

VSA Assignment Description

Assignment title	Early Childhood Care & Education Adviser
Country	Kiribati
Location	Tarawa
Partner organisation	UNICEF
Duration	12 months (option to extend)



Sustainable Development Goals

41284

1. Assignment goal

UNICEF Kiribati has improved technical and management practices in place to support delivery of high-quality ECCE programmes/projects, leading to equitable and inclusive education outcomes for children.

2. Assignment outcomes

Outcome 1

The Ministry of Education (MOE)¹ has the technical knowledge and tools required to develop and implement ECCE and programmes in Kiribati.

Outputs

Working collaboratively with MOE staff:

- Develop policy documents on Early Childhood Education in Kiribati and share these with MOE staff.
- Provide guidance on budget allocation for Early Childhood Education in Kiribati to be included in the MOE budget by the end of 2021.
- Design and pilot an Early Childhood Education in Kiribati curriculum framework in three outer islands in 2020.
- Provide guidance, training and advice to MOE staff to deepen their knowledge and technical capacity for strengthened implementation of Early Childhood Education policy and programmes

Outcome 2

The MOE has adequate partnerships with all key stakeholders, facilitating better implementation of ECCE policy and programmes in Kiribati.

Outputs

- Work alongside key staff to enhance coordination and coherence among ECCE stakeholders, including development partners and faith based organisations

¹ The MoE and UNICEF have an agreement in place that UNICEF will support the development of ECCE in Kiribati based on the Situational Analysis of Children in Kiribati in December 2017.

https://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/04_Situation_Analysis_of_Children_Kiribati.pdf



- Advocate on behalf of the MOE to government for additional budget and resources to be allocated to ECCE in Kiribati, as required. A proposal will be developed to substantiate the additional budget and resources.

Outcome 3

UNICEF implements well-designed Early Childhood Education programmes and projects that effectively meet the needs of i-Kiribati communities.

Outputs

Work alongside UNICEF and MOE staff to:

- Provide progress reports on a quarterly basis with clear recommendations for post-assignment.
- Establish effective linkages between Early Childhood Education and other UNICEF programmes on Early Childhood Development to encourage shared learning and collaboration
- Provide a monthly report on the UNICEF financial resources for ECCE provided to MOE with a focus on the efficient and effective use of these resources according to the MOE budget.

As needs on the ground may change over time, the volunteer is encouraged to review and update the assignment description on arrival and during the assignment in consultation with the partner organisation and VSA programme manager.

3. Reporting and working relationships

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. The volunteer will work closely with Ministry of Education staff, reporting to the Chief of UNICEF Kiribati and Head of United Nations Joint Presence in Kiribati, and the Director of Education for the Ministry of Education.

4. Capacity building

The volunteer will work directly with the Minister and Secretary for the Ministry of Education in providing advice for the implementation of the ECCE Strategic Work plan. They will also work with Director of ECCE in the MOE as well as the team responsible within the MOE for the ECCE work plan. This will be on an advisory, mentor, supervisory and training basis depending on the context.

5. Person specifications (professional)

Essential

- A tertiary qualification in Early Childhood Education
- Strong knowledge of the Early Childhood curriculum
- Professional experience in policy, programme planning, management and/or research in education
- Experience in project management, including design, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation.
- Experience engaging and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders
- An ability to train and mentor other members of staff

Desirable

- ECCE experience in a government environment
- Experience working in a developing country



6. Person specifications (personal)

Essential

- Strong interpersonal skills with the ability to communicate effectively with people at all levels.
- Creativity
- Culturally sensitive.
- Highly adaptable and flexible.
- Patience and resilience

Desirable

- The ability to embrace change and create inclusive environments/workplaces

Additional information

Residency status

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

Partner organisation

The volunteer's partner organisation will be UNICEF.

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.

Vulnerable Children 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 Vulnerable Children 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\$750 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\$1,100 per couple.
2. For two year assignments, the volunteer will receive a rest and respite grant of NZ\$1000 on completion of the first year.
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, for up to a maximum of 24 months.
4. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of AUD\$1120.
5. A location grant of NZ\$2000 after 4 months of service.

- **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 prior to departure.

