



Australian Volunteers Program Eswatini

Australian volunteers have supported partner organisations in Eswatini to achieve their development goals since 1988. 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

Our work in Eswatini

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Jo Leung, Australian volunteer Project Coordinator of the Wheelchair Basketball Project at Cheshire Homes. Photo: Matthew Willman

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Australian volunteer Jo Leung (fifth from left) with Wheelchair Basketball Project participants at Cheshire Homes. Photo: Matthew Willman

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Cheshire Homes mural. Photo: Matthew Willman

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Preparing dyed grasses at Gone Rural for distribution to women weavers in regional parts of Eswatini. Photo: Matthew Willman

Our Southern Africa team works closely with our Eswatini 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 eSwatini, including:

- Gender equality and women's empowerment
- Reducing violence against women and girls
- Education (including science)
- Youth
- Working with people with disabilities
- Human rights
- Environmental management
- Strengthening institutions that promote stability and sustainability

In Eswatini, we partner with organisations working in a broad range of sectors, including social infrastructure and services, government and civil society, and health. Program partners are mainly local or national non-governmental organisations.

Most in-country volunteer assignments are with partners in Mbabane, Piggs Peak, Matsapha, and Manzini. The program also supports partners 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 events that focus on specific sectors or topics such as disability inclusion, gender equality and safeguarding.

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NGOs are always in need of various skill sets they cannot often afford, so I would recommend the Australian Volunteers Program as it adds value to the organisation in terms of learning a new skill, fundraising, tapping into other digital platforms, etc. We are thankful for the opportunity we've been assigned with the volunteer.”

Khabo Dlamini, Cheshire Homes of Swaziland

1



2



Since 2018 the program in Eswatini has supported

7+

partner organisations

12+

Australian volunteers

15+

assignments

9+

in-country volunteer assignments

6+

remote volunteer assignments

6

small grants

Small grants

Through the Impact Fund, we provide small grants of up to AUD\$10,000 to our partners to support their vital work and progress towards achieving their development objectives.

The Impact Fund has supported over 200 partners to deliver hundreds of projects. Projects have been across a range of thematic areas including gender equality, disability and social inclusion, climate action, organisational strengthening, and COVID-19 response and recovery.

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.



"I am very proud of the partnerships that we have with our program's partner organisations in Southern Africa. It is lovely to see the work that our wonderful Australian volunteers do to support partner organisations in meeting their development objectives."

Wendell Westley, Country Program Manager – Australian Volunteers Program, Southern Africa

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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Member of the Wheelchair Basketball Project at Cheshire Homes. Photo: Matthew Willman

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Local weavers at Gone Rural, a social enterprise that supports women to generate income from weaving and other handicrafts. Photo: Matthew Willman



In-country

International volunteering is an incredible experience. It's an opportunity for volunteers and partners to share their skills and culture, while making a tangible difference to communities.



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 Gone Rural

Gone Rural is a social enterprise in Eswatini founded in 1992 with the mission of creating economic empowerment for rural women in Eswatini through basket weaving.

Offering home-based work to over 700 rural artisans in often remote communities, Gone Rural provide market access, product design, materials and training to the women in order to earn an income for their beautiful traditional handcraft.

Gone Rural have been a partner with The Australian Volunteers program since 2018 and, to date, have been awarded two Impact Fund grants by the program.

Australian volunteer Anissa Dove worked for Gone Rural as a Social Development Coordinator. Her role focused on developing and piloting a program to train weavers from the remote Lavumisa region in southern Eswatini to teach women in other parts of the country their unique weaving style. Training was led by master weavers with Anissa's guidance. She also ran workshops with the women to assist them in designing their own pieces.

Anissa returned for a second assignment as a Product Design Trainer to work with the potters from the Gobhobo district, however, was soon repatriated due to the pandemic. After repatriation, Anissa took on a remote volunteering assignment as a Social Media Advisor.

According to Gone Rural, Anissa was successful in supporting opportunities for growth due to her flexibility in redesigning her training program after getting feedback from participants. Furthermore, she was able to act as a facilitator enabling the women to emerge as trainers, designers, and community leaders. Anissa's ongoing engagement with Gone Rural demonstrates that repeat volunteering – particularly with the same organisation in the same country – can be highly beneficial for the partner organisation if the role evolves with the needs of the organisation.



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

Australian
Volunteers

Australian
Aid 

3rd Floor 37 Bath Avenue, Rosebank, Johannesburg, South Africa
southernafrica@australianvolunteers.com
+27 11 447 7404

australianvolunteers.com
#AusVols @ausvols