

VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Finance and Administration Advisor – Buin Health Centre
Country	Bougainville
Location of Partner Organisation	Buin
Partner Organisation	ABG Department of Health
Duration	10 to 12 months
Sustainable Development Goals	



1. Partner organisation overview

The Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) Department of Health (DoH) has its headquarters in Buka town. The DoH administers its services to the different districts of Bougainville, one of these being the Buin District in Southern Bougainville. The Buin Health Centre (BHC) is situated in Buin town and serves as the only health centre in the southern part of Bougainville. BHC is a 38 bed District Health Centre in Buin District. BHC receives referrals from surrounding health facilities and has a primary catchment population of approximately 36,000 people and a secondary catchment of 80,000. It in turn refers to Arawa and Buka Hospital depending on the clinical assessments.

A major barrier to the development of the health sector in Bougainville is a shortage of funding for services and a gap in capacity for service delivery. Given its isolation to the rest of Bougainville, BHC experiences these issues on an increased scale, and provides for increased challenges.

VSA has been working with the DoH for a number of years in other locations across Bougainville, with volunteers previously providing the school of nursing in with financial, technical, and management support. VSA has been working with the BHC since 2019, and currently has a Nurse Mentor volunteer on assignment in Buin.

2. Assignment overview

BHC would benefit greatly from a volunteer who has financial management skills and knowledge and is conversant with hospital or school administration practices. Most of the financial management systems currently in use are basic and grounded in Department of Health policy and although staff can articulate these procedures, they are rarely followed. Along with basic financial management training, staff would benefit greatly from some computer training.

With a significant new health facility due to be built in Buin in the coming years, there is a high need to get basic administrative and finance practices in place with the existing team.



3. Goal/outcomes/outputs

Goal

BHC has increased capacity to manage their financial and administrative operations, in order to provide a high-quality of service to patients in South Bougainville.

Outcome 1

All financial activity of BHC is undertaken in accordance with Government Department of Health (DOH) policy

In conjunction with local staff:

- Review the current financial systems in line with the current DOH policy
- Provide suggestions for improvement
- Provide on the job training and mentoring to assist staff to utilise the updated systems
- Deliver basic computer training
- Deliver basic training in financial accounting
- Train staff to produce monthly financial reports

Outcome 2

BHC office staff accurately complete the necessary financial reporting in accordance with Government Health Policy.

In conjunction with local staff

- Assess the level of financial accounting knowledge
- Assess ability of staff to complete the monthly financial reports
- Provide on the job training to address the gaps
- Provide ongoing mentoring to assist staff to complete the necessary accounting tasks each month

Outcome 3

All patient and staff records are managed according to Government Health Policy.

In conjunction with local staff:

- Review the current patient and staff record management systems in line with the current DOH policy
- Provide suggestions for improvement
- Provide on the job training and mentoring to assist staff to utilise the updated systems

4. Reporting and working relationships and capacity building

The volunteer will report directly to and be accountable to the Executive Director BHC. On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominately work with either one or both of the administration staff.

The volunteer and Buin Health Centre 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 on arrival 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

- A relevant Finance qualification or at least 3 years' experience in financial management
- Experience with Financial reporting and accounting
- Proven strong administration and organisational skills
- Computer literate
- Confident skills with financial systems

Desirable

- Records management experience
- Knowledge or experience of how a health facility functions
- Training or mentoring skills
- Previous experience working in a developing Country

Personal specification (personal)

Essential

- Community-minded, with a willingness to learn about, and respect Bougainvillean values and protocols
- A willingness to learn the local language (Tok Pisin)
- A self-sufficient and self-motivating attitude
- The ability to adapt to changing situations, and be flexible to change where factors may be beyond your control
- The ability to work in an isolate environment with limited resources.
- Willingness to travel to remote locations by and work in rural environments

Desirable

- Experience living in rural isolated areas
- Experience working and living in a developing country

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 Bougainville refer to the appendixes and see <https://vsa.org.nz/about-vsa/countryregion/bougainville/>

Additional Information

Residency status

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

Pre-departure briefing

As part of the volunteer's contract, successful candidates will be required to take part in a pre-departure briefing course run by VSA in Wellington and complete all required pre-reading.

