

## *Programme Area Summary*

**Country:** Kenya

**Programme Area:** Secure Livelihoods 2005-2009

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

Secure livelihoods (SL) through increased employment opportunities and income generating capacity for unemployed youths, poor women and people with disabilities in three regions of Kenya.

### **Why is VSO working in that particular Programme Area and region?**

Poverty in Kenya is a national concern. 14.6% of the population is unemployed and 45% of this unemployed section is among the youth. The high level of unemployment has a direct impact on poverty levels and social problems such as crime and insecurity. The government is currently promoting the informal sector economy by targeting the youth in order to curb the unemployment problem.

In response, VSO Kenya SL sector will focus on the youth, the out-of-school and unemployed in its secure livelihoods programme as well as poor women, persons with disabilities and those affected and infected by HIV & AIDS.

VSO Kenya has identified all the three regions where other VSOK programmes are present as areas for the SL programmes. These are the Western and Nyanza, Eastern Kenya and the Coast Region. It will work in close collaboration with the HIV & AIDS and Disability programmes.

### **Key beneficiaries and partners:**

- Local Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs), NGOs, CBOs, religious institutions, INGOs and government departments in the regions.

### **Key objectives of the programme**

- To increase the organizational capacity of Youth Polytechnics to address the needs of youths, through organisational development, planning, resource mobilisation, monitoring and evaluation and marketable skills training for informal sector.
- To strengthen the capacity of the Community Based Organizations, NGOs, Cooperatives, Religious Organizations (among others) in supporting the disadvantaged in income generating activities.
- To strengthen CBOs, NGOs, Cooperatives and other groups in market access information, market oriented designs for products, business development services and product development.
- To address partners needs through supporting the creation of linkages with MFIs and secure livelihoods organizations to focus on the disadvantaged.
- To increase the level of networking and collaboration amongst key stakeholders in secure livelihoods.

### **Current programme activities**

By November 2006, VSO Kenya was already thinking of changing its thrust towards market oriented enterprise development at the community level. A market survey undertaken in October revealed that market access is a major constraint for the poor. The poor do not know how to undertake market survey, they have no market information and their products do not compete adequately in the market because of the quality. The beneficiaries will be the wider community as families raise income to support their basic needs, including education and health.

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### *Focus of International Volunteer Placements:*

At least 15 volunteers will be recruited in following skills/ areas:

- Business advisers
- Gender and OD advisers
- Community mobilisers
- Capacity builders
- Micro-enterprise experts, product development experts, marketing and production managers
- Lobbying and Advocacy Advisors

### *Advocacy and Global Education*

- Gender concerns will be mainstreamed in all programmes and partners' programme planning
- Support to strengthen lobbying and advocacy to gender related laws and policies undertaken by the Women's Agenda Forum.

### *Partner exchange visits/study tours*

- Promoting exposure visits on gender and micro enterprise good practices.

### *Other partnership activities*

- Support partners in start up business activities, training in micro credit services, savings and credit, etc.
- Promote linkages, learning and dialogue amongst informal sector, CBO, government agencies (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Gender, Ministry of labour and Human Resources, etc);

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

The programme seeks to alleviate poverty among the youth and women, and other disadvantaged groups through the promotion of micro enterprise and the informal sector. The SL programme works closely with the HIV/AIDS and Disability programmes, because of cross cutting issues and in order to ensure maximum impact of its interventions.