

# VSA Assignment Description

<b>Assignment Title</b>	Cancer Support and Education Mentor
<b>Assignment Modality</b>	Standard / In-country
<b>Assignment Number</b>	42164
<b>Country</b>	Samoa
<b>Location</b>	Upolu
<b>Partner Organisation</b>	Samoa Cancer Society
<b>Duration</b>	1-2 years

## Sustainable Development Goals



## 1. Partner Organisation Overview

Samoa Cancer Society is a not-for-profit non-governmental organisation working in the spaces of advocacy and cancer awareness as well as patient support, providing holistic social and spiritual support for people living with cancer, caregivers, families and cancer survivors. Their vision is to "End Cancer as we know it" through health promotion and patient support. Our goals are to raise health literacy of the people of Samoa in the space of Cancer Awareness, advocate for early detection/testing for appropriate cancers, as well as help people living with cancer, caregivers and family members navigate the health system to access the care they need, including palliative care care as well as advocate against the risk factors for developing cancer.

The Samoa Cancer Society was first established in 1998, and the office is situated at the National Cancer Resource Centre in the Moto'otua Hospital compound. Over the years, the SCS has laboured to amplify the need for the government to prioritise nationwide awareness of cancer and the special Palliative Care that is needed by our families and communities who suffer from this illness.

## 2. Assignment Overview

There is no Palliative Care (PC) service in Samoa. The Samoa Cancer Society (SCS) has been advocating for PC services in Samoa for over 10 years. SCS hosted the first and only Palliative Care Conference in 2018. In the same year, SCS drafted the first Palliative Care Guidelines for the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the first Palliative Care Essential Medicines List for Samoa in 2016.

Unfortunately, to date, nothing has progressed past what the SCS has done. Despite the lack of solid support from the government and ministry, the organisation continues to advocate and promote the need for PC services in Samoa, as well as provide patient support as able within our services. We have engaged in research in the space of PC, hearing from the people we serve and their caregivers about what their needs are, and as a result, we aim to;

1. Progress research in this area was led and supervised by SCS
2. Develop a community palliative care programme supporting caregivers at home
3. Continue to advocate for palliative care to the appropriate bodies.

### 3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

#### Goal

The Samoa Cancer Society (SCS) will have a community-based Palliative Care Programme suitable for the Samoa context.

#### Outcome 1

Assess current services to identify areas where support is required for a community-based Palliative Care Programme for the SCS

##### *Alongside SCS, the volunteer will:*

- Help identify the necessary resources required for an appropriate community-based Palliative Care service in Samoa
- Engage community members and families needing Palliative Care to establish what support they require
- Support staff and volunteers in facilitating this process in the community
- Suggest recommendations gathered from the findings of the engagement of community members to the CEO of SCS for consideration, discussion, and later implementation.

#### Outcome 2

Assist SCS in the implementation of the community-based Palliative Care Pilot Training Programme – using the “train-the-trainer approach”

##### *Alongside SCS, the volunteer will;*

- Support the implementation of a community-based palliative care training programme
- Assist in coordinating the facilitation of the modules in a pilot programme
- Build the capacities of participants through training and mentoring of the learning modules
- Provide ongoing support to the staff and participants through on-the-job coaching of the relevant skills in palliative care.

### 4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The SCS is in the process of engaging new staff in the Patient Support Team. Having an experienced volunteer in Palliative Care will significantly impact the challenging work we do, especially with limited support and resources.

Given the sensitive nature of Palliative Care, SCS would be most grateful to engage a volunteer of Samoan (preferably) or Pacific ethnicity for this assignment. Such a volunteer will give the patients and families confidence in feeling culturally safe regarding language and cultural understanding of the local needs of Samoa in this health area.

Capacity building and strengthening for the staff and SCS members will occur through day-to-day engagement, knowledge sharing, coaching, mentoring, and facilitated training programmes for the establishment of the Palliative Care Support Programme as outlined in the outcomes/outputs.

The volunteer will report directly to the Cancer Support and Education Lead (CSEL) or CEO (until the Cancer and Education Lead is appointed) and will be accountable to the CEO. On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominantly work with the CEO (until the Cancer and Education Lead is appointed).

The volunteer and the Samoa Cancer Society 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 reviews and reflects on the Assignment Description throughout the Assignment to ensure the best development outcomes are being achieved.

## 5. Selection Criteria/Position Requirements

### Professional Specifications

#### Essential

- Bachelor of Nursing or a relevant tertiary qualification in the health sector
- Experience and sound knowledge of cultural safety in health care
- Proven experience and understanding of palliative care (3-5 years)
- Proven experience in community care and engagement, ideally within a Pacific/Samoan context

#### Desirable

- Ability to effectively communicate and manage priorities
- Computer literacy
- Ability to conduct research and compile findings that will strengthen palliative care
- Ability to be creative in ways to engage the community and raise awareness

### Personal Specifications

#### Essential

- Solution-oriented and able to work in a resource-constrained environment
- Empathy and compassion
- Humility and integrity
- Flexibility and patience
- Resilience and initiative

## 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 Samoa, see [VSA in Samoa](#)

Refer also to the following links for greater context;

- Untold History of Samoa: [Untold Pacific History | Episode 3: Samoa - NZ's Colonisation of Samoa & the Mau Movement | RNZ - Bing video](#)

- New Zealand Aid Programme in Samoa: [MFAT NZ & Samoa-4YP.pdf](#)
- Samoa Government Website: [Government of Samoa \(samoagovt.ws\)](#)
- Samoa Tourism Authority: [Samoa Tourism Authority - Corporate Website](#)
- Pocket Guide of Samoa: [A Brief History of Samoa](#)  - [Samoa Pocket Guide](#)
- Samoa Pocket Guide: [Samoa Pocket Guide - Samoa's #1 Travel Guide](#)
- Beautiful Samoa: [Uncover the History of Beautiful Samoa | Samoa Tourism](#)

## 8. Living and Working Situation

The VSA Samoa office will source basic, safe and comfortable furnished accommodation before the volunteer arrives in the country. On rare occasions, the volunteers may be asked to share accommodation. This can be discussed more when the volunteer has been selected and has initial contact with the Programme Manager and Country Coordinator.

The Samoa Cancer Society office building is within the Hospital compound and right next door to the School of Medicine, a gated compound, close to town (within 2 km) and on the main road where the bus are regular. It has separate toilets for male and female staff.

The volunteer will have a desk and chair. The office has fans, and the air conditioning system is under construction, and there will be internet access.

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### Additional Information

#### Standard Assignment (12 months or more)

##### 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

VSA funding stakeholders are both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and donors. We ask volunteers and accompanying partners to fundraise to help cover the cost of sending volunteers throughout the Pacific and beyond. Fundraising can be as simple as doing something you enjoy with a group or friends, and our Fundraising team is available to help you every step of the way.

##### Vaccination requirements

Potential volunteers are advised that VSA's insurers require volunteers to be vaccinated, 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 in determining 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 SAT \$1900.

### *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 for 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.*