Attachments

Appendix 1: Background to the assignment

Appendix 2: Living situation

Appendix 3: Kiribati



Appendix 1: Background to the Assignment

Assignment focus

Delivering UNICEF Pacific's multi-country programme has unique challenges and risks, including complicated management context dealing with the scattered population in 14 PICTs; the vastness of the region resulting in very high transactions costs, over-reliance on the development aid, high exposure to natural disasters, lack of reliable data to ensure services reach the most vulnerable; and limited human and financial capacities within many governments. A talented and dedicated workforce is a key component of being able to deliver results for children- although UNICEF sometimes faces challenges in getting the right people in at the right posts at the right time.

The Early Childhood Education Volunteer will support the development and preparation of the Early Childhood Education programme and will be responsible for managing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and reporting the progress of Early Childhood Education programmes/projects as stipulated in the Education Work Plan for Kiribati within the overall framework of UNICEF Pacific Country programme. The Early Childhood Education Volunteer will provide technical guidance and management support throughout the programming processes to facilitate the administration and achievement of results on Early Childhood education programmes/projects to improve learning outcomes and equitable and inclusive education, especially for children who are marginalized, disadvantaged and excluded in society. He/she will contribute to achievement of results according to plans, allocation, results based-management approaches and methodology (RBM), as well as UNICEF's Strategic Plans, standards of performance, and accountability framework. The assignment will therefore cover the following thematic areas such as support to programme development and planning, programme management, monitoring and delivery of results, networking and partnership building and, innovation, knowledge management and capacity building.

Partner organisation

UNICEF has been working in the Pacific for more than 50 years. Today UNICEF Pacific is a fully fledged multi-country office based in Fiji and with country offices in Vanuatu, Kiribati and Solomon Islands. Their mission mandate is to promote the rights and wellbeing of every child in the Pacific, in everything we do. Together with their partners in Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Island, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, they translate this commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere.

UNICEF's Multi-Country Programme 2018-2022 is designed to support Pacific-wide strategies of direct importance for children's rights and aligned with the UN Pacific Strategy 2018-2022, the overarching framework for the United Nation's agencies support for development across the region, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) UNICEF Strategy Plan (2018-2021) and the SAMOA Pathway and the Pacific Plan. It contributes to the objectives of the national development plans of all Pacific Island countries as well as regional frameworks, including Pacific Plan, an overarching strategy for regional development, endorsed by leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum in 2007. Guided by the SDG's principle of 'leaving no one behind' the programme focuses on reducing inequity gaps within and across countries.

The UNICEF Pacific Multi-country programme has 6 components: a) Child and maternal health and nutrition; b) water, sanitation and hygiene; c) education; d) child protection; e) policy, evidence and social protection and; f) programme effectiveness. Towards the achievements of the planned results across all these programmes, UNICEF utilises six key strategies:

- a. Evidence-based advocacy and technical assistance to support formulation and implementation of the strengthened child-sensitive legal frameworks, policies, plans and budget.
- b. Capacity development for generating data, planning, delivery and monitoring of strengthened and resilient social services, particularly in rural, remote and other under-served locations;
- c. Community engagement and communication for behavioural developments, focusing on improved healthy and protective practices;
- d. Partnerships with regional institutes, civil society organisations and with children and young people;
- e. Promotion and modelling of technological innovations, to enhance learning, link the widely dispersed populations and for real-time monitoring.



- f. Facilitation of South-South cooperation through knowledge exchange, sharing of good practices and lessons learned, and establishment of the Pacific regional cooperation.

There are currently 8 UNICEF staff under fix term contract and four consultants in Kiribati. Chief of Field Office, Driver & messenger, Programme Associate, Programme Officers for Child Protection, WASH, Health & Nutrition, Education and UN Coordination Officer. Three positions are under recruitment (WASH Officer, Communication Officer and Administrative associate).

Working situation

While the volunteer will be based at the UNICEF office in Bikenibeu, Tarawa, they are expected to be engaged outside the office with stakeholders and partner organisations. The office is a shared office space with a number of UN agencies in a fenced compound. The office space is modern by Kiribati standards.



