



# Lukluk

Volunteer Service Abroad  
2018

**vsa**   
AOTEAROA  
NEW ZEALAND  
VOLUNTEER SERVICE ABROAD TE TĪAO TĀWĀHI





## **Lukluk** is a celebration of our amazing partners in the Pacific and beyond.

Our magazine is usually called *Vista* – it's the view from our volunteers and the impact they're having. In this magazine, we wanted people from our partner organisations to tell their own stories about the work they're doing in their communities and what's important to them.

We work with hundreds of organisations, from grass roots groups to local and central governments and regional UN agencies. This is just a handful of them, but they all share the same energy and aspiration – better futures.

**So why Lukluk? It's Tok Pisin for "vista" – the view from the Pacific.**

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Front cover: Children let loose after class in PNG. Photographer: Chris Mitchell. Contents page: Shop fronts in Solomon Islands. Photographer: Lance Cash. Opposite: Emily Richardson with Marie Nutenmal in Vanuatu. Photographer: Gina Kaitiplel. Inside back cover (left to right): Dave Morgan in Vanuatu. Carola Cullum in Vanuatu (photographer Gina Kaitiplel). Roseanne Ulunga (photographer Jack Thompson). Neill Barr (photographer Wayne Lovell).

**Connecting people – transforming lives**





Kia ora,

It has been a busy and exciting few months for VSA. On July 1, we commenced a new five-year partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). VSA has had a close and very successful partnership with MFAT for over 50 years, and this latest arrangement will enable VSA to grow and strengthen our efforts throughout the Pacific.

Over the next five years we're planning another 1,000 volunteer assignments, and this issue of *Lukluk* gives you a small sample of the kinds of organisations volunteers will work alongside.

I've been able to visit quite a few of them over the last year, and have been so impressed by the work they do, whether it's at government or grassroots level, in the fields of health, education, environment, business or more: they all share the same aspirations for thriving communities, and we're proud to do the mahi with them.

Stephen Goodman, VSA CEO

### Volunteer Service Abroad Te Tūao Tāwāhi

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### Our values

- respectful partnerships
- working and learning together
- cross-cultural understanding
- fairness, social justice and self-determination
- the power of volunteering

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Students using the Library. Photo: Wayne Lovell



XGRR staff member Hortencia and VSA volunteer Hugo Egan. Photo: Wayne Lovell

## Timor-Leste's "reading generation"

**Gaspar Freitas Kassa is Library and Museum Manager at the Xanana Gusmão Reading Room (XGRR) in Dili, Timor-Leste.** The Reading Room was founded by Kirsty Sword Gusmão, the wife of Timor-Leste's first post-independence President, to support literacy and cultural heritage.

### How long have you been with XGRR and how did you get involved?

I have been working at XGRR since June 2015. Previously, I was a Youth Programme Manager at Search For Common Ground (SFCG), an International NGO branch in Dili, which closed down in 2015. This is an amazing place to continue my work for youth in Timor-Leste.

### How has working for XGRR made a difference for you?

It is a unique place for sharing knowledge, access to information and technology, and most importantly for me it is an opportunity to support the young generation to have a better future for them. It also provides a safe place for people to meet and have discussions, do research and conduct various educational activities.

### What kind of impact does it make in the community?

The XGRR has played a key role in promoting life-long learning and a safe place where people can obtain information, knowledge, read and borrow books, and where the

museum provides information about Xanana Gusmão and his struggle for an independent Timor-Leste.

From January to July 2018, the total number of our users was 18,366, with 41% women. We are encouraging more women to participate through creating a women-focused group and more activities for women.

### Do you have a highlight from your time there?

My highlights include an instalment of Digital Library System 'Koha' in 2016; Successful fundraising in 2016 and 2018; establishing a partnership with the Northern Territory Library, Darwin to develop a future collaboration on a staff exchange programme and library projects;

a new space for children called "Bebeteca" with more education activities for children; and we have started publication of a new science book project for children with XGRR funding.

### What do you hope for your community's future?

I hope our community can use this space for improving their lives by sharing knowledge, access to educational resources and training, preserving our culture and expressing the pride of self-identity as Timorese.

