

Enabling resilience in a crisis – Strengthening psychosocial support in the Pacific region



An upcoming forum enables humanitarian aid and development staff to share and develop ideas on enhancing psychosocial awareness and systems of staff and community support in the context of disasters or crises in the Pacific region.

The second *Pacific Psychosocial Forum* will be held in Honiara, the Solomon Islands from 23rd to 25th May 2012.

Facilitated by the Mandala Foundation in collaboration with a local planning committee, organisers say the three-day event is an opportunity for managers and staff of aid agencies based or active in the Pacific to exchange ideas and develop best-practice strategies for providing psychosocial support before, during and after a crisis.

“The forum is really important to us as Solomon Islanders because a lot of the time when people are dealing with a crisis or disaster, they forget to look at the psychosocial aspects,” said local forum committee coordinator and ADRA staff member Joe Lovi.

“Not every organisation neglects the psychosocial issues, but often there can be some gaps in how the policy is implemented. I’m hoping that the forum will really drive psychosocial practices and policies at a governmental as well as an organisational and community level,” Mr Lovi said.

Executive Director of the Mandala Foundation, Christoph Hensch, said, “The forum will be highly interactive, and participants will be encouraged to contribute their own experiences and ideas through storytelling, small group discussions and workshops.”

Mr Hensch said the forum program will be arranged in to three main streams, addressing country, organisational and community level approaches to psychosocial support.

“The streams will enable participants to target the information that is most relevant to their roles and develop networks that can be mobilised to shares resources and ideas before, during and after a crisis,” Mr Hensch said.

The three-day program will feature presentations from local, regional and international speakers. Key topics to be addressed at the forum include strengths and gaps in existing community responses during crises, support for groups with diverse needs (such as women, children, people with mental health issues or people with a disability) and mapping of key psychosocial issues pertinent to the Pacific region.

Mr Hensch says the forum is open to all members of the international humanitarian aid and development sector, and is particularly relevant to local, expatriate and Headquarters-based staff and managers of NGOs operating in the Pacific region.

Event Details

Title:	Pacific Psychosocial Forum: Enabling resilience in a crisis
Date:	Wednesday 23 rd to Friday 25 th May, 2012
Location:	Maranatha Hall, Honiara, Solomon Islands
Website:	mandalafoundation.org.au/index.php?page=2012-pacific-psychosocial-forum-2012
Media Enquiries:	Christoph Hensch, Executive Director, Mandala Foundation
Email:	christoph@mandalafoundation.org.au Phone: (+61 3) 9005 0808

About the Mandala Foundation: *The Pacific Psychosocial Forum is hosted by the Mandala Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation whose mission is to strengthen humanitarian action through the psychosocial support of staff, projects and management systems. The Foundation is based in Melbourne, Australia and provides services mainly to agencies operating in the Asia and Pacific regions. The Foundation receives funding support from the Australian Government, AusAID.*