


VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Clinical Dietician Mentor
Assignment Modality	Standard In-country
Assignment Number	42185
Country	Solomon Islands
Location	Honiara
Partner Organisation	Gizo Hospital
Duration	12 months
Sustainable Development Goals	

1. Partner Organisation Overview

Gizo Hospital is the main healthcare centre in Western Province. It's operations are overseen by the Western Provincial Health Services. It is a public hospital located in Gizo town centre. The hospital was established after World War II by missionaries and volunteers and has grown over the years.

Gizo Hospital offers services to both inpatients and outpatients. It has 60 beds and offers emergency, surgical, medical, laboratory, and public health services for people living in Gizo and surrounding islands. It is a referral hospital and receives patients from the rest of Western Province. The hospital has about 200 nurses, 10 doctors and about 60 administration and support staff.

Gizo has a population of 7,177 as per 2019 census who are serviced by the hospital. As this is a provincial referral hospital, it also serves patients from Western Province and refers serious cases to the National Referral Hospital in Honiara. Currently the hospital's largest number of patients are those who have non-communicable diseases and vector borne diseases.

2. Assignment Overview

The clinical nutrition care process is crucial for managing nutrition-related medical conditions such as undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and non-communicable diseases of patients. However, Gizo hospital lacks any clinical nutrition therapy guidelines, standards and protocols. A volunteer is being sought to support the Clinical Dietician to develop guidelines for use by staff involved in patient diet including staff who work in the kitchen.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

Patients, particularly those who have non-communicable diseases, are eating food that supports their dietary requirements and are making healthy food choices.

Outcome 1

Gizo hospital staff are providing patients with dietary advice that supports their clinical conditions.

Working closely with the dietician officer and Gizo hospital clinical care team:

- Identify common nutrition-related health problems and gaps in current nutrition care practices;
- Observe current practices related to diet and nutrition in the hospital;
- Provide guidance and recommendations on current evidence-based diet and nutrition therapy guidelines that align with local dietary habits & cultural preferences;
- Assist in developing a clinical diet and nutrition therapy guideline that specifies:
 - nutritional assessment procedures, guidelines & protocols for medical nutrition therapy,
 - guidelines for enteral & parenteral nutrition, and
 - standard nutrition screening tools that can be used in Gizo Hospital; and
- Support staff in the development of materials and tools for use in the hospital.

Outcome 2

Patient nutrition for inpatient malnourished children and adults with non-communicable diseases is improving.

- Mentor dietician officer in ensuring malnourished patients and those with non-communicable diseases receive quality nutrition care;
- Provide capacity development opportunities for dietician, nutritionist, nurses, doctors and all clinical care team on nutrition care practices; and
- Support dietician officer to raise awareness and run education sessions on the importance of medical diet & nutrition therapy in patients' care and recovery.

Outcome 3

Gizo Hospital catering team is providing catering services that meet patients' various dietary needs.

- Become familiar with local diet preferences and reasons for these;
- Observe current purchasing and cooking of food at the hospital;
- Make recommendations on guidelines, systems, and processes that can be used to in the hospital food and kitchen management;
- Assist in developing catering guidelines that specify procedures for various special dietary requirements that align with the existing food safety policy & other related national policies; and
- Identify, recommend and establish systems and processes that can be used to improve efficiency in provision of quality catering services in Gizo Hospital.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The volunteer will support capacity development of the dietician officer and other staff by providing on-the-job capacity development sessions. The volunteer will also mentor and coach the dietician and other officers as may be appropriate. Educational and awareness sessions for the clinical care team as well as the primary and the public healthcare team will also be important for staff training.

The volunteer will report directly to the Dietician Officer and will be accountable to the Provincial Health Director. On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominately work with the Dietician Officer and the clinical care team.

The volunteer and Gizo Hospital will have an ongoing relationship with the VSA Programme Manager in terms of assignment monitoring, reporting, professional advice and personal support.

As needs on the ground may change over time, the volunteer is encouraged to review and update the Assignment Description on arrival in consultation with the partner organisation and VSA Programme Manager. By their very nature, development situations can involve significant change, so it is advisable that the volunteer periodically reviews and reflects on the Assignment Description throughout the Assignment to ensure the best development outcomes are being achieved.

5. Selection Criteria/Position Requirements

Professional Specifications

Essential

- Undergraduate degree in dietetics and nutrition
- At least three years working as a qualified dietitian
- At least two years' experience in policy development

Desirable

- Experience working in Melanesian context or the Pacific
- Experience working in rural and remote communities
- Experience working in food service setting
- Experience working in hospital setting or supporting community programmes
- Experience providing training or mentoring others on the job

Personal Specifications

Essential

- Willingness to learn and speak Pijin
- Excellent problem-solving abilities
- Great organisational and communication skills
- Ability to work in a team and adapt to the provincial hospital setting.
- Friendly and open
- Easy to work with and allows constructive critique of their work
- Supportive and inspiring

6. VSA Essential Attributes

- Commitment to volunteering, to VSA and to the partner organisation
- Cross cultural awareness
- Adaptability and a willingness to approach change or newness positively
- Able to form good relationships, both personally and professionally, with work colleagues and in the community
- Resilience and an ability to manage setbacks
- Initiative and resourcefulness
- An ability to facilitate learning through skills exchange

7. Country Context

Honiara is the business centre of Solomon Islands and as such is a melting pot for people from all the island groups that make up the diverse nation. A hot and dusty place, Honiara offers most facilities albeit in a rudimentary form. The main international airport is in Honiara.