Final appointment

Final appointment will be subject to satisfactory medical and immigration clearances (costs covered by VSA), partner organisation acceptance, and successful completion of the pre-departure briefing course.

Family status

VSA supports partners to accompany volunteers on assignments of six months or longer. However volunteers with accompanying dependents will not be considered for this assignment.

Fundraising

Volunteers are encouraged to fundraise at least \$1000 with the support of VSA's fundraising team. Accompanying partners are encouraged to raise the same amount. All funds raised will help VSA keep its programmes in action and support future volunteers.

Vaccination requirements

Potential volunteers are advised that VSA's insurers require volunteers to be inoculated, prior to departure, in accordance with the instructions of VSA's medical adviser. VSA covers the cost of any required vaccinations.

Children's Act

While on assignment, VSA volunteers may be required to work with children and/or may choose to participate in informal activities in their own time that involve interactions with children (such as coaching teams or teaching English). 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.

Volunteer package

The volunteer's package includes the following:

Reimbursements and grants



1. Volunteers will receive an establishment grant of NZ\$ 375 to help them set up in their country of assignment. For volunteers with an accompanying partner (whether or not that partner is also a VSA volunteer), VSA will pay an establishment grant of NZ\$550 per couple.
2. The volunteer will receive a remote location grant of NZ\$2000 to help towards a break out of Bougainville after six months on assignment.
3. A resettlement grant of NZ\$200 will be paid for each month the volunteer is on assignment. This is payable on completion of the assignment.
4. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of PGK1,900.

Accommodation

Basic, comfortable furnished accommodation will be sourced by VSA. In some circumstances volunteers may be asked to share accommodation.

Airfares and baggage allowance

VSA will provide the volunteer with economy airfares to and from New Zealand for their assignment plus a baggage allowance.

Insurance

VSA will provide travel insurance to cover baggage and personal property, and non-routine medical expenses for the duration of the assignment. Further details of the insurance cover will be provided during the volunteer pre-departure briefing.

Utilities

VSA will reimburse volunteers reasonable expenses for household utilities while on assignment.

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

Appendix 1: Working Situation

Buin Health Centre is a basic facility that serves a large rural population. The condition of the centre has deteriorated over the years due to a lack of regular funding, and also lacks the resources required for deliver quality services.

BHC is staffed by a dedicated and skilled group of local health workers, who still manage to provide a range of health services to the local community despite the lack of funding and resources.

Currently the finance and administration is run out of the small office at the front of the facility. It operates to collect payment from patients and maintain operations.

Appendix 2 : Living Situation

Buin

Buin town is the main town in the Buin District of Southern Bougainville. It is accessed by two roads that lead south from Arawa on both the western and eastern sides of the island. The drive to Buin from Arawa is around 100km takes around 4 hours, depending on the road conditions.

The area around Buin was the focus of significant fighting during World War II, with numerous sites of interest and wrecks still visible today – including the famous aircraft wreckage of Admiral Yamamoto.



After the war, the present-day town of Buin was established inland to the north from its original location. In the late 1960s Buin became the centre of government, commercial, and education activity in Southern Bougainville.

From the 1960-90's Buin was slower to develop than the rest of Bougainville. Road access to Buin was via Panguna and Siwai districts, although a road over Santos pass was eventually constructed. Although large cocoa and copra plantations were established from Arawa north along the north-east coast to and including Buka, such activity did not occur in the Buin region. Further, while the Panguna copper and gold mine brought prosperity to many in central Bougainville and facilitated the development of a modern town in Arawa, Buin did not receive any substantial investment.

During the Bougainville crisis Buin saw some particularly fierce combat, including the 1996 Kangu Beach massacre, which began a chain of events leading to the ceasefire and signing of the peace agreement. Even after the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement in 2001, the neighbouring area of Konnou continued to experience its own localised conflict up until 2011.

Prior to the Crisis, Buin was serviced by a small airfield outside of town. Now there are no commercial air services to Buin, although an airstrip on land owned by the Catholic Church is located approximately one kilometre north of the town has recently been upgraded with an occasional charter flight. Volunteers based in Buin travel north to either Arawa or Buka when they are due to fly out of Bougainville.

