to become a critical mass to drive the required interest in learning about Asia and developing Asia-related skills. In the first instance it appeared that this was not the case. The struggle to reach 70 school participants was difficult.

One important point is noted above. That is, that a general interest in Asia education is more likely to drive Asian language learning than vice versa.

Second, there is a group of secondary schools, possibly as many as 40 (extrapolating from the 27 responses recorded in the analysis), possibly many more, which see themselves as 'Asia-focused schools'. It would be very useful from an empirical point of view to find out what this meant to them and how the common patterns derived from this process of enquiry (rather than *a priori* definitions such as those proposed influentially over time by the AEF among others) could be used in marketing messages and more generally. One important way of marketing educational ideas is to build a plausible idea of educational leadership and up-to-dateness among principals and to seed a contagion process. The key term here is 'plausible'. Examples, and key figures, must be available.

Third, there is an educational constituency which sees Asia-focused education as part of a 'good general' education. This group may require a different pitch to the 'Asia-focused schools'. A subset of this group may be school personnel who want to broaden the cultural experience of their students, mostly because of their location and demographic. (Regional and rural schools are overrepresented as participants in this project.) This latter is an important group to tap because they often need little persuasion of the seriousness of the issue (cultural isolation, not Asia-focused education) and have a good deal of practice at doing something about it. It's familiar. They also often welcome attention and support in a way that urban schools may not.

Lastly, and this has been noted above, schools, and especially secondary schools some of which are much larger than many country towns, should generally be thought of and treated as self-managing entities rather than as units of a system.

5.2 WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNT ABOUT PARTNERSHIPS?

5.2.1 THE SORTS OF PARTNERSHIPS SET UP THROUGH THE PROJECT REPRESENT THEIR OWN SORT OF 'PARTNERSHIP' WHICH WILL BE VALUABLE TO EXPLORE FURTHER

At a local level it is clear that some strong bonds have formed between Ambassadors and their host schools. However, there is no evidence of what might be commonly construed as conventional institution-to-institution partnerships forming through the project. What has been established, unequivocally, is relationships, and as became evident through the course of the project this was what was important to establish.

These relationships are obviously of varying depth and duration but they are not subject to the same degree of infrastructure as the sorts of partnerships described, for example, in the recent report from the Business-School Connections Roundtable. Compared with what is discussed there, the actual purpose of ALAP was comparatively one-dimensional and directive. It wasn't to set up a relationship between a business and a school which required exploration and negotiation in a completely open environment. It didn't require the development of an agreed vision statement and 'specific and achievable goals that all stakeholders understand and

support, a strong relationship culture among the stakeholders, a shared sense of ownership of the relationship, strong leadership and management, etc.’

It required rather more prosaic matters, not least among them finding a time when the Ambassador could get to the nominated group of students. This, of course, is why so few plans were developed and no one signed the Code of Conduct. These were requirements easily recognisable (with hindsight) as out of proportion with what was actually occurring. What people wanted was ideas related to the task in hand — these became more obvious as the project evolved — and very clear direction about how to make them work. As the last project report notes: ‘It is clear that schools [we]re usually seeking discrete activities or services, with clear beginning and end points and tangible outcomes, to form the basis of interaction with business. The same can also be said for business.’

Reference is made again to the differences between the original materials and those supplied to participants in the ‘ANZ’ sub-project. This is a case of operational improvement and streamlining, but more to the point they reflect a much better understanding of the actual nature of the project’s work.

It is understandable how this conceptual evolution occurred. After all the initial impetus for the project came, however indirectly, from the Business Alliance for Asia Literacy. But it has evolved rather differently, and may in fact have extended the notion of what a partnership can be.

The idea of sustainability over a long period as a criterion for success, for example, is something that requires modification in this case. The ANZ case study also suggests that it may be that relationships can evolve into something more substantial over time when the partners are satisfied with each other’s offerings and circumstances. This differs from the model that characterises the early work of the project and a certain amount of the discussion in *Realising Potential* of the need for a big ‘front end’ in developing a partnership, and perhaps for the evolution of a relationship based on ‘soft skills’ and fairly flexible interaction this may be more appropriate. There are many types of interaction between schools and business/industry in fact for which this sort of ‘partnership’ may be a more suitable model.

