

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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Our work in South Africa

C

Australian volunteer Jayne Christian (right) with staff member at Makwetse Primary School, Hoedspruit, maintaining food gardens. Photo: Matthew Willman

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

2

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

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 LGBTQI+ 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 government and 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, 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

30+
partner organisations

70+
Australian volunteers

110+
assignments

50+
in-country volunteer assignments

55+
remote volunteer assignments

16
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.

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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



“ 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 Sandra Banjac and her colleague at Media Monitoring Africa, Johannesburg. Photo: Matthew Willman

5

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

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 GALA

GALA, a partner of the Australian Volunteers Program since 2018, is a centre for queer culture and education in South Africa.

The organisation's mission is to act as a catalyst for the production, preservation and dissemination of knowledge on the history, culture and contemporary experiences of the LGBTIQ+ community. To date, GALA has been awarded two small grants from the program.

Due to the pandemic, GALA had to learn to shift their operations online. During this challenging time, the organisation successfully met, and exceeded, their main objectives. During this time, Australian volunteer Lucinda O'Connor supported the organisation remotely in documenting historic, global events from a local, queer perspective, she played a pivotal role supporting GALA to shift online.

Lucinda also assisted the organisation with a key objective to concentrate on 'archiving the now'. This included the #feesmustfall oral history project, which documented queer voices from the student movement about education costs in South Africa. GALA also worked to ensure that the impact of the pandemic in South Africa was documented from a local, queer perspective. Lucinda was integral to the management of the "Queer Voices From Lockdown" oral history/questionnaire project. She also edited and proofread two articles commissioned from queer writers – one from the viewpoint of queer healthcare workers, the other on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on queer not-for-profit organisations on the continent.

With Lucinda's assistance, GALA developed new effective strategies by shifting to digital platforms, engaging actively on social media with weekly archive stories, directing funds for book publication and documenting the pandemic from a queer perspective through questionnaires, commissioned articles, films and tracking press and social media.

GALA continue to engage with volunteers and international interns remotely and credit their experience with Lucinda and the Australian Volunteers Program as giving them confidence to do this.



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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