**The Xanana Gusmão Reading Room has been a VSA partner since 2015, with five volunteers in that time. Currently, Hugo Egan is volunteering as a Marketing & Library Coordination Assistant as part of VSA's UniVol programme for recent graduates. Read Gaspar's full interview at [www.vsa.org.nz](http://www.vsa.org.nz)**



Volunteer Nadine Rutter in Vanuatu. Photo credit: Gina Kaitiplal

## Climate action in the Pacific

The Pacific is the most vulnerable region in the world to the effects of climate change. Tropical cyclones undo years of growth, and sea level rise has already seen whole communities move from their homes. Around the region, we work alongside organisations to adapt to the effects of climate change. These are just a few:

**Infrastructure Cook Islands** works to ensure safe, fresh water supply on its outer islands, which have been impacted by drought.

**The Pacific Community (SPC)** looks at ways in which technology, including renewable energy resources, can help communities become more resilient.

**The Chamber of Commerce and Industry**, Timor-Leste, disseminates climate change education through its membership, which advocates for small business.

**Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation (MORDI)**, in Tonga, is working to help rehabilitate producers after Cyclone Gita earlier this year. They encourage farmers to diversify in order to be more resilient.

**The Farmers' Support Association**, Vanuatu, works throughout the country to ensure farmers' cooperatives have collective buying and selling power, enabling them to withstand environmental and economic shocks.



A drone view of the development. Photo: Gordon Botha

## Housing communities in Papua New Guinea

**Two hundred and forty families will get homes in Kokopo, Papua New Guinea, thanks to an innovative housing project by the Catholic Archdiocese of Rabaul.**

Diocesan Administrator Doug Tennant says "People in Papua New Guinea are moving to urban areas to find work but wages are very low... Here in Kokopo people are being denied a most important human right; the right to adequate housing."

The Archdiocese owns land which it is developing, allocating 800 square metres each to 240 families. Each house will have a composting toilet, solar-powered lighting and rainwater collection tanks.

The Archdiocese has sought funding for the project by selling some land to the Provincial Government for use as sports and recreational facilities,

and by selling other parcels of land to developers who will provide housing for middle income groups.

Eligible people will get the title free of charge, but prospective homeowners will be expected to raise about half of the K80,000 (\$37,000) price or, in a move modelled on Habitat for Humanity projects, provide "sweat equity" - that is, labour on the building, for up to 500 hours.

Doug says there is "dire need" to meet this most basic of human rights: "the Archbishop of Rabaul is making it his personal crusade to show the way by creating a housing scheme accessible to the poor, as a model for other communities to follow."

**CADR has been a VSA partner since 2013, with 51 volunteers in that time, including Gordon Botha, who is active in this project in his assignment as Administration Adviser.**



Students at Loto Taumafai School. Photo: Chris Mitchell

## Special education in Samoa

**Since 1981, Loto Taumafai Society for People with Disabilities (LTS) has provided quality education, rehabilitation and support for children and people with disabilities.**

**With valued assistance from donor and volunteer organisations, the thriving NGO has paved the way forward for inclusive education in Samoa.** By Shivani Shama

According to Principal Lagi Natanielu, children with disabilities often face numerous challenges within mainstream education facilities, with some students with disabilities choosing to discontinue education altogether.

She says, “As you would know in any community, people with disabilities are marginalised and can face stigma from others, so we strive to provide a safe environment for our students where they feel accepted, valued and cared for.

“I believe that in recent years there has been a growing awareness and acceptance for people with disabilities in the community. We always try to add value to what we do, whether it’s through community engagement, engaging our parents through our Parent-Teacher Association or through our inclusive curriculum.”

According to UNICEF’s 2010 Pacific Children with Disabilities Report, children with disabilities in the Pacific who attend main stream education facilities, often attend only for a few years before discontinuing their learning. Only a small minority progress on to secondary school, meaning that the efforts of LTS and other like-minded organisations are crucial for the livelihood of people with disabilities in the Pacific.

