

# CULTURAL CRASH COURSE



## Eyebrows

The raising of eyebrows up-and-down act as a greeting, an acknowledgement, and an agreement (i.e. yes). You may find children do this a lot!

## Hand holding

Boys, If you make good friends with another male, don't be surprised if they hold your hand. The same goes with girls.



## Shaking Hands

Shaking hands is an important act in meeting someone! Be proactive in shaking hands when you enter a new community. There will normally be formal times to shake everyone's hand on arrive and departure from a community.

## Shyness

Don't be surprised if you come across many shy Ni-Vanuatus. Don't be put off from making a friendship, your effort will be greatly rewarded.

## Bislama

Make an effort to speak Bislama, the locals will appreciate your effort and it will help break down barriers.

## Eyes

You may notice Ni-Vanuatus not maintaining eye-contact as is done in your home country. Girls, try not to make too direct eye contact with boys, you can look into their eyes for acknowledgement and then drop your eyes. Boys, don't hold long gazes at girls. As a sign of respect don't prolong eye contact with someone who is ranked higher than you (i.e. chief or pastor).

## Politeness

It is rude to walk between two people who are talking. Make sure you make the effort to go around.

When engaged in conversation, let the other person finish speaking before you speak. Interrupting is not common in the Ni-Vanuatu culture.

Use someone's title as a sign of respect. (i.e. Pastor John, Chief Simon).

## Gender Roles



The Ni-Vanuatu culture is very traditional recognising the strengths of each gender to participate in daily life. While in a village

females are not encouraged to participate in manual hard labour which is reserved for the males. Females are generally expected to help with the preparation of food, caring for children other domestic duties. While we will endeavour to make the trip engaging for both genders, we aim to respect the local culture and community. Please discuss the specific activities for the team with your country ADRA Connections coordinator. There may be other activities such as teaching at the local village school, or teaching a skill if qualified where females can make a meaningful contribution to a community.

## Giving of Gifts

Gifting is an important part of Ni-Vanuatu culture. If your team decides they would like to bring out some gifts, please be aware that some items are more appropriate than others.

Where a team is lodging with local families individual gifting to the family is important. Team leader, please set a budget on gifts to ensure host families receive the same value in gifts. We suggest an amount between \$5 and \$15.



Some appropriate gifts might be a jar of jam or peanut butter. Calico is also useful, or a tea towel for example. Items which require batteries are not practical.

Where the team is lodging together in a village, and the team wishes to bring gifts, items that can be used by the community are more appropriate rather than individuals receiving gifts and others missing out. For the youth perhaps some sporting equipment like a soccer ball and pump, or school supplies for the local school.

You may come from a church where SDA hymnals are no longer in use. If approved by your church, gifting hymnals would be happily received by SDA Ni-Vanuatus.

If in doubt, have your team leader send us an email.

## Social Gatherings

Take note of where each gender is congregating, do likewise and mingle!



Male and females should not be seen alone together unless you are engaged or married. ADRA Connections members should never be alone with a member of the community you are visiting.

## Animal Welfare



You might feel sorry for some dogs you may see while visiting a community. Remember that dogs are not seen as affectionate friends like they might be at home. Please do not treat the dogs with special attention or teach them bad habits that are hard to break. If you feel the need to do something, you can make a donation to Vanuatu's Animal Welfare Associate - SAMS.



**“Tolerance, inter-cultural dialogue and respect for diversity are more essential than ever in a world where peoples are becoming more and more closely interconnected.”**

—Kofi Annan,  
Former Secretary-General of the UN

**“Humanity is waiting for us. Not to hear about our actions, but to see our actions.”**

—Hany El Banna, World Humanitarian Forum, United Kingdom



**“Peace cannot exist without justice, justice cannot exist without fairness, fairness cannot exist without development, development cannot exist without democracy, democracy cannot exist without respect for the identity and worth of cultures and peoples.”**

—Rigoberta Menchú Tum (Guatemalan  
1992 Nobel Peace Prize Winner)

# USEFUL INFORMATION

## Luggage

If you are doing any domestic air travel within Vanuatu your luggage limit will be strictly 10kgs. You can leave some remains in Port Vila that you would like to take to Vanuatu but don't want to take to the project site.

If you do not have luggage weight restrictions because you are not flying within Vanuatu, we ask that you still pack lightly when staying with a community.



## Electricity

While in a village do not expect access to electricity or shops. Please ensure you have spare batteries for your torch and camera.

While in Port Vila or Espiritu Santo, wall plugs are the same shape and voltage as Australia and New Zealand.

## Weather Preparedness

Vanuatu is a tropical paradise. But with the turquoise water and sun-filled days also comes a lot of rain, humidity and dampness. To prepare yourself, bring a rain jacket, flip flops/sandals and small dry bag to protect valuables (i.e. cameras). Clip lock bags are also very useful where you need to keep something dry, or separate a wet item from the rest of your luggage.

## Visa Requirements

Australian and New Zealand passport holders do not need a visa. If you hold a different passport, please do your research with enough time to apply for a visa if needed. All participants will need at least 6 months left on their passport.

## Clothing

Bring as much cotton clothing as possible to keep cool. Try and avoid bringing thick material that take a long time to dry. If you are caught with a lot of rain, you may be unable to dry your clothing!

A quick-dry towel would also be useful.



Most shops close at lunch time for 1 hour (12-1pm) on weekdays, and all day Sunday. Supermarkets open 7 days a week, and open during lunch.

# BISLAMA BASICS

Hello

Good Morning

Good Evening

How are you?

Are you okay/good?

I'm good/fine/okay.

Where are you going?

What are you doing?

What's this?

How much is this?

I like it!

Where is the...?

Toilet

Can I take pictures?

Sorry, I speak only a little Bislama  
nomo

Halo

Moning! / Gud moning

Gud naet!

Olsem wanem?

?I olraet? / ?i gud? / ?i stret?

I gud / i stret / i olraet

Yu go wea?

Yu stap mekem wanem?

Wanem ia?

Hamas long hemia?

Mi laekem tumas!

... i stap wea?

smolhaos/toilet

Mi save karem smol foto?

Sore, mimi toktok smol Bislama

My name is...

What's your name?

I come from...

I've come to...

Please

I'm very happy to...

Where are you going?

What are you doing?

Not much.

Nem blong mi...

?Wanem nem blong yu?

Mi kam long ...

Mi kam blong...

Plis

Mi glad tumas long...

?Yu go wea?

?Yu stap mekem wanem?

Mimi waet nomo

