

Shaniella's Story

Solomon Islands

**Primary (3-6)
Case Study and
Activities**



SHANIELLA'S STORY

SOLOMON ISLANDS



Shaniella is 23 years old. She grew up in a village in the Solomon Islands with her father, mother and three brothers.

Shaniella went to a local school until grade 11 but was unable to complete her final year because she did not pass the exam. Girls' and women's participation in secondary education, training and employment in the Solomon Islands is much lower than male students'.¹ With the poverty rate in Makira province at around 32 percent,² Shaniella knew that without relevant job skills, she would struggle to earn a living.

In 2020, Shaniella decided to move away from home to study at a rural training centre outside the capital, Honiara. The school is supported by Caritas Australia Solomon Islands (CASI) through the Happy, Healthy, Holistic Community Development program. It caters mainly for young women from poorer communities but is now starting to enrol male students too. Learning focuses on job-related skills.

Shaniella chose to study hospitality and tourism, as well as compulsory subjects like life skills, cooking, sewing and agricultural production.

The Solomon Islands is a country particularly prone to natural disasters, including tsunamis, cyclones, drought, floods and landslides.³ Not long after Shaniella started, her new school was hit by a landslide, flooding and a cyclone, all in quick succession!

It was terrible.

Shaniella is seen in a classroom at her Rural Training Centre near the capital Honiara, Solomon Islands. Photo: Neil Nuia

SHANIELLA'S STORY

SOLOMON ISLANDS



“I was in school that time when the landslide occurred,” Shaniella says. “I was devastated because I had no knowledge of what to do and where to get information.”

The landslide destroyed the school’s gravity-fed water system. It also damaged school buildings and devastated the garden which the school relies on for food.

CASI was able to help the school install eight water tanks. Students had access to clean drinking water and toilets again! The tanks also supply water to nearby schools, health centres and the wider community. CASI helped boost the local food security by providing the school with planting materials, 200 chickens and training in agriculture and poultry management. They also ran some Disaster Risk Reduction workshops, to help students, teachers and other community members learn about risks in the school’s environment, evacuation procedures and how to respond during an emergency. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, CASI also helped improve the school’s hygiene practices. Lots of people, including around 80 students, have benefitted from the program so far!

Now, Shaniella can complete her job skills training, with enough water and food to eat, as well as better hygiene and sanitation. She is improving her ability to earn an income, learning skills which will expand her job opportunities. The school community has increased and diversified its crop supply and its number of poultry has quadrupled. Students are also better prepared to respond when disaster strikes.

Shaniella is confident she will be ready to work in the hospitality and tourism industry when the Solomon Islands opens up to international visitors again. Things are looking bright for Shaniella, for her school community and for all future generations.



1 [UNESCO, World Bank](#)

2 [Solomon Islands Government, ‘Solomon Islands Poverty Maps’, 2017](#)

3 [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#)

SHANIELLA'S STORY

LEARNING TASKS



Read or watch [Shaniella's Story \(Solomon Islands\)](#).

(Be sure to watch Shaniella's Story prior to showing your students to ensure its suitability for your class)

TASK 1: Discussion

- Choose one word to describe how you felt when you heard Shaniella's story.
- Why did Shaniella decide to move away from home?
- What environmental challenges do the Solomon Islands face?
- What happened at Shaniella's new school?
- What helped the school community recover?
- How did Caritas Australia help?
- Do you have water tanks at home and/or school?
- What about chickens or a vegetable garden?
- How does access to fresh food, clean water and sanitation help students thrive?
- What does Shaniella want to do when she finishes school?
- Have you ever visited or lived on a small or remote island? What did you like and/or dislike about it?

Curriculum links: English, HASS, Science, Health and Physical Education

TASK 2: A Day in the Life

Watch Shaniella's '[A Day in the Life](#)' film

List all the things Shaniella does throughout the day. List all the things you do throughout the day. Organise these into a Venn diagram to compare the similarities and differences. What do you think are Shaniella's greatest challenges?

Curriculum links: HASS, English, Religious Education

TASK 3: Our Common Home Quiz

Climate change is having an impact on Shaniella and her community's food security in the Solomon Islands¹. People in rural communities like Shaniella's are having to adapt to and prepare for changing environmental conditions and ways of reducing risks from disasters like landslides. Along with supporting Project Compassion, we can help Shaniella and her community by understanding more about what it means to care for our common home. Try the [Our Common Home Quiz on Kahoot](#) to learn more.

