

# Australian Volunteers Program's Gender Equality Statement of Intent

## VISION

**The Australian Volunteers Program systematically works to promote and protect gender equality and women's rights in all aspects of the program.**

## PURPOSE

The Australian Volunteers Program is committed to gender equality. Gender equality and women's empowerment are essential approaches for effective development. This Statement of Intent outlines the program's high-level commitment to achieve positive gender equality outcomes and reduce gender inequality.

## CONTEXT

There is a strong international legal and policy framework in all countries that the program operates in to work towards gender equality in inclusive, locally contextualised and safe ways to support gender justice, women's rights, and security, including the right to live free from violence.

Gender equality and women's empowerment – protecting their rights, recognising their voices, and investing in their potential – are essential approaches for effective development, along with broader efforts to work with men, women, boys, girls and people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identities.<sup>1</sup>

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly recognises volunteer groups as stakeholders to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 5: *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*. The role of volunteers is crucial in contributing to *leaving no one behind*<sup>2</sup> by reaching out to people, including those marginalised or difficult to reach, to bring voices and knowledge into collective actions.<sup>3</sup>



## OUR COMMITMENT

The program's approach to gender equality and women's rights is underpinned by our commitment to:

- Making gender equality and women's rights a program priority.
- Recognising gender equality and women's rights as a universal human right and essential for effective development.
- Upholding gender equality and women's rights throughout the program both in Australia and overseas.
- Applying a "do no harm" approach to embedding gender equality and women's empowerment in our operational and programmatic work.
- Recognising that in order to embed gender equality we must promote the rights of women, men, children and people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identities and abilities to a life free from discrimination, and free from violence at work, at home and in the community.
- Taking a rights-based and intersectional approach to gender equality and women's rights.
- Seeking to partner with, and learn from, organisations working for gender equality and women's rights.

## PRIORITIES

The program's Gender Equality Action Plan outlines the actions the program will take to progress gender equality. The program will prioritise:

- Leadership, analysis, resources, systems and oversight that advance gender equality outcomes across the program.
- Developing staff and volunteers' understanding and capacity to strengthen gender equality and women's rights.
- Developing innovative partnerships to promote gender equality and women's rights.
- Working to prevent and respond to gender-based discrimination, exploitation and violence.
- Applying a gender equality lens to monitoring and evaluation activities to assess progress and improve outcomes.

## OUTCOMES

By actively working to promote and protect gender equality and women's rights, the Australian Volunteers Program seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

- Gender equality is a cross-cutting priority and is considered in all activities, programs, projects and institutional aspects.
- The program has developed strong partnerships with gender equality and women's rights organisations and is achieving impact.
- Staff and volunteers have access to gender equality learning and development opportunities.
- Volunteers have greater capability to consider gender equality in their assignment objectives.
- Staff are confident to work in ways that promote and protect gender equality and women's rights.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdin\\_monitor\\_article/public-diplomacy-tool-advancing-women%E2%80%99s-issues-and-closing-gender-gap](https://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdin_monitor_article/public-diplomacy-tool-advancing-women%E2%80%99s-issues-and-closing-gender-gap)

<sup>2</sup>Leaving no one behind. In committing to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Member States recognised that the dignity of the individual is fundamental and that the Agenda's targets and goals should be met for all nations and people and all segments of society. Source: The Sustainable Development Report, 2016 [unstats.un.org/](http://unstats.un.org/)

<sup>3</sup><https://www.unv.org/volunteerism-and-global-goals>