


# VSA Assignment Description

<b>Assignment Title</b>	Culture and History Research Adviser
<b>Assignment Modality</b>	Standard
<b>Assignment Number</b>	42191
<b>Country</b>	Solomon Islands
<b>Location</b>	Gizo, Western Province
<b>Partner Organisation</b>	Western Province Government
<b>Duration</b>	12 months
<b>Sustainable Development Goals</b>	

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## 1. Partner Organisation Overview

Western Province is the largest of the nine provinces of Solomon Islands and is renowned for its beautiful tropical islands and world class diving and snorkelling locations. Beautiful coral reefs, WWII wrecks, eco-tourism lodges and headhunting shrines are other attractions in the province that makes it the biggest tourist destination outside of Honiara.

Western Provincial Government (WPG) has been operating since 1978 when the country became independent. The province has its own Provincial Government Administration head by a Clerk. The role of the WPG is to develop the province, particularly rural areas. Planning is an important part of the WPG's activities as this helps to ensure that development occurs in a considered manner.

Western Province was identified by the Solomon Islands Government as an area of significant tourism growth. The New Zealand Government has invested significantly in an airport in Munda which was constructed to international standards.

The Western Provincial Government has a Cultural Officer who was employed when the office reopened in 2024 after being closed for 21 years. The office is currently working on publication of oral history for the province. Part of the work that the office is doing is documentation of the process of making products of cultural relevance in local communities.

Since reopening the officer has discovered that past research recordings and documents of historical significance had been misplaced, destroyed or damaged. The office would like to conduct some research and do some mapping of sites of cultural significance and put together materials on these. The office is also working with the tourism officer to come up with products to market to tourists. The products that they would like to develop are targeted at tourists. The products will be intangible experiential products that showcase the rich culture and traditions of the people of Western Province.

## 2. Assignment Overview

The volunteer will support the cultural officer to work with communities to research and record stories from communities. They will also visit sites of cultural significance to communities, document and map these, and where possible, appropriate and feasible support the communities to create tourism products. The volunteer can also support with the correct storage and all material that are currently.

## 3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

### Goal

Western Province has an information centre that is accessible and available for individuals, schools, tourists and the public for research.

### Outcome 1

The cultural office of WPG has well documented cultural histories from different tribes.

Working alongside the Cultural Officer:

- Collate existing materials that capture the histories of different tribes of Western Province;
- Support research on traditional knowledge and local knowledge systems relating to cultural histories and record these;
- Identify ways of raising awareness on the importance of preserving culture and traditions that are important to communities; and
- Ensure that all materials gathered, electronic, written and otherwise, are stored in a central database.

### Outcome 2

Places of cultural historic significance are known and attracting more visitors.

- Work with communities so that they recognise sites of cultural heritage and take measures to preserve them as much as possible;
- Support with documenting histories of these sites and finding ways to make these known and where appropriate, to become tourist attractions; and
- Work with communities to develop tourist experiences that will showcase culture and history.

### Outcome 3

The Cultural Officer is skilled and confident to work alongside communities to preserve their histories and heritage sites.

- Support staff to report on and present data on cultural heritage of Western Province;
- Identify appropriate and low-cost ways of engaging with communities;
- Engage in capacity development and develop tools to enhance skills and knowledge within the department; and
- Conduct research on intellectual property rights as this may pertain to indigenous cultural art, documentation and other materials with a view to providing advice on how IPR might be obtained.

## 4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The volunteer will begin by identifying current strengths that the Cultural Officer has and build on this. The volunteer will work with the Cultural Officer to decide what aspects of research the officer would like to prioritise and together agree on capacity development approaches and methods that will work well to ensure skills and knowledge are transferred.

The volunteer will report directly to the Cultural Officer and will be accountable to the Provincial Secretary. On a day-to-day basis, the volunteer will predominately work with the Cultural Officer.

The volunteer and Western Provincial Government 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 arts, history, international development or social sciences
- At least five years' experience conducting social or historical research in rural and/or remote communities
- Meticulous organisation and communication skills

#### **Desirable**

- Experience working in a Melanesian or Pacific context
- Experience digitising and developing databases
- Experience archiving materials
- Experience working on intellectual property rights
- Great organisational and communication skills
- Excellent problem-solving abilities

### **Personal Specifications**

#### **Essential**

- Willingness to learn and speak pijin
- Friendly, open and flexible
- Easy to work with and allows constructive critique of their work

## **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

VSA will provide accommodation that is relatively close to the town centre. Taxi fares will be up to about SBD40 one way depending on housing and work location. The Cultural Officer shares an office with the Tourism Office. It is airconditioned and a desk will be provided for the volunteer. The office is close to the hospital, police station, wharf and market.

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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.**