

U.S. PEACE CORPS



PORT VILA, VANUATU

Description of Volunteer Service

Anton Zuiker [ss# removed]
Republic of Vanuatu

Anton Zuiker has realized his childhood dream of Peace Corps service; he now joins his father, Joseph Zuiker (Dominican Republic 1965-67), as a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer.

Application and Pre-Service Training

After a competitive application process, which stressed applicants' skills and cross-cultural adaptability, Anton joined the Peace Corps and began eight weeks of intensive in-country training on December 4, 1997. This training program included five weeks in a rural island village, during which Anton and his wife, Erin, lived with an extended family.

The comprehensive pre-service training program consisted of the following components:

Language Training	Eight weeks of daily classes for proficiency in speaking and reading Bislama, the lingua franca of Vanuatu.
Cross-Cultural Training	Discussions, demonstrations and immersion in village life for an understanding of Melanesian culture, problem solving methods, cultural taboos, and daily way of life and communication.
Technical Training	Daily classes, panel discussions, and demonstrations for community development skills and strategies, informal and non-formal education techniques, and knowledge of the Vanuatu education system and Ni-Vanuatu student profile. This component included numerous government and NGO speakers on political, social, religious, health and gender issues in Vanuatu.
Personal Health and Safety Training	Preparation for dealing with medical issues common to PCVs in Vanuatu, both for personal health and safety and for village health education efforts.

Upon completion of training, Anton was sworn in and assigned, along with Erin, to work with the northern five villages of Paama Island as a Rural Community Education Volunteer. Anton began this service on January 22, 1998.

Rural Community Education (RCE)

Peace Corps Vanuatu's RCE program was relatively new in 1997 (Anton was in the second RCE group to arrive in Vanuatu) and served as a broad mandate for Anton's involvement; generally, RCE Volunteers are expected to have a formal role in a primary or secondary school, and assist their communities with various and varied community development projects and initiatives.

Anton's life and work on Paama was assisted and overseen by Johnny Albert Tomatelu, the local Ni-Vanuatu field representative for the New Zealand-funded Rural Skills Training Program. A North Paama Peace Corps Committee, comprised of representatives from five villages — Tavie, Lironessa, Liro/Senealie, Asuas, and Voravor — also assisted in the support of Anton's life and work. This committee met quarterly.

Anton served his community of 700 primarily as a teacher and development worker.

Teaching

Anton taught Grade 7 English in the Vaum Junior Secondary School, a new community-run boarding school opened in response to the national education ministry's push for increased secondary education opportunities. Anton taught for two academic years, five hours each week, with 38 students each year. A popular and effective activity with the school was Anton's American Kakaes, in which pairs of students came to Anton's house on Wednesday evenings for dinner and English-language conversation.

Peace Corps Vanuatu offered a Small Project Assistance grant in 1998 to support Anton's What A Bang! music education project, which brought a popular "stringband" from Futuna Island to VJSS to demonstrate instruments made with local materials (e.g. bamboo, empty Coke bottles, and rubber sandals). To this day students improvise music on handcrafted instruments such as ukulele, tin can drums and bamboo whistles. VJSS has begun to collect and use various musical instruments for music education and class sing-a-longs.

Additionally, Anton assisted in the Liro Primary School. In 1998, Anton taught English speaking and writing skills to Grades 5 and 6, two hours each week to each class. In 1999, Anton and Erin organized an extracurricular Arts and Crafts class each Monday, and a Sports activity each Wednesday.

Development Projects

Through participatory appraisal methods, Anton and his counterpart, along with the village leaders, identified development projects appropriate to the community life and within the RCE mandate. These included the RSTP Solar Project; Tavie Village water project; Liro Community Center project; and Peace Corps Informational Talks.

The RSTP Solar Project was an initiative that was generated by the profound interest of the villagers to the solar-powered home lighting system Anton's father brought to Paama on his visit in mid-1998. Anton and Erin held a public meeting to explain and demonstrate solar energy and power; at this meeting, many families expressed a desire to obtain solar power. In response, Anton organized an affordable package of solar panels and lights, for which families contributed the full cost; 30 families on Paama and Epi islands purchased packages, for a value of US\$15,000 (a very significant sum for this rural community). Under the RSTP umbrella, this project then included installation

and maintenance training for each family, with followup expected by future PCVs. This project has ignited grass-roots interest in solar energy in this solar-rich nation.

