


# Partnership in Action:

## Australian NGO Cooperation Program



Laxmi and her mother Mankala outside their home in western Nepal. Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia.



**P**artnership – working in collaboration and cooperation - is at the heart of Caritas Australia. With the support of the Australian Government, and through partnerships with local organisations and Church networks, we are able to reach where the need is greatest and work together for a just future.

In 2022-2023, we delivered **14** programs in **12** countries with the support of the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), reaching over **232,000** people worldwide.



We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. At Caritas Australia, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which our offices are based. This land always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

Caritas Australia offices are located on the lands of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation in Sydney, the Boon Wurrung People and Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) Peoples of the Kulin Nation in Melbourne, the Whadjuk of the Noongar Nation in Perth, the Turrbal and Jagera People in Brisbane, and the Ngunnawal People in Canberra.

We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of First Australians. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to this country and we commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

An aerial view of Jawoyn country in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory. Local guides from Caritas Australia's Djilpin Arts run cultural tours for visitors to promote their culture for future generations. Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia.

# Our impact

This year, our extensive collaborative efforts spanned across the Indo-Pacific, engaging with over 110 in-country partners, including implementing agencies, civil society organisations, and host government departments, in the successful delivery of ANCP projects.



## • Case study: Empowering people with disabilities in Vietnam

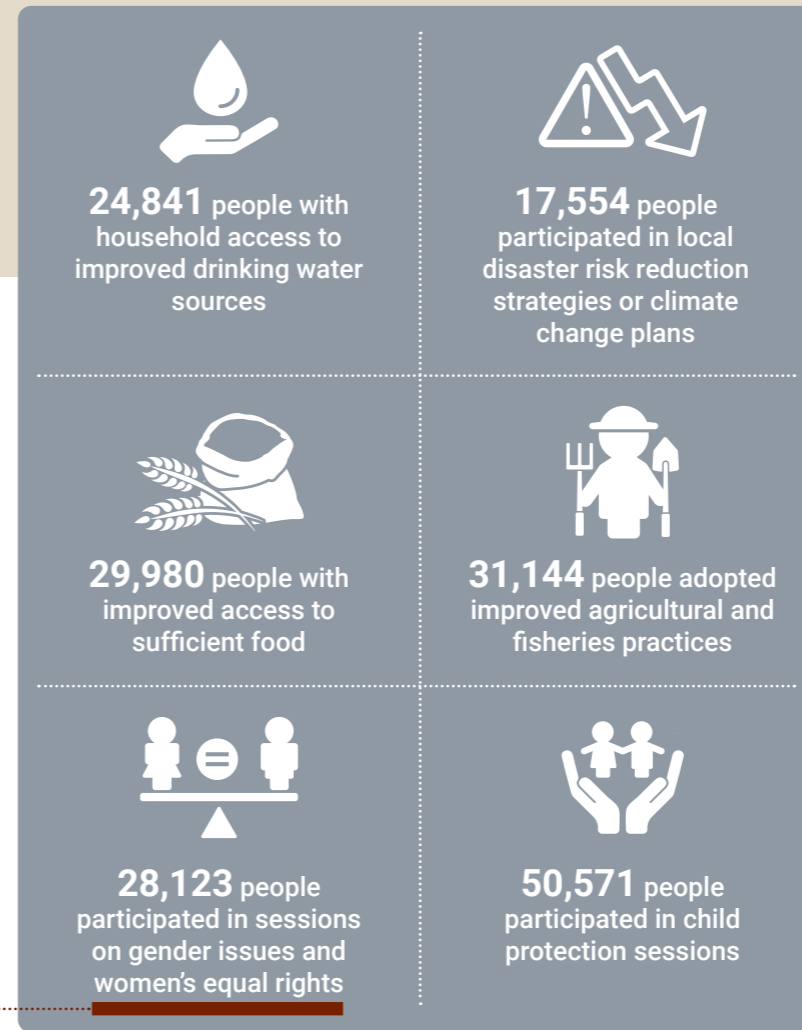
Thu was just 12 years old when he lost his leg. One day, he was looking after his cows when he stepped on an unexploded land mine. Living with a disability in rural Vietnam presented many challenges for Thu, who worked mainly as a rice farmer. After his wife, Linh, suffered a stroke, Thu also had to take on the additional role of her carer.