Gizo is the capital of Western Province and is the second largest town in Solomon Islands. It is located on Ghizo Island and is west-north-west of Honiara. It is a five-minute boat ride from Nusatupe where the airplane landing strip is located.

Gizo has a population of just over 7,000 residents. It is a tourism centre with diving and surfing being popular activities. There is a thriving market where you can buy fresh fruit, vegetables and seafood every day. You are strongly encouraged to build relationships in the local community and socialise with Solomon Islanders at every opportunity, as this will enrich your experience of living in Solomon Islands.

VSA will provide basic, furnished accommodation with gas facilities for cooking. You will have access to power (although power outages can occur), phone, internet, piped water, a few restaurants, a few shops and a few expatriates. Public transport is relatively cheap.

Most volunteers feel safe in Solomon Islands, but it is important to know the risks and take personal responsibility for your safety. As in many countries, foreigners tend to be the target of petty crime, so always be alert and take precautions. In general, there are no problems moving around in Gizo.

For more information, see <https://vsa.org.nz/what-we-do/countryregion/solomon-islands/>.

8. Living and Working Situation

Gizo office is close to the Police Station, hospital and near the main wharf. Shopping area is about a five-minute walk from the office. BSP bank is available on working days. Western Union is also available. There are only two or three licensed restaurants in Gizo but other resorts within proximity offer restaurants as well.

The hospital has access to transport vehicles and there is 24 hours security at the hospital compound. In general, hospital environment is safe and secure. Overcrowding at the hospital is often due to relatives and visitors and this is managed by security personnel. However, as rule of thumb always keep your valuables in a safe place and be always alert. The hospital is on the main road and near the town centre, wharf and supermarkets.

All offices in the hospital have access to a fan and some have air-conditioning. The dietician officer shares office room space with 3 other hospital staffs but works closely with the kitchen unit which is located on the western end of the hospital, the nutrition officer and the clinical team working at the hospital wards. There is free internet access that all hospital staffs have access to.

Additional Information

Residency status

VSA volunteers must be New Zealand citizens or have New Zealand permanent residency status, and currently living in NZ.

Pre-departure briefing

As part of the volunteer's contract, successful candidates will be required to take part in a pre-departure briefing course run by VSA in Wellington and complete all required pre-reading.

Final appointment

Final appointment will be subject to satisfactory medical and immigration clearances (costs covered by VSA), partner organisation acceptance, and successful completion of the pre-departure briefing course.

Family status

VSA supports partners to accompany volunteers on assignments of six months or longer. However, volunteers with accompanying dependents will not be considered for this assignment.

Fundraising

Volunteers are encouraged to fundraise at least \$1000 with the support of VSA's fundraising team. Accompanying partners are encouraged to raise the same amount. All funds raised will help VSA keep its programmes in action and support future volunteers.

Vaccination requirements

Potential volunteers are advised that VSA's insurers require volunteers to be inoculated, prior to departure, in accordance with the instructions of VSA's medical adviser. VSA covers the cost of any required vaccinations.

Children's Act

While on assignment, VSA volunteers may be required to work with children and/or may choose to participate in informal activities in their own time that involve interactions with children (such as coaching teams or teaching English). VSA is committed to the protection of vulnerable children and adults, which also includes meeting our commitment under the Children's Act 2014.

The information requested during the application process is necessary to assist VSA to determine applicant suitability to work and/or interact regularly with children and is part of a series of pre-selection checks undertaken on all applicants for VSA assignments.

Volunteer package

The volunteer's package includes the following:

Reimbursements and grants

1. The volunteer may be entitled to an establishment grant to help them set up in their country of assignment, and a location grant for rest and recuperation (R & R) purposes. These grants depend on the length and location of the assignment. The volunteer's contract will specify any grant entitlements.
2. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of SBD 7,500.

Accommodation

Basic, comfortable furnished accommodation will be sourced by VSA. For security purposes volunteers in Honiara should expect to share accommodation.

Airfares and baggage allowance

VSA will provide the volunteer with economy airfares to and from New Zealand for their assignment plus a baggage allowance.

Insurance

VSA will provide travel insurance to cover baggage and personal property, and non-routine medical expenses for the duration of the assignment. Further details of the insurance cover will be provided during the volunteer pre-departure briefing.

Utilities

VSA will reimburse volunteers reasonable expenses for household utilities while on assignment.

Final terms and conditions relating to the specific volunteer assignment will be confirmed in a personalised volunteer contract.