APPENDICES

Appendix One: REASONS WHY SCHOOLS CHOSE TO JOIN THE PROJECT

This appendix provides a more detailed account of the information contained in Table 2.3 on page 18.

TO SUPPORT THE TEACHING OF ASIAN LANGUAGES

- **To encourage students to see value in Asian language study/ to continue on with Asian language studies to Year 12 — 25 responses (c. 20%)**

This motivation is directly in accord with the intentions of the program and was mostly stated simply and directly:

To encourage students to continue to study Japanese and for them to see how important an Asian language is in today's world.

Because this may help students understand the benefits and values in studying LOTE at VCE levels.

There were several responses which detailed their circumstances. The response below is included to reflect the number which focused on Indonesian and concern about its current state and its future.

Our school is committed to teaching Indonesian from Transition to Year 12. The subject is thriving in Years 7-9, with an average of 20 or more students choosing Indonesian as an elective in Year 9. However, we are struggling to encourage students to continue their studies into Year 11 and 12, with class sizes in Year 11 averaging only 5 students. We believe that there are a number of factors contributing to the rapid drop off of students from Year 9 to Year 11. Anecdotally, one significant factor is negative parent and student perceptions as to the value of Indonesian as an HSC subject. It is not uncommon for us to hear parents or students saying that they think that studying Indonesian for their HSC is a waste of time. We hope that involvement in this project would provide an alternate perspective.

This response also reflects the high and perhaps unreasonable expectations held out by some participants for the impact of the project.

- **To provide a 'living resource' for students to enhance the quality of an existing language program — 8 responses (7%)**

The sentiment among these responses is the value of having a living example of a native or fluent speaker to a language program. 'Living resource' is a direct quotation from two of the submissions.

- **For students to see the application of Asian languages to options for employment — 6 responses (5%)**

This could have been placed under ‘Enhance the quality of Business Education’. It is the point at which the purposes of the project intersect.

TO SUPPORT ASIA-FOCUSED PROGRAMS

- **To enhance our current program, develop new avenues of interest [schools with established programs] — 27 responses (c.22%)**

This reason is like the next one, and taken together they represent the largest single group of responses. They can be read as being process of collection with a logic that goes something like — ‘We’re an “Asian school”. This is an “Asian school” activity. We should/ would like to do it.’

The two groups differ in terms of the maturity of their programs. This group, the larger, has well-established programs and is keen to say so.

Our school is a national leader in the Access Asia and Asia Education Program.

This group represents a most important core constituency for a project of this nature and, with the group immediately below, its members came in a cluster when schools known to have relevant programs were notified of this project. They understand the concept of the project readily and it is already closely aligned with the program and operations of the school. This doesn’t guarantee success — a good deal of pressure is placed on the Ambassador to perform — but improves prospects.

We are determined to prepare our students to become part of a global workforce. A sense of comfort and engagement with Asia is a basic pre-requisite. We already work closely with local employers. This project is a logical extension of our work.

There were other schools included in this group which already had programs in operation which applicants felt that ALAP could enhance. Two references were made to using this process as part of the means of implementing a BALGS program.

XX SHS has just completed a 12 month Asia Literacy Grant. This project would now add another dimension to the work that we have been doing in regards to building our capacity to delivering a quality Japanese language program.

- **To enhance our current program (in several cases in business education), become more Asia-focused, develop new (general) links with Asia-related programs, networks and people [schools beginning this work — 16 responses (13%)**

This is another important constituency, beginning schools looking for something to add to their program which will help embed new emphases and

practices. That 16 schools chose ALAP for this purpose, fulfilling the general if not the more specific intentions of the project, is significant and positive for the project. The responses suggest that ALAP was seen as a possible entry point to a larger network of interest. This was also closely allied to the more specific reason noted below: living in what is felt to be a monocultural, isolated community without the resources accessible in larger more culturally complex areas. There is also a background implication that participation in the project will provide guidance, direction, access, support — all the requirements of people who are uncertainly beginning a new educational process, and who may be susceptible to being dissatisfied when all those props are not delivered.

