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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Conservation on Kolombangara supports Education**

The Kolombangara Island Biodiversity Conservation Association (KIBCA) has commenced delivery of funds from its 2013 Educational Scholarship Program.

Scholarships worth \$100,000 will be granted by KIBCA this year to assist students from the Island. This is an increase of \$10,000 from 2012.

The scholarship program was started in 2010 and is a direct benefit to local communities resulting from the establishment of the Kolombangara Island conservation area.

Donors have contributed generously to the scholarship program in support of the people of Kolombangara and their commitment to protecting the 20,000 hectare conservation area.

Financial support for the scholarship program has been provided from the American Museum of Natural History through the Solomon Island Community Conservation Partnership, Kolombangara Forest Products Limited, 4 Nature and individual private donors.

This year scholarships were awarded to 120 students from Kolombangara Island enrolled in Forms Four through to Seven at schools located within the Western Province, Guadalcanal and Malaita.

This week students from Ringgi High gathered to say thank you to KIBCA and the donors for their scholarships.

Dilleen Solomon a Form 5 student from Bibiu, when asked about the program said, "KIBCA's work and scholarships are important because we want to become a special person in the future and also we want students doing KIBCA's important work".

When asked about KIBCA's work Form 4 student from Sandfly, Delrisha Terry said, "It's important to look after the environment because it is the breeding place for the birds and other animals. It's also important to take care of our natural environment for future generations"

The benefit of the scholarships and receiving a good education were highlighted by the students.

Alex Lausaca a Form 4 student from Ghatere said, "Having a scholarship is good because it helps us into the future. It helps to make a difference in life for tomorrow's world".

His comment was supported by his friend Paul Saungao, Form 4 from Villawho said, "...it's a good thing because from school we can learn many new things that are going on within our own country and also we can benefit our own country when we achieve our goals"

Alfred Kaluae a Form 4 student from Kaza spoke for many students when he said that receiving a scholarship was good because it helps lift the burden off your parents.

These comments were agreed to by KIBCA Financial and Administration officer Adrian Ghele. Mr. Ghele said that the local families were very happy about the scholarship.

"Parents are supporting KIBCA and appreciate the assistance that scholarship program makes with meeting school fees. It is very important to support families and the education of our young people here on Kolombangara", said Mr. Ghele.

A large number of applications were received by KIBCA for scholarships for students attending tertiary colleges. KIBCA is working with the Kolombangara Ward Constituents Committee to help fund these applications.

KIBCA will continue to promote the strong link between education and conservation with another round of scholarships to be made available in 2014. KIBCA sees the education of the youth as critical to achieving sustainable resource use and protecting Solomon Islands nature and culture.

Families from Kolombangara Island with students attending school can contact the KIBCA office in Ringgi to receive more information on the Educational Scholarship Program.

Donors who may be interested in supporting the Scholarship Program please contact KIBCA or the Solomon Islands Community Conservation Partnership (SICCP).

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