

WELKAM TU KIBCA NEWS FO JULAI 2014!

A NEW PHASE FOR KIBCA

KIBCA is entering a new phase. Up until now the emphasis has been on establishing the protected area and establishing KIBCA as a community-based voice for conserving the important biodiversity values of Kolombangara. However from time to time over the last 5 years, KIBCA has become 'bogged down' with customary land issues. This has distracted KIBCA from other important issues and should not be the key focus for our organisation.

As the alienated land occupies over 75% of Kolombangara, KIBCA now wants to return its focus to this area, while still taking an interest in what takes place on the customary land.

Key priorities for the alienated land are:

- Strengthening awareness of the protected area and those parts of the customary land which have been agreed to;
- Developing a Management Plan for the protected area in consultation with the communities;
- Growing awareness of the potential for Sustainable Livelihoods and Microfinance opportunities in our communities so we are not dependent on cash money from logging.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY MICRO-FINANCE and SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS ??

Micro-finance refers to small enterprises developed by people based in the community who have a low income and no access to banking services. This could be a type of "saving club" which allows people to save and withdraw small amounts of money when they need to. All of us need some money saved up sometimes - you might need money to improve your house, for school fees, to have a wedding or to help your wantok if they get sick. In time, a saving club can also provide small loans.

The most important thing is that a micro-finance activity can help people become financially independent. Then our communities can become more secure and self-supporting. We don't need to wait for handouts when we are in trouble.

To generate money for the saving club, people need to start something which will provide a product for other people to buy, or a service for other people to use. This means people need to plan ahead so they have enough resources for their own family, as well as enough resources for the new activity.

Activities which are suitable are those that can be started on a small scale in our own homes, or on community land, and using resources which are close at hand. They should not rely on technology or machines which are not available to us. These activities are operated by us ourselves, and are not reliant on outside help to operate.

On Kolombangara we need to be thinking about sustainable livelihoods that will help us to protect our natural environment, because it is our natural environment that provides resources for our Solomon Island way of life. For example there are many plants we collect from the bush for medicine, bush nuts and fruits, and for weaving baskets. Our canoes come from the bush. We also collect many resources from the oceans.

If we want to be able to keep using these resources we need to manage the bush and the marine areas in a sustainable way. This will also mean we are protecting cultural values, for the benefit of ourselves and future generations.

KIBCA will work with the community to identify suitable sustainable livelihoods.

Eco-tourism is one way in which we can promote the special qualities of our environment on Kolombangara and provide local employment for guides, hospitality staff, concerts and demonstrations of culture. This spreads the awareness to visitors who will take this information back to their country.

Some other options include:

Harvesting bush food for sale e.g. ngali nuts

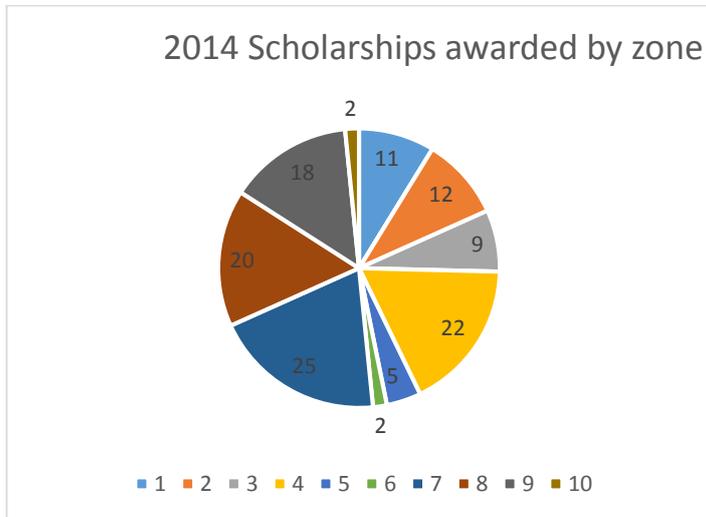
starting a nursery for propagating endemic timber species (native to Kolombangara)

keeping bees which assist with pollination of native forest species & generate honey for sale

coral and sponge farming.

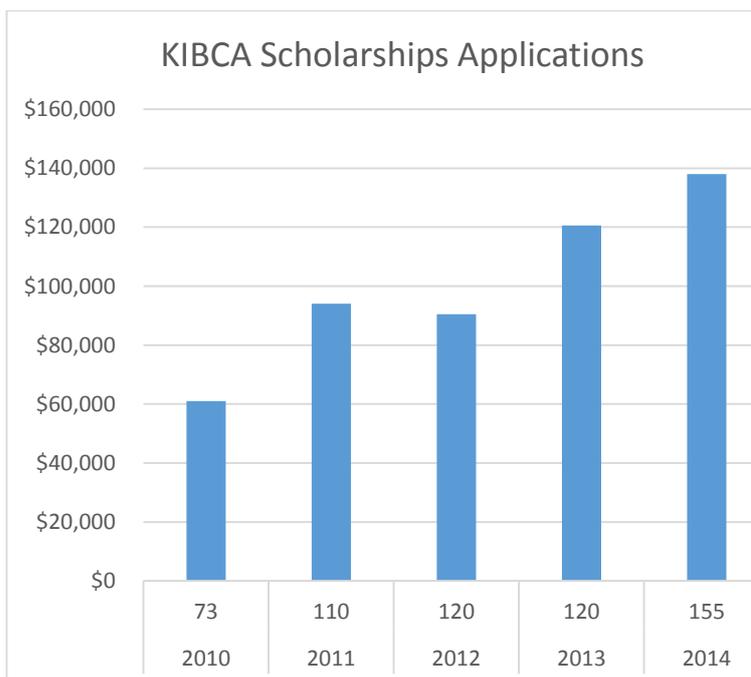
KIBCA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM 2014-2015

