

Partnership in Action:

Australian NGO Cooperation Program

2024 - 25



Asilika and her daughter in their home in a small village in Fiji. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Impact of the Australian NGO Cooperation Program partnership

Partnership – working in collaboration and cooperation – is at the heart of Caritas Australia's mission. 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 2024-25, with the support of our 32 local partners and the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), we delivered 19 programs in 16 countries, reaching a total of 1,001,475 people worldwide.

52% of participants were women and girls.

84% of projects on gender equity.

79% of projects with disability inclusion.

68% of projects with climate change objectives.



137,052

Number of people who received improved health services



22,835

Number of people with improved access to sufficient food



30,903

Number of people with household access to improved drinking water sources



14,894

Number of people with household access to improved sanitation facilities



14,023

Number of people who participated in the development or implementation of disaster risk reduction strategies or climate change plans



23,375

Number of people who participated in sessions on gender equity and women's equal rights

Programs Spotlight:

Community Managed Sustainable Livelihoods and Resilience Program II, Bangladesh

Partner: Caritas Bangladesh

Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, with disasters such as floods, cyclones, tidal surges and droughts increasing in intensity and frequency. With support from the Australian government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), the five-year Community Managed Livelihoods and Resilience Project II focuses on creating a common home where communities are climate resilient, and achieve sustainable livelihoods and ecological justice. The project targets approximately 105,000 marginalised and vulnerable people across five districts of Bangladesh, with a particular focus on farmers, women, people with disabilities and indigenous communities vulnerable to climate change.

Over the past year, the project has helped:

- Improve food security, reduced poverty, and increased economic resilience for farmers.
- Enhance women's participation in production and decision-making processes.
- Implement adaptive techniques on agricultural activities, creating a strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and incorporating it into agricultural production.
- Reduce vulnerability to climate change and disasters, decrease seasonal migration and improve environmental sustainability.
- Increase social justice, inclusivity and cultural rights for marginalised groups, including indigenous communities, ethnic minority groups, women and people with disabilities.
- Improve healthcare by training rural traditional birth attendants and midwives to support pregnant mothers to give birth safely.



Project impact



Co-investment support:

1,495 people received co-investment support for agriculture, livestock, and off-farm activities.



Climate change and Disaster Risk Reduction:

48 awareness sessions were conducted and 20,929 trees planted, with adaptive farming and water-saving techniques introduced.



Health and nutrition:

41 midwives and 129 traditional birth attendants were trained, 448 safe deliveries were conducted and 35 health awareness sessions were held.

Programs Spotlight:

Strengthening Health Systems of the Catholic Church Health Services in Papua New Guinea

Partner: Catholic Church Health Services

In Papua New Guinea, many rural health facilities were constructed more than 50 years ago, with little to no renovations done to them since then. Many suffer from power outages, leaking roofs and severely outdated medical equipment. This has deterred many from seeking necessary medical assistance, which is particularly risky for pregnant women.

Catholic Church Health Services is a health service provider in Papua New Guinea for over 25 percent of the country's population, running over 240 health facilities across the country. Through the Strengthening Health Systems of the Catholic Church Health Services project in Papua New Guinea, and in partnership with the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), rural health facilities can undergo much-needed renovations to provide quality healthcare to the community.

In the last financial year, the project made significant strides in strengthening rural health systems in the Enga and Milne Bay provinces. Through targeted infrastructure upgrades, medical equipment delivery and capacity building, the project improved access to quality healthcare and enhanced community resilience. Community engagement and adaptive planning were key to overcoming logistical and security challenges, keeping the project on track and responsive to local needs. Strong collaboration with Provincial Health Authorities and community leaders also ensured effective implementation and local ownership.



Project impact



Delivered essential medical equipment to four healthcare centres, improving clinical capacity and infection control.



Water supply restored at Yampu Health Centre; incinerators installed at Yampu and Pumakos health centres for safe waste disposal.



Sixty-six births attended by skilled health workers; 22 health workers trained in HIV prescribing, emergency obstetric care and basic life support.



Over 150 community members engaged in awareness sessions on sorcery accusation-related violence, and tribal conflict.



Seven healthcare buildings equipped with handwashing facilities; three with improved water sources.

