

MODULE 3 CASE STUDIES

SKOLASTIKA'S STORY : Solomon Islands



18-year-old Skolastika lives in an isolated village on the east coast of Makira Island, a remote island in the Solomon Islands.

Skolastika lives a simple life. Her parents are subsistence farmers and Skolastika helps out when she can, in between schooling and playing basketball with her friends.

Skolastika's vision in her right eye is deteriorating. She has a cataract that will eventually rob her of her sight. She doesn't understand that this cataract is treatable and, even if she did, there are no local eye services to treat her.

There is no eye clinic in Makira and islanders rely on visiting eye teams that come to the island perhaps once every two years. Many people in Skolastika's village were suffering from eye problems, with many blind from cataracts, and people accept this as part of life.

One day Skolastika's eyes are screened by a provincial eye nurse, who identifies her cataract. Skolastika is lucky; the nurse tells her that a Fred Hollows Foundation NZ trained eye team will be setting up a temporary eye camp, three hours away, in the island's only hospital, and they will be able to restore her sight to full vision again.

A few months later Skolastika climbs aboard a little motorboat. Skolastika's mother wants to go with her young daughter, but there is no room on the boat. There are more people who need help than the boat can hold.

Once she reaches the eye camp, Skolastika waits nervously. She had never left her village before and feels lonely and afraid without her family. Dr Nola Pikacha takes Skolastika's hand and, in local pidgin, tells her not be scared and reassures her about what will happen during surgery.