Through the continuing generosity of our donors, KIBCA's Scholarship Program has grown larger again! A total of 126 scholarships, worth \$138,000 have been awarded for the coming year. They have been awarded across the zones as follows:



Zone 1	Varu - Iriva
Zone 2	Poporo - Hambere
Zone 3	Kukundu - Taghoapa
Zone 4	Vavanga - Ghatere
Zone 5	Pine - Ireke
Zone 6	Korare - Kuzi
Zone 7	Kaza - Ravai
Zone 8	Ringgi - Vao
Zone 9	Poitete - Rapata
Zone 10	Guhele - Nusamahiri

You can see how much the Program has grown from the graph below.



The scholarship program is having a direct investment into the lives of our Kolombangaran young people.

KIBCA wants to extend a big thank you to its donors: Kolombangara Forest Products Limited (KFPL), 4Nature, Solomon Islands Community Conservation Partnership (SICCP) and several private donors.



Here is what local Kolombangarans are saying about KIBCA's Scholarship Program:

Piani Lilo (teacher, Kolombangara AC): "KIBCA does a great job for the children of Kolombangara through the scholarship program. The children are really happy because KIBCA assists them with their school fees. I support this KIBCA program and their other ones related to conservation and environment. Good job KIBCA!"

Grey Rence (Form 6, Biulah PJS): "The KIBCA scholarship program is very good. It reduces the burden on my parents to pay school fees. I encourage Kolombangara students to support KIBCA's program".

Saungao (parent, Villa): "I am very happy with the KIBCA scholarship education assistance for my 2 sons who are attending secondary school this year. I hope that KIBCA continues to provide this assistance in 2015".

Olympia (parent, Honiara): "I am very happy with the scholarship program but there needs to be more discussion about the categories for how scholarships are awarded. I think the program should definitely continue"



KIBCA SAYS NO TO TURTLE POACHING

Harvesting of marine turtles is becoming a concern on the north coast and other parts of Kolombangara. Last year between 20 and 30 turtles were taken from Ropa by Gilbertese poachers. Just last week KIBCA received another report about people taking a large number of turtles from their overnight sleeping habitat near Guhele. To address these concerns, an additional turtle monitoring transect will be added to Ropa in the vicinity of the proposed marine area. This work is supported by Conservation Leadership Program.

It is illegal to take these marine turtles because they are a protected species. They are a very important species in the Solomon Island marine ecosystem. KIBCA appeals to all communities to see that they are protected and conserved. KIBCA is currently working with Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund to monitor turtles and their habitat. We hope that this will result in additional areas being declared as marine protected areas including the turtle habitat near Ropa.

It is illegal to take these marine turtles. If you are aware of people illegally poaching turtles please contact KIBCA.

WORLD PARKS CONGRESS

People from many nations will be gathering in Sydney 12-19 November 2014 to share stories about national parks all over the world, their challenges and successes. Kolombangara and the Solomon Islands will be represented by Ferguson Vaghi. He will present the unique story of the Protected Area and KIBCA on behalf of the communities of Kolombangara.

Ferguson will also participate in field trips to visit some national parks in New South Wales. We expect he will return home with even more ideas about how to manage the issues we face with our protected area and how to develop it as a national park.

CALLING ALL GUIDES

Are you ready for a walk up Mt Veve? How about some training?

It is time for us to check where all our guides are up to and whether you need some training or want to refresh some aspects of guiding.

Even though not all visitors to Imbu Rano want to go hiking, there is a regular number of visitors who want to get a closer experience of our protected area. It is very important that as well as giving them an enjoyable and safe hiking experience, we provide these visitors with information about the protected area, so they can spread the word to others. So KIBCA will soon be contacting all those people who have worked as guides previously.

We are also on the lookout for new guides. Guides need to be fit and able to talk to visitors about the protected area. KIBCA provides training from time to time to help guides grow confident in these skills.

If you or anyone you know would like to become a guide, please contact Ferguson Vaghi on 740 1198 or call in to the KIBCA office.

KIBCA EXECUTIVE MEETING JUNE 2014

The Executive meeting had a productive meeting and endorsed KIBCA's Administration and Finance Policy and its Child Protection Policy. Copies of these are available for anyone to look at.

