

## Programme Area Summary

**Country:** Namibia

**Programme Area:** Education (2003 – 2008)

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

To support NGO stakeholders and government departments in strengthening the Ministry of Education (MoE)'s capacity to address the educational needs of disadvantaged children in the targeted regions. Thereby: to contribute to the development of quality education for disadvantaged children in Namibia.

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

VSO Namibia has been working in education since its inception when Namibia gained independence in 1991. At that time VSO was asked to support the implementation of the new education system, in particular the introduction of the Cambridge IGCSE syllabi, initially through the provision of secondary level Mathematics, Science and English teachers to address the shortages of teachers in these subjects.

The education programme operates in the previously most disadvantaged regions in the north of Namibia – Omusati, Oshana, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Kavango and Caprivi.

The programme aims to specifically support girls, orphans & vulnerable children, children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, children with disabilities and children who are part of minority groups, such as the San. In relation to the latter, VSO Namibia is also working in the Otjozondjupa region.

### **Key beneficiaries and partners**

The key beneficiaries of the education programme are 'disadvantaged children' as clarified above. The key partner is the Ministry of Education. In addition VSO Namibia may work with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which represent particular target groups, such as the San, girls and children with disabilities.

### **Key objectives of the programme and the cross-cutting themes**

VSO Namibia's education programme expects to achieve results in 3 main areas:

- Increasing the number of qualified Maths, Science and English teachers.
- Improving the quality of Maths, Science and English teaching.
- Improving and strengthening (education) management capacity at cluster, circuit and regional level.

VSO Namibia recognises the direct impact HIV and AIDS, gender inequality and discrimination against people with disabilities are having on all development efforts. These issues are therefore addressed in all programming, either through direct volunteer placements or through encouraging all volunteers to mainstream these issues at placement level. There are strong links between the Education programme and the other VSO Namibia programmes - Disability, HIV and AIDS and Secure Livelihoods.

### **Current programme activities**

#### *Focus of International Volunteer Placements*

- Volunteers are placed in senior secondary (and occasionally primary) schools as teacher/trainers, where they have a split role teaching (Maths, Science or English) in the school and supporting the in-service training of teachers in schools in the cluster. Volunteers are also working at regional level as subject advisory teachers, supporting the continuing professional development of subject teachers (English, Maths, Science and Primary).
- In an effort to increase the number and retention of teachers qualified to teach at IGCSE level in the northern regions, volunteers have been supporting the set up of bursary schemes (supporting disadvantaged students to study to become teachers),

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the development and delivery of a Foundation Course at the University of Namibia (Northern Campus) and a programme to upgrade the skills and qualifications of Maths and Science teachers (MASTEP).

- In addition, both short and long-term volunteers are supporting the MoE in building management capacity at institutional, cluster, circuit and regional level. VSO Namibia is also participating in a pilot project between VSO and the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), which will see 4 NAHT members take up short-term placements (12 weeks) as School Management Advisors over the summer of 2007.

### *Workshops, training & conferences:*

- Various workshops and training sessions are organised with both volunteers and partners. Annual volunteer workshops are organised and facilitated by the Programme Office on issues pertaining to professional development and general national educational issues. Such workshops are co-facilitated by officials from the Ministry of Education.
- The programme office also holds bi-annual employer orientation workshops with all employers, before the arrival of the next cohort of volunteers, to discuss roles and responsibilities of the Programme Office, Partners / Employers and Volunteers.

### *Support to national volunteering*

- The Education Programme Manager recently went on a fact-finding mission to the Kavango region with an office-based HR Development Advisor. During this visit, the HR Adviser met with eight volunteers, school principals and inspectors, and the regional office management teams.
- The purpose was to assess the needs of Human Resource Management from the regional level down to the individual schools. Based on the information gathered, she recommended that the Kavango region could benefit from assistance with regards to recruitment, personnel management, and general management. These initiatives resulted in the development of a Short Term Placement for an HR Development Advisor for the Kavango region.

### *Research*

- Research-based audits in the education sector were carried out by an office-based volunteer, which culminated in the development of training modules for the education partners in the areas of Positive Approaches to Discipline; Learner-Centred Education; Time Management; HIV & AIDS; and Assessment.

### *Partner exchange visits/study tours*

- Various volunteers in the education programme initiated partnerships with organisations, both locally and abroad, which have led to financial assistance for teacher and learner exchanges. One such partnership is between Udjombala JSS in Northern Namibia and Warlingham SS (Kent, UK), which culminated in agreements for teacher and learner exchanges between the two schools. Another partnership is between Kandjimi Murangi SS in the Kavango region and Justus-Liebig Universitat Giessen in Germany, which saw some 16 student teachers from Germany coming to Kandjimi Murangi SS.
- Some volunteer-initiated linkages lead to assistance with Learning Support materials being availed to some rural schools in Namibia. Such materials range from laboratory equipment to computers and textbooks.

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

- Volunteers have access to the placement support fund, through which a small amount of money can be accessed to fund activities related either directly to the volunteer's placement or any other crosscutting issues.

### *Development of publications or other materials for training or communication*

- VSO Namibia programme office produces a bi-annual newsletter to which all programmes contribute articles. This newsletter gives updates to partners and other

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stakeholders on various issues pertaining to programme developments and volunteer activities in development.

### *Other partnership activities*

- Newer partnerships are being explored with the most disadvantaged indigenous people in Namibia. Partnerships are being extended to include Opuwo district for the Himba people and Tsumkwe area for the San communities.

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

Very recently the education programme has embarked upon the promotion of the use of short-term volunteers within the education sector and increasingly partners are beginning to appreciate their value. The programme envisages bringing out up to six STVs in the coming period (between June and September 2007) to assist with training and capacity building in the management of schools and at inspectorate level.