

**International Mission Information Sheet 2010**

*Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands*

**Background Information**

The Solomon Islands is made up over 990 islands and is found in the South Pacific Ocean. The Western province of Solomon Islands is known as being one of the most beautiful parts of the Solomon Islands. In the Western province is the Marovo Lagoon, which is the biggest salt water lagoon in the world, filled with beautiful island scenery, underwater ocean life and smiling faces. In the Marovo lagoon is an island called Batuna, which is where the Papsda on a Mission team will be heading to. Like many islands in the Solomon Islands, despite the rich abundance of ocean life and palm trees, the remote location means that the people are unable to interact with and access the large trading hubs, trading routes, basic services provided by the government, and suffer from a poverty of opportunity. Health care is often a long canoe paddle away. Because people are mostly subsistence farmers who live by their gardens and by fishing, most families do not possess cash currency, and therefore struggle to afford necessary travel on public transport services (eg. Boat trip for funeral or to the capital Honiara for medical care etc..) or buy medicines or pay school fees.

In the Marovo Lagoon the Marovo Women's Association (MWA) was established but for many years was not active due to lack of leadership, capacity, or structure. In the 1990's, ADRA NZ started a project there called the Small Enterprise Development Project which worked with the existing MWA members and helped to build the leadership capacity and worked with the members with literacy, health education, small businesses and other interventions. In Batuna, there was a MWA wholesale store built so that members could access cheaper stock, but the building was unable to be completed. The building has been standing half completed for some years now, and when the MWA holds meetings and trainings, they have been held under the MWA store instead of in a training centre which was purposed to be built under the store.

The 2010 Papsda on a Mission team will work together with the MWA members and their families to complete the MWA centre so that appropriate meeting places can be built so that members can be trained out of the elements and can also have a place to sleep during the training weeks. Some of these women come from nearby villages, others paddle themselves for hours across the lagoon, while others depend on the small 25HP MWA boat to come out and pick them up for the trainings. When you meet the women in the MWA, you will be able to hear for yourselves personal stories about how ADRA has helped change their lives.

Some MWA members shared their frustration with ADRA at how far they come for this necessary training, and yet how there are no facilities available for them to stay in or to shower etc... Since then ADRA has provided a communal shower but have lacked the means to complete the building.

**This is where Papsda came in!**

In 2010 Papsda will take on the Marovo Lagoon project as an International Missions Project. We aimed to provide them with support through:

- Prayer
- Funds
- Education
- Resources
- Time

### **Purpose of Mission Trip**

The main aim of the trip is to:

- Complete the MWA building
- Depending on the make up of the team, there are possibilities for
  - Run kids clubs in the surrounding villages/local school
  - Nurses to run training/information sessions
  - People of a trade to run a training session for the local “polytech” equivalent (very very basic, primitive version of it)

The people of Batuna are lovely smiling faces who are excited to hear of the possibility of people coming to their village to join together to help them. Too often the teams stay in Honiara or go to Atoifi hospital, so it is great to have a group going to a remote place where the need is great also. The completion of this building will be an encouragement to the around 500 members in the MWA, as they have a place to meet and stay if necessary, and also give a method to generate some income if other groups/passersby need to hire a venue for trainings.

### **Why the Marovo Lagoon?**

This project has been chosen for 5 basic reasons:

- Sustainability (connections through ADRA and current organisation (the MWA))
- Real Need (development of community helping themselves)
- God commissioned us (Mark 10:45, Acts 20:35)
- Potential for Spiritual Growth of Papsda participants

### **Cost of Project**

The target for building resources is \$20,000 and is to be fundraised prior to leaving.

The cost to the participants on current availability for each person ranges between an early bird price of \$2,500 & later applications at \$3,000. This price includes airfares, transport, accommodation, food, travel insurance, t-shirt. Further payment details are described in the detailed information section on page 3.

### **Proposed Dates for Trip**

Departure date is Thursday Sept 23. The date of arrival back in Auckland will be Thursday Oct 7.