The following example is not typical in that it is much more complete than most. It does, however, cover the relevant ground.

... The principal has played a constructive role in school development; she has been trying and willing to build relationship with schools in Mainland China and Hong Kong; the school is forging rapidly ahead. Staff and students awareness and understanding on Asian region, however, is handicapped by remote location and still behind the times. We believe by participating in the project we will be able to change the situation and deepen staff, students, parents and school or local community understanding on Asia Literate gradually; meanwhile, students may have a chance to have a life-long experience and skill in Asian region by getting involved in the project.

TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF BUSINESS EDUCATION

- **Establish (new types of) links with the business community — 10 responses (8%)**

This group were employment-focused and the proponents were mostly members of the Business Education faculty or careers teachers. This is a good example. The clarity of purpose is very strong.

YY College has a large and vibrant Business and Economics Faculty. We would like to further enhance the learning opportunities for our students. In particular we see both a need and a benefit for students to develop a broad understanding of the Business relationships between Australia and the Asian region. In addition we see it as important to provide students with the opportunity to gain first hand knowledge from business professional.

This quote is included to exemplify the variety in the responses but as with the one immediately above to illustrate how precise some requirements may have been. A chemical engineer or a retired banker would not have done, whereas they may have done so for the next group.

For our Media students to have a greater knowledge and understanding of Media work possibilities in South East Asia and to consider pursuing Studies of Asia at a tertiary level.

TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF GENERAL EDUCATION

- **For students to become more Asia literate / open to Asia and Asian experiences/ less inclined to think stereotypically/ discourage racist attitudes/ have a global outlook/ part of a good general education — 15 responses (12%)**

These responses were distinguished by not being about ALAP as a project or as part of a defined initiative or program but as part of a good general contemporary education which might be Asia-focused (the majority of these responses) or it might not.

The College has a belief in the need to have a present and future global outlook. We recognise and accept the significance of Asia becoming a major area of development and trade.

‘Asia’ seemed to be used in a number of cases as term for ‘outside the usual range of experiences’, for which of course this project provided a useful fit.

This group includes users of the term ‘Asia literate’ who were in a distinct minority in the schools group, but were markedly more numerous and proportionate than the potential Ambassadors using the term.

- **To increase the range of experiences of students in an insular/ monocultural community — 6 responses (5%)**

Due to our location and demographic it is a challenge to supply real world links to our Asian neighbours and ensure students have an opportunity to interact with other professionals who have a high regard, rely on and value Asian literacy.

This is self-explanatory and may well feature more widely, but the use of it as a single reason for applying to participate in a project is an indication of how seriously the issue is taken by some schools and teachers.

- **To help accommodate the impact of the new Australian Curriculum — 3 responses (3%)**

This group of responses could have been placed under ‘Support Asia-focused programs’, but the broad intent appears more to satisfy the newly-specified requirements of the ‘general’ Australian Curriculum.

BECAUSE I CAN ...

There were four responses (3%) which suggested that the personal capacity and experience of the respondent were grounds for being involved in the ALAP.

Appendix Two: REASONS WHY AMBASSADORS CHOSE TO JOIN THE PROJECT

This appendix provides a more detailed account of the information contained in Table 2.5 on page 25.

A PASSION

This is to some extent a study in altruism. The most common responses (more than 60%) were couched in terms of providing young people with accounts of something which had meant a great deal to the respondents and/or which could mean a great deal to the young people being partnered.

- **A passion to share my experience — 61 responses (34%)**

These sorts of comments can be simply and effectively typified by this answer.

I have had 25 years of experience living and working in Asian countries and I would love to share my experiences with others and promote the excitement to the younger generation.

'I feel I have a lot to offer', 'this is a longstanding passion', 'I have had great personal benefit from my time in Asia', 'some of the most wonderful experiences of my life' — these were the sorts of comments allocated to this category. They provided an impression (by reference to years spent in particular, but also by descriptions of aggregated experience) that many of these may have been older, possibly retired people.

