

Australian *Volunteers*



**Invention: creating a testable
product**

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Listening to our partners to develop community volunteer management supports that can be tested in the real world.

In design

Dec 2022 - May 2023



Summary

This project builds on previous activities and insights gained to better understand what a helpful community volunteer management support may look like to our partner organisations. Learnings from the project discovery and concept development gave us insight into strengths and needs of our partners. These learnings were also used to identify remaining knowledge gaps and questions that needed to be addressed to respond to remaining project assumptions. This puts us in a better position to design an informed version of a volunteer management support that can be trialled in the real world.

As this project journeys through the innovation stages of discovery, design and test, we continue to confirm that our partners want support with managing volunteers. Acknowledging the complexity of the issue and the process, we once again invited our partner organisations to share their knowledge and experience. This allowed us to better understand what is useful content and what is the best mode of delivery to allow partners to strengthen their use of community volunteering.

Our objectives

- To better understand conditions in which our partner organisations need to use a volunteer management support service.
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- Learn why our partner organisations do not access and use other volunteer management resources available online.
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- Understand what format of support resources may be helpful to partner organisations and respond to their needs
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- Get a sense of how we may create a better service experience, including 'needs assessment'.



An in-country workshop allowed partner to express what they need to access and utilise volunteer management support tools and systems.

Our approach

Based on previous insights we were aware that well-designed resources themselves are not enough to motivate their use – user experience, from learning about to engaging with the support, is as important. In January and February 2023, teams in Tanzania, Mongolia and Sri Lanka held workshops to hear from civil society partners about what is needed to confidently access and utilise any volunteer management support that the Australian Volunteers Program may offer.

We asked partners about their prior experience in utilising organisational capability strengthening supports: what worked and what did not work optimally. We also tested a simplified volunteer management toolkit, publicly available online, to better understand why such resources are not currently accessed. Finally, we asked partner organisations to think big and be creative about what volunteer management supports may look like.

What we are learning

- Partner organisations need to be motivated to utilise the resource and in doing so strengthen their volunteer management practices.
- Peer platforms and networks are seen as useful in cross-sharing learnings, studying resources and connecting to similar organisations.
- Partners trust a known source of information, as opposed to resources published online by an unknown organisation.
- Many partners do not have sufficient HR capacity and resourcing to implement volunteer management systems.

- Partner organisations desire tailored support specific to their context.
- Australian volunteers are seen as useful in supporting the implementation and hand over of the volunteer management systems to their national peers.