

Red Cross no longer sending AVID volunteers

By Ashlee Betteridge
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The Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program is not just [shedding placements](#) and losing 30 percent of its budget—it has now also lost a partner.

As Fairfax Media reported, Red Cross has [withdrawn](#) from the AVID program, citing the aid cuts. Red Cross told current volunteers that the organisation was going to try to keep them in their current assignments for as long as possible, and was looking for other options. It has also announced the withdrawal [on its website](#).

Red Cross' departure leaves the other two core partners, Scope Global and Australian Volunteers International (AVI), to divvy up the depleted volunteer budget. They are quite possibly breathing a sigh of relief.

Red Cross was both the newest and smallest partner to AVID, and unlike the other two organisations, volunteer-sending (of AVIDs at least) is not its core business.

According to the ODE evaluation of the volunteer program released last year, in 2011-12 and 2012-13, Red Cross received \$17.8 million, AVI \$36.9 million and Scope Global (then called Austraining) \$81.4 million (note that these figures are the total received across two years, not single year budgets). AVID partnership agreements with the three partners were all due to expire in December this year.

Red Cross only came on board the AVID program in 2010-11, and took several years to ramp up its participation. In a [highly-positive report](#) [pdf] on volunteering and AVID that it published last year, Red Cross noted: "Our contribution to the AVID program has increased rapidly: from eight volunteers sent overseas in 2010/2011 to 128 volunteers in 2012/2013". This pales in comparison to the roughly 1000 volunteers that Scope Global manages in assignments each year.

This may not be the end of volunteer opportunities through Red Cross, however. From comments to Fairfax and the statement on its own website, it sounds as though Red Cross will now pursue international volunteering under its own terms, free of AVID's red tape.

About the author/s

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Ashlee Betteridge was the Manager of the Development Policy Centre until April 2021. She was previously a Research Officer at the centre from 2013-2017. A former journalist, she holds a Master of Public Policy (Development Policy) from ANU and has development experience in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. She now has her own consultancy, Better Things Consulting, and works across several large projects with managing contractors.

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