**“I think the most important thing we need to remember is that each and every child has the capacity to learn.”**

Natanielu explains, “Our doors are open to children within a wide spectrum of disabilities. This includes children with physical and sensory impairments, Down Syndrome and Autism. At the moment, Samoa does not have a curriculum catering specifically for students with disabilities so part of what we do is to see how we can adjust and adapt the Ministry of Education’s curriculum to meet the needs of each of our students.

“Working with people with disabilities, especially children, can be very challenging, but at the end of the day to see them laughing and having fun whilst learning,



**LTS teachers, and students Harry and Joshua with As (centre) from the Samoa Blind Foudation using new braille typewriters. VSA volunteer Jan Kennington, who organised the donation of the typewriters from the Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ, is on the right.**

makes it all worth it. The biggest reward is to see them flourishing and making progress each day.

“I think the most important thing we need to remember is that each and every child has the capacity to learn, even if they learn differently. My vision for the students is that when they leave school, they will be confident to do something meaningful in life that makes them feel valued as productive members of the community.”

**LTS has been a VSA partner since 1998, with 13 volunteers in that time. Currently, Jan Kennington is working as a Special Education Adviser.**

## Cook Islands waste management

Most weeks, the Cook Islands News has at least one item on rubbish in Rarotonga. Jaime Short, as director of Water, Waste & Sanitation (WATSAN) for Infrastructure Cook Islands (ICI), has become one of the faces of the campaign against waste.

Litter is an issue on the island, particularly as most will eventually make its way out to sea, so WATSAN has a number of schemes they're developing to address it, including waste collection and recycling, a proposed polystyrene ban and eventually, a plan to join up waste management across the outer islands, as well.

Jaime says "we have been doing extra things like a small anti beach litter campaign, posting each week's

**"The biggest challenge is changing mindsets, getting people to accept that waste management is everyone's responsibility."**

survey results on Facebook, which shows people care and are unhappy about the litter. Unfortunately, despite the campaign, the litter hasn't changed."

Waste is an issue across the Pacific, which a number of Governments are moving to address with plastic bans,

better waste collection and raised awareness.

Which is why WATSAN's on the 6.00 news every week: Jaime says, "The biggest challenge is changing mindsets, getting people to accept that waste management is everyone's responsibility."

**ICI has been a VSA partner since 2015, with three volunteers including Hilary Boyes, who's working alongside Jaime as a Solid Waste Management Coordination Adviser.**

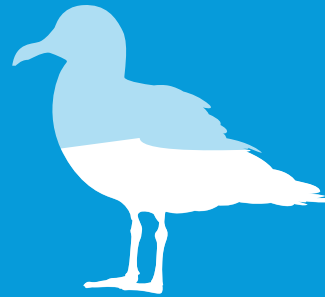
## Plastic in the Pacific



**70%**  
of the litter on Samoa's coast is plastic



**80%**  
of marine debris comes from land-based sources



**50%**  
of birds and marine mammal species have eaten plastic

## Positive moves towards plastic free



**Single use plastic:**  
Pacific countries are taking the lead on banning single-use plastic: it's banned in Vanuatu now and in Samoa by 2019. Fiji has placed a levy on it and New Zealand announced its own ban this year.



## Performing in Vanuatu

**A small ni-Vanuatu theatre group has grown to work with and support youth all over Vanuatu.**

In a country with a high teenage pregnancy rate (around 7% of all births) and high prevalence of Sexually Transmitted Infections, Wan Smolbag spreads the world about sexual and reproductive health and healthy relationships through theatre, music and dance – even an award-winning TV show.

Since being founded by a small troupe of volunteer actors in 1990, WSB has grown to be the largest grassroots NGO in the Pacific. They now work in many different areas including youth advocacy, environment, and good governance, proving they are more than just community theatre.

Half of all unemployed people in Vanuatu are between the ages of 16 and 29, and nearly half of all high school-aged people are not in school. Wan Smolbag's mission is to engage those young people, to provide them with the skills they need, as well as advocating for good youth policy and ensuring young people have access to reproductive health services.