This is during the school holidays here in New Zealand.

### **Who would be involved?**

The invitation is open to all Papsda attenders to a maximum of 16 people. However everyone is encouraged to be a part of the project through:

- Prayer
- Sponsoring an individual who will travel to the Solomons
- Providing financial support for the building project

### **Detailed Information**

#### **Schedule:**

The group will leave Auckland for Honiara via Brisbane on Thursday Sept 23 at 7am and leave Honiara 3pm on Thursday Oct 7, 2010 at 3pm. The group will arrive back in Auckland early on Friday morning Oct 8, 2010 at 12:15am. The total time away will be 2 weeks. We need to travel together as a group from Auckland to Honiara. A different return fare may be possible at additional costs.

The first night will be spent in Honiara. We will fly by charter plane the next day to Batuna.

**Transport:**

Transport in Honiara will be by an open ADRA truck. From Batuna airport the mode of transport is walking so pack light and in easy to carry bags.

**Application and Payment Information:**

Please register your interest in this project as soon as possible.

Application form and **\$500 non-refundable** deposit received by May 31 **\$2,500**

Application form and **\$1000 non-refundable** deposit received by June 30 **\$3,000**

**Payment Plan Dates:**

Application received by	May 31	June 30
Non-refundable deposit	\$500	\$1,000
July 2	\$600	\$600
Aug 2	\$700	\$700
Sep 2	\$700	\$700

The final costs are subject to change until the airfare is purchased. All costs include airfares, accommodation, local transport, meals, travel insurance and t-shirt mentioned above.

Please make cheques payable to Papatoetoe Seventh-day Adventist Community Church or deposit into the PAPSDA bank account 12-3028-0537532-00 Ref: Solomon's Mission.

**Money:**

While most things are included in the price a small amount of local currency may be required for souvenirs or additional expenses. You will need to order the Solomon's Dollar from your bank or in Honiara. Once in Marovo Lagoon cash only is used and there are no ATM's or banks – please check charges with your bank.

**Meals:**

All meals are provided in the cost. Meals will be simple but tasty. Meals at the Lagoon will be provided by the MWA. In Honiara you will be given an allowance to buy your own and meals will be of your own choice using the meal allowance.

**Water:**

It will be important to keep hydrated especially on the building site. Rain water is available and safe and bottled water is available for NZ\$1. Tap water, when available, is unsafe. Some bottled water may be provided at the building site however it will be your responsibility to keep your water bottle filled.

**Excursions:**

On the night we arrive and the 2 days before we leave Honiara we will spend in Honiara and you will be responsible for any activity you want to take there. There will be heaps opportunities for snorkeling (or fishing) on the lagoon.

**Travel Insurance:**

Travel insurance is included in the cost for the period 23 Sep to 8 Oct 2010. Travel outside these dates will be an additional \$5.00 per person per day.

**Accommodation:**

Accommodation is a large house on mattresses spread over 3 rooms under mosquito nets and another empty room close to where we are building. You will need to bring your own bedding but

not a sleeping bag as it will be very hot. A simple sheet or sarong/lava lava will be sufficient bed coverings. The house does have electricity. The main showers are at the house or outside for those sleeping in the empty room where we are building.

### **Clothing:**

The weather will very hot both day and night. A light rain jacket may be needed if it rains but other than that cold is not a concept. No long sleeves or long pants are required. You will need suitable clothes for a building site including closed shoes or work boots.

### **Laundry:**

There is only hand washing facilities available.

### **Luggage**

Pack light but include: Small Torch, no more than 2 lava lavas, 4 tops and 4 shorts, simple first aid kit per details below, light rain jacket, swimming togs

Documents: Passport, airline ticket details, credit card, local currency

Building site dress code: Covered shoes, Clothes must be able to get dirty

Church Dress Code: Church is always hot. Ladies: skirt/dress that are modest. Men: Short sleeved shirt and dress shorts

### **Suitcases:**

A medium sized suitcase plus the carry on should be sufficient. Remember the weight limit is 20 kg and **may be strictly enforced** coming home. Also remember you will be walking from the Batuna airport to the lagoon so ensure you are able to carry it.

