

Australian Volunteers Program in Southern Africa

In 2020-21 the Australian Volunteers Program supported 18 volunteers and 11 partner organisations in eSwatini, Lesotho and South Africa, prioritising COVID-19-related security, health and economic recovery, and addressing refugee and gender-based violence, climate change and trade issues.

'Nurturing strong working relationships is so important and it was nice to see how they continued to be developed even though, geographically, we were so far apart.'

– Remote volunteer

In 2020-21 in Southern Africa, the program supported:

11
partner organisations

7
partner organisations received Impact Grants

18
volunteers

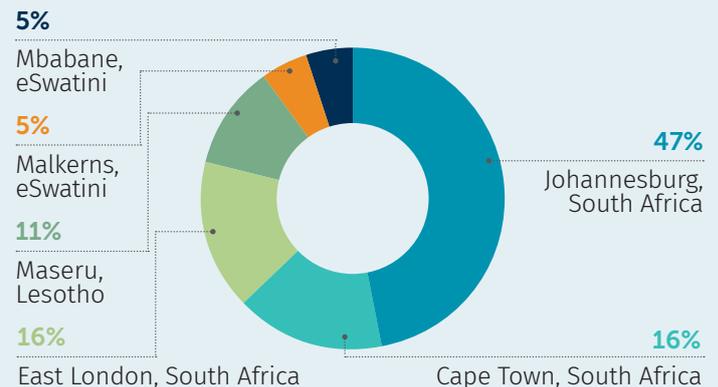
19
remote assignments

Gender and age of volunteers

Women 61% Men 39%



Location of assignments



Most common types of partner organisations

NGO - local and national **100%**

Most common professions of volunteers

Marketing and Communications **32%**
 Community and Social Development **21%**
 Business, Finance and HR **16%**
 Media and Design **16%**
 Education **11%**

100% of partner organisations were satisfied or very satisfied with the volunteer assignment



63% of volunteers were satisfied or very satisfied with the program



* The above data is drawn from reports completed by volunteers and partner organisations. Responses were not received from all volunteers and partner organisations, and not all respondents provided a response to every question.

In 2020-21, the Australian Volunteers Program adapted to the impacts of COVID-19 by developing new ways of supporting partner organisations in Southern Africa. The program adapted its Country Program plans by aligning its approach to the Australian Government's COVID-19 Response and Recovery for Africa.

The program team in Southern Africa engaged with existing and new partner organisations who could benefit most from remote volunteering. The most common development sectors that assignments contributed to were social infrastructure and services (45%), government and civil society (36%), and health (27%). All partner organisations were local and national non-government organisations.

During the initial phase of COVID-19, staff completed a rapid assessment of partner organisations' needs and adjusted their support accordingly. Ongoing engagement has deepened their understanding of partner organisations' priorities and constraints. The program enlisted two new partner organisations in KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa.

Seven partner organisations received support from the Australian Volunteers Program Impact Fund including:

- Botshabelo to offer early childhood development training for women in rural South Africa
- Kick4Life to empower young people in Lesotho to strengthen their knowledge, advocacy, and leadership skills on climate action
- Thuso-Tla-Tsoa-Kae Handicapped Centre in Lesotho to provide a new greenhouse for children with a disability

- Ann Harding Cheshire Homes in South Africa to provide a computer station that all residents can use, including those with a disability
- QuadPara Western Cape work towards dispelling preconceived perceptions about wheelchair users in South African communities.

Hlokomela Health and Malamulele Onwards (both in South Africa) received support from the Australian Volunteers Program Innovation Fund.

The program celebrated and promoted international volunteering in Southern Africa, delivering online events for International Volunteer Day and International Women's Day, which included partner organisations from South Africa, eSwatini and Lesotho as well as volunteers, Australian High Commission staff and program staff.



Louise Bearman (middle), Australian volunteer Quality Assurance and Project Coordinator at the Cape Town Child Welfare Society.
Photo: Matthew Willman.

Spotlight on Gone Rural

Gone Rural in eSwatini empowers rural artisan women to improve their skills and earning potential through the production and sale of traditional weaving and pottery. Since 2015, Australian volunteers Adam Teasdale and Anissa Dove have supported Gone Rural Swaziland to achieve the organisation's objectives.

Adam supported staff to develop training materials that improved the quality of their service delivery and assisted in improving staff communication, which led to further collaboration.

With Anissa's support, staff developed and piloted a program led by master weavers to teach women their unique weaving style. Anissa mentored participants to design and price their products and share their stories online. This project gave women control over their products, often for the first time.

In 2020, Anissa returned briefly to support as a Product Design Trainer to assess material quality. She determined the available clay was not suitable for commercial production and supported the development of new product lines with existing materials. After repatriation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Anissa assisted Gone Rural to track online metrics and monitor leads generated to sustain sales that had been impacted by the pandemic.

Through Adam and Anissa's support, Gone Rural has achieved organisation objectives which continue to help women and families in their community.

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