

## Operations Advisor

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| Team:       | Operations                      |
| Group:      | Programmes & Volunteer Services |
| Grade:      | 15                              |
| Reports to: | Operations Manager              |
| Location:   | Wellington Office               |
| Updated:    | January 2025                    |

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| Role Purpose:      | <p>To support the Operations team and the Programme and Volunteer Services teams, through identifying and/or leading projects and activities to ensure continuous process improvement and ensuring we are delivering high levels of volunteer support at all stages of the volunteer journey. Lead the organising and execution of the volunteer briefings and debriefings.</p> <p>To provide guidance and expertise to other team members on volunteer logistics, assignment assessments/assignment descriptions, operational health and safety and working with external stakeholders.</p> |
| Direct Reports:    | Nil  |
| Budget Delegation: | Nil  |

## About VSA

Volunteer Service Abroad - Te Tūao Tāwāhi (VSA) is New Zealand's largest and most experienced volunteering agency working within international development. VSA sends New Zealanders and people with strong connections to Aotearoa on overseas assignments to share their skills, experience, and knowledge directly with local people and communities to make real, sustainable change.

VSA focuses on people-centred development. We give great importance to manaakitanga which means we value respectful partnerships, working and learning together, cross-cultural understanding, and the spirit of volunteering. VSA's values and our strategic focus reflect our commitment to bringing the spirit of Te Tiriti o Waitangi to the philosophy and values of our international development programme.

The purpose of VSA's programmes is to support countries across the Pacific to build their own capacity and sustainability. This is done by engaging skilled, committed New Zealand volunteers to work with in-country partners on short or longer-term assignments. VSA manages a range of development programmes in partnership with other organisations. These include in-country, regional, multi-lateral and New Zealand-based partners, such as Government ministries, public and academic organisations, private business and not-for-profit community groups.

We have team members working from our National Office in Te Whanganui-a-Tara/Wellington, as well as team members and volunteers located across the wider Pacific in the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Kiribati, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste. VSA works in partnership with a range of partners across the Pacific and Aotearoa New Zealand, including non-government organisations as well as private, public, and academic organisations and institutions.

VSA's work is funded primarily through its strategic relationship with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and independently generated income. VSA is an independent, secular, and not-for-profit organisation and is governed by a Council. VSA is registered in Aotearoa New Zealand as an incorporated society and is a charity registered with the Charities Commission.

You can find more information at [www.vsa.org.nz](http://www.vsa.org.nz)

## About the Team

VSA's Programmes and Volunteer Services group comprises teams throughout the Pacific and in Wellington. The Programmes teams are located throughout the Pacific (including in NZ) and manage our country programmes. Volunteer Services is made up of two teams: Operations and Volunteer Recruitment; which are located in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand and provide support to our volunteers and programmes.

This role is an integral part of the Operations team. The Operations team manages the deployment and return of selected volunteers (and any accompanying partners) and makes sure they are prepared for their time on assignment. Our Operations Advisors are responsible for providing support and advice to the Operations team on logistical arrangements and team processes, ensuring the effective capture and reporting of volunteer impacts and data. They also manage the volunteer pre-departure briefings and facilitate return volunteer debriefs.

## Critical Success Factors

| Area of Responsibility                           | Evidenced through   |
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| Processes and systems monitoring and improvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing and implementing both Operations-focused processes and systems improvements and those across the wider Programmes and Volunteer Services team. Regularly reviewing existing processes with an eye to continuous improvement.</li> <li>• Leading, in conjunction with the other Operations Advisor, the Operations Coordinators in collectively resolving issues and capturing and sharing learnings.</li> <li>• Participating in organisational reviews of systems and processes to ensure a strong alignment with VSA's strategic focus areas and the achievement of outcomes that benefit and support VSA's key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Developing and delivering training on systems and process improvements as and when required. Including, providing coaching or training to colleagues to help familiarize themselves with our CRM and other operations processes.</li> <li>• Regularly updating and ensuring consistency of Operations' standard documentation, and that good file and record management practices are followed</li> <li>• Participating in the development of VSA's internal policies and procedures that the Operations team will be involved in</li> </ul> |

