

Programme Area Summary

Country: Ethiopia

Programme Area: Education 2004-2009

What is the Aim of the Programme Area?

VSO Ethiopia's education programme aims to improve the quality of, and accessibility to, education to enable Ethiopians to gain practical skills that will advance sustainable development within Ethiopia. VSOE is supporting the government's decentralisation of education administration, management and planning to the regional education bureaus and institutions.

Why is VSO Working in that Particular Programme Area and Region?

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world, with 44% living under the national poverty line, and nearly 45% of primary-aged children not enrolled in education. The Ethiopian Government has identified education as one of the key factors in achieving nationwide development through providing trained and skilled manpower, and raising people's awareness and knowledge of their own rights and duties. VSO Ethiopia (VSOE) has been working in the education sector for the past decade and has built a reputation for innovative and high quality work through its education volunteers. Over this period a strong, strategic partnership has developed with the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, which has requested VSOE's support to implement numerous aspects of its Education Sector Development Plans. VSOE is, therefore, well placed to provide effective and strategic contributions at all levels of the Ethiopian education system in order to improve its accessibility and quality.

Key Beneficiaries and Partners:

Key partners include the Ministry of Education, the Institute of Curriculum Development and Research, and the Higher Education Institutions, Teacher Education Institutions, Regional Education Bureaus, Local (Woreda) Education Offices, and selected schools, in the Addis Ababa federal state and five of the regional states (Amhara, Benishangul Gumz, Oromia, SNNPR, and Tigray). VSOE also collaborates with a number of organisations such as the Department for International Development, the British Council, the Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education (NUFFIC), and the USAID funded Basic Education Support Objective (BESO) project to implement nationwide education programmes. Further partnerships are planned with international and local NGOs, such as the Save the Children Alliance, Action Aid, PACT Ethiopia and the Basic Education Association Ethiopia, to develop VSOE's role in the Non-Formal Education sector and to strengthen the national coalition for the Education for All Global Campaign.

Key Objectives of the Programme and the "Cross-Cutting"/"Mainstreaming" Themes?:

VSO Ethiopia's Education Programme has three main objectives:

- To build the (management) capacities of Regional Education Bureaus to support the delivery of high quality and relevant education appropriate to their regions.
- To build the capacity of national level institutions to support and improve the implementation of policies related to quality and relevance at secondary education and teacher education levels.
- To contribute to the development of Non-formal Education policy and practice in Ethiopia.

There are currently two 'cross-cutting' themes, and a further one planned, in the programme:

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- HIV & AIDS – volunteers are supported to use the education infrastructure to reach young people and adults to disseminate vital information and tackle the stigma surrounding HIV & AIDS.
- Gender – volunteers help to create gender aware curricula, act as role models, promote girls in class, improve hygiene facilities in schools, and work with parents and community leaders to raise awareness of the importance of education and, in particular, girls' education.
- A third theme of Inclusive Education is being explored by the programme, focussing on making the education system responsive to Special Educational Needs and the needs of disadvantaged groups in society.

Current Programme Activities

Focus of International Volunteer Placements

Currently there are 77 volunteers in the education programme (February 2007), with a planned expansion to 100 volunteers by September 2007, making it one of the largest VSO programmes globally. The main projects these volunteers are involved in are:

- *The Higher Diploma Programme (HDP)* (20 volunteers) – The HDP is a compulsory qualification course for teacher trainers (originally designed by volunteers) delivered in teacher training colleges nationwide to upgrade the teacher trainers' skills and professionalism, and encourage child-centred methodologies. Volunteers are involved in the delivery, management and development of this course at national and local levels. (VSO Ethiopia will be withdrawing from this programme by Sept 2008 as Ethiopian counterparts take over the full running of the programme).
- *English Language Improvement Programme (ELIP)* (10 volunteers, with a further 25 planned for Sept 2007) – English Language Centres have recently been established in every college and university in the country. Volunteers support the management of these Centres, design and implement language training for academic staff, students, and local schoolteachers, and collate and create English language materials to make each Centre a resource point for the surrounding area. This programme will reach more than 170,000 schoolteachers across Ethiopia.
- *In-Service Cluster Teacher Training* (13 volunteers and expanding) – Volunteers are based at Cluster Resource Centres in Teacher Education Institutions, from where they provide in-service training and support to the teachers from clusters of 4-9 local primary schools, and build the capacity of their Ethiopian counterparts in running and developing the cluster programme.
- *Leadership and Management Change Programme* (5 volunteers) – volunteers work in pairs in a district, one developing the leadership and management capacities of school leaders, and the other providing in-service teacher training and continuous professional development for the teachers. This whole-school approach aims to achieve an enabling learning and teaching environment with the active participation of key stakeholders at grassroots level.
- *Curriculum Development Programme* (4 volunteers) – volunteers are placed in the national Institute of Curriculum Development and Research to support the development of curricula and textbooks for primary and secondary education in the areas of science, IT, and English language.
- *IT Programme* (14 volunteers) – volunteers work in colleges and universities around the country to develop their IT capacities (particularly in networking and software and hardware maintenance), train counterpart Ethiopian IT staff, and provide basic IT training for staff and students, as part of the Ministry of Education's drive to improve the quality of education through the application of ICT.
- *Higher Education Programme* (8 volunteers) – volunteers are placed in the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency, the Higher Education Strategy Centre,