These days Buin is still a small and quiet town, but there continues to be new ongoing development. Buin has a Police Station and small holding cell, a Courtroom, a Secondary School, a Health Centre, a number of guesthouses and petrol stations. Buin has a small number of stores that stock basic imported groceries (e.g. rice, canned foods, and some frozen foods). The town has a vibrant market that runs on a Thursday and Saturday, and has a plentiful supply of fresh fruit, vegetables, and seafood. There is a small Bank of the South Pacific (BSP) rural branch in Buin, however there is no ATM.

Buin town continues to host a small number of New Zealand Police as part of a joint Community Policing Project that has operated since the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

Public Motor Vehicles (PMVs) ply the coastal highway to and from Arawa most days (where the nearest VSA volunteers would be based), except Sunday, and costs K50 each way. The trip takes three to four hours or longer depending on the state of the road.

Buin runs a diesel generated town power service which runs for regular hours per day, although power outages for up to a week are still common. The town has mobile phone coverage, with a 3G service on the Digicel network, although network outages are also common. The Buin Urban Council in its infancy and provide few services. There is no town water supply or reticulated sewage collection, and volunteers water supplies come from a roof-collected tank.

Buin has some fascinating attractions that have been seen by few outsiders, including Lake Loloru (a crater lake in the mountains above Buin, which has spiritual significance to the Buin people), the remains of 'little Toyko' (an underground military base that the Japanese Forces, who held Bougainville for much of WWII, wanted to resettle a larger number of civilian Japanese; several pristine island islands boarding the Solomon Islands; and of course, Admiral Yamamoto's crash site.

On the whole, Buin is a quiet town. With the sorts of sensible precautions applicable to any town almost world-wide, Buin is a safe community.



Appendix 3: Autonomous Region of Bougainville (ARoB)

The Autonomous Region of Bougainville (ARoB) is the largest island in the Solomons Island Archipelago, situated on the border between Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Despite being more culturally, linguistically, and geographically aligned to the Solomon Islands chain to the south, ARoB was politically absorbed into the Australian-administered Territory of Papua New Guinea after World War II, and ultimately into the independent nation of PNG in 1975. Following a devastating conflict through the 1990s, a Peace Agreement was signed in 2001 which included a requirement for a referendum on its political future. The overwhelming vote for independence in the 2019 referendum means that Bougainville's political future is still a very current question

While the autonomous region has had a particularly difficult colonial and post-colonial history, the people of Bougainville continue to demonstrate tremendous resilience in the face of these challenges. Bougainvilleans are a hardworking, proud and happy people, and continue to display innovation and strength in spite of complex political and social challenges.

For more information on ARoB, see:

- [Autonomous Bougainville Government News](#)
- [RNZ Bougainville](#)
- ['Bougainville – A risky assignment'](#) – An account by MFAT of New Zealand's role in helping to bring peace to Bougainville
- [New Zealand Aid Programme in PNG](#)
- Former Volunteer Travel Website: [Travel Inspired'](#)

VSA in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville

New Zealand has a significant relationship with Bougainville, one that was largely formed through the role it played with helping to bring peace to the island during The Crisis. VSA is an integral part of New Zealand's presence in Bougainville, and is well supported by funding from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. VSA has been present in Bougainville since 1998, and has sent hundreds of volunteers to support Bougainville in building its health, agriculture, education, and governance sectors.

VSA volunteers are regularly based in throughout all the main areas of Bougainville and they are supported by a by a VSA office in Arawa and Buka. The Programme Manager is based between Arawa and Buka and a full time Programme Coordinator assists from the Buka office.

General security

The physical, psychological, and cultural damage resulting from a decade of civil conflict will take many years to heal. While there has been many years of peace in Bougainville, it will continue to take time before people gain confidence and build trust within their communities and with outsiders.

Volunteers must be aware of, and accept the heightened risk, and adopt behaviour that reflects due caution. This includes taking precautions such as not moving around after dark alone, keeping the house secure and keeping items of value out of sight. All VSA volunteers to the ARoB must sign a set of security protocols that set out behaviour, designed to minimise risk.

VSA has confidence in the peace process and a commitment to the people of the ARoB. The Programme Manager is constantly monitoring the security situation. VSA has found the people of Bougainville to be incredibly hospitable, friendly and keep watch over VSA volunteers as needed.