Every year, tens of thousands of people see WSB theatre productions



Josh teaching dance. Photo credit: Gina Kaitipliel

examining social issues, while up to 17,000 young people are seen in clinics, including WSB's mobile clinics that visit the regions.

Ricky Hinton, manager of WSB's Port Vila centre (WSB also runs the Northern Care Youth Clinic in Santo), says "There's always something different happening – sewing, dance, computer classes, music...

"This town is growing and growing and the space for youth is just not there. So my dream is for it to remain a place for youth to come and learn something. It's a safe space for them as well as a place for learning fun stuff."

**Wan Smolbag has been a VSA partner since 1998, with 13 volunteers since then. Josh Mitikulena is volunteering as a Dance Tutor/Choreographer.**



## Vanuatu women in media

**Gina Kaitipler is Production Coordinator at Further Arts in Port Vila, Vanuatu.**

This year, VSA commissioned Gina to make a short documentary about Wan Smolbag (previous pages) – follow us on Facebook to see when it's released!

### **What is Further Arts' mission?**

To support the cultural activities of producers, artists and musicians within Vanuatu and overseas. We empower ni-Vanuatu and other Melanesians to develop skills and livelihoods that are culturally, socially, environmentally and financially sustainable, and to apply these skills to achieve social justice and social transformation for the betterment of Vanuatu, Melanesia, and the world.

### **How did you get involved?**

In June last year I got an invitation to join a media training called "Women in Media". I became a regular part of Further Arts' crew and very recently, I joined Further Arts Nesar Studio as Production Coordinator.

### **How has it made a difference for you?**

It has made a big difference for me. It has taught me a lot about photography and filming. It has also allowed me to meet a lot of people who have the same interests as

me and also people in different communities.

### **What kind of impact does it make in the community?**

Further Arts provides space and training on multimedia productions. We also document "kastom" (traditional) knowledge through kastom music, food and dance through videos, CDs and books.

### **Do you have a highlight from your time here?**

It has been an exciting journey for me as a young woman who has never been to other islands except for my home island. One of my highlights is doing projects in seven different islands from north to south of Vanuatu.

### **What's your vision for Further Arts' future?**

I hope that Further Arts Nesar Studio will become a power house that supports communities around the country and helps people know where they come from and what the true meaning of their culture is. I hope that we will continue to raise the skills and knowledge of young people in media, especially for young women who need a lot of support.

**Further Arts has been a VSA partner since 1998, with four volunteers. Nicole Colmar is there as a Media Production Adviser**



Opposite: Gina Kaitipler and VSA volunteer Nicole Colmar.



Serah Piturara and Roseanne Ulunga. Photo: Patrick Rose



Serah and Roseanne visit Honiara High School with MEHRD staff. Photo: Claire McClintock

## Time for school in Solomon Islands

### Henson Makoani's passion for education in Solomon Islands is infectious.

As Acting Director of the Asset Management Division of the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Human Resources (MEHRD), he's been working to improve Ministry and school facilities for the last five years, as part of the Government's drive to achieve universal primary school enrollment.

The Solomons has one of the fastest growing populations in the region, with 40% of its citizens under 15 years of age. Just 17% of the population is fully literate. Nearly one-

fifth of primary school-aged children are not in school.

Making sure the 1300 schools in the country are fit for purpose "is one of the biggest challenges we have," he says, and it's work that can be set back in an instant, as happened after the Honiara flash floods in March 2014, when many schools required further repair, and were put into service as emergency shelters.

In the last four years, together with VSA and Downer, MEHRD has overseen a construction boom: 20 new libraries in Honiara schools, along with two new science labs and new toilets, including separate

facilities for girls, who are more likely to not attend school than boys.

**"Our staff are gaining confidence and are now improving on what they're doing,"**

Serah Piturara, MEHRD's Chief Asset Officer, says she feels real pride in the new classrooms. While Henson notes that Ministry jobs aren't as attractive as the private sector, Serah says she's seen MEHRD staff's confidence and skills grow alongside the classrooms. "Our staff are gaining confidence and are now improving on what they're doing," and points to improvements in school designs,

such as ramps for accessibility and design with disaster preparedness in mind.