¹ [UNDP](#)

Curriculum links: HASS, Health and Physical Education, Science

SHANIELLA'S STORY

LEARNING TASKS



TASK 4: Water Flows

Before the landslide, Shaniella's school used a gravity-fed water system to supply water to the school buildings and food garden. Investigate how gravity helps water flow by using an assortment of cardboard tubes, egg cartons, shoeboxes, paper cups and other recyclables to construct a marble run. Do this activity in small groups then test each cardboard construction by running a marble through it (to represent the flow of water). Compare them to see which design moves the marble most effectively. Which one worked the best? Why? Which ones didn't work so well? Why? Do any designs help the marble to speed up and/or slow down? Thinking about gravity-fed water systems, why might this be an important consideration?

Curriculum links: HASS, Health and Physical Education

TASK 5: Water Game

Every year millions of people around the world become sick and even die from drinking unclean water and from not being able to wash. Learn more about water at Shaniella's school with our **Water Game**.

Curriculum links: HASS, Health and Physical Education

TASK 6: CST Link

Care for our common home is vital for the common good of all people. And since we all share the earth, we also all share the responsibility to care for it.

What does Shaniella's story remind us about the CST principle of Care for Our Common Home?

- What small action could you take to help care for our common home?

For more on this principle, including extra classroom activities and other resources, visit our [CST Toolkit](#).

TASK 7: RE Link

Water is a very important part of Shaniella's Story. It also features throughout scripture. Can you think of any Bible stories involving water? As well as being essential to life, water is a useful symbol or metaphor for other things. Jesus loved a good metaphor! Sometimes, he used these figures of speech to communicate his message. Read the story of Jesus and the Woman of Samaria in [John 4:1-15](#). Why was the Samaritan woman surprised that Jesus asked her for a drink? What do you think Jesus meant by 'living water'? After your discussion, including of the physical, ecological and spiritual importance of water, finish with this prayer:

God of life,
We praise you for our sister water
whose oceans, rivers, lakes and rains,
sustain us like living water.
We pray for Shaniella and her community
in all the opportunities and challenges they face.
As they and we adapt to a changing climate,
help us 'be the change you wish [us] to be in the world'*
caring for our common home together,
for all future generations.
Amen.

* Ghandi

Water Game

Learn how a restored source of fresh water has impacted on Shaniella's school in the Solomon Islands.

You need:
A dice
Counters for each child

Start

1

2

Oh no!
Broken water
pipes! Go back
to the start.

3

4

You
help in
the kitchen.
Roll again.

5

6

No
water
in the tank.
Miss a turn.

7

You
plan to
save water.
Roll again.

14

13

12

Your
water
bucket has
a hole in it.
Go back 2.

11

10

9

You help
in the
garden.
Move forward
2 spaces.

8

15

You miss
class
because of a
landslide. Go
back 3 spaces.

16

17

Tanks
are full
from rain!
Move forward
3 spaces.

18

19

You stop
to wash
your hands.
Miss a turn.

20

21

School
gets a
new water tank!
Go forward 2
spaces.

22

23

You have
fresh drinking
water! Roll
again.

29

28

27

26

You cannot
wash.
Go back 2
spaces.

25

24

Finish

30

School

ring
ring

Caritas
AUSTRALIA



SHANIELLA, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Does your school have clean water? What about water tanks? Do you have a vegetable garden and chickens too? Shaniella's school is in the Solomon Islands - a country that sometimes experiences tsunamis, cyclones, drought, floods and landslides. In 2020, a landslide damaged Shaniella's school, including its gravity-fed water system, buildings and food garden. It was terrible! With Caritas Australia's support, the school installed 8 new water tanks. This gave students access to fresh drinking water and toilets again! The community also learned more about Disaster Risk Reduction and how to prepare for and respond to emergencies. Things are looking bright for Shaniella, for her school community and for all future generations.

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Shaniella

After the landslide, and with Caritas Australia's support, Shaniella's school and community were able to recover. The new water tanks they installed also supply water to nearby schools, health centres and the wider community. As well as running some Disaster Risk Reduction workshops, Caritas helped boost the local food security by providing the school with planting materials, 200 chickens and training in agriculture and poultry management.

Now, Shaniella can complete her job skills training, with enough water and food to eat, as well as better hygiene and sanitation. She is improving her ability to earn an income, learning skills which will expand her job opportunities. The school community is also thriving!

Shaniella is confident she will be ready to work in the hospitality and tourism industry when the Solomon Islands opens up to international visitors again.

THANK YOU

PHOTO CREDITS

Shaniella's Story (Solomon Islands) – Neil Nuia

PRIMARY STUDENTS

Learning about people not having what they need to live a healthy and safe life can be hard. If you are feeling worried or upset about anything you have learnt about through this resource, make sure you talk to your teacher or a trusted adult. They can share your concerns via our [website](#).

Do you have an idea for how Caritas Australia can improve our school resources? We would love to hear it! Please email education@caritas.org.au

TEACHERS

For more school resources, please visit: caritas.org.au/resources/school-resources/

Stay up to date with events and resources! Subscribe to [Caritas Australia's Education e-newsletter](#)



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