



KIBCA

**Kolombangara Island
Biodiversity Conservation Association**

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MEDIA RELEASE

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110 Scholarships Big Boost for Kolombangara

KIBCA today announced it has awarded a record number of educational scholarships totalling \$94,000 to 110 children of Indigenous Kolombangarans. These scholarship reward landholders for not logging above 400m altitude on Kolombangara Island.

“This is the third year of the popular scholarship scheme. We are pleased that we have increased the total amount available by 54% compared to last year,” said Mr Ferguson Vaghi, KIBCA Coordinator. “In 2010 only \$61,000 was offered, while \$40,000 was offered in 2009.”

“These scholarships make a real difference for parents struggling to pay school fees. Many parents were able to send their child to school because of the scholarships.”

“This month KIBCA awarded 44 university and vocational colleges scholarships, 22 Form 6 and 7 scholarships and 44 Form 4 and 5 scholarships,” said Mr Vaghi.

Principal of Ringgi Community High School, Herman Aruhane, where 10 students received scholarships, said, “parents must understand the important role that they are playing for Kolombangara Island. The school acknowledged the work of KIBCA for the third year in helping Ringgi CHS relieve the burden of parents.”

Ryan Aquila, Director of Gizo Institute of Electrical and Technology Studies, also praised the KIBCA scheme. Four of his 58 students doing electrical studies received a KIBCA scholarship.

Fulton College in Fiji, with four students with scholarships said, “We sincerely appreciate the help and this will certainly boost the students’ morale in their work”.

KIBCA received 129 applications and awarded scholarships to all 110 valid applications.

Mr Vaghi said, “Many landholders are tempted to break their agreement not to log above 400m altitude.”

“Landholders on Kolombangara Island have a clear choice. They can either protect the sensitive forests above 400m in a conservation area and support their children’s education or they can log above 400m and lose the scholarship program.”

“KIBCA has started making scholarship payments and will distribute all the funds once each school confirms to KIBCA the enrolment details of students.”

“KIBCA thanks the donors that funded this year’s scholarship program, including SICCP (funded by the American Museum of Natural History), KFPL and 16 private donors from overseas.”

Contact: Ferguson Vaghi on 60 987 (w) or 740 1198 (mob). **Photos** at www.kolombangara.org