### **Medications/First Aid Kit:**

Please bring with you any medications you need for the time away. Simple first aid kit including plasters, savalon, pain killers, insect repellent, sunscreen, antihistamine, diarrhea treatment, copies of prescriptions and details of prescription glasses may also be useful.

### **Vaccinations:**

Check with your doctor for various vaccinations you may need. Malaria is a problem and anti malarials should be considered. Charlene recommends that if you do not want to take anti malarials (due to side effects) it is essential (and what she does) to wear RID insect repellent (Aeroguard tropical is not as good as RID) around sunset and sun up. It is also important that you don't ignore any warnings signs like fever and headaches. The health clinic is nearby and it takes 5mins to do a malaria check. If you have malaria you can take the medication straight away. There are various forms of malaria and the deadly one isn't as common in the Solomons as it is in Africa. Other vaccinations are often recommended for Tetanus-Diphtheria, Hepatitis A & B and vaccinations will sometimes be recommended for TB or Typhoid.

### **First Aid:**

Bad hygiene, infected cuts and mosquito bites are the most common sources of disease. Please take common sense precautions to wash your hands after the toilet and before eating (bring hand sanitiser for times where soap may not be available) and use insect repellent at all times.

**Infections:** Due to the climate and temperature of the ocean water, if you get a cut or open wound, it easily gets infected. So it is vital that everyone brings their own iodine/antiseptic and bandaids etc to apply each day to the cut to ensure that it does not get worse. If due attention is given to the cut immediately and for the first 24 hours (especially if it is a coral cut in the ocean), it should not get infected.

### **Telephone calls & Internet:**

There is no phone on the building site and cell coverage is very sparse at Marovo and unreliable in Honiara. It is best not to promise communication back home but you may be able to use it when

available. There is a radio system that works well for emergencies. Internet may be available at a nearby school if the connection is working at the time.

**Reasonable fitness:**

The trip is not strenuous but the biggest factor is the heat. This will take a few days to get used to. Participants on the trip will need to be reasonably fit to cope with the heat. We will be working alongside the water so you will be able to jump in if you need to cool off during the day. Ensure you have plenty of water.

**In the case of sickness:**

The nearest local clinic is 5 mins walk away and regional hospital is a short flight away. A helicopter is a radio call away to airlift someone to Brisbane in case of a very serious accident or very serious illness.

**Security:**

In Honiara, the risks are greater regarding personal security from people, so the common sense rule is that everyone must be with someone at all times when outside of the hotel. After dark everyone stays inside their accommodation unless they are in an ADRA vehicle or taxi. In the day it is fine to walk around, but it is good to stay with the group.

Once out in the Marovo, it is safer because the community is very small and everyone knows everyone. There are a lot of vocational students wandering around during the day and night, but they are keen to make new friends and speak to the new faces on the block, although most of them are too shy to come up and talk to us. As usual, at night it is best not to walk around alone, just for the safety of the team.

**Animal Danger:** When snorkeling, use common sense, don't go around touching everything, especially if you see a rare spikey lion fish which already look dangerous. The only real danger in the Marovo lagoon and across the islands are crocodiles. The rules are:

1. Always ask locals before you swim in an area.
2. Do NOT go near the shoreline after dark.
3. Do not swim alone.
4. Do not swim near mangroves.

90% of crocodile attacks happen when locals go down to the shore at night. The crocodiles are not everywhere and you have more chance of being in a car crash in NZ than being taken by crocodiles especially if you follow the four rules above.

**Questions:**

If you have any queries or for an application form please do not hesitate to contact Leanne or Virginia at church on 278 7786 or by email [leanne@papsda.co.nz](mailto:leanne@papsda.co.nz), [virginia@papsda.co.nz](mailto:virginia@papsda.co.nz).