Kudzai's journey: from hunger to hope in Zimbabwe

For Kudzai, a mother living in rural Zimbabwe, life was a seemingly relentless struggle to meet her family's most basic needs. After her husband passed away, she became the sole caregiver for her elderly mother, her son, and her brother – who lives with a disability. She often relied on strenuous casual work such as washing clothes, fetching water, weeding fields, or working as a maid to earn income. With persistent drought worsening already harsh conditions, the household frequently survived on just one meal a day.

The turning point came when Kudzai joined the Zimbabwe Integrated Community Development program, implemented by Caritas Gweru and supported by the Australian government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). Kudzai joined a community nutrition garden and began growing a variety of crops, including vegetables, tomatoes, carrots, butternuts and onions. The produce not only improved her family's nutrition but also became a steady source of income. With earnings from the garden, she could finally pay her son's school fees, afford medication for her brother, and cover household expenses without depending on unpredictable casual labour. Her dedication earned her a position on the garden's committee, where she is now an active leader.

Beyond gardening, Kudzai was also selected as the leader of her community's broiler chicken group. She also benefited from the construction of a toilet at in her home, which helped improve her family's health and hygiene by reducing the risk of waterborne diseases. Today, her family enjoys three meals a day – a drastic improvement from the past. Her son is enrolled in a technical college in Zimbabwe's capital, Harare, and household needs such as food, clothing, medication and transport are now met consistently.

The program formally finished on 30 June and Caritas Australia will continue working with Caritas Gweru, Caritas Hwange, Caritas Gokwe and Caritas Zimbabwe in a new program that builds on the success and lessons from the Zimbabwe Integrated Community Development Programs. The five-year Empowering Communities in Climate Adaptation and Resilience-Building in Zimbabwe program will aim to support 33,923 people across Zimbabwe between 2025 and 2030.



Project impact

 Over **70 percent** of community members now have access to three meals a day.

 **1,942** people, including children and people with disabilities, can now access safe drinking water from nine newly installed water points.

 **220** women and five women with disabilities have taken leadership roles in various project committees.

 **268** women reported reduced gender-based violence.

Kudzai proudly showing the vegetables she has grown after participating in the project in Zimbabwe. Photo: Caritas Gweru.

A brighter future for Manaini and her family

Life in rural Fiji has not been easy for 44-year-old Manaini, a mother of six and grandmother of two. The family lived from what they grew, but meals were plain and often lacked nutrition, and store food was too expensive. To make matters worse, the village had no electric lights, making it dangerous for children and the elderly to walk outside at night.

'The things I worry about the most is my children's education,' Manaini shared. 'The requirements that need to be met are hard for me to achieve with my daily income.'

Almost one quarter of Fiji's population live in poverty, and rates are higher in rural villages, particularly in the Northern Division. Any extra income can mean the difference between children completing school, being able to buy medicine, or simply managing daily costs.

Fiji also has one of the highest rates in the Pacific in terms of non-communicable diseases. Eighty percent of the population live with non-communicable diseases, and diabetes and heart disease are widespread. On average, every eight hours, three people lose a limb to diabetes.