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|   | <p>implementing, ensuring that they are comprehensive, fit for purpose, and aligned with current legislation. Developing and/or maintaining 'how to' documentation that guides training and familiarisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly reviewing assignment assessments and assignment descriptions to ensure quality and consistency is being maintained across our programmes, and working collaboratively with internal experts to ensure assignments reflect development goals, including supporting Programme Managers in the technical review of assignment assessments, and communicating amendments to draft assignment assessments where required.</li> <li>• Providing quality assurance on Assignment Descriptions prior to final approval.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Projects</b></p>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading projects to improve performance across the Programmes and Volunteer Service space.</li> <li>• Actively participating in and, at times, leading cross-organisational projects that improve and promote the work of VSA, build awareness and profile, and support achievement of the long-term objectives of the organisation in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas. For example, CRM improvements and monitoring and evaluation reviews.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Industry Knowledge &amp; Networks</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remaining aware of industry trends in international development and volunteering, including connecting to peers in Aotearoa New Zealand and groups across the Pacific.</li> <li>• Research industry-related themes that pertain to VSA's work and provide recommendations for how VSA can further develop its programmes in line with its strategic focus areas.</li> <li>• Attend external events and functions as required.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Volunteer Logistics</b></p>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise the Operations Manager of any concerns identified in relation to the Volunteer Contract and volunteer policies.</li> <li>• Ensure all volunteers have received Volunteer Contracts and relevant policies to read and agree to prior to commencing assignments. Ensure copies of signed policies and Contracts are stored in accordance with the Privacy Act on personal files in CRM.</li> <li>• Working with field-based staff and volunteers to resolve issues and answer queries relating to VSA's programmes, assignments and the volunteer agreement.</li> <li>• Providing guidance and mentoring to Operations Coordinators on volunteer logistics and administration-related issues as they relate to VSA's programmes and partner organisations.</li> <li>• Providing recommendations for improvements to how VSA works with external partners, including but not limited to travel, medical and insurance providers.</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining and keeping up to date VSA’s security asset register and continually improving the asset tracking processes, including coordinating with field-based staff on the purchasing and maintenance of security equipment.</li> <li>• Communicating effectively with other VSA teams regarding volunteer assignment-related information as it pertains to their work.</li> <li>• At busy times or during staff absences, providing backup assistance to other Operations team members and other VSA teams, as required.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Returned Volunteer Management</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working collaboratively with the Stakeholder Engagement group to ensure all volunteers completing assignments have their experiences captured.</li> <li>• Transitioning volunteers from actively managed in Operations to the post deployment stages and handover with the Marketing, Communications and Fundraising team.</li> <li>• Ensuring all volunteer records are shared in accordance with obligations set out in the Privacy Act.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Briefing and debriefing of Volunteers</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overseeing the Volunteer Briefing Courses, undertaking regular reviews of process, content and training techniques used to ensure maximum impact.</li> <li>• Leading the development of new material for the Volunteer Briefing Courses.</li> <li>• Presenting Volunteer Briefing Course sessions as appropriate.</li> <li>• Developing new material for online training and preparation of volunteers for their assignments.</li> <li>• Leading debriefing sessions of volunteers on completion of their assignments.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Reporting and Analytics</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering regular Operations team reporting on volunteer assignments and trends.</li> <li>• Collaborating with the Senior MERL Insights Advisor and other VSA staff on improvements to VSA’s Results Measurement Framework and suite of volunteer, accompanying partner, Partner Organisation and Programme Manager reports.</li> <li>• Analysing system data to identify internal training opportunities, areas for continuous improvement and risks to VSA brand or reputation.</li> <li>• Contributing to the writing of reports for internal and external audiences.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Organisational Health and Safety</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with the Programme Manager to ensure the volunteers are equipped with, and/or trained in how to use, any HS&amp;S kit such as life jackets, Personal Location Beacons (PLBs), and 4WD vehicles.</li> </ul>   |

