

"ENTER INTO HIS GATES WITH THANKSGIVING."

2021 UniVol programme

Be part of Volunteer Service Abroad's UniVol programme
and benefit from a committed young volunteer.

Connecting people – transforming lives

Kia ora,

Volunteer Service Abroad's – Te Tūao Tāwāhi (VSA) exciting youth-focused programme, UniVol, provides a great opportunity for selected young university students to volunteer overseas and contribute to capacity building and international development.

The UniVol programme is a collaboration between VSA and Otago, Victoria, Massey and Auckland universities and offers a 10-month field placement overseas with one of VSA's partner organisations starting at the beginning of each year.



UniVols Laura, Caitlin and Jess with their language teacher Maria in Bougainville.



Chris Wellnitz giving a presentation in Tonga.



Nelum Patel in Bougainville.

About Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA)

VSA volunteers work with people throughout the wider Pacific to create lasting, positive change for everyone.

We send skilled Kiwis to share their experience and knowledge directly with local people and communities.

Together with our overseas partners, our volunteers build local businesses, provide education and improve health, help safeguard the environment and foster good governance, and deliver community-driven and owned projects.

Working together with our regional neighbours, our volunteers create new opportunities for people that will continue to ripple across communities and generations to come.

Since 1962 we have recruited more than 4000 New Zealanders whose skills and support have made a difference to people who want a better life for themselves and their children.

Find out more at: www.vsa.org.nz

How do organisations benefit from a UniVol volunteer?

UniVol volunteers (UniVols) are committed, motivated volunteers with experience and knowledge to carry out the professional goals of the assignment.

UniVol strengths include:

- UniVols are usually very good at adopting the **local language**. This positively impacts the volunteer's and local counterparts which in turn supports the overall success of an assignment. Volunteers who speak the local language can communicate more effectively with their peers and colleagues and earn the trust and respect of locals
- UniVols are digitally skilled, comfortable using social media **and have strong written skills** due to their time at university and growing up in a technology-driven society. This means UniVol volunteers are in a good position to share these skills within your organisation
- UniVols are sociable and have **strong community involvement** outside their partner organisation. This allows for deeper cultural understanding.
- UniVols are usually very good at forming successful **workplace relationships and friendships**. This positively impacts the workplace environment for both the volunteer and their colleagues
- UniVols are often very **good networkers**. This creates more opportunities for their partner organisation to collaborate with other organisations
- UniVols are well placed as **youth working with youth**. This positively impacts how the volunteer is perceived as approachable, relatable and non-threatening by their colleagues

A review of the UniVol programme showed that a key benefit for a partner organisation is that they are more likely to find a volunteer within a shorter timeframe and with a definite start date (January-February each year, although this timeframe may change depending on border restrictions in 2021).

"Having young volunteers who are at the same level - all of us are exploring the world and learning from each other, it is a really positive thing."

"Chris was great to have in Tonga. He really helped us a lot with our NRL & Mai e Nima community outreach programs that we deliver to the community. For the short time that Chris was with us, he was a blessing to be part of our team. With limited resources and manpower towards our health and well-being program in Tonga, Chris in the short time he was with us was able to fill a lot of gaps in areas of our programs that we really needed help and assistance with."

About UniVol volunteers

When they apply the volunteers are enrolled in their final year of university studies (bachelor's degree or higher) in either Development Studies, Geography, Marketing, Communications or related disciplines at Otago, Victoria, and Massey universities or are from the School of Social Sciences at University of Auckland.

UniVol volunteers need to have:

- skills and experience gained from studying and from paid or unpaid work
- the personal attributes to meet VSA's requirements (these include flexibility, resilience and tenacity to adjust major changes)
- an understanding of international development

Suitable candidates are longlisted for a brief video interview with members of VSA's recruitment team. Preferred candidates are phone screened and invited to attend two interviews, one to explore their technical skills and the other to identify any potential sensitive issues that may omit them from the volunteer process with VSA.

All assignment offers are subject to satisfactory medical and immigration clearances, partner organisation acceptance and successful completion of the VSA briefing course.

A UniVol volunteer must be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident and aged 30 years or under.

Partners and/or dependent children do not accompany UniVols.

What are the types of assignments?

VSA develops assignments in close collaboration with our partners. The assignments cover the development themes of: Youth

- Climate change
- Health
- Education
- Legal
- Gender
- Social justice

UniVol assignments can be in the areas of:

- IT training
- tourism and hospitality
- marketing and communications administration
- monitoring and evaluation
- youth work

Do volunteers speak the local language?

VSA provides basic language tuition during an in-country orientation and we strongly encourage all volunteers to learn the local language.

How can my organisation apply for a UniVol volunteers?

UniVol assignments are based in in Melanesia, Polynesia or Timor-Leste in a range of organisations including government agencies, NGOs and training institutes.

You can start by contacting VSA, developing a suitable assignment and requesting a volunteer.

How can I get more information or apply for a volunteer?

Name:

Email:

Address:

Number:

Comments from past UniVols

"I ended up travelling quite a bit and making connections across different departments of my partner organisation. This was awesome because it meant I got to work with people who were passionate about different areas including education, health, disability services, and women's empowerment to name a few."

"Volunteers have a larger impact in the community than we may realise. Despite the challenges we face which can make us feel disheartened at times, simply our presence at our partner organisation and within the wider community goes a long way."

"Don't underestimate yourself and the skills you have. You will be surprised by your ability to help people in a number of ways."

"The highlight of my assignment was definitely the ability to be included on a regional and sometimes even global level in meetings and consultations with organisations such as UNICEF and IPPF surrounding development and the area in was working in - sexual and reproductive health."

"My partner organisation was great! They were so excited to have a volunteer and made me feel valued at every moment. I learnt a lot from them."