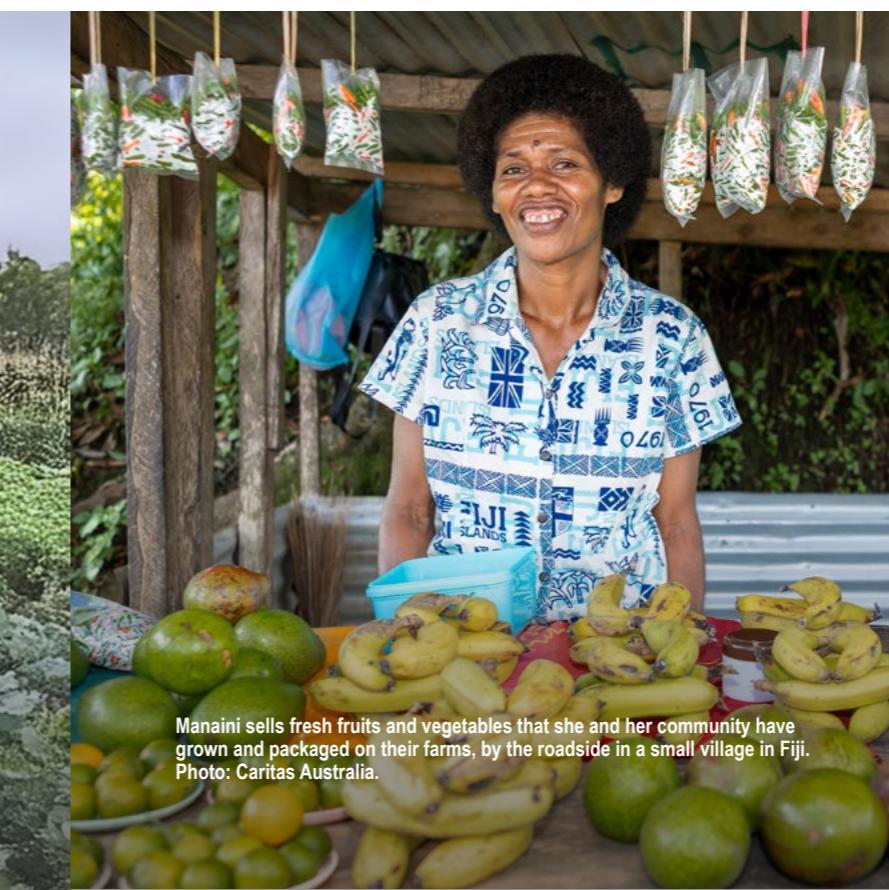
In partnership with the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), Caritas Australia works with our local partner, Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND), to

implement the Improving Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods project in the Northern Division of Fiji. The project focuses on building sustainable livelihoods, enhancing food security, and strengthening community resilience through inclusive, gender-sensitive and climate-adaptive approaches.

In its second year, the project has significantly expanded its reach and deepened its impact across 14 communities in Fiji's Northern Division, supporting women like Manaini. Through the project, Manaini learnt food processing skills to transform leftovers from crops like cassava and taro into flour and increase her weekly income. Her family can now eat healthier meals and save money. With the women's group, Manaini bakes cakes and pies to sell for extra income.

Seeds from the program gave her a thriving garden, and she makes her own organic fertiliser and pesticides. Additionally, solar lights now brighten the village, helping children to study and walk safely.

Manaini is proud of what she has achieved. 'The project totally changed the life of my family and even the community,' she said.



Manaini sells fresh fruits and vegetables that she and her community have grown and packaged on their farms, by the roadside in a small village in Fiji. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Project impact

 **622** people trained in food processing.

 **568** people trained in organic farm management.

 **532** people trained in business and financial literacy.

 **526** people participated in community-based disaster risk management.

 Backyard gardens distributed to **436** households.

 Organic seedling banks established in **14** communities.

 Solar street lights installed in **14** communities.



Priscilla with her cattle near her home in Hwange, Zimbabwe. Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia.

Insights and learnings

Project evaluations

During the last financial year, three Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) projects undertook evaluations – one in Zimbabwe and two in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The evaluation of the Tuinuke Sustainable Livelihood project, implemented by our partner Caritas Goma in North Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, shows that it has achieved lasting change in a challenging context. The project reached over 800 participants through income-generating activities, vocational training and livestock support, reducing reliance on child labour and improving household economic stability.

Community protection committees and farmers' associations strengthened local resilience through mutual aid, advocacy and peer monitoring, helping families navigate risks linked to conflict and displacement. Women were central to the project's success, representing 73 percent of participants and holding leadership in over 60 percent of community groups, which boosted incomes, decision-making and visibility in traditionally male-dominated spaces.

Households improved food security from two to eight months per year, and average incomes rose from USD \$10 to \$178. Many farmers' associations, including those led by women, now manage farmland independently. By combining farming support, small loans, skills training, women's leadership, peacebuilding and climate adaptation, Tuinuke demonstrates that investing in women and local structures fuels resilience, equality and sustainable community impact even amid conflict and displacement.

The evaluation of the Zimbabwe projects implemented by Caritas Gweru, Caritas Gokwe and Caritas Hwange found that a total of 2,852 households reported being able to afford three meals per day, compared to only one or two meals per day before the project started. As many as 4,550 households now earn an average monthly income between USD \$51 to \$300. At baseline, 80 percent of those

households reported earning less than USD \$20 per month on average.