But while MEHRD staff are benefitting from the work, she says the most important thing is that the outcomes directly benefit the children who have modern, safe facilities. "It's a great privilege for me to work as a MEHRD Officer."

**The VSA/Downer/MEHRD partnership began in 2014. Since then, 17 young engineers have each undertaken three to four-month assignments as Infrastructure Advisers with MEHRD. Most recently, Jack Thompson, Roseanne Ulunga and Fraser Coutts have worked in Honiara with the Ministry.**



Helen Hakena. Photo: Adam Constanza

**Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency (LNWDA)** was founded at the height of the 10-year Bougainville conflict to provide humanitarian aid to women and children.

This year, Leitana will complete work on new buildings, having worked out of temporary facilities since their old office burned down in 2007.

The building will "change women's lives," Leitana co-founder Helen Hakena says. LNDWA's influence spreads throughout Bougainville but here, Helen gives an insight into her day-to-day work:

"I see about four women a day for counselling services for domestic

violence cases, child abuse, gender-based violence in general. People come from across Bougainville.

"We also conduct training with women's groups and youth groups, so they grow their skills.

"We don't have the funding to do that, but we have the skills, so we give back to the community."

**LNWDA has been a VSA partner since 2007, with six volunteers in that time. To read more, visit [www.vsa.org.nz/leitana](http://www.vsa.org.nz/leitana)**



Women in Fiji. Photo: Olivia Owen

## Gender equity in the Pacific

The Pacific experiences the highest rates of gender-based violence outside of conflict zones. Women have just 7% of Parliamentary seats, but there are wāhine toa working everywhere to ensure women are healthy, safe and independent. These are some of our partners working for women:

**Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency**, Bougainville (see opposite page).

**The Nazareth Rehabilitation Centre**, in Bougainville, provides safe houses, access to counselling and legal advice, and livelihoods training. They also undertake education, especially to men, in the regions.

The **UN Women** multi-country office in Fiji looks after programmes around the region to support women from the grassroots to parliament.

**The Kiribati Family Health Association** provides sexual and reproductive health services and education, and supports peer education for youth.

**Women in Business Development Inc**, Samoa, has grown from a small cooperative to an organisation that sells to multinationals, including the Body Shop.

**Isles Media Investment**, Solomon Islands, produces the country's first newspaper focussed on women.

**HAFOTI** is a cooperative of women's small rural producer groups across seven districts in Timor-Leste, with the objective of increasing the capacity of rural women to generate income for their families.

**Women and Children's Crisis Centre**, Tonga, provides free counselling and legal services, as well as a safe house, and advocates for change at a national level.

## Tonga youth

**With youth unemployment in Tonga at 11.1%, Tonga Youth Enterprise & Entrepreneurship (TYEE) aims to support young people with employable skills.**

Lusia Latu-Jones, TYEE President, says, "Our young people are being inspired, empowered to lead and make their own good choices when it comes to employment opportunities and training opportunities. We support them in making the transition from out of school to their first job or new career. Our young people are the future of our country, the future workforce of Tonga."

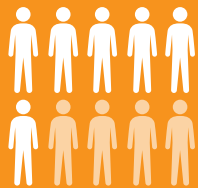
Many of TYEE's clients are school leavers, however they also work with young people who've received scholarships to study in New Zealand or Australia then return home to find it hard getting work.

Lusia says "Our ambition is to provide high quality support services to Tongan young school leavers and our business partners and sponsors alike." Through partnerships, they're able to provide training in ICT, tourism and production – skills in high demand in Tonga.

**TYEE is a new VSA partner this year - Graeme Atkinson is their first volunteer.**



## Youth in the Pacific



In the countries where VSA works, up to 60% of the population is under 25



Young people make up one-third of working-aged people in the Pacific, but are twice as likely to be unemployed



In the countries where VSA works, up to 34% of young people are non-literate





**VSA sends skilled Kiwis overseas to share their experience and knowledge directly with local people and communities.**

Working alongside our amazing partner organisations, together we create new opportunities for people that will continue to ripple across communities and generations to come.

**Costs covered. Diverse industries**



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