



# VSA Assignment Description

<b>Assignment Title</b>	Community Nutrition Mentor
<b>Assignment Modality</b>	Standard In-country
<b>Assignment Number</b>	42196
<b>Country</b>	Solomon Islands
<b>Location</b>	Western province
<b>Partner Organisation</b>	Gizo Hospital
<b>Duration</b>	12 months
<b>Sustainable Development Goals</b>	 

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## 1. Partner Organisation Overview

Gizo Hospital is the main healthcare centre in Western Province. Its 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

A VSA volunteer could support with mentoring staff and community leaders in community nutrition to build a strong team capable of tackling malnutrition, improving maternal and child health, and reducing NCDs. The volunteer could work alongside staff to develop training materials and invest in mentorship programs to ensure long-term sustainability and improved health outcomes for communities.

## 3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

### Goal

Staff and community leaders are working effectively with communities to improve community nutrition outcomes.

### Outcome 1

Provincial staff and relevant authorities are making decisions on capacity development requirements.

Working closely with the provincial administration, the primary and public health team and nutrition officer:

- Observe the work of the primary and public health team;
- Conduct desktop review of documents and other materials used for community awareness and internally;
- Identify current networking and collaboration opportunities; and
- Provide a written report with recommendations on a programme to follow.

## **Outcome 2**

Communities, schools and other institutions in western province have adequate nutrition knowledge which enhance them to live a healthier lifestyle in their respective areas.

- Review current and develop new training materials for use internally and in communities;
- Provide training to staff and key community leaders;
- Develop a networking forum;
- Create a community engagement plan;
- Create guidelines for catering in schools and work with key stakeholders to implement healthy choices;
- Coach and monitor nurses on Growth Monitoring of children;
- Provide feedback and mentoring on Micronutrient Supplementation Campaigns and Men's Involvement Activities;
- Work with partners in promotion of backyard Garden Promotion; and
- Engage with communities on identifying and referral for Severe Malnutrition.

## **Outcome 3**

The public health team is monitoring and evaluating efforts in community nutrition.

- Support staff to provide monthly, quarterly and annual reports to executive leadership team; and
- Development mechanisms for feedback to communities.

## **4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building**

The volunteer will support capacity development of the Nutrition officer and other staff by providing on-the-job capacity development sessions. The volunteer will also mentor and coach the Nutrition 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 Provincial Health Director and will be accountable to the Provincial Health Director. On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominately work with the Nutrition officer, Public and Primary health 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 qualification in nutrition and diet
- At least three years' experience in community nutrition programs
- Understanding of community engagement, networking and participation
- At least two years' experience in development and review of nutrition guidelines, policies and procedures

#### Desirable

- Prior experience working in the health sector at provincial or national level
- Expertise in data, analytics and/or reporting
- Prior experience working with communities where NCDs are high
- Prior experience working in a Melanesian or Pacific context

### Personal Specifications

#### Essential

- Willingness to learn and speak Pijin
- Excellent problem-solving abilities
- Great organisational and communication skills
- Friendly
- Easy to work with and allows constructive critique of their work
- Supportive and inspiring
- Flexible and adaptable

#### Desirable

- Mature and experience working with people from different cultures.

## 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-northwest 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.

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/Learn-About-the-Solomon-Islands\(solomons.gov.sb\)Welcome|TourismSolomons\(visitsolomons.com.sb\)](https://vsa.org.nz/what-we-do/countryregion/solomon-islands/Learn-About-the-Solomon-Islands(solomons.gov.sb)Welcome|TourismSolomons(visitsolomons.com.sb))

## 8. Living and Working Situation

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.

Gizo is a small town where almost everybody recognizes or knows each other. The Western Provincial Government Office is located at the town centre. Gizo has daily fresh vegetables and fish although water can be a problem at times especially during long dry spells. There is a thriving market where you can buy fresh fruit, vegetables and seafood every day.

Gizo is generally very safe but is advisable to be cautious at night. You are 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.

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### 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.**