

Australian
Volunteers

Australian
Aid 

Australian Volunteers Program Cambodia

Australian volunteers have supported partner organisations in Cambodia to achieve their development goals since 1992. The Australian Government's Australian Volunteers Program continues this rich history.

The Australian Volunteers Program develops long-term, mutually respectful partnerships with organisations across the Pacific, Asia, and Africa to contribute to locally led change and the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The program aims to:

- Support partner organisations to progress their development objectives
- Increase program participants' cultural awareness and build stronger connections across countries
- Increase key stakeholders' appreciation of the value of volunteering

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Hak Menghaeng, Engineering Technology Officer, and Australian volunteer Ugyen Choden, WASH Capacity Development Mentor, at Engineers Without Borders Australia in Phnom Penh.
Photo: Harjono Djoyobisono

Keo Chanrika, Engineering Technology Officer at Engineers Without Borders (EWB) Australia in Phnom Penh, and Australian volunteer Meg Cummins hold a toilet prototype developed by EWB Australia.
Photo: Harjono Djoyobisono

Sar Dak, Program Officer at EnergyLab in Phnom Penh, in conversation with Australian volunteer Program Development Mentor Graeme Brown.
Photo: Harjono Djoyobisono

Our work in Cambodia

Our team in Cambodia works closely with our partners to understand their priorities and objectives. Together with our partners, we identify how the program can support them and how that support might change over time.

The program provides support across a range of development priorities in Cambodia, including:

- Health
- Education
- Agriculture and rural development
- Infrastructure
- Private sector partnerships and enabling
- Disability
- Gender empowerment
- Child protection
- Environment
- Governance

In Cambodia, we partner with organisations working in a broad range of sectors, including social infrastructure and services, government and civil society and education. Program partners are mainly local or national NGOs and INGOs.

Most volunteer assignments are with partners in Phnom Penh, Battambang and Siem Reap. The program also supports partners in remote locations through remote volunteer assignments.

The program facilitates opportunities for partners to connect with each other, exchange knowledge and share experiences. For example, partners participate in online and face-to-face workshops that focus on specific sectors or topics such as disability inclusion, gender equality and safeguarding.

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The Australian Volunteers we have worked with have been immersed within the organisation and have been an integral part of the team. By working closely with This Life's team, our volunteers have been able to support the development of policies, procedures and strategies, which will enable This Life to continue to deliver programs, working towards our vision of a world where children, families and communities are supported to access and create opportunities in life.”

Billy Gorter, Executive Director – This Life



Since 2018
the program in
Cambodia has
supported

75+
partner
organisations

150+
Australian
volunteers

200+
volunteer
assignments

29
small
grants

Small grants

From time to time, our partners can apply for small grants to support their vital work and progress towards achieving their development objectives.

Small grants have supported over 200 partners to deliver hundreds of projects across the program. Projects have been across a range of thematic areas including gender equality, disability and social inclusion, climate action and organisational strengthening.

Australian organisations

We also partner with Australian organisations who share our commitment to locally led change. We support existing partnerships between overseas partners and Australian organisations and identify opportunities for new partnerships. Australian partners contribute to skills and knowledge exchange and support volunteer recruitment.

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Australian volunteer Gregory Cansdale meeting with colleagues from the Southeast Asia Development Program, Phnom Penh.
Photo: Harjono Djoyobisono



"I feel proud to be part of the Australian Volunteers Program to contribute to Cambodia's development goals, as well as the cultural exchanges between program participants and our partners using a locally led approach in our way of working."

Molika Bou, Country Program Manager – Australian Volunteers Program, Cambodia

About our volunteers

Our program is all about people – volunteers, partners and the communities in which they live and work.

We value volunteers who are open to mutual learning and skills exchange, and who are committed to contributing to partners' priorities in support of locally led change.

We are committed to ensuring that international volunteering is inclusive and accessible to Australians from a range of backgrounds, with diverse perspectives, identities and abilities. We recognise the

unique strengths and skills that people with diverse backgrounds and experiences offer, and we work with volunteers to remove barriers they may face.

Each volunteer assignment requires specific skills and experience. Australian volunteers work in a broad range of sectors including community and social development, health, science, engineering and architecture, skilled trades, education, disaster and emergency management, gender equality and child protection.

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Johann Rebert, Deputy Country Representative of the Asia Foundation, meeting with Australian volunteer Communications Mentor Leane Regan.
Photo: Harjono Djoyobisono

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Australian volunteer Samantha Schofield working with Samoth Mavina, Self Employment Officer at Friends-International.
Photo: Cam Suttie



In-country

In-country volunteering enables volunteers and partners to share their skills, knowledge and culture, and form long-lasting relationships along the way.



Remote

Through remote volunteering Australians are supporting organisations overseas to achieve their development goals anywhere, anytime.



Hybrid

By combining remote and in-country phases, hybrid volunteering offers our partners and volunteers flexibility while still allowing for genuine connections and meaningful skill sharing.

Spotlight on Friends-International

Friends-International's mission is to support marginalised children, youth and their families, and to build a future where all children are safe from all forms of abuse, and they are provided opportunities for employment and becoming active members of their community.

Friends-International works in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos and Myanmar and has been a partner of the program since 2017.

Friends-International's focuses include child protection, social reintegration programs, and vocational training to improve employability and empowerment of youth. They also undertake income-generating initiatives, such as social enterprises and production centres.

Australian volunteer Samantha Schofield completed an in-country assignment as a Youth Project Mentor. During her assignment, Samantha supported staff in initiating new activities designed to help vulnerable children and youth in Siem Reap and neighbouring provinces. Her assistance also extended to other locations in Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, and Indonesia.

Due to the pandemic and the significant impact it had on communities across Cambodia, Friends-International shifted their focus away from building futures to saving lives. Samantha demonstrated a high degree of adaptability, coordinating the report on Friends-International's COVID-19 response in Cambodia and other countries. She also assisted the organisation with delivering fundraising activities to compensate for lost income due to the pandemic and helped develop new policies and procedures for online child protection for both beneficiaries and staff.

Staff learnt how to adapt materials and methodologies for online training and delivery, as well as monitoring and evaluation tools to measure and improve training delivery. Samantha was directly involved in the proposal writing, implementation, and reporting for two small grants awarded to Friends-International from the Australian Volunteers Program (the organisation has received three Impact Fund grants from the program in total). The two grants aimed to increase community resilience against COVID-19 impacts in Siem Reap by training ChildSafe Agents, providing emergency assistance and supporting marginalised communities back into employment.



The Australian Volunteers Program is guided by principles that ensure we



Support locally led change



Grow strong relationships and partnerships



Value volunteering



Evolve good practice and embrace innovation



Enhance diversity and inclusion



Ensure accountability and value learning

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The Australian Volunteers Program is funded by the Australian Government.
The program is managed by AVI in a consortium with DT Global and Alinea International.