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and the universities' Academic Development and Research Centres to advise and undertake research on the management, quality and expansion of the higher education sector. There are also currently four volunteers lecturing in the fields of Physiotherapy and IT until the end of 2007.

- *Non-Formal Education Programme* (2 volunteers) – volunteers work both at the Ministry of Education and the national coalition of NGOs' forum, supporting policy and strategy for NFE, and at the regional level, helping to coordinate and develop the work being done on the ground by the various local and international NGOs and the Ministry.
- *Institutional Capacity Building Initiative* – this is a pilot project in which teams of 3-4 short-term volunteers will be placed in new and existing universities to advise and support on areas of finance, organisational development, and management.

Workshops, training & conferences:

- As well as the Annual Volunteer Conference and two-week intensive language training programmes, for each of the above projects regular workshops are held for volunteers and their Ethiopian counterparts to share ideas and experiences, and develop new resources or approaches. Workshops are also held for all volunteers on the cross-cutting themes of HIV&AIDS and gender.

Research:

- VSOE is currently undertaking research for the Valuing Teachers Campaign. VSOE also encourages volunteers to undertake research in their placements and submit papers for national and regional educational conferences. Previous volunteer research has played a significant role in shaping national policies, such as the 'Teacher Education System Overhaul' (see VolZone for a copy).

Advocacy and Global Education:

- The outcomes of the Valuing Teachers research will be used by VSOE to advocate on the inclusion of teachers' voices in decision-making and improvements in their social status. VSOE is also one of 11 permanent members of the Global Campaign for Education - Ethiopia Coalition (which also includes the Basic Education Association Ethiopia, Plan, Pact, Action Aid, and Oxfam), through which VSOE advocates on its organisational values, and local as well as global learning in education, gender and HIV & AIDS development issues.

Partner exchange visits/study tours:

- VSOE and representatives from regional and national education institutions and a local NGO partner conducted a study tour to Uganda in 2005 to look at decentralisation processes and the empowering of district education bodies to meet the Education For All (EFA) goals. The learning from this formed the basis of the Leadership and Management Change project outlined above. A further LINKS study tour is planned in March/April 2007, focussing on establishing and running an effective national coalition to increase the responsiveness and accountability of national government towards EFA.

Providing grants and/or equipment for partners e.g. small grants fund:

- VSOE allocates up to £3,500 annually to support education volunteers' small-scale projects. In 2006/07 the Education Programme has secured £20,000 from Band Aid to support primary schools in teaching-learning materials production and constructing pit-latrines to increase girls' attendance.

Development of publications or other materials for training or communication:

- VSOE has produced numerous manuals and guidelines for teacher training colleges (such as guidelines for establishing cluster in-service training units, and basic IT networking manuals), and has provided more than 15 high-quality research papers in areas such as the improvement of quality education, the expansion of the higher education sector, and the development of teacher education.

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Other partnership activities:

- VSOE is a permanent member of the Teacher Education Development Advisory Team, which comprises the Ministry of Education, EU donor countries, UN agencies, NGOs, Teacher Unions and Colleges of Teacher Education.

What makes VSO's work in this programme area special?

Based on ten years of first hand experience in Ethiopian education and the high quality of programme delivery, since September 2006 VSOE education volunteers have been asked to roll out the Ministry of Education's new School Improvement Programme (focussed on the quality of teaching learning, leadership and management, safe and healthy school environments, and partnerships between parents, communities and schools). In addition, VSOE education volunteers are delivering the National Alternative Basic Education for Out of School Children and Adult Education Strategies. These opportunity, coupled with the existing strong links within the VSOE education programmes from grassroots to national level, will undoubtedly place VSOE in a very strong position, on the one hand, to empower school teachers, directors, and parents to be active participants in the decision-making processes of the education sector; and on the other hand, to co-ordinate various education initiatives and link policy to practice in order to achieve tangible changes at school /grassroots level.