

Australian Volunteers



orelawan

Supporting volunteerism in Asia
Archipelago

Supporting volunteerism in Asia Archipelago

Learning how to support governments and peak bodies to improve volunteerism.

Complete

Feb 2022 - Apr 2023



Cover image: Jon Hunter (L), Regional Director Asia, Australian Volunteers Program, with Marsya P. Nurmaranti (C), Executive Director, Indorelawan, and Indah Susanti (R), Indonesia Program Manager, Australian Volunteers Program, in Jakarta Indonesia. Photo: Harjono Djoyobisono.

Summary

We sought to learn more about how we can support governments and peak bodies to improve volunteerism in the Philippines and Timor-Leste, as part of the discovery phase for the Global Volunteering Accelerator workstream.

Australian volunteers were not able to travel internationally during the COVID-19 pandemic and some of our government partners requested program support for national volunteering activities. In response, we met with key volunteering bodies and government organisations to identify and discuss opportunities for providing support to their existing initiatives.

We partnered with the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA) in Philippines and the Secretary of State for Youth and Sport in Timor-Leste to run a series of workshops through which our partners identified volunteering research and global networking as key priorities. This work has continued into the design phase and we are currently working with these partners to co-design and co-deliver volunteering research and networking activities.

Our objectives

- What are the priorities of government and peak bodies in relation to national volunteering?
-

- How can the program contribute to these priorities?
-

- Who are the key stakeholders supporting national volunteering in the region?

Our approach

We started by working with the willing and interested. The Philippine Government requested support from international volunteer-sending organisations (IVSOs) on their national volunteering initiatives and in Timor-Leste we have continued supporting the Government through the Volunteering for Development (Vol4Dev) workstream.

To further understand the context, the in-country team in the Philippines held a series of meetings with government agencies and civil society organisations to scope what are the existing national volunteering activities in the Philippines. The in-country team in Timor-Leste has been working with the Secretary of State for Youth and Sport other IVSOs present in the country to explore how strengthen volunteerism in the country.

The program supported PNVSCA in conducting a multi-stakeholder workshop on the formulation of the National Volunteerism Research Agenda (Appendix 1). This workshop resulted in the prioritisation of research to progress policy formulation on volunteerism. The program was one of the first international volunteer sending organisations (IVSO) to be recognised by PNVSCA for the support to national volunteering (Appendix 2).

Inspired by the activities done in the Philippines, a National Volunteerism Consultation Workshop was held in Timor-Leste to support the government in their national youth volunteer scheme (Appendix 3). The workshop highlighted the importance of conducting a Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Assessment Survey to understand volunteering environment in the country.

We followed this learning and established a new design project 'Partnering on volunteering research and networks,' which explored how the program might partner with key volunteering bodies to support research and volunteering networks.

What we are learning

- Government agencies, academic institutions and civil society organisations show strong interest on national volunteering activities in the Philippines and Timor-Leste.
- Governments of both countries have existing nationally-led volunteering initiatives.
- Conducting multi-stakeholder workshops can be done to jumpstart national volunteering activities.
- Mechanisms to support volunteering in partners countries can be replicated and contextualised in other countries.
- Other IVSOs are interested and willing to support nationally-led volunteering programs.
- Maintaining good relationship with government and non-government partners is important in the successful implementation of projects.



PNVSCA Executive Director Donald James Gawe (Right) invited at the workshop in Timor-Leste to share about volunteerism in the Philippines.



DFAT Development Counsellor Than Le and PNVSCA Director Donald Gawe meeting at the sidelines of the NVRA workshops in the Philippines.



Onsite participants of the NVRA Workshop in the Philippines.



Participants of the National Volunteerism Consultation Workshop in Timor-Leste.

Appendix 1 - Forming a national volunteering research agenda in the Philippines

In June 2022, the Australian Volunteers Program worked in partnership with the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA), to hold a hybrid, multi-sectoral stakeholder workshop on creating a national volunteering research agenda.

A total of 108 online and onsite participants worked together in identifying the national landscape of volunteering and how national research can help mainstream volunteerism in the country. Attendees included officials from the government, civil society organisations, academics, and different international and local volunteer sending organisations from different parts of the Philippines.

This workshop was conducted as part of the Global Volunteering Accelerator workstream.



Appendix 2 - PNVSCA signs a partnership agreement with the Australian Volunteers Program

The Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA) and the Australian Volunteers Program entered into a partnership agreement through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that formalised their mutual collaboration on national volunteering activities in Philippines. This two-year agreement set out mutually beneficial outcomes through a range of activities that included but were not limited to:

- Developing and delivering targeted and strategic mutually agreed innovation initiatives
- Connecting with global partners to facilitate learning exchanges on volunteerism and volunteering practices
- Participating in an open exchange of knowledge and ideas for accelerating national volunteering
- Seeking opportunities to collaborate with other International Volunteer Sending Organisations to support national volunteering initiatives

A workshop was conducted to draft an action plan for the two-year partnership. The activities identified during the workshop provide key action points to determine the success of the partnership. The action plan highlighted collaboration activities such as research, innovation, learning exchange and private sector engagement to boost volunteerism in the country. Activities set in the action plan and MOU contribute to the program's learning of how to support volunteering infrastructures of government and peak bodies.

This partnership initiative is part of the Global Volunteering Accelerator workstream.



Appendix 3 - Conducting a national consultation workshop on volunteerism in Timor-Leste

The Australian Volunteers Program in Timor-Leste, together with other international and local volunteer agencies and government stakeholders, successfully conducted a National Consultation Workshop on Volunteerism. This 2-day workshop was key in advancing Timor-Leste's recognition of volunteering through the creation of a government body to maintain coordination of efforts in national volunteering.

Over 70 participants were present, including the Secretary of State for Youth and Sport and other government officials, leaders of international and local volunteering agencies, members of the academy and youth from different organizations in Timor-Leste.

This is also the start of creating networks in the region starting with Timor-Leste and Philippine Governments. The Executive Director of the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency presented the history, legal framework, challenges, and recommendations that are vital to the creation of Timor-Leste's own government agency to work in promoting and mainstreaming volunteering

This workshop was conducted as part of the Global Volunteering Accelerator workstream.