The Tavie Water Project was an effort to request financial and technical assistance from the national Rural Water Supply for a project to bring water from a hilltop spring to the parched village. Anton advised the village chief and leaders in the process of project application and assessment. Currently, the RWS has plans to fund the project in 2000.

The Liro Community Center Project was a process-oriented effort to design and construct a community dining hall. Fellow PCV Kevin Anderson was invited to share his skills as an architect in designing a unique but locally and culturally appropriate building. Anton then worked with a committee to apply for financial and technical assistance from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. While a completed Liro Community Center would be a terrific accomplishment of and a benefit to the village, the knowledge and understanding of the project process was Anton's true goal. This process included frequent committee meetings to discuss the steps involved and to ascertain if the project was a continuing community need and priority.

Anton and Erin's Peace Corps Informational Talks were given over the course of 1998, when they were the only PCVs on the island. They visited each of the 22 villages to introduce and explain the goals and efforts of Peace Corps. From these talks came an interest in an increased Peace Corps presence on Paama, and in 1999 two additional PC sites were added, with a third in 2000.

Additional Peace Corps Activities

Anton also lent his efforts to Peace Corps Vanuatu in the following efforts:

Anton was a member of the Volunteer Newsletter Committee for 1998 and 1999, and helped produce the quarterly newsletter *Vanamerican Nius*; Anton's efforts contributed to the growth and improvement of the newsletter.

Anton completed a one-week temporary assignment on Efate Island in September 1998, in which he assisted Shefa Province in assessing the potential for the province's assuming control of the rural Kalmet Community School. Anton's report lauded the potential but warned of transitional challenges. Unfortunately, the Kalmet community chief unilaterally disbanded the school shortly thereafter.

Anton served as the Technical Training Coordinator for Rural Community Education Trainees in the Pre-Service Training of Vanuatu Group 11, from November 1998 to January 1999. Anton directed and facilitated the training of 12 PCTs (6 married couples) with the aim for readying them for rural service. Primary technical training revolved around participatory rural appraisal skills and techniques, including a weeklong PRA exercise in Nicu Village on Epi Island. All 12 individuals swore in and continue to serve in Vanuatu. Anton received excellent evaluations from the Trainees.

In-Country Travels

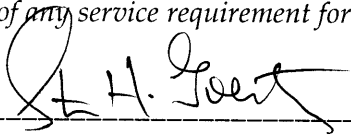
As part of his interest in his host country, Anton travelled extensively within Vanuatu, often visiting fellow Volunteers at their sites and engaging them in discussions pertaining to the goals and efforts of Peace Corps. His travels included Maewo, Malekula, Espiritu Santo, Ambrym, Efate and Epi islands. Anton also organized a trip of Volunteers to Ambrym that included a camping trek to the active Mount Marum volcano.

Close of Service


Anton Zuiker successfully completed his term of service on October 24, 1999.

This is to certify in accordance with Executive Order 11103 of April 10, 1963, that Anton Zuiker served successfully as a Peace Corps Volunteer. His service ended on 24 October 1999. He is therefore eligible to be appointed as a career-conditional employee in the competitive civil service on a non-competitive basis. This benefit under the Executive Order extends for a period of one year after termination of Volunteer service, except that the employing agency may extend the period for up to three years for a former Volunteer who enters military service, pursues studies at a recognized institution of higher learning, or engages in other activities that, in the view of the appointing agency, warrant extension of the period.

Pursuant to Section 5(f) of the Peace Corps Act, 22 USC 2504(f), as amended, any former Volunteer employed by the United States Government following his/her Peace Corps Volunteer Service is entitled to have any period of satisfactory Peace Corps service credited for purposes of retirement, seniority, reduction in force, leave, and other privileges based on length of Government service. That service shall not be credited toward completion of the probationary or trial period of any service requirement for career appointment.



Steve Goertz
Acting Country Director
Peace Corps Vanuatu



Date