Thu and Linh joined the 'Together We Can' Disability Project, run by Caritas Australia's local partner in Vietnam, the Centre for Sustainable Rural Development (SRD). With support from the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), the program helps people living with disabilities to establish Village Saving and Loans Associations (VSLA) so that they can access affordable loans. Thu was able to obtain a low-interest loan, which he used to open his own barber shop on a new road that was constructed near his home.

The VSLA provided a welcoming and inclusive space for Thu and Linh to socialise, learn new skills and give support to others. **"I think having a club is good, where people living with disabilities can join and help one another. Additionally, there are many meaningful activities from the project to support my family and others,"** said Thu.

The program also helped him build an accessible toilet for Linh, who has become more independent thanks to the support of a physiotherapist. For Thu, the greatest impact that the program has had is seeing the change in Linh's physical and mental wellbeing.

Thu looks after cows near his home in Vietnam. Photo: Phan Tan Lam/Caritas Australia.



## • Case study: Creating brighter futures for women in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Rosalie was only 14 years old when she had to drop out of school due to the financial constraints of her family. She had little options and became a child soldier. Even after getting married and having children, Rosalie had to continue to work as a soldier - she had no other option, and this was the only life she knew.

**"I walked with a child in my left hand, a box of ammunition on my head and another child on my back. I also had a weapon on my right shoulder. The chief commander had no mercy on me, even though I had my baby on my back,"** said Rosalie.

When Rosalie was finally demobilised from the army after six years, she was eager to start a new life, free from violence. Determined to turn her life around, she joined the Integrated Community Development program, supported by Caritas Australia, and its local partner organisations, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and Caritas Bukavu.

Through the program, Rosalie participated in business and social skills training and joined a Saving and Internal Lending Community group (SILC), which helped her with a loan to start her own small business, selling second-hand shoes and natural remedies.

Rosalie is now a business owner, a community leader and a role model for other ex-combatants who are seeking to readjust to civilian life. This program is delivered in partnership with the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



Rosalie sells second-hand shoes and natural remedies in the DRC. Photo: Arlette Bashizi/CAFOD.

## Unlocking positive change

During the 2022-23 period, four ANCP-funded programs underwent external evaluations across diverse locations, including Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Myanmar, and Nepal. Through these evaluations, some common trends and learnings have been generated that will help support the ongoing strengthening of our work.



### Empowering through Strengths and Assets

Adopting a Strengths-Based Approach (SBA) and Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach has resulted in sustainable development and enhancement of self-belief among community members.



### Collaboration Fuels Impact

Strengthening partnerships emerged as a key component of the collaborative ABCD approach, enabling our partners to complement and collaborate on existing programs.



### Community Participation and Ownership

The evaluations highlight the importance of involving communities in decision-making, planning, and implementation.



### Education and Empowerment

Investing in education, training, and capacity building, has led to improved skills, knowledge, and self-confidence among participants, enabling them to drive positive change.



### Transforming Livelihoods

A common thread across programs was the focus on improving livelihoods and income generation, particularly for marginalised communities.



### Navigating Challenges with Adaptability

Adaptability, flexibility, and collaboration with local authorities and partners were found key in navigating challenges, such as external crises, environmental issues, political interference and funding delays.



### Documentation and Monitoring

The evaluations emphasise the importance of thorough documentation, monitoring, and evaluation. These practices help track progress, identify challenges, and inform decision-making for ongoing and future projects.

***“Financial support is temporary, but skill development is permanent and long-term”***

-FFS farmer, Kirtipur Municipality. Nepal Livelihoods and Resilience Program.