- **A passion to communicate the huge opportunities Asia experience provides for both personal and professional growth — 31 responses (17%)**

This was another substantial group which might have been younger but were certainly no less enthusiastic. 'Come and look what I've found' might be a characterisation of their attitudes.

I have lived in Asia for four years and I have a lot of passion for the region and its diversity. I strongly believe that engaging young Australians with Asia will contribute greatly to their strategic understanding of their region and will give them a competitive advantage in the future.

- **A passion for learning languages, and Asian languages in particular — 10 responses (6%)**
- **A strong desire to share aspects of the respondent's own cultural heritage — 7 responses (4%)**

Of these seven responses, four related to Korean, two to Japanese and one to Indonesian culture.

THE NEED FOR ASIA LITERACY AS A CORE REQUIREMENT/LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR ALL YOUNG AUSTRALIANS

- **A belief that Asian literacy is a core requirement for all young Australians — 28 responses (16%)**

Because Asia literacy should be promoted to young folk — they deserve it!

Among this group of responses there was also a good proportion which commented on the inadequacy of current school programs and arrangements. A high proportion of this group were also involved in education in one way or another.

I find my children's exposure to anything outside of Australia in terms of history, culture and geography to be woefully lacking. Anything that does happen e.g. the only language taught is Italian!!! Seems ad hoc and in no way prepares them for a globally-facing adulthood.

It might be noted here that, except for references to the name of the project, the term 'Asia literacy' *per se* is used four times in these 179 expressions of interest. It is fair to assume it is not a term this group of passionate enthusiasts either uses or is familiar with.

THE VALUE OF VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE

This response reflects the significant number of recruits from AVI. One group of responses specifically referred to experience in Asian countries; the other to voluntary community service in overseas country more generally. The second notion was often coupled with the value of helping young people as a good thing to do.

- **Wanting to share experience of volunteering in Asian countries — 8 responses (4%)**

Volunteering in Asia opens up so much in your life - I would like to share that and 'keep in touch' with my experiences.

- **Wanting to share the value of the experience of volunteering in more generally — 10 responses (6%)**

I believe that working, volunteering or interacting with people from other countries is vital for almost every job and for a well-rounded life.

IT WILL BE OF PERSONAL VALUE TO ME

These responses could be placed into two categories, relating to perceptions of the intrinsic value and the extrinsic value of participating. But the first two categories below were perhaps most closely related to perceived 'fit'.

- **Relates to the job I am in — 4 responses (2%)**

- **I know that such things work/ I have had experience on them working — 2 responses (1%)**

Then there were those who saw participation as a source of pleasure.

- **‘Sounds like fun’ — 3 responses (2%)**

And finally, those who saw other advantages in it for them.

- **Want to develop networks (for some, for ‘groups I usually do not have access to’) — 4 responses (2%)**
- **Better for my business to be involved with something like this — 1 response (0.5%)**

I WAS ASKED

- **Invited to join in — 7 responses (4%)**

As noted above in this report this could apply to most of the Ambassadors but seven chose to respond in this way. A number of these respondents were members of the BAAL group.

Appendix Three:

SHORT EXPANSIONS OF THE MATERIAL GATHERED THROUGH INTERVIEWS

Ten school key contact points were submitted to the evaluator. Each was phoned in late October. Interviewees, being assured of anonymity, were asked to tell their story. The schools are not directly identified here although some brief contextual notes are provided. Most of the interviews were quite short although several extended to 20 minutes or more. Salient points only are included here.

School A sees itself as a leader in Asia Education. It has a major language centre nearing completion and has participated in a wide range of AEF programs. The key school contact and the Ambassador have emailed each other frequently and met once but nothing else had happened at the time of the interview. There is a plan in train, however, for the Ambassador to present to two Year 10/11 LOTE classes about the importance of bilingual and biculturalism. Next year it is intended to try to conduct activities on three separate occasions. This will correspond with the efforts of the school to begin establishing the teaching of Chinese.

