

Australian Volunteers Program Philippines

Australian volunteers have supported partner organisations in Philippines to achieve their development goals since 2000. 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

Australian volunteer Speech Pathology Trainer Jill Smith at Welcome Home Foundation in Bacolod City.
Photo: Cam Suttie

Community member Dante Pablo works in the organic greenhouse at a community farm in Lamut, Ifugao.
Photo: David Aguilar

Volunteer Program Sustainability Enhancement Officer Hazel Maglantay at Gelacio I. Yason Foundation Family Farm School, Roxas, Oriental Mindoro.
Photo: David Aguilar

Our work in Philippines

Our team in Philippines 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 Philippines, including:

- Economic growth
- Good governance
- Social inclusion and protection
- Disaster risk reduction
- Gender equality and women's empowerment

In Philippines, we partner with organisations working in a broad range of sectors, including

government and civil society and education. Program partners are mainly local or national NGOs, government agencies or academic institutions.

Most volunteer assignments are primarily with partners in Metro Manila and in Camarines Sur. 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 workshops that focus on specific sectors or topics such as disability inclusion, gender equality and safeguarding.

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With the training and suggestions provided by our volunteer, we improved our livelihood program and e-commerce. She helped us a lot with proposal writing and implementing our impact grants. Her learning modules for our staff were well researched and easily digestible. She didn't rush things and was participatory in her approach.”

Ms. Carmelita “Mel” Nuqui, Executive Director, Development Action for Women Network



Since 2018
the program in
Philippines has
supported

35+
partner
organisations

50+
Australian
volunteers

70+
volunteer
assignments

8
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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The team at Gelacio I. Yason Foundation Family Farm School, Roxas, Oriental Mindoro.
Photo: David Aguilar

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I take pride in my role as a program staff member, in being a bridge that connects the needs of our partner organizations with dedicated volunteers. Together, we strive to achieve development goals, all while pouring our hearts into making a meaningful difference in the communities we serve.”

Joji Bonilla, Country Program Officer - Australian Volunteers Program, Philippines Office

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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A view of Barangay Hapid and Tupaya in Lamut, Ifugao.
Photo: David Aguilar

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Leela Galvez, volunteer Sustainable Tourism Officer, working on sustainable tourism at the Negros Occidental Tourism Division.
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.

Empowering sustainable livelihoods in Philippines

Philippines Local Government (LGU) of Canaman Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) offers services to improve its residents' wellbeing, such as financial aid to alleviate economic hardships or assist individuals during crises.

Recently, there has been a surge in community demand and an increase in program priorities by the national government, stretching LGU Canaman MSWDO's resources.

Additional support was provided by Australian volunteer Lydia Jovero who worked alongside the LGU Canaman MSWDO on the development of their sustainable livelihood project. Lydia's contributions introduced new perspectives and innovative methods to improve program effectiveness and strategic planning.

Lydia began her assignment as a Sustainable Livelihood Officer while LGU Canaman MSWDO was in the process of establishing a strategy document. Resources from the national agency would normally be used in developing such a strategy, but these often proved to be insufficient. Lydia played a crucial role in bridging this gap by introducing a process of monitoring to assess the impact of livelihood projects and identify the needs of beneficiaries. Through regular field visits and focus group discussions, she evaluated project effectiveness and identified opportunities for additional support.

These activities were integral to the development of the office's Sustainable Livelihood Development Plan, which ensures the proper utilisation of funds, assesses organisational goals, and demonstrates successful implementation of livelihood projects to higher government authorities. With a solid plan in place, the organisation may now be able to request additional funding to sustain their activities.

LGU Canaman MSWDO provided a supportive environment for Lydia to create meaningful change, ensuring that she had the necessary tools and infrastructure to effectively execute her initiatives. Her background as a Filipino Australian further enhanced her connection with the community through language and shared culture.



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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