## Gender Equity, Disability and Social Inclusion meta review

Through the support of ANCP, we conducted a meta review that focused on Gender Equity, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) within our international development and humanitarian initiatives, reviewing a total of 11 projects.

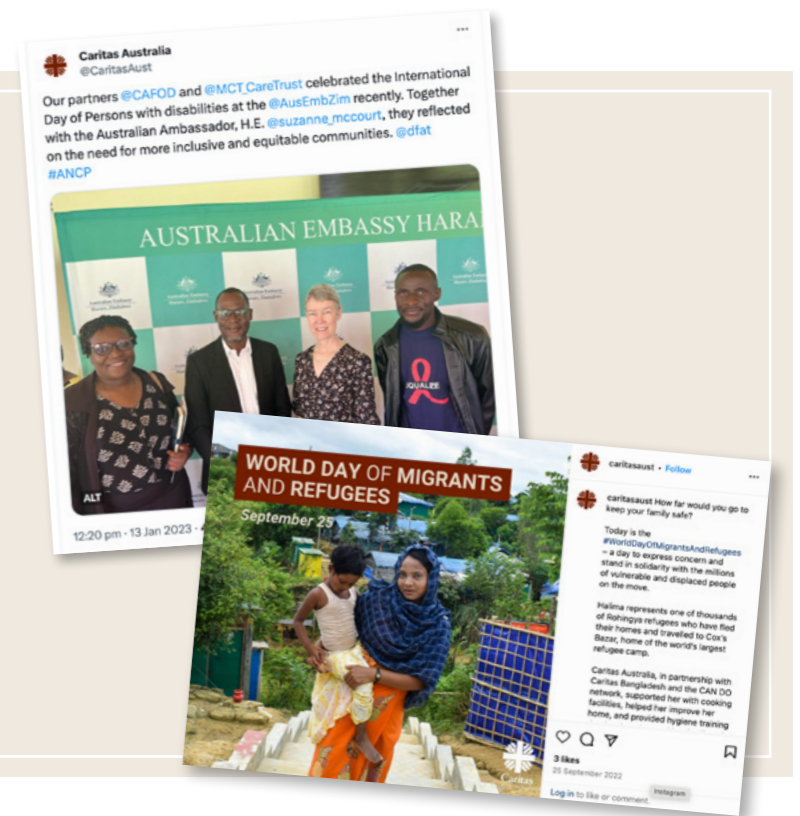
The review affirmed Caritas Australia’s commitment to mainstreaming equity and inclusion across our work, while also highlighting several projects that demonstrated transformative outcomes linked to gender equity and disability inclusion. These included projects that actively engaged men and boys in supporting changes to gender norms, and targeted programs that were supporting people with disability to realise their rights.

Several recommendations have since been actioned including the development of an introductory training for partners and a guidance note for key GEDSI considerations in project design. These evaluations contribute to our continuous commitment to understanding, improving, and enhancing the positive change we strive to catalyse.

## Strengthening relationships

Through diverse social media and communication platforms, we continued to share transformative stories and project impacts, collaborating closely with DFAT to align public messaging with shared values between Australia and partner countries.

With eased travel restrictions, we were able to resume face-to-face engagement with DFAT posts, participating in roundtable discussions, bilateral meetings and celebrating international days.



## Program spotlight

In Nepal, over 4,000 women were able to access livelihood support interventions, participating in different capacity building training programs and activities, as well as receiving support to establish or promote their own businesses.

This has boosted confidence and influenced changed perceptions within families and communities, fostering trust in their financial decision-making abilities.

The Nepal Livelihoods and Resilience Program has also significantly reduced instances of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) across multiple districts, with more than 5,400 people participating in sessions on gender issues and women’s equal rights.

The Machhapuchhre Agro-Eco Tourism Learning Center and Homestay is helping families in Nepal broaden their income streams.  
Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia.