The key school contact in **School B** is a careers practitioner. It involved itself in ALAP to help develop links with the community and additional job opportunities for its students. The Ambassador is a lecturer at the local university but 'somehow things just haven't happened. It's probably our fault, but he wanted something small and manageable and we were trying to work out what to do that would fit with both our interests.' It was decided that members of the Year 10 SOSE class would make a video by interviewing the Ambassador and his colleagues about their working lives and also issues related to Asia-Australia relations. But 'we waited a long time for notification, and one or the other of us was busy and we just couldn't arrange things. So we're hoping it will happen next year.'

School C is a very big outer suburban school which has a strong Japanese program to the point at which it becomes an elective. At that point enrolments decline markedly. The local community is not supportive of language learning and the key school contact, at the time the LOTE Coordinator, believed this might be redressed to some degree through the use of an Ambassador. However this person has shifted roles and neither his replacement nor the school administration shows any sign of interest in following through on the project.

School D describes itself as a very much internationally-focused school. It teaches three Asian languages and has both sister schools and corporate links in Asia. Here the Ambassador was overseas for a considerable amount of the project period although he has met with the school contacts several times. He gave a presentation to some Years 9-11 students on 'Engaging with Asia', which was largely a PowerPoint presentation which 'did not especially enthuse the students'. It was felt that he was 'too academic' to be of great value to the school and the contact will be let lapse.

The focus of the work at **School E**, a very academic inner city school, was with a specialist Year 9 'global awareness' stream. The key school contact thought that 'not a great deal had happened'. However the Ambassador had provided a 'very good' guest presentation in person and, subsequently, a Skype discussion of education in Asia when he was overseas. 'It's not costing us anything and he's a contact we've

got if we want to use it I guess. We've got our own requirements with this program which is a bit in flux at the moment, and he's very busy with low availability. But perhaps that's what we should expect and be grateful for what we've had from the project.'

At **School F**, another large inner city selective school in this case with a very high proportion of Asian students, the contribution of the Ambassador to a Year 11 Business Management class was described by the key school contact as 'fabulous' and 'really helpful'. 'He came four times and gave a well-prepared presentation each time, and every time it was a great success. It was that personal perspective and insight into working in an overseas business environment. Just the little things: etiquette, communicating. Our kids were left with a much better understanding of the requirements of interaction and relationships, intercultural understanding in this particular context I suppose. ... I would very much like it to happen again next year.'

School G, an urban private girls' school, decided to participate in the project in order to help motivate Years 9 and 10 students to keep up their study of Chinese in senior levels. It was thought that if the connection with business could be effectively established this would interest the students. Not much had happened here. 'We were slow to make contact and in terms 2 and 3 which were probably the critical time for the girls in their subject selection decision-making we seemed to forget about it. Schools are very busy places. But we hope to make something happen soon. We have plans for a one-off presentation before the end of the year and are looking forward to it.'

School H is an unusual suburban school with an international boarding section with, in addition, a large hosting program for Asian students. It has been a participant in the L21CS and BALGS programs, has an Asia Literacy committee and a very active interest in the topic. One of the problems here was that the Ambassador provided lived in another state, and so special arrangements had to be made for personal contact. Funded from other programs, he spent two days in the school undertaking a wide range of activities with students and staff (meeting with all the Learning Area Leaders for example), an occasion which was made much of — the Minister for Education came — and was deemed a success. 'He was very personable and had lots of stories which interested the students.' However, the key school contact had a plan for the partnership with very explicit goals that she felt she could not interest him in. Her interest was getting help in a specific area that was his work specialisation, but she felt that his interest was driven solely by seeking support for a foundation which he was setting up. She does not plan to pursue the relationship.'

School I, an outer urban private girls' school, is very actively developing a 'China Strategy' promoting language and other related cultural learning. (The teaching of Japanese is already very strong.) The principal, the key school contact, had had a very good experience with L21CS which among other things had given her 'a very much enhanced appreciation of the protocols of dealing with Chinese contacts'. The first Ambassador assigned to the school received a posting to New York shortly after this occurred. She was able to provide a one-off presentation with which the school was very pleased. While this contact has been kept up, a situation with which the school is pleased, another Ambassador has been assigned to the school and only preliminary contact has occurred. The school would like assistance with the strategic aspects of its intentions and is looking forward to getting some help in that regard.

