

Global Mission in Vanuatu: Our Story



Don and Shirley Anton, members of Titirangi Presbyterian Church in Auckland, lived and worked in Vanuatu for two years as Partners in Mission with The Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu. Here is their story:

My Global Mission journey began in late 2013, having read a request for an English language teacher at Talua Ministry Training Institute, South Santo. My first appointment was to teach a two-week short course to a Foundation Class of thirteen students, who were aspiring to enter the Bachelor of Ministry programme the following year. In the third week Don visited so we had a wonderful shared experience of meeting staff and students in addition to exploring nearby villages, beaches and other beautiful spots on the south and east coasts of Santo. I knew I wanted to spend more time teaching at Talua, God willing.

It was evident God had a plan for us both, as in response to a request for an English teacher in 2015, Don initiated inquiries with Phil King as to how he could serve at Talua if my application was accepted. This is the way God works. I know that it is God that gives us the energy and desire to serve Him. It is not of ourselves.

Our Global Mission journey together began in 2015 at Talua. Don recounts, "During our year at Talua Theological Training Institute, I assisted the Bursar with work on the budget for Talua and contributed to the development of policy and procedures to help Talua become a registered provider under the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority (VQA). I enjoyed teaching Maths to Diploma students, with a focus on practical Maths that would be needed when they became ministers. Managing the Talua truck and driving to Luganville was also a weekly feature. So, I experienced a diversity of interesting roles!"



Don with Pastor Philip and Pastor Shem, lecturers at Talua Ministry Training College.



Foundation Class Graduation at Talua, 2015

I enjoyed my teaching role immensely, working with the Diploma Level 1 class and the Bachelor of Ministry Foundation class. Don and I were privileged to be a part of the Talua community and admired the dedication of the NiVan staff and the students' dedication to achieving their goal of becoming Pastors. An intrinsic part of life at Talua is hospitality, hence we enjoyed spending time with visiting lecturers, mission workers and visitors from Canada, Ireland, the US, Germany, Australia and New Zealand. An invitation by Pastor Allan Nafuki for Don to work for the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu Education Authority, led us to Port Vila in 2016. We were blessed to have the friendship and support of Gloria and Neville Jones, Global Mission workers living nearby.

Don says, “I was involved with assisting both Talua and Korvan Community Health School to become registered providers within the VQA framework by developing policy, procedures and implementing quality management systems. It was important to be working in collaboration and partnership with both Korvan and Talua staff, and the sharing of knowledge and using existing structures and committees for the development of quality management systems. It wasn’t about imposing a structure, but how we could utilise existing structures and processes to achieve registration and work towards accreditation. At the time of writing, Pastor Philip from Talua has just advised me that the VQA has told them they are ready to become a registered training provider. This is a fantastic achievement for Talua and a great outcome for the work we have done together.

“The meetings I had with the PCV resulted in them having meetings with the Korean church leading to the handing over of Korvan Community Health School from the Korean church to the PCV. Discussions with the PCVEA staff and subsequent meetings with the Ministry of Health resulted in Korvan changing the course that it will deliver so that it closely aligns to the Diploma that is delivered by the Ministry of Health”.

I was asked by the PCVEA to develop educational resources, so this meant familiarising myself with aspects of the English language curriculum and spending time observing classes at Seaside Presbyterian Community School. I wrote resources for teachers to support literacy development at junior secondary level and ran teacher workshops on the use of language learning strategies and text based grammar. This school-based experience in turn fostered an idea to write reading resources with a focus on the experiences of NiVans working in New Zealand under the Regional Seasonal Employment Scheme (RSE), with content relevant to contemporary NiVan experience.

Now living back in New Zealand, we have recently hosted Mrs Hannah Daniel from Seaside School to assist in a reading project called “Linking Lives”, sponsored by the PCVEA, Global Mission and the Titirangi Presbyterian Church. During her three-week visit, Hannah and I interviewed RSE workers employed in horticulture in Waipukurau, Hastings, Pukekohe and Tauranga. I am currently writing the interview material into the form of Reading Cards for use in Vanuatu schools.

Don and I value the friendships we now have with some of the people we worked with in Vanuatu. NiVans who have stayed with us have met the congregation at Titirangi Presbyterian Church and it’s great that personal connections are made between Christian brothers and sisters at a local level.



Hannah Daniel at Titirangi Church and with RSE workers at Pukekohe.