Appendix 2: Living Situation

South Tarawa

Tarawa Atoll, in the Gilbert group, is the administrative centre of Kiribati. It is divided into North and South Tarawa, with the majority of services and population located in the south. South Tarawa is very densely populated, with 6,000 people per square kilometre. The area consists of small islets, from Betio in the west, to Bairiki in the east, connected by causeways along the South Tarawa road.

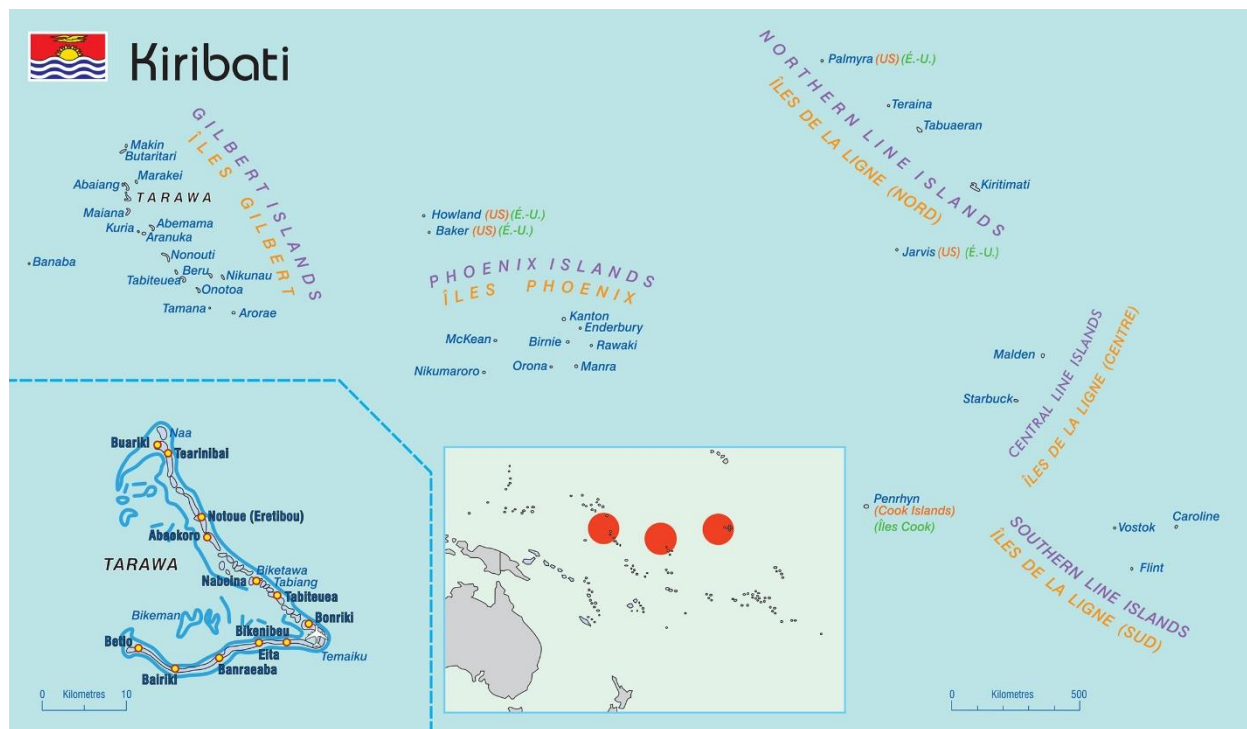
Tarawa has two hospitals, the Tungaru Central Hospital and Betio Hospital, a few health clinics and a medical clinic at the Marine Training Centre (MTC), which volunteers can access. There are a number of supermarkets but supplies of foreign goods are dependent on irregular shipping services and infrequent airfreight for fresh produce. Computer, internet and e-mail services are available at local internet cafés and motels. Kiribati uses the Australian Dollar and long-term volunteers usually open an account with ANZ Kiribati.

Life is generally relaxed but the density of people in Betio can mean a buzz of noise and activity. Kava bars and a few 'nightclubs' tend to be very loud. Music and dance are important aspects of Kiribati culture. Limited space in South Tarawa means limited room to play sports but football, volleyball and basketball as well as traditional i-Kiribati games are played.

