

Using our Gifts in Vanuatu – Gloria Jones



Neville and Gloria Jones have been serving in Vanuatu since 2015. Gloria shares some reflections on her journey

This is our third year working in mission for the PCANZ and the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu (PCV). It has been a very busy year for me as I have had three roles:

1. Teacher Aide at a school, working in a class of 35 students.
2. Helping at the Hospital Dental Clinic
3. Running English reading classes after school.

Modern life in Vanuatu is a world apart from today's western society. Vanuatu's rich diversity across the islands is one of its greatest attractions, with its history, languages, culture, customs and ceremonies making it a rich and exciting experience to see and feel. It is a unique experience for any mission teams wanting to help with projects or just to visit. Both Neville and I love hosting and helping these groups who come on their mission trips, and love to hear the stories and the changes in them on their return. I have been able to get to some of these islands on outreaches with dental teams, doing dental work, and helping the communities manage tooth pain and improve their oral health.



Gloria in the dental clinic at Lamap on Malekula Island, ready for the next dental outreach programme

It is quite primitive out there, living as the locals do – listening to their storiams (stories) and their struggles, eating the local food, no power, no flushing toilets and collecting water each day. We also have to cook the old fashioned way with rods on open fires, and washing at a river by hand, much like my great-grandparents did.

Living with another culture means that it takes time to earn trust, and to be accepted as part of the family. There are always frustrations, such as island time, cyclones, broken stuff, hot weather, wet season, creatures, bugs and barking dogs; this can be overwhelming, challenging, but also rewarding.

My highlight this year has been running an after-school reading class. It has been very exciting watching these students progress, gain confidence, develop a love for books, and just wanting to hang out and read. Relying on God for direction and daily needs has been very inspiring and seeing his hand at work is a real blessing.

Using Your Gifts

Last year a door opened for me to help the struggling dental department at the main hospital in Port Vila. Working with a team of 12 Ni-Vanuatu staff, together we were able to make changes and get the clinic running effectively with sterilisation procedures, cross-contamination policies, clinic patient organisation, training and set-ups. In six months it has turned around, and is now an effective unit seeing thirty to fifty patients a day.

In summary, lending a helping hand in Vanuatu, learning and living together, using our gifts and making it a better place has been a rich experience.

What are things I miss? A hot shower, a nice couch or lazy boy to sit on, friends and family.



Eager students at the after-school reading programme

Neville and Gloria Jones are members of Wairau Presbyterian Church in Blenheim and are official Global Mission Legends.