

Programme Area Summary

Country: Nepal

Programme Area: Education

What is the aim of the programme area?

VSO Nepal's chief goal is to work with the government and NGOs in achieving 'Education for All' (EFA) by 2015. The key is ensuring education is accessible, relevant and retentive for all, especially marginalized groups.

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

The lack of participation in education of marginalised groups is a clear development concern in Nepal and manifests itself in various ways. Poor governance underpins many development issues and is an issue at the root of the conflict and insurgency in Nepal. The education system and practice perpetuates this. Education is a powerful tool in tackling this marginalisation, and rights awareness which leads to a stronger civil society, is key to promoting social change and contesting governments in order to deliver effective and appropriate development. Education has an important role in raising awareness and tackling discrimination regarding HIV & AIDs. Marginalisation and discrimination within the education system excludes key groups of children and in itself perpetuates and reinforces discrimination and exclusion in communities. The aim and objectives of the education programme area clearly intend to increase participation of marginalised children in education and support the development of a positive learning environment.

Key beneficiaries and partners

- The main focus of VSO's work to increase participation of marginalised children in education is at the district level. At present VSO Nepal is working in Kanchanpur, Makwanpur, Parsa, and Bhaktapur. Volunteers are based at the District Education Offices (DEOs), a local education campus and the Education Training Centres (ETCs).
- We are currently working at central level with the Foreign Aid Coordination Section of the Ministry of Education, as well as in the Department of Education. This has helped to feed district level experiences to central level and vice versa.
- A new partner is the National Centre for Education for whom volunteers work in Education Training Centres

Key objectives of the programme and the cross-cutting themes

- Increase the quality of classroom teaching and learning, particularly for girls, children with disabilities and Dalit and Janajati children, in selected districts.
- To improve the management of education in selected districts, at DEO, municipality and school level in order to support the delivery of EFA
- To help achieve EFA through cooperation with national education stakeholders, and by supporting the development of policy and good practice based on experience in selected districts.

Cross cutting them of HIV & AIDS.

Current programme activities

Focus of International Volunteer Placements

- The DEO is responsible for implementation of education policy and delivery of education service. Volunteers who take up the Education Adviser placements in the DEOs spend the first year working at the Resource Centres (district centres for training, resources, monitoring and evaluation support to surrounding schools) with the Resource Person of that cluster of schools as their counterpart, advising on participative teaching practice and methodology. The second year is spent in the

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DEOs, developing a programme of activities for RCs and the DEO and supporting the development of SMC structures and Parent Teacher Associations.

- The National Centre for Education (NCED) a new partner, uses volunteers to work as Education Training Advisers (ETAs) in its main centre in Kathmandu and in the Education Training Centres (ETCs) of Parsa and Morang, located near the DEOs, so volunteers can link up. The ETAs advise and support the training staff of the ETCs in promoting the use of participatory methodology in training teachers, head teachers and School Management Committee (SMC) members.
- Aasaman is an experienced and leading NGO developing and implementing child-rights based plans and activities. The volunteers carry out research into the means of education access for working children and children with disabilities. By working with Aasaman, we will have an impact on the districts of Siraha, Bara, Danusha and Mahottari.
- In addition A short-term volunteer is currently working in the programme office as Advocacy Officer, to work on Nepal's Valuing Teachers' Campaign (see under 'Advocacy') and requests in the future may include volunteers to work with Teachers' Unions. VSON is involved in various campaigns and has several strategic partnerships that don't necessarily request volunteers, but are essential for implementing the PAP, for example, our partnership with the Education Journalists Group, a forum of journalists working in various types of media, who are advocating for change at policy level.

Workshops, training & conferences

- Training in gender, dalit, disability, HIV&AIDS discrimination and exclusion issues
- Training in participatory techniques and planning, such as using Theatre for Development techniques
- Volunteer and partner workshops at a district level (2 x year per district)
- Programme learning workshop (1x year)
- Various volunteer forums for sharing information and supporting each other (professional and personal issues)
- Participating in workshops and training courses organised by other INGOs, for example UNESCO and UNICEF
- Active participation in GCE
- 'Links' Study Tour by Programme Manager

Research

- Research into community participation and involvement of NGOs in EFA policy/practice

Advocacy and Global Education

- Valuing Teachers' Campaign - towards the improvement of management, administration, leadership, salaries and working conditions in education. Nepal was one of the countries that carried out this research and now other countries are using their guidelines to push for improvements in the education system to value teachers

Providing grants and/or equipment for partners

- Supporting initiatives to increase community involvement in education and new School Management Committees
- Supporting new initiatives to support gender equity in education

Development of publications or other materials for training or communication

- Training materials and resources developed based on needs assessments
- Best practice learning reports at district level and annual education report produced
- Weekly and monthly newsletters produced by the Programme Office with contributions from volunteers - circulated by email and post

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- A policy research report on '*Teachers' motivation and perceptions in Nepal*' as part of Valuing Teachers (see above)

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

There are many international organisations working in education in Nepal but VSO's approach is very different. Most of the other organisations provide financial support to the government to implement its programme, VSO brings experienced and professional people from around the world. Similarly, VSO works not just with the government at central level but also with civil society organisations e.g. education journalists, media, teachers union and with teachers, school management committees at the school level. In the absence of required skills and knowledge, the implementation of the programme is not possible. VSO's work in mainstreaming HIV & AIDS in Education, inclusion and participatory approaches have been recognised highly by the government.