

Australian Volunteers



Leadership mentoring

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Investigating if an open volunteering model can attract senior leaders or executives to volunteer.

Complete

Oct 2019 - Mar 2020



Summary

In this prototype, we brought together a group of senior Australian government employees with senior leaders in partner organisations. In doing so, we hoped to discover if a mentorship program could be mutually beneficial to both groups.

Our objectives

- Discover a mixed-mode model that could support volunteers and partners who do not have an existing relationship to build and maintain a working relationship.
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- Determine if this model can attract a more diverse group of volunteers, specifically senior leaders or executives, who would not otherwise consider volunteering with our program.
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- Test if senior-level mentoring can offer our partners something attractive and useful.

Our approach

This model was designed to test the potential of mixed-mode volunteering, where volunteers spend some time in country, followed by some time working remotely in Australia. The prototype focuses on Leadership Mentoring, pairing Australian public servant leaders with mentees in our partner organisations.

Volunteer mentors who took part in this prototype were senior leaders in Australia. They were matched with senior leaders in partner organisations in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and the Federated States of Micronesia. These pairings were based on skills, experiences, and objectives of the program.

What we learned

The bushfires in Australia and COVID-19 impacted the remote volunteering aspect of this prototype. All mentors worked at the Victorian Department of Environments, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), and some were seconded to respond to the bushfire crisis in Australia. While outside factors heavily impacted final evaluations and reports, the participants' written evaluations demonstrate that goals were achieved, and successful relationships were built.

- It is possible to establish relationships in a short period of time.

- Volunteering models like this would benefit from a strong, well-planned structure for interactions.
- Short term projects need to consider participants' time constraints
- Senior Australian government employees found value in the experience and actively participated.