

# VSA E-Volunteer Assignment Description

<b>Assignment Title</b>	Early Childhood Education Advisor (Ermera)
<b>Country</b>	Timor-Leste
<b>Location of Partner Organisation</b>	Dili
<b>Partner Organisation</b>	UNICEF Timor Leste
<b>Duration</b>	6 months, part time with the option to extend
<b>Sustainable Development Goals</b>	



41582

## 1. Partner organisation overview

UNICEF works in partnership with the Government of Timor-Leste, development partners and civil society to ensure the survival and development of children with specific focus on the poorest children to achieve global and national targets for child rights.

UNICEF has been working closely with the Government of Timor-Leste for realisation of women's and children's rights. UNICEF and the Government of Timor-Leste has been working in partnership to improve the survival, development, participation and protection of children and women in accordance with:

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- The Sustainable Development Goals
- Other international conventions and agreements related to children

UNICEF programmes are aligned with the Government of Timor-Leste's National Strategic Plan.

**The Alola Foundation** is a not for profit non-government organisation operating in Timor-Leste to improve the lives of women and children. Founded in 2001 by Former First Lady, Ms Kirsty Sword Gusmao, the organisation supports a range of initiatives to improve maternal and child health, create employment, promote human rights, strengthen community development, and improve the status of women.

UNICEF is working alongside the Alola Foundation to implement the Community Pre-schools Initiative. The initiative is supported through a partnership with the New Zealand Government, UNICEF New Zealand, the Morgan Foundation and the H&M Foundation.

## 2. Assignment overview

Children in Timor-Leste face various difficulties such as low enrolment in preschool, age appropriate enrolment, absence of supervision and monitoring, poor capacity of facilitators and lack of availability of teaching and learning resources. Children in the rural areas are frequently left behind without receiving a full education. UNICEF is modelling community-based pre-schools with a parenting education programme as a model for a government system that recognises community pre-schools, complemented by a systematic approach to improve the knowledge and skills of families on positive parenting.

The UNICEF supported Community Based Preschool programme implemented by the Alola Foundation in Ermera and Viqueque municipalities presently has 2,928 children in 103 centres and 185 facilitators.



Alola Field Officers deliver training to the facilitators, however, the Field Officers themselves have limited capacity and understanding of early childhood education and development. A second e-volunteer is being recruited to support the programme in Ermera, and it is anticipated that aspects of the development of training programmes for both Municipalities will be done as a team.

### 3. Goal/outcomes/outputs

#### Goal

UNICEF and the Alola Foundation effectively implement the Community Preschools Initiative, enabling community preschool facilitators and parents to teach and support children in a child-friendly, play-based way that promotes holistic child development and critical thinking skills.

#### Outcome 1

Alola Field Officers provide effective training workshops and ongoing mentoring for parents and community preschool facilitators, to foster understanding and increased use of early learning pedagogies and child-centred play-based approaches

- Undertake a needs assessment to identify the knowledge and skills of Field Officers.
- Together with Alola and UNICEF staff, create individual and group learning and development plans to strengthen the facilitation, mentoring and coaching skills of Field Officers.
- Prepare online training workshops to mentor Field Officers.
- Create a quick reference guide linked to each workshop topics.

#### Outcome 2

Alola project staff monitor and document the implementation of the Community Preschools Initiative to effectively communicate and promote ECE and the benefits of play-based, child-centred approaches.

- Support Alola Field Officers to develop tools for monitoring and reporting on the progress of community preschools.
- Provide training to improve the writing and presentation skills of Alola Project Officers to produce content and positive stories.

### 4. Reporting and working relationships and capacity building

This is an e-volunteer (e-vol) position. The volunteer will primarily communicate and work closely with Alola Project Staff, primarily the Alola Field Officers. The volunteer will also work with the UNICEF Education Officer (Pre-School) to support project implementation.

The volunteer will report directly to the Alola Programme Manager and will be accountable to the Chief of Education, UNICEF. On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominately work with the Alola Field Officers and Project Officers through the provision of online training and support.

The volunteer and UNICEF will have an ongoing relationship with the VSA Programme Manager in terms of assignment monitoring, reporting, professional advice and personal support.

**As needs on the ground may change over time, the volunteer is encouraged to review and update the Assignment Description in consultation with the partner organisation and VSA Programme Manager. By their very nature, development situations can involve significant change, so it is**



advisable that the volunteer periodically review and reflect on the Assignment Description throughout the Assignment to ensure the best development outcomes are being achieved.

## 5. Selection criteria/position requirements

### Person specifications (professional)

#### Essential

- Tertiary qualification, or significant experience working, in Early Childhood Education
- Demonstrable experience applying child-centred, play-based approaches in preschool environments
- Strong facilitation and mentoring skills, including but not limited to training of teachers
- Experience in working in a multi-cultural environment

#### Desirable

- Experience in using participatory learning methods
- An understanding of applying the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Experience in working in a developing country in the area of education, particularly early childhood education
- Ability to create teaching materials from local materials
- Familiarity with issues related to gender equality, violence against children, inclusive education, meeting the learning needs of children with disabilities

### Personal specification (personal)

#### Essential

- Flexibility and patience to adjust to various situations
- Ability to listen, communicate and relate to others on a professional and personal level, respecting that different individuals have a different pace and levels of learning
- Values, shows respect and appreciation for local cultures

#### Desirable

- Willingness to enrich personal knowledge from the Field Officers own experiences and skills
- Openness to learning some basics of a new language (Tetun)

## 6. VSA Essential Attributes

- Commitment to volunteering, to VSA and to the partner organisation
- Cross cultural awareness
- Adaptability and a willingness to approach change or newness positively
- Able to form good relationships, both personally and professionally, with work colleagues and in the community
- Resilience and an ability to manage setbacks
- Initiative and resourcefulness
- An ability to facilitate learning through skills exchange



## 7. Country Context

For more information about Timor-Leste see [here](#) on the VSA website.

### Additional information

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#### Residency status

VSA volunteers must be New Zealand citizens or have New Zealand permanent residency status, and currently living in NZ.

#### Final appointment

Final appointment will be subject to satisfactory VSA clearances, and partner organisation acceptance.

#### Children's Act

VSA is committed to the protection of vulnerable children and adults, which also includes meeting our commitment under the Children's Act 2014.

The information requested during the application process is necessary to assist VSA to determine applicant suitability to work and/or interact regularly with children and is part of a series of pre-selection checks undertaken on all applicants for VSA assignments.

#### E-Volunteer package

The volunteer's package includes the following:

##### *Reimbursements*

Volunteers will receive a monthly honorarium of NZ\$90 for a part-time assignment. This amount is expected to reimburse the volunteer for costs associated with undertaking the assignment.

**Final terms and conditions relating to the specific volunteer assignment will be confirmed in a personalised volunteer contract.**