Another important issue discussed was a proposal to change the name of KIBCA. The current name places emphasis on Biodiversity and Conservation. The Executive agreed a different name was needed to show that Sustainable Livelihoods are also an important component of our organisation and that KIBCA represents all parts of Kolombangara Island, not just the protected area.

The new name will be Kolombangara Island Integrated Resource Management Program.

IMBU RANO ECO-LODGE

KIBCA hopes to one day take over the running and management of the Imbu Rano Eco-Lodge. At present the Eco-lodge is used by about 20 visitors and occasional researchers each month but this beautiful cool guest house in the mountains has significant potential for use as a cultural and education centre.

Our vision is for Imbu Rano to be used by school groups and university groups from throughout the Solomon Islands to learn about the biodiversity and cultural values of Kolombangara, and to learn about the job of being a ranger for the protected area.

In the meantime the lodge is quite under-utilised and there is definite potential for growth in sustainable eco-tourism.

The costs for Imbu Rano are: \$300/person for accommodation per night, \$4,000 per night for exclusive use of the lodge by groups, \$100/person access fee and \$200/group for Ringgi-Imbu Rano transfer.

TWO NEW VOLUNTEERS

Our new volunteers have arrived from Australia. Peter Butler and his wife Meri Billington reached Ringgi on 23 June and will be here for 12 months. They are now learning all about KIBCA and the protected area and settling in to life in the rain in Ringgi. They have commenced planning some new projects as part of KIBCA's management team.

Pete worked as a ranger in Kakadu National Park for 26 years. Kakadu National Park is a very large park listed as World Heritage and jointly managed between the Australian government and Aboriginal people. Pete will be putting his experience to good use, working side by side with Wayne Tefenoli, KIBCA's only Ranger at present. This "dynamic duo" will start off by reviewing the Ranger program, including Ranger tasks and responsibilities, available resources and drafting up a works program.

Meri also has a background in working with communities in national park management and preparing plans of management for reserves. Her main focus will be on building awareness about Microfinance and Sustainable Livelihoods. KIBCA is aware that there are local people trying out new ideas with a view to future projects. Ferguson and Meri will be consulting closely with the local communities around Kolombangara to find alternatives to logging as a means of sustainable income.

Please say 'hello' to Pete and Meri when you see them around Ringgi or elsewhere. They are very keen to meet people on Kolombangara as they have heard so many nice things about us!

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – TO BE HELD IN OCTOBER 2014, venue to be advised

This will be an important meeting where the next year's program and proposals for ongoing financial support will be discussed. We look forward to seeing you all there.

ADVANCE NOTICE: KIBCA FESTIVAL 16-18 DECEMBER 2014

KIBCA Cup Soccer Competition

&

KIBCA Cup Netball Competition

for all teams around Kolombangara and Kohinggo

Singing / Speech / Drawing Contests & more !

Come and join us to find out more about KIBCA and how your community can become involved in the Sustainable Livelihoods Program.

We invite all AGM members to help with organising this important community event. Please contact Ferguson Vaghi with your ideas for making it a great festival.

WHAT IS KIBCA ALL ABOUT ?

Past exploitation of native forest on Kolombangara Island led to concerns about the impact of forestry activities on

the island's plants, animals, and ecosystems, and on our people and cultural values.

KIBCA was formed in 2008 to represent the communities of Kolombangara and resulted in setting aside a protected area above the 400 metre contour. Landholder representatives have signed a Community Conservation Partnership Agreement to exclude logging from that area for 5 years. KIBCA also has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with KFPL so that forestry within the alienated land is carried out sustainably as per the requirements of the FSC.

There is still great interest by some community members to exploit the forests on Kolombangara for logging. Some of the areas being considered for logging are very close to people's homes and gardens.

Before making a decision to allow logging we need to remember:

It is not a wise decision for the long term to allow logging on land that the community may need in the future

A community which allows logging does not receive the true value of those resources.

With planning it is possible to make space for sustainable harvest of timber as well as other uses.

THANKS TO KFPL

KIBCA would like to thank KFPL for its continuing support in supplying an office and housing for KIBCA staff, and for its contribution to the scholarship program. KIBCA also acknowledges the efforts being made by KFPL to protect the natural environment of Kolombangara as an accredited FSC logging company and for its support for the protected area above the 400 metre contour.

RESEARCH CONTINUES

As readers are aware, Kolombangara has one marine protected area on the south side of the island. A second marine protected area is likely to be identified on the north side of the island around Ropa based on the research being carried out by our partner SICCP.

KIBCA has noted that some researchers carry out research for their own benefit rather than for the benefit of the people of Kolombangara. There is also a problem if researchers do not tell us of their impending visit or if they fail to provide a copy of their findings. KIBCA will develop protocols to address these issues which will be provided to universities and prospective researchers.

Ferguson Vaghi: Coordinator ph 740 1198

Adrian Ghele: Finance & Administration ph 763 0624

Wayne Tefenoli: Ranger

Peter Butler, Meri Billington: Volunteers