

## *Programme Area Summary*

**Country:** Ghana

**Programme Area:** Disability 2004 - 2009

### **What is the aim of the programme area?**

To enable people with disabilities to fulfil their potential within society as citizens with equal rights and access to services.

### **Why is VSO working in this particular programme area and region?**

Persons with disabilities are among the poorest and most vulnerable in Ghana. The Government of Ghana has within its constitution the provision 'that persons with disability shall be protected against exploitation, all regulations and all treatment of discriminatory, abusive and degrading nature'. The VSO Disability Programme supports the Government National Disability Policy and 'provides sustainable ways of helping persons with disabilities help themselves' through: continuing to support the development of disability organizations at national and regional level; raising awareness on disability issues; promoting access to livelihood options for persons with disabilities and increasing participation of women with disabilities and improving the delivery of special education. The programme is focused in the Greater Accra, Eastern, Central and Volta Regions, because these are ranked in the lower part of the country's poverty level, and Greater Accra, to enable work at national level strategically with government and other stakeholders.

### **Key beneficiaries and partners**

- Ghana Federation of the Disabled (GFD)
- Ghana Society of the Physically Disabled (GSPD)
- Ghana National Association of the Deaf (GSPD)
- Volta Physically Challenged Independent Group
- Department of Social Welfare

A strong partnership has been developed with the Special Education Division of the Ghana Education Service and a strategic partnership developed with Action on Disability and Development, a UK based organization, for work in the three Northern regions. VSOG has also been instrumental in the establishing of Networks of Disabled Peoples Organisations in the Eastern, Western and Central Regions of Ghana. Beneficiaries are ultimately Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs) and through them disabled people themselves.

### **Key objectives of the programme and the crosscutting themes**

The Programme takes a rights based approach and has been developed in consultation with a variety of stakeholders. The broad objective of the disability sector is that at the end of the Programme Area Plan period (2009), people with disabilities in the 4 regions have become more informed about their rights and responsibilities and are demanding these rights both within their organisations and wider society.

The key objectives of the sector are:

- to improve the effectiveness and representation of organisations of people with disabilities through capacity building interventions;
- to promote access to quality information and services by people with disabilities with particular focus on HIV/AIDS and education;
- to promote greater understanding among people with disabilities on their civil rights and responsibilities.

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### **Current programme activities**

The key priorities for 2007/08 are: make strategic partnerships; increase work with children with disabilities; develop and advocacy tool/manual; increase volunteer numbers/ scope of work of volunteers in the Disability Programme Area; expand fully in the Central Region; establish strong relationships with women with disabilities; increase work in the area of intellectually disabled; make an entry point at the policy making level.

### *Focus of International Volunteer Placements*

Average of 16 volunteers in country at any one time including social workers, organisational development advisers, physiotherapists and fundraisers.

### *Workshops, training & conferences*

- Organisational development workshops for DPOs in financial management, leadership skills, fundraising, monitoring & evaluation
- Workshop with Parliament Select Committee on social welfare & employment
- National Disability Network Meetings once every quarter

### *Support to national volunteering*

There are plans to develop placements for advocacy officers.

### *Research*

There are plans to commission research on Perceptions of PWDs in the four focus regions.

### *Advocacy and Global Education*

Training sessions on the Advocacy manual and the Handbook on Mainstreaming Disability.

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

Development of publications or other materials for training or communication: NGO Directory on Disability; HIV and AIDS Brochure for Persons with Disabilities

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

Ghana's total population is 18.7 million, of which 1.8 million (10%) are estimated to have some form of disability<sup>1</sup>.

The National Disability Policy was drawn up in 2000 and six years after its inception implementation is yet to be fully realized as awareness has not been adequately created on it. The Government of Ghana has also passed the Persons with Disabilities Act 2006. VSOG was in the frontline advocating for the passage of the Act and now focuses on supporting all stakeholders in its effective implementation.

VSOG supports the disabled community in Ghana by working with organisations of persons with disabilities to build their capacity into ones that are truly representative and meets the needs of the disabled community throughout Ghana.

VSO has been working in Ghana since 1958 and been supporting people with disabilities as a priority area for over ten years. VSO aims to support and complement the efforts of government and NGOs to assist people with disabilities to realize their potential and claim their rights as equal and active members of Ghanaian society.

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<sup>1</sup> The World Health Organization noted, in 1981, that it was impossible to accurately estimate the number of people with disabilities more accurately than at 10% of the total population and the WHO range of 7-10 percent has often been cited.

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In 2002, VSOG produced '*Protect Yourself*', a Sign Language Video that provides HIV and AIDS awareness material for deaf Ghanaians in Ghanaian Sign Language. The project, which involved production of a HIV and AIDS awareness song and music video with young deaf people, development of an accompanying fact sheet and training of facilitators from 23 special schools in Ghana, was funded by the Foreign Commonwealth Office, British Council and VSO.

The video aims to ensure that the deaf community in Ghana receives equal HIV and AIDS information to the hearing community and, importantly for deaf people, through their own language. The music video has been shown extensively on Ghana Television (GTV) and internationally on the deaf film circuit.

The video is currently been used in a number of deaf schools in Ghana. This project proved to be a trailblazer on moving forward the disability agenda in Ghana, and has received great reviews and witnessed enormous impact.