



Australian Volunteers Program Sri Lanka

Australian volunteers have supported partner organisations in Sri Lanka to achieve their development goals since 1980. 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 Sri Lanka

David Havig (L), volunteer Digital Marketing Mentor for Tourism at the Matara District Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MDCC) visits manager "Indu" S.H Indrani (C) and owner Dr Indika Prasad Mohotti (R) at Culture Resort, Matara. Photo: The Creative Labz / Benadict Colombage

Members of the MDCC team - Chief Executive Officer, Sudesh Kumara (L), Administration and Account Assistant, Malshi Waragoda (C), and Membership Development Officer, K.A. Bhavindi Amasha (R). Photo: The Creative Labz / Benadict Colombage

Our team in Sri Lanka 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 Sri Lanka, including:

- Economic development and business
- Tourism development
- Gender equality
- Disability inclusion
- Reconciliation

In Sri Lanka, we partner with organisations working in a broad range of sectors, including agriculture, forestry and fisheries, education, and civil society and government. Program partners are mainly local or national NGOs or international agencies.

Volunteer assignments are with partners throughout Sri Lanka, including the capital Colombo. 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.

"

As a small NGO, it is very difficult to find resources to fill skills gaps locally. The approach to locally led development and the friendly nature of the in-country team motivated us to work with the Australian Volunteers Program."

Sugi (Nadarajah Sukirtharaj) - Jaffna Social Action Centre



Since 2018
the program in
Sri Lanka has
supported

30+

partner
organisations

45+

Australian
volunteers

60+

volunteer
assignments

10

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.

2

*A laneway in Galle Fort Town.
Photo: Colin Collett van Rooyen*

3

*Traditional Sri Lankan food
at Mathota Ambula Street
Foods Boutique at Polhena
Beach, Matara.
Photo: The Creative Labz /
Benadict Colombage*

4



"I am excited to welcome volunteers to my country, Sri Lanka. I always appreciate working with people with such honourable qualities that are so willing to share their time freely to support our partner organisations."

*Charith Weerasinghe, Country Program Manager -
Australian Volunteers Program, Sri Lanka*

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.

4

*Sandun, a fisherman from
Negombo, Western Province.
Photo: Harjono Djoyobisono*

5

*Thamaramali Mahanama, a
vendor selling tea at Patna
Cascades, Deniyaya.
Photo: The Creative Labz /
Benadict Colombage*



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 the Organisation of People for Engagement and Enterprise

The Organisation of People for Engagement and Enterprise (OPENE) is a local organisation working to improve education and deliver local, sustainable, capacity-building initiatives, including initiatives that respond to the climate crisis.

OPENE depends on grants and public donations to fund its work. To maintain effectiveness and financial sustainability, OPENE seeks to develop strong networks with the global donor community and build a trusted donor base.

Janet Dawson, an Australian volunteer Fundraising Mentor, has worked closely with OPENE to strengthen their capacity in writing grant proposals and reports, meet compliance requirements, and develop fundraising documentation. Under the hybrid volunteer modality, Janet arrived in Sri Lanka after three months of remote work. As a result, she had a solid understanding of the assignment as soon as she hit the ground, which greatly contributed to its success.

Her support and adaptability positively impacted staff capacity and organisational policies. Janet helped to diversify the donor portfolio and secure competitive grants in the education and community capacity-building sectors. A significant milestone was achieved with the successful application for a long-term grant, which aligned with the organisation's approaches in economic development, women's empowerment, and education.

Janet's exceptional abilities and motivation have made a lasting impact on OPENE's operational capacity. Her integration into the organisation was supported by inclusive practices, active participation in organisational activities, and cultural adaptability.



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**

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.

No. 35A 1/1 Colonel T.G. Jayawardana Mawatha, Colombo
00300, Western Province, Sri Lanka
srilanka_office@australianvolunteers.com
+94 11 257 730 0

australianvolunteers.com
#AusVols @ausvols