

## *Programme Area Summary*

**Country:** Nepal

**Programme Area:** HIV & AIDS 2005-2009

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

To develop the organisational and programme capacity of VSO Nepal's partners to provide effective HIV & AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support services and to secure, assert and protect the rights of those vulnerable to and infected and affected by HIV & AIDS.

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

Nepal reported its first case of HIV infection in 1988. In the one and half decades since millions of rupees have been spent to combat the epidemic. However, Nepal is witnessing a rapidly evolving epidemic with the UN now estimating the total infections at about 70,000. Different factors such as stigma, discrimination, inclusion, and gender disparity have fuelled the increase of HIV infection. The majority of the policies that are in place to protect the rights of the people do not sufficiently address the needs of people infected by or those especially vulnerable to HIV.

There is a strong need for the government and civil society to work together to combat this epidemic. Lack of organisational capacity and coordination as well as fragmented movement constrain an effective response to the HIV & AIDS epidemic. Thus VSO Nepal will support to strengthen the organisational and programming capacity of our partners to provide effective HIV&AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support services and to secure, assert and protect the rights of those vulnerable to and infected and affected by HIV&AIDS.

VSO Nepal will focus its work in strategically-selected umbrella and network type organisations at national level and the organisations that have wider impact of their work. VSO Nepal is currently working in Sunsari, Morang Parsa, Makwanpur, Kathmandu valley, and Kaski districts. VSO Nepal has identified these districts based on high prevalence of HIV & AIDS, presence of organisations with a similar aim, the security situation and accessibility. With the improved security situation, VSO Nepal will also explore partnerships in other districts particularly in the mid and far west regions.

### **Key beneficiaries and partners**

Our key beneficiaries are people especially vulnerable to and infected and affected by HIV&AIDS.

The main partners VSO works with are

- INGOs, NGOs & CBOs
- Organisations of people infected by and those especially vulnerable to HIV
- Organisations that are working for the reduction of HIV & AIDS infection in Nepal
- Umbrella and network organisations at national level
- Government organisations

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

- To develop organisational and programme capacity of partners both individually and collectively, to plan and deliver effective HIV&AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support services
- To strengthen the capacity of VSO Nepal partners both individually and collectively, to empower those vulnerable to and infected and affected by HIV&AIDS to advocate for their rights to non-discrimination, equality before the law, access to information, services and involvement in decision making that affects their lives

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- To mainstream HIV&AIDS into VSO Nepal programme and support partners to mainstream HIV&AIDS into their organisation and programme.

Gender mainstreaming is one of the key components of the HIV & AIDS Programme Area Plan. The crosscutting theme is to increase the inclusion and participation in decision-making and mainstream development of disadvantaged groups in Nepal, in particular people vulnerable to and living with HIV & AIDS, women, people with disabilities and Dalits.

### **Current programme activities**

#### *Focus of International Volunteer Placements*

- To support in strengthening organisational development and staff capacity for effective service delivery, strengthen advocacy initiatives and promote united response. Examples of placements: Organisational development/Management Advisors, HIV & AIDS Programme Development Advisors, IT advisors, Advocacy advisors, Counselling Advisors.

#### *Workshops, training*

- VSO Nepal has been providing need-based training/workshops on staff capacity development, programme development and promotion of good governance.

#### *Support to national volunteering*

- VSO has plans to support on national volunteering. One of our VSO volunteers will be carrying out a research which we hope will identify recommendations on how VSO Nepal can most effectively support national volunteering in Nepal. This will involve speaking to our partners and other organisations that recruit volunteers.

#### *Research:*

- VSO Nepal in 2006 conducted two research exercises:
  - Counselling – Final draft has been developed. Findings shared with partners and volunteers during the Programme Area Review. Plans to share findings with government and other stakeholders in the near future
  - Gender analysis on accessibility of care & support services for people infected by HIV – Initial draft developed. Findings will be shared with partners and volunteers in the near future

#### *Advocacy*

- VSO will seek to support its partners in structuring and strengthening their advocacy work. VSO Nepal has recruited an Advocacy Advisor Volunteer who has been and will continue to support partners in their advocacy work.

#### *Partner exchange visits/study tours*

- VSO Nepal has initiated the practice of sharing learning between its partners through national visits. Similarly theme-based international visits have been organized for its partners.

#### *Providing grants and/or equipment for partners*

- VSO Nepal manages a grants programme to fund small-scale innovative HIV & AIDS projects through partner organisations.

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

- VSO Nepal will support partners to develop information materials. However, in doing this VSO Nepal will promote the practice of sharing materials amongst its partners.

#### *Other partnership activities:*

- Regional networking and coordination initiative – VSO Nepal has been trying to promote the practice of sharing and learning both within its partners as well as among the wider stakeholders. VSO Nepal will support any initiatives that contribute to unified response and sharing/learning.

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- Mainstreaming HIV & AIDS – