

# VSA Volunteer Essential Personality Attributes

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## **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, if they are travelling overseas.
- Readiness to make time to volunteer as part of their daily life, if they are working remotely from New Zealand as part of VSA's e-volunteering programme.

## **Open and agreeable –**

*VSA volunteers must be:*

- Able to form good relationships, both personally and professionally, with the people they work with and for volunteers travelling overseas, with 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. This is particularly emphasised for volunteers who will be living and working overseas while on assignment with VSA.

**Adaptability –** *VSA volunteers who are volunteering overseas must be:*

- Able to adapt their expectations to the realities they encounter in-country.
- 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, when in-country.

## **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.
- This is particularly emphasised for volunteers who will be living and working overseas while on assignment with VSA

## **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.

## **Working with IT –**

*VSA volunteers working as part of the e-volunteering programme from New Zealand must be:*

- Able to demonstrate a reasonable level of understanding and capability in the use of IT platforms and communication channels that they may be required to use as part of their e-volunteering assignment.