School J is one of the biggest schools in its state with a thriving Asia Education program driven, it was suggested, by Asia Education's place in the new Australian Curriculum. Large groups of teachers (50+) have been supported to visit China, where it has sister schools, in an effort to build interest across all Key Learning Areas. In terms of ALAP however, nothing has happened. One meeting was held with the Ambassador and 'he was personable and friendly but not suitable. He didn't appear to be sure why he was there or how he could help. I think the company had put his name forward.' There were other issues which appeared to suggest that it just wasn't the right time for this Ambassador to contribute.

Appendix Four:

BRIEFING MATERIAL PROVIDED TO ANZ AMBASSADORS

This is a fine example of briefing materials showing how far the operational shift, which occurred in the project, has gone.

ANZ Ambassadors for Asia Literacy

The following information details the roles and responsibilities of both the ANZ Ambassador and the teacher involved in the Asia Literacy Ambassador project.

1. FOR AMBASSADORS

1.1 Ambassador Role

The ANZ Ambassador will give a presentation (approximately 10-minutes) on their work in the Asia region, focussing on how it has impacted on their career and life opportunities. They will adapt this presentation to make it relevant to the teacher's nominated topic.

1.2 Ambassador Presentation

The ANZ Ambassador is asked to address the following questions in their presentation, in addition to any other content relevant to the nominated topic:

1. What has been your career pathway?
2. What sparked your interest in the Asia region?
3. How important is language to intercultural engagement?
4. What lessons have you learnt about the importance of Asia skills?
5. What career advice do you have for young Australians?

Bring a Thing!

The Ambassador may wish to consider preparing a brief PowerPoint presentation or bring along photos or objects that can act as props and assist them in telling their story of engagement with the Asia region. It adds interest and is a great strategy for attracting and keeping the attention of students.

1.3 Ambassador Preparation

Ambassadors can prepare themselves by reading the attached *Asia Skills Fact Sheet*, which defines Asia Skills and names the knowledge, skills and behaviours of those who are Asia literate. Ambassadors can also look over the *Strategies for Engaging Students* for some useful tips on working with students.

The Ambassador must also ensure they have checked the address, phone number, and public transport or parking options for the school that they are visiting.

2. FOR TEACHERS

2.1 Teacher Role

The teacher is required to facilitate the class following the Ambassador's presentation. Teachers should remember that the Ambassador has had no experience of working with large groups of teenage students. The teacher is therefore required to manage the activities, which could include:

- Q&A session
- Small group discussions, where the Ambassador can work with each group in turn
- Problem-based learning exercises, utilising the Ambassador as a resource of information
- Student presentations about curriculum they are working on.

2.2 Preparation of Students

Students who are prepared for their interaction with the Ambassador beforehand get a lot more out of the experience. Teachers must therefore ensure that students know why the Ambassador is coming and have thought about some questions they would like to ask.

Teachers may wish to start this preparation by showing students the *Asia Skills in Action* videos and working through the resource document available on the website at http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/for_teachers/asia_skills/asia_skills_in_action.html.

2.3 Teacher Hosting Requirements

In preparation for the interaction, the teacher should provide the Ambassador with the following information:

1. The date, time and duration of the class they are presenting at
2. Venue and directions.
3. AV or other requirements.

The teacher is also required to:

- Meet the Ambassador when they arrive at the school (or nominate someone else to be responsible for this).
- Set up an introduction with the Principal, if possible.
- Provide morning tea or lunch if the Ambassador is present over a refreshment break.
- Check if there is anything else the Ambassador requires.

Appendix Five:

DATA SOURCES

- Project Funding Agreement
- Contract Variation 1
- Project Workplans 1 and 2
- Report of the research and consultative group
- Project Reports 1 and 2
- *Expressions of Interest* from Schools and Ambassadors
- Survey of Participating Schools and Ambassadors, conducted for this evaluation
- Interviews with 10 key school contacts conducted for this evaluation
- 17 project case studies and feedback from their preparation
- Interviews with project team members
- Workplace Visit survey data
- 'Opening a Door Into Asia' feedback data
- Project materials including those posted on the project website