**VSA Volunteer Essential Personality Attributes**

**Commitment –** *VSA volunteers must demonstrate:*

* Commitment to volunteering, to VSA and to the partner organisation.
* Readiness to leave their New Zealand lifestyle, family and friends for the duration of the assignment.

**Open and agreeable –** *VSA volunteers must be:*

* Able to form good relationships, both personally and professionally, with the people they work with and those in the community where they live.
* Non judgmental, and able to understand the implications of relationships.
* Able to network, and to gain the co-operation of other people.

**Adjustment to local culture –** *VSA volunteers must be:*

* Willing and able to remove their “western lens” to understand and appreciate local communities and adopt alternative working styles.
* Willing to go at the pace dictated by local people and the community.
* Able to listen effectively, respect others and gain their respect.

**Adaptability –** *VSA volunteers must be:*

* Able to adapt their expectations to the realities they encounter in the field.
* Able to effectively cope with major changes, to modify behaviour and adjust to the situation.
* Willing to get out of their comfort zone, and approach change or newness positively.

**Initiative –** *VSA volunteers must be:*

* Self starters, able to use their own initiative to create and follow an appropriate plan of work.
* Committed to achieving positive outcomes from the assignment.

**Resourcefulness –** *VSA volunteers must be:*

* Able to find practical ways to solve problems and get things done.
* Able to make do with the resources available.

**Managing setbacks –** *VSA volunteers must be:*

* Able to maintain a positive attitude in response to unfamiliar circumstances and setbacks.
* Able to withstand stress, discomfort and isolation, and develop appropriate strategies to manage stressful situations, including taking ownership and personal responsibility.
* Resilient, mature, and able to persist in the face of tough challenges.
* Able to recognise their own strengths and limitations, including knowing when to seek help.

**Skills exchange –** *VSA volunteers must be:*

* Able to facilitate learning through skills exchange.
* Able to explain, teach, and communicate in a way that makes sense to others.
* Willing to contribute ideas and suggestions while realising that it might take time for them to be accepted.