


VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Education Adviser
Assignment Modality	Standard
Assignment Number	42178
Country	Solomon Islands
Location	Gizo, Western Province
Partner Organisation	Western Provincial Government
Duration	12 – 18 months
Sustainable Development Goals	

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.

Western Province Government Education Division is responsible for leading the implementation of the new Education Act (2023) across Western Province, in collaboration with school communities, school leaders, teachers and other private or faith-based Education Providers. Implementation of the Act began early in 2024 however progress has been difficult to achieve. The Act introduces significant requirements, operational changes and reform across all areas of the system, including school management and governance.

The Western Provincial Government needs assistance to work effectively with all their stakeholders, to engage and support them to meet the new expectations of the Education Act, to better govern and manage their schools, so all children receive a good quality education. The current challenge is that staff do not have adequate understanding of how they can operationalise the changes needs to be effected, and do not have the skills to implement the changes.

2. Assignment Overview

The Western Provincial Government needs assistance to work effectively with all their education sector stakeholders, to engage and support them to meet the new expectations of the Education Act, to better govern and manage their schools, so all children receive good quality education.

A VSA volunteer is being sought to work alongside staff to operationalise the changes that need to be effected. The volunteer will work with the team to understand what the requirements are and how the team can work with education providers, school boards and leaders, and teachers to effect change.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

The Provincial Government Education Division is in a stronger position to effectively lead and manage implementation of the Act across schools, in collaboration with communities and stakeholders.

Outcome 1

Education officers have a strong, practical knowledge of how to implement the Education Act requirements in their own work and with school leaders and boards.

Working alongside the Chief Education Officer:

- Lead an assessment with the Education Division to identify gaps in readiness to implement the Act and develop workplans;
- Identify priority training activities with school leaders and boards; and
- Support officers with trialling training activities in some schools, carry out an evaluation of training activities and then make adjustments as necessary to conduct further training in schools.

Outcome 2

Education officers are effectively using new tools for school monitoring, reporting, and planning.

- Mentor staff to use new tools provided by MEHRD or developed locally;
- Access support from MEHRD divisions to help implement these tools;
- Undertake an initial trial of these tools with some schools; and
- Review success of the trial with the Education officers.

Outcome 3

Education Officers confidently support schools with compliance, governance, and data collection.

- Plan and schedule training activities with school leaders and boards to build their knowledge and understanding of new compliance and governance requirements; and
- Work with education officers to design data collection processes and activities, using models provided by MEHRD.

Outcome 4

Education Officers co-design resources and guidelines to support school leaders and school boards to meet new requirements.

- Work with Education officers to design guidelines for school leaders and boards, using models or information provided by MEHRD.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The volunteer will work with the leaders and officers of the Education Office, to assess their needs to lead implementation of the Act. The volunteer will co-design capacity development activity to address these needs. This may include training, coaching and mentoring of Division officers.

The volunteer will then work with the officers to support how they plan, deliver and monitor training for school leaders and boards, and engage effectively with school communities, (in collaboration with school boards). The volunteer will mentor and guide PG officers in implementation of these activities.

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

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

- Postgraduate qualification in education
- At least three years' experience as a school or leader in the education sector
- At least two years' experience and skills leading and supporting change across an organisation or system
- Effective communication skills and experience mentoring others in the context of change

Desirable

- Knowledge of education policy development and implementation
- Experience working in Melanesian or Pacific Island contexts
- Ability to work in contexts with limited resources
- Strong problem-solving approaches

Personal Specifications

Essential

- Willingness to learn and speak Solomon Islands Pijin
- Ability to prioritise goals and actions
- Empathy and compassion
- Reliability and commitment

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 provides basic accommodation for volunteers that has running water and are fully furnished. Accommodation will be relatively close to the town centre. The Western Provincial Government office is in the town centre where the bank, supermarket, hospital and police station.

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.