The weather in South Tarawa is hot and humid all year round. It has high average rainfalls that can sometimes be unpredictable and can mean many months with almost no rain during the dry season. South Tarawa is prone to flooding and this is often exacerbated by poor irrigation and infrastructure. While outside the cyclone belt, Tarawa can still experience the tail-end effects of cyclones.



Appendix 3: Kiribati



(Map courtesy of the Pacific Community – www.spc.int)

The Republic of Kiribati (pronounced “kee-ree-bas”) became independent in 1979. It has the largest sea-to-land ratio in the world with only 810 square kilometres of land spread over a staggering 3.5 million square kilometres of the Pacific. With a population of 110,136 (2015 census), population density is extremely high with 141 people per square kilometre compared to around 57 worldwide.

Traditionally, power in Kiribati was exercised by the councils of older men, or the *unimwane*. They remain a powerful force and continue to exert a significant influence on the selection of parliamentary candidates. This can place pressure on elected representatives to put local interests ahead of national interests.

Relationships are the core of Kiribati culture and the family is also the central point for education and learning – ranging from techniques for fishing and house building, weaving, cooking and preserving food, traditional medicine, black magic and land management. In most households, there will be resident children who are not born of the parents of the household, but who have come to live with them for one of a range of practical reasons. Children in Kiribati are the community’s responsibility

As the communal extended family is the foundation of Kiribati society, the concept of privacy differs greatly from Western society. Some I-Kiribati are not used to people preferring to spend some time alone, and they may consider that if you are living by yourself you must be lonely and in need of company.

The *maneaba* (community house) is traditionally the centre of community life in Kiribati and still plays an important part in today’s society. This is where community discussions, council meetings and celebrations take place and where important decisions are made.

The majority of the population of Kiribati live in traditional village settings. Village life is strongly orientated around the extended family and the *unimane* (old men) and *unaine* (old women), who continue to play a prominent role in society. Eating, singing and traditional dancing are an important part of I-Kiribati culture and nearly every village has a *maneaba* where people gather for a *botaki* (party). I-Kiribati are generally friendly and courteous to foreigners and are likely to extend invitations to weddings and birthdays.



Although health indicators have improved in recent years Kiribati continues to see the highest infant mortality rate in the Pacific after Papua New Guinea, low life expectancy and a high incidence of nutrition related non-communicable diseases. Tuberculosis and other communicable diseases are a health problem and there are regular outbreaks of dengue fever and occasional cases of leprosy and typhoid.

36% of the population of Kiribati is under the age of 15. As in other Pacific nations, Kiribati has begun to see adolescent reproductive health issues, substance abuse, juvenile offences and increased cases of youth suicide.

Kiribati is in the category of least developed countries. It has few natural resources, with the majority of its economy based on the subsistence lifestyle of its people. A significant of the population survives through fishing. A feature of the Kiribati economy is the large divergence between the balance of trade and the balance of payments. Although exports account for 25% of the cost of imports, the balance of payments is favourable due to transfers on accounts of overseas investments, repatriation of earnings and fishing license fees

Religion plays a very important part in the everyday lives of the I-Kiribati and the church is very active in education and social issues. I-Kiribati contribute a large amount of money (especially considering incomes are not large) to religious causes. Each village has one or more churches and villagers are expected to attend church and other church related activities.

For more information on Kiribati, see:

Government tourism website: <http://www.kiribatitourism.gov.ki/>

Economic overview: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/kiribati>

New Zealand Aid Programme in Kiribati: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/countries-and-regions/pacific/kiribati/>

VSA in Kiribati

VSA's association with Kiribati dates back to 1967. The programme focuses on promoting sustainable economic and urban development and strengthening the public sector. The Kiribati programme is managed from New Zealand by the Polynesia and Kiribati Programme Manager, and by the VSA office in Wellington.

General Security

Volunteers are required to be security conscious and adhere to the advice of their partner organisations, VSA, and the New Zealand High Commission in Tarawa on security matters. If there is a major emergency or should security deteriorate, VSA has established emergency procedures and volunteers will be fully supported by staff in New Zealand. VSA staff or in-country contractors will discuss security measures with the volunteer and develop an individual security plan.