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|                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively support any Crisis Incident Management Team activity and lead the Operations involvement in the event of accidents, incidents, or other scenarios where staff or volunteers are in a health, safety or security situation while deployed offshore.</li> <li>• Ensuring volunteer health and safety information is accurate and gathered in a timely manner ahead of deployment on assignments, and is collected, stored and shared in accordance with the Privacy Act.</li> <li>• Ensure Programme Managers have returned Volunteer Security Plans and these are entered into VSA systems in a timely and secure manner.</li> </ul>                             |
| Health and Safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking reasonable care for personal safety and wellbeing in all VSA workplaces, project sites, and if and when driving vehicles.</li> <li>• Acting in accordance with all reasonable health and safety instructions, policies, and signage making sure that acts or omissions do not adversely affect the safety and wellbeing of yourself or others.</li> <li>• Reporting all occupational injury, illness, near miss incidents, accidents, environmental spills, or fire (regardless of its severity) to your manager.</li> <li>• Reporting all hazards which may result in an injury, illness, spill, or fire, to your manager, and to the HR Coordinator.</li> </ul> |

At VSA there will be times when we all pitch in to do additional tasks that are outside our regular roles. This forms part of our culture and our values.

At VSA all team members are encouraged to contribute to continuous improvement: to support innovative thinking, smart work practices, how we engage across teams, and the overall culture and work environment.

There will be opportunities to participate in forums, committees, and working groups across the organisation and with third parties.

## Key Relationships

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| Internal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operations Manager</li> <li>• Operations Advisor</li> <li>• Operations Coordinators</li> <li>• Director Programmes &amp; Volunteer Services</li> <li>• Senior MERL Insights Advisor Volunteer Recruitment team</li> <li>• Programme Managers</li> <li>• Country Programme Coordinators &amp; Advisors</li> <li>• Finance team</li> </ul> |
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|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing, Communications and Fundraising Team</li> </ul>  |
| External | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers and Accompanying Partners</li> <li>• Partner Organisations</li> <li>• Travel Agency</li> <li>• Insurance Brokers</li> <li>• VolunteerCare</li> <li>• NZ Police</li> <li>• NZ Ministry of Justice</li> <li>• Pacific Immigration Offices</li> <li>• VSA contractors</li> </ul> |

All team members are expected to develop professional relationships with other staff throughout the organisation during their tenure at VSA.

## Skills / Competencies / Attributes

- Commitment to the principles of international development and understanding of the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, bi-culturalism and multi-culturalism.
- Proven experience in developing and improving logistical processes, ideally specific to international deployments.
- A tertiary qualification in Development Studies or experience working in international development would be highly desirable.
- Proven experience developing presentation, workshop and online training material and confidence in facilitating and quickly building rapport with an audience.
- Proven experience interacting with CRM databases (in particular, Microsoft Dynamics).
- Sound interpersonal skills and the ability to interact in a culturally respectful manner at all levels across both New Zealand and Pacific organisations.
- A strong customer service focus with the ability to quickly establish trusted and productive working relationships.
- Highly organised, disciplined, resilient, and capable of managing a wide range of competing priorities while remaining composed.
- Confidence in both verbal and written communication skills. Ability to remain calm under pressure.
- High level of motivation and initiative, self-management and ability to work autonomously to deliver results to deadline.
- Tech-savvy with a working knowledge of Office 365-suite of products, research tools, data processing and document formatting for professional audiences.
- Courage to speak up and challenge, improve or raise issues that need to be addressed.

- Cheerful, positive and comfortable working with a bunch of professional, focused and fun colleagues.

Please note:

- From time to time the briefing of VSA volunteers may take place outside regular business hours, such as through occasional weekend briefing programmes. You will be needed for this work and will be given reasonable notice of these weekend workshops. Time off in Lieu will be granted for this weekend work.
- There is a possibility that the Operations Advisor may be required to travel to one of VSA's programme countries to enhance programme knowledge and contextual understanding. If this is the case, they are required to capture and share their organisational and professional development learning with VSA staff upon their return.