A total of 28,066 people gained access to clean and safe water, and sanitation services across the three districts. Notably, there were no reported cases of waterborne diseases such as cholera or diarrhoea.

The evaluation findings also revealed that women made up 60 percent of the members in community-level structures, such as garden committees, water committees, child protection committees, and internal savings and lending groups, demonstrating significant progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment.

There is at least a 50 percent reduction in gender-based violence in the communities and there has been a significant decline in cases of child abuse, neglect and child marriages across all communities, alongside increased community confidence in reporting suspected cases of child abuse.

Using technology to enhance productivity

In Myanmar and Indonesia, partners funded by the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) identified the need to strengthen their data collection processes and they were supported to integrate Kobo Toolbox as a monitoring tool. Using Kobo Toolbox, partners were able to more effectively collect, analyse and manage data, and make project adaptations as required.

Caritas Nepal piloted a digital agriculture platform called GeoKrishi, developed in Nepal. The platform aims to empower farmers by providing them with location-specific, actionable information to enhance productivity and profitability. The initial uptake has so far been relatively limited due to access and literacy barriers. However, the project sees GeoKrishi's value and plans to ensure further integration.

Strengthening Economic Justice programming

With funding from the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), Caritas Australia engaged a consultant to lead a structured review of its economic justice work. This process included in-depth interviews with internal staff and key partners across regions, generating insights that directly informed the development of the Economic Justice Review and the accompanying Economic Justice Guidance Note. These resources established Caritas Australia's shared definitions, Theory of Change, and practical design and implementation tools for integrating economic justice into programming. The new design for a project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (being funded by ANCP) has applied this approach and used the new economic justice tools to ensure a strong outcomes-focused project.

Participatory Climate Vulnerability Analysis

A Climate and Environment Specialist provided training to the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) partners in Timor-Leste about climate vulnerability assessments (CVA). The partners undertook CVAs in their respective communities as part of the project. This analysis helped communities identify vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities for climate change, which empowered them to lead and determine their own solutions.

Anticipatory Action

Training was provided to the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) partners in Cambodia on integrating anticipatory action into their work. Anticipatory action has been identified as a potential way to effectively mitigate the impacts of increasing climate-related disasters, by responding to them before they occur. The process is based on linking early warning systems to pre-emptive humanitarian action, enabling communities to avoid the full impacts of a disaster by acting ahead of time.



Nimol is a youth leader living in Cambodia who advocates for greater climate action. Photo: Kimheang Tuon.



Manaini (centre) sits in a workshop in her village with Viloki (left) and Kavoa (right) from the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND) in Fiji. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion

With the support of the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) funding, Caritas Australia's partner in northern Fiji, Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND), conducted a Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) audit. The aim of the audit was to review its current practices and provide recommendations about the organisation in order to embed social inclusion into its programming. This included the development of a GEDSI Training Toolkit as a resource to provide practical, participatory tools to guide FRIEND in this area.

Cross learning between the Australian NGO Cooperation Program partners

As part of the Research and Advocacy for Climate Policy and Action in Indonesia and the Philippines project, an exchange visit was held between coastal communities in Central Java, Indonesia and island communities in Bohol, Philippines. The purpose of this visit was to share lived experiences, and foster mutual learning and solidarity. This led to the production of youth-led videos to raise climate awareness, which were shared on social media. In addition to this, the piloting of inclusive development planning by integrating climate resilience into the Barangay Development Plan of Nocnongan, will serve as a model for other barangays.

The project collaborated with regional and global networks such as International Association for the Study of Forced Migration, Refugee Self Reliance Initiative, and Asia Pacific Adaptation Network. The project also contributed to broader policy dialogues on climate-induced displacement, showcasing its innovative approach to integrating advocacy and research.



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 and the Boon Wurrung People and Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) Peoples of the Kulin Nation in Melbourne.

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

The Catholic Agency for International Aid and Development

Caritas Australia
Level 2, Building 3, 189 O'Riordan Street, Mascot NSW 2020

-  questions@caritas.org.au
-  1800 024 413
-  @CaritasAU
-  @CaritasAust
-  @CaritasAustralia
-  @caritasaust
-  @CaritasAustralia
-  www.caritas.org.au



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