


Lukluk

Volunteer Service Abroad 2019





Lukluk is a celebration of our amazing partners in the Pacific and beyond.

Across the Pacific and beyond VSA volunteers work with people whose passion and aspirations are making their communities better and stronger. These are a few of their stories.

Lukluk — it's Tok Pisin for "Vista"

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Volunteer Service Abroad Te Tūao Tāwāhi Values

- ✘ **Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi**
- ✘ **Respectful partnerships**
- ✘ **Working and learning together**
- ✘ **Cross-cultural understanding**
- ✘ **Fairness, social justice and self-determination**
- ✘ **The power of volunteering**

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Kia ora,

This year’s Lukluk delves a bit deeper into what makes the relationship between VSA and our in-country partners tick. These close and enduring relationships help our work succeed.

That’s highlighted by VSA’s journey with the Timorese women’s collective HAFOTI, which I had the privilege of visiting with the VSA President, Dr Simon Mark last year. With VSA, HAFOTI members have gone from being small subsistence producers, to exporting to Australia and becoming leaders for change in their communities.

In our assignments we seek to build capacity, to give our partners the tools to take economic and social development into their own hands. This delivers real results and great friendships. Just ask the women of HAFOTI and the other partners whose stories also feature in this edition of Lukluk.

Stephen Goodman, VSA CEO

Volunteer Service Abroad Te Tūao Tāvāhi

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Our partners and stories

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Mana Dortia Kese (left). Photo: Helen Reynolds

Growing stronger together

“We had our first volunteer, Mana Tanya, in April 2011. She worked closely with me to secure the funding and support of Caritas NZ which has been so important for HAFOTI’s development.

This year we had a very proud moment when we sent our first ever export of Virgin Coconut Oil to Australia. I was able to visit Australia with Maun Kim our seventh VSA volunteer to see the markets and learn about export.”

That’s Mana Dortia Kese, the Director of Timor Leste’s HAFOTI collective reflecting on how VSA and HAFOTI have worked in partnership for eight years. Over this time HAFOTI has gone from strength to strength as local products have been turned into thriving businesses, which are in turn now becoming exporters.

But the outlook wasn’t always so good with the collective foundering when Mana Dortia Kese joined in 2010. “At that time HAFOTI was not doing so well and my job was to rebuild it. I’m pleased to say **we are now a strong organisation with 315 members** in 23 groups operating in seven of the 13 Timor–Leste municipalities.”

VSA volunteers have worked with Mana Dortia, and the many other women of HAFOTI to develop products including coconut oil, body scrubs, soymilk, black rice, and banana chips. Assignments have ranged from technical production advice to helping developing packaging, business management, marketing, and now with seventh volunteer Kim Willoughby they are developing an export market.

“HAFOTI is in transition as we move to an organisation that is both export focused but works more deeply with our members around broader issues beyond livelihoods like healthy diets, children’s rights and domestic violence.”

Kim says it’s essential to tell the Timor-Leste story. “The traditional way HAFOTI makes coconut oil produces a very high quality product. It can’t compete on price with the cheap mass produced sun dried copra product from other countries, but it can stand alone as a high quality commodity and that together with the story of where it has come from offers a great marketing opportunity.”

That’s not lost on Mana Dortia- she has just spent three weeks in Australia schooling up on the market opportunities that much larger nation offers including a workshop with other women from Asia and the Pacific doing similar work. “We visited cities including Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane and looked at the products being sold, and the kind of packaging being used, and we also learned more about marketing and how to fill in the export documents.”

One of the opportunities she is taking back to develop is sun dried pineapple- which sells for \$95/kg in Australia. It’s high value products like this the collective needs to focus on for export as the cost of shipping from Timor-Leste is incredibly expensive. A container can cost ten times as much to ship from Timor-Leste to Australia as it does from larger, more established ports.

HAFOTI is a contraction of Hamahon Feto Timor – or “Umbrella organisation for Timorese women”. It’s a name that is incredibly appropriate as the economic development offered to its 315 members has translated into greater financial independence. In fact, with the creation of a savings and loan scheme, collective members are now able to safely save – not easy in a cash economy with no banks.



HAFOTI Members at Aileu Centre. Photo: Helen Reynolds



Mana Dortia Kese in conversation. Photo: Helen Reynolds

This has been a huge step forward and has provided HAFOTI women with the means to send their children to school and to make other improvements that will ripple through their communities.

In many districts the financial empowerment provided by HAFOTI is enabling its members to become leaders, says Mana Dortia proudly, "HAFOTI is in transition as we move to an organisation that is both export focused but works more deeply with our members around broader issues beyond livelihoods like healthy diets, children's rights and domestic violence."

Mana Dortia's collective has grown from the small seed of subsistence business into an organisation that is making generational change in its members communities. That's the result of the tireless work that her and the other members of HAFOTI have done alongside VSA and others. "We really appreciate the partnership and support that we receive from VSA and the wider New Zealand community like Caritas NZ, MFAT and the New Zealand Embassy. It makes a real difference to the success of our organisation."

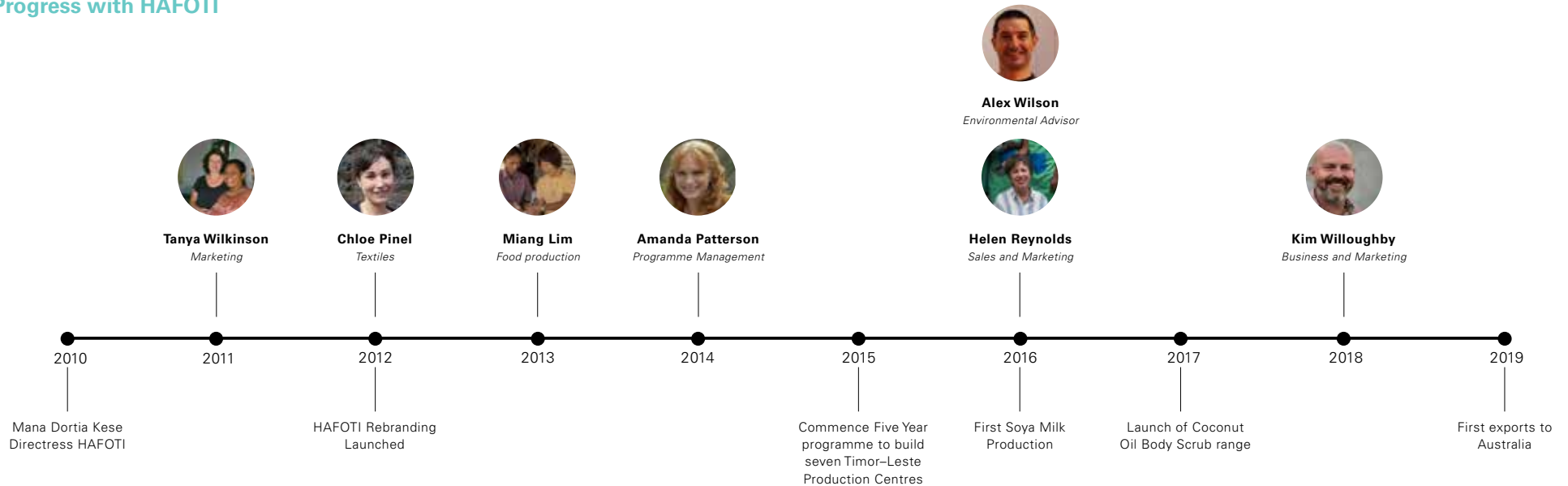


Mana Dortia and Lily in the Agora cafe. Photo: Helen Reynolds

Our Progress with HAFOTI

Volunteers

HAFOTI Milestones





Cambodian market. Photo: Senghorng Tuot

A beneficial association

Senghorng Tuot is the Enterprise Development and Marketing Facilitator of iDE's Cambodia Agribusiness Development Facility. He's tasked with strengthening the Melon Association of Siem Reap Meanchey (MASC). That involves everything from improving market access to helping develop growers' business, finance and marketing skills, to personal coaching of farmers to become more sustainable. His background is in animal science and veterinary medicine and he holds a Masters degree in animal production, hygiene, quality and environment from François Rabelais, France.

Before his involvement with the Melon Association, Senghorng worked with crop and livestock farmers to grow their businesses. In his iDE role he's been working with VSA volunteer Clint Smythe. Clint's a longtime horticulturalist and exporter with immense experience with produce marketing and exports as well as on the ground agricultural skills.

Senghorng says working with VSA has helped the association make real improvements for growers both on the farm and in the market. "[We've been] reaching our target sale of

30 tons a month. Our farmers feel happier with our melon association since we got so much good advice and recommendations from Clint regarding the proper way to run the association business as well as individual farm management matters.

"He brought good solutions to the melon association to deal with the shortage of working capital which has been a barrier for the association getting more supply and members for nearly two years.

"We join together to meet upscale market actors such as LUCKY, MAKRO, AEON supermarket and other wholesalers/distributors to keep in touch and make some possible changes on the business relationship, especially we try more and more formal contract with those buyers. As a result, we did about 4 to 5 new supply contracts in Phnom Penh and justified some contract articles associated to payment terms and parties responsibilities."



Visit of MAKRO team to association

Senghorng speaks warmly of the relationship with VSA. "I've noticed the **VSA volunteers are open-minded and friendly people and willing to provide as much support as they can.** Moreover, VSA sends good candidates that we like and have the right background for what we want."

And there are more big steps ahead for the industry that Senghorng wants to work with VSA to achieve. "We want to professionalise our created association and aggregation points to be more and more operational in regards to production, supply planning and branding. Alongside that we want institutionalisation of our farmer group to an appropriate legal form in accordance with their goal, objective and business venture such as a social enterprise and/or company. And also more exploring on the new crop trials and matching the current market demand..." Senghorng's list keeps getting longer as he makes it clear there's a strong vision for a better future that VSA can be a part of building.



Senghorng with cucumber growers, Cambodia. Photo: Clint Smyth



SIBC Sales – Marketing Team, Vale Luma, July 2019



Supplied - Clint Smyth demonstrates sowing carrot seed



Cambodian market. Photo: Senghorng Tuot



Clint Smyth with Cambodian farmers. Photo: Senghorng Tuot



Clint Smyth and Senghorng Tuot



Mana Dortia Kese . Photo: Helen Reynolds



SIBC – Phillipa Austin + Moddie Nanau, S_M Office, July 2019



HAFOTI members making banana chips. Photo: Helen Reynolds

Moddie nanau – Voice of the nation



SIBC – Sales Marketing Team including VSA Volunteer Pip Austin, July 2019

“I am in the very fortunate position to be the mouthpiece for the unspeakable, eyes for the invisible & ears for the unreachable.”

Referred to as “The Voice of the Nation” since 1952 the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) provides entertainment, news and current affairs, cultural and educational programming and is the only media source capable of reaching the Solomon’s 900+ islands. An important part of Solomon Islands’ huge affection for the SIBC are its talented and dedicated team – including veteran broadcaster Moddie Nanau.

Originally from Are Are in Malaita Province, Moddie joined SIBC in 1983 at the age of 16 as a Junior Radio Presenter. Over many years of presenting and producing in 2013 she was appointed Head of Production and last year saw a change of direction for Moddie when she was appointed Manager Sales and Marketing.

Over the years Moddie has made an outstanding contribution to the media in the Solomon Islands including being the recipient of several international media awards and an MBE in 2016. Moddie is a household name in Solomon Island homes and to many it is Moddie Nanau who is “The Voice of the Nation”.

As SIBC have just completed their first partnership with VSA we sat down with Moddie to share her impressions of SIBC, challenges she faces and how she found working with VSA:

What is special about SIBC: SIBC provides credible and trustworthy coverage nationwide and is there in good times and in times of need. SIBC provides an important link to the past and to the future with its broad coverage of news, cultural and historic events.

What drives you: My passion and love for the job. I am in the very fortunate position to be the mouthpiece for the unspeakable, eyes for the invisible and ears for the unreachable. Although I am the first to acknowledge that none of this would be possible without the strong support from my family and SIBC colleagues.

What challenges face you: Switching from the Broadcasting and Production side of the business to Sales and Marketing has been a big personal challenge, especially as I have no formal training in this area.

How have you found working with VSA: This is SIBC’s first time working with VSA and we greatly appreciate Pip’s knowledge and experience, along with being helpful, approachable and working alongside not only the Sales and Marketing Team but all the SIBC Team.

What have you gained personally from working with VSA: Practical knowledge and tools to do my work better. Also, the confidence that I can do a role that was completely new to me.

Opening doors in Kiribati

Uere Toorua began his teaching career at a church school on Tarawa in 2012, that was followed with a move to Bikenibeu's King George V and Elaine Bernacchi School (KGV&EBS) in 2013, and a Master's in Education in Fiji a couple of years later. Just this year he became the Principal of KGV & EBS.

It's an important job, KGV&EBS is the only state senior secondary school on the Tarawa atoll and Uere is responsible for ensuring teaching and school leaver standards are maintained and that staff and students' needs are met. That includes teaching in both Kiribati and English. The former is vital to maintaining the Kiribati culture, the latter is critical for students to engage in the world beyond their small island nation.

Uere is assisted by VSA volunteer Martin McMorrow, who has a background in teaching English as a Second Language including a master's degree in English language teaching, a PhD in teaching academic English, as well as extensive classroom experience around the globe.

Martin has struck up a strong friendship with the Principal and an admiration for Kiribati. It's a relationship that Uere clearly values.

"Dr Martin has a sense of humour in leading the workshop with teachers, and this makes the workshop lively and enjoyable. In addition to that, Dr Martin has also been coordinating programs which make the school proud and one of the programs is working with our students on creative writing.

"This program also strengthens the connection between the school and New Zealand through the presence of New Zealand High Commissioner Michael Upton to present the work of students."

"Dr Martin has a sense of humour in leading the workshop with teachers, and this makes the workshop lively and enjoyable."



Martin McMorrow with Uere Toorua



School yard – KGV&EBS. Photo: Martin McMorrow

As with all VSA assignments, Martin's job is to increase the school's capacity. "Currently, there are two monthly workshops for teachers and workshops for students twice a week. The workshops with teachers are supporting them with their career as well as personal development, whereas the workshops with the students are intended to build their confidence in using English and to introduce them to guests from a wide range of countries and professions."

Uere says the work Martin is doing with KGV&EBS is supporting the vision of the school which "is to ensure students are academically supported and facilitated through quality and inclusive education programs." He adds that they "really appreciate the cooperation of New Zealand through VSA as it helps to open doors to the development of teachers and students at KGV&EBS."

Making the 'miracle' games

Philippa Te Hira-Matatia talks about organising the biggest single sporting event in the Pacific with no time to spare.



5000 athletes and support team members, 1000 officials, and over 3000 volunteers. And just 17 months to pull it all together.

That was the challenge faced by the Government of Samoa after a late withdrawal for hosting the 2019 Pacific Games left Samoa with the honor, and the task of hosting the biggest sporting event in the Pacific.

It's a job that was made for the founders of the Samoa Institute of Sport- a social enterprise set up in 2016 to support young sportspeople in Samoa in 2016. The institute had been running successfully under the guidance of co-founder Philippa Te Hira-Matatia when the chance to take on the Games came up.

With the newly founded Office of the Pacific Games established in March 2018, Philippa took on the role of Communications Manager, and was one of the only seven initial staff members. "Thinking back on those first 9 months," she says, "It was a huge brief to fulfil and on reflection it had a start-up kind of feel to it as we had to be constantly agile and responsive. It was intense but also amazing and I definitely have to acknowledge the opportunity and belief the Samoan government invested in us."

Samoa College kids chasing the Pacific Games torch.
Photo: Mathew Durling

It was a belief that paid off with the Games, which took place over July, being celebrated as the biggest ever. “There’s usually seven years to prepare and we had 17 months. But even with the short amount of time to host the games we exceeded expectations. It was the largest number of athletes and officials to ever turn up to the games and it went really smoothly it even got nicknamed “the miracle games.” When we asked teams why they thought it went so well they attributed it to the strong communications and responsiveness of the office.”

That’s where VSA was able to help, working with Philippa to identify roles where they could make the biggest difference and recruiting volunteers who had extensive experience in communications. “A lot of it was about building brand awareness,” says Philippa, “and although Lucy and Graeme were on social media and Mike and Ben were doing graphic design I’d class them more as brand consultants because of the great job we did together building that brand.”

Pacific Games News desk



“Coming away from it I’m really proud of how Samoa came together as a nation, but one of the highlights for me was the way each school adopted a country and learned everything they could about it. That turned into hosting their nation, doing flag raising ceremonies, and making videos about it that went viral.”

The Games didn’t just represent the opportunity to highlight sport however. With the eyes of the Pacific on Samoa and the Games it was a chance to promote other important issues too. “We were the first games to go plastic free in that we banned single use plastic bottles. We got a lot of questions about how we were going to implement it but we managed it, and it meant we decreased our waste and highlighted the importance of reducing plastic use.

“Coming away from it I’m really proud of how Samoa came together as a nation, but one of the highlights for me was the way each school adopted a country and learned everything they could about it. That turned into hosting their nation, doing flag raising ceremonies, and making videos about it that went viral.

“It really made it feel like the Games belonged to the Pacific community.”

On the contribution of VSA volunteers to that success Philippa is unequivocal. “They were great ambassadors for New Zealand, they showed real Kiwi can-do. These were huge jobs and they came in and stepped up for us and for Samoa. They had that attitude of just roll your sleeves up and get out and get it done.”



Pacific Games stadium. Photo: Claire McClintock



Pacific Games News desk



Pacific Games News desk



Pacific Games News desk



Pacific Games News desk. Photo: Trina Edwards



Pacific Games News desk. Photo: Trina Edwards



Pacific Games News desk. Photo: Roland Setu



Pacific Games News desk



Pacific Games News desk



Pacific Games News desk. Photo: Trina Edwards



Pacific Games News desk. Photo: Alvaro Hoyos Ramos

Meleoni Uera – Making things happen

Ask Programme Manager Tina Mackie about working with Meleoni Uera and she's forthright in her praise. "Meleoni and I work very closely as a team and I honestly could not carry out my VSA role without her."

Meleoni is contracted to VSA in Tonga to support and train volunteers. She's the go to person if you need to sort out an immigration issue, find a doctor out of hours, or just want to have a chat about how things are going.



Meleoni Uera. Photo: Tina Mackie

She started in early 2018, just in time to help with the massive disruption caused by Tropical Cyclone Gita. "My first three volunteers were due to land the day Gita struck. We got them here not long afterwards, but there was no electricity and water was limited.

"I spent a lot of time making sure that people were safe and keeping briefings up to date. I had to pull a few tricks here and there to make sure things happened."

With a background of working in the Tongan government in senior positions including as the head of the training and employment division, along with expertise in volunteer management including work with Australian volunteers, Meleoni's skills and connections have been a vital addition to VSA's Tonga operations.

"The last thing I was involved with in government was the seasonal work programme, since then I've spent six years community training provider. I deliver short term training for women and for youth. I also help deliver other projects and that's how I ended up doing the work with Australian volunteers, and then VSA."

Meleoni has a high regard for the people she meets in the role.



Vava'u Market and town, July 2018

"What stands out as a highlight? To be honest the calibre and the level of the volunteers coming through. Their ability and willingness to give beyond their scope. They are finding they can have an impact beyond the host organisation – I've seen it across so many volunteers.

"I'm also a direct recipient of that- one of the VSA volunteers mentored me to build my business, another has finished in-country, but is sending through training books which are invaluable to the other community work I do. VSA has become my family. "

"I spent a lot of time making sure that people were safe and keeping briefings up to date. I had to pull a few tricks here and there to make sure things happened."

Augustine Rihai – A life in education



Augustine Rihai

In his career as a Vanuatuan educator with the Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACoM) Augustine Rihai has faced more ups and downs than most. He's led the creation of a whole new set of standards for ACoM schools, and he's had to deal with evacuating two schools after the Ambae eruption.

VSA has been with him through many of these moments.

Augustine started as the Secretary in 2017, the year before the eruption that forced evacuation of the island and with it ACoM's Torgil Rural Training Centre and St Patrick's College. Prior to that he'd found his way into education via trade.

"I was employed at the Vanuatu Public works department as the machinist. I was one year into the job in 1993 when the Anglican Church of Melanesia negotiated with the head of Public Works to transfer me to Torgil rural Training Centre on Ambae to teach motor mechanics."

That was the start of a career as an educator that has included being a Principal and an Education Officer. It's in the latter role that Augustine had his first experience with VSA.

Asked about that he answers modestly "I worked with two VSA volunteers, Christine and Kurt. Christine took up the role as the Curriculum and Training Adviser and Kurt took up the role as Business and Marketing Adviser.

"They were very expert and at the time I really didn't know how to work with such very higher calibre people." Something definitely did work however, and it resulted in successful two-year assignments that built ACOMs capacity at an operational level.

That led to further assignments including VSA volunteer Joan Middlemiss' work developing a full suite of educational standards for managing the schools and their curriculum and pastoral care. Augustine waxes lyrical about her work, "**Joan is a great teacher and a great leader.** She always listens to my positive queries for the future of the ACoM Education Authority in Vanuatu.

"She helped me to set up the management level of the department, and created a video for us to follow when she left the office. The church is still talking about Joan. I will never forget her as she shaped me as a real Manager of the Education Authority of the Province of Melanesia in Vanuatu."


Joan's standards have been immensely successful and are being adopted more widely than originally expected. Augustine has plans to work with VSA to further unify ACoM's work. "We'd like to with VSA next to help create an overall management system of the ACoM Vanuatu Provincial Office and the dioceses in Vanuatu."



Torgil training centre before the 2018 Ambae eruption



Joan and Peter Middlemiss with ACoM staff at Big Bay 2017



VSA sends skilled Kiwis overseas to share their experience and knowledge directly with local people and communities.

Working alongside our amazing partner organisations, together we create new opportunities for people that will continue to ripple across communities and generations to come.

Costs covered. Diverse industries



Connecting people – transforming lives

