

# VSA Assignment Description

<b>Assignment Title</b>	Deaf Education Trainer
<b>Country</b>	Tonga
<b>Location of Partner Organisation</b>	Tongatapu
<b>Partner Organisation</b>	Ministry of Education and Training – Inclusive Education Unit
<b>Duration</b>	12 months
<b>Sustainable Development Goals</b>	

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## 1. Partner organisation overview

### Ministry of Education Inclusive Education Unit

An Education Sector Study identified that children with disabilities were often excluded from Education, and the Inclusive Education (IE) Unit was subsequently established in 2007.

The Unit is under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Training, and currently has 8 staff, with 3 staff working in the special education class, and 5 staff providing the IE support in mainstream schools.

The purpose of this unit is to support the education of all children to ensure that they participate in education and progress well.

Staff within the IE Unit work for and with ECE centres, primary schools and secondary schools as requested.

In 2007 the first special education class was opened in the central area for all children with disabilities in Tonga age 5-12 who cannot attend mainstream schools. The IE support program began in 2017 to support the education of children with learning difficulties in primary schools to ensure inclusion. Additionally, the IE Unit provides support for ECE centres to encourage inclusion.

## 2. Assignment overview

The Tonga census in 2016 showed that 722 people have difficulty hearing, or cannot hear at all.

In children aged 2-9, 38 have hearing difficulties, and 77 cannot hear at all.

The data explicitly showed a high number of children at home, not in school, perhaps a result of the fact that schools are unable to adequately teach children with hearing difficulties.

With support, and if sign language teachers are trained, children with hearing difficulties can attend school in the future.

This assignment will focus on assisting teachers to teach deaf children and those with hearing difficulties to communicate using sign language.

Teachers, children, and families will benefit through:

- Improved and effective strategies for teaching deaf children and those with hearing difficulties
- Improved sign language learning opportunities for children and their families
- Access to quality learning in the classroom for all students

This assignment will also support NGOs and community groups who work with children, adults, and families affected by deafness and hearing difficulties, training and supporting staff and families.

It is expected that the volunteer be based with the Ministry of Education and Training 4 days per week, and be community based 1 day per week.



### 3. Goal/outcomes/outputs

#### Goal

Improved teaching and access to quality learning opportunities for deaf children and those with hearing difficulties.

#### Outcome 1

Teachers are supported to improve their knowledge and skills in teaching sign language in the special education classes and in the primary schools, including their access to, and development of, curriculum materials and resources.

- Assess the current level of knowledge of teachers and Inclusive Education staff
- Design and implement a training programme to increase teachers' skills and knowledge to teach sign language, including but not limited to workshops, in service training, modelling and one-to-one training
- Conduct sessions with children to demonstrate to the staff the practice of communication via sign language
- Provide teachers with ongoing support and mentoring
- Provide modelling and training to the Education Officer and teachers in the use of appropriate resources for students
- Support teachers in the identification and development of appropriate resources
- Develop and deliver training on the above resources

#### Outcome 2

Children with hearing difficulties and who are deaf are supported to communicate in sign language.

Working alongside Education Officers and teachers:

- Observe and assess children with hearing difficulties and who are deaf
- Design and implement learning opportunities for children to learn sign language and begin to use it
- Support teachers to work with parents in their learning of sign language
- Develop progress tracking tools

#### Outcome 3

NGOs, Education providers and community groups operating outside of the Ministry of Education and Training are supported in their work engaging with children, young people and families who are experiencing deafness and hearing difficulties.

Working alongside NGOs, community groups and education providers:

- Observe and assess needs and the resources currently used
- Make suggestions to staff and families about the best way to engage with children, young people, and adults
- Provide ongoing advice, support and guidance to staff and families

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

On the days that they are based at the Ministry of Education and Training, the volunteer will report directly to, and will be accountable to, the Principle Education Officer. On the days that they are based outside of the Ministry, the volunteer will report to, and be accountable to, the leads at the NGOs and community agencies.

On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominately work with the education officer who works in the special education classroom and is responsible for teaching sign language to deaf children, with teachers, and with staff and families at NGOs and community agencies.

The volunteer and the Ministry of Education and Training 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

- Knowledge of, and communication skills in, New Zealand or Australian Sign Language
- 2-5 years of experience in teaching New Zealand or Australian Sign Language
- Excellent communication skills
- Excellent organisational skills
- Creativity to cater for children with diverse hearing and learning needs
- Understanding and respect for cultural differences
- Ability to monitor progress of teachers and children in sign language
- Team work

### Personal specification (personal)

#### Essential

- Flexible and can adapt to new environment
- Empathetic towards others
- Good social skills

## 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 the Tonga, see <https://vsa.org.nz/about-vsa/countryregion/tonga>

### 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. The volunteer may be entitled to an establishment grant to help them set up in their country of assignment, and a rest and respite grant after a specified period of active service in-country to encourage the volunteer to take a break away from the immediate assignment location. These grants depend on the length and location of the assignment. The volunteer's contract will specify any grant entitlements.
2. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of TOP\$1,500

#### *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.**

