



Australian
Volunteers

Australian
Aid 

Australian Volunteers Program South Africa

Australian volunteers have supported partner organisations in South Africa to achieve their development goals since 1994. 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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Australian volunteer Sandra Barjac and her colleague at Media Monitoring Africa, Johannesburg. Photo: Matthew Willman

The local community celebrates the completion of food gardens at Makwetse Primary School, Hoedspruit. Photo: Matthew Willman

Jessica Pietsch, Australian volunteer Digitisation Project Officer with a colleague at the Nelson Mandela Foundation, Johannesburg. Photo: Matthew Willman

Our work in South Africa

The Southern Africa team works closely with our South African 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 South Africa, including:

- Gender equality and women's rights
- Eliminating violence against women and girls
- Education, including science
- Youth
- Good governance
- Working with people living with disability
- Human rights (including for LGBTQIA+ communities)

- Environmental management
- Strengthening institutions that promote stability, democracy and the rule of law

In South Africa, we partner with organisations working in a broad range of sectors, including civil society, social infrastructure and services, and health. Program partners are local or national NGOs.

Most volunteer assignments are with partners in Gauteng, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Limpopo provinces. 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.

“

The volunteers are carefully selected and are suited to the tasks we undertake. I believe that the Australian Volunteers Program takes our organisation's needs and the personalities within our team into account when selecting the volunteer.”

Andy Clark, Botshabelo Urban Life



Since 2018
the program in
South Africa has
supported

35+

partner
organisations

100+

Australian
volunteers

135+

volunteer
assignments

16

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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Anthony Ghillino, General Manager of the QuadPara Association of the Western Cape with Australian volunteer Project Mentor Lowri Williams, Cape Town.
Photo: Matthew Willman

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"I am very proud of the relationships we have with our partner organisations in Southern Africa. It is lovely to see the work that our 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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Australian volunteer Jayne Christian (R) maintaining food gardens with a staff member at Makwetse Primary School, Hoedspruit.
Photo: Matthew Willman

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James Hamlet, Australian Volunteer Resource Mobilisation Officer with Matthew Clayton, Research, Advocacy and Policy Maker at Triangle Project, Cape Town.
Photo: Matthew Willman



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.

Supporting children with cerebral palsy through strengthened marketing and financial management

In South Africa and Lesotho, children who are severely disabled by cerebral palsy receive support from Malamulele Onward, a non-government organisation providing physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and equipment.

Malamulele Onward's programs are supported through the significant contribution of volunteers, with a small team and 34 volunteers delivering its services. Australian volunteers Alison O'Loughlin and Sankara Ganesan have helped to strengthen Malamulele Onward's capacity through remote volunteering.

As an volunteer Digital Communication Mentor, Alison strengthened the organisation's outreach and facilitated successful training courses. The revenue generated from these courses provides a much-needed income stream towards sustaining the organisation's operations.

Alison also introduced staff to helpful digital tools, such as LinkedIn and ChatGPT, and helped to streamline work processes. She worked with the team to raise awareness about an event to commemorate International Women's Day, which boosted morale among the children's caregivers. As a result of Alison's work strengthening Malamulele Onward's marketing, the organisation has experienced a growing number of enquiries, increased interest in training courses and more requests for assistance.

As a remote Financial Management Mentor, Sankara fostered a strong and positive relationship. His dedication strengthened staff capacity around finance. The team are now able to effectively and efficiently manage finances, which will contribute to the organisation's long-term sustainability.

Alison and Sankara's open-mindedness, professionalism, adaptability, and problem solving skills contributed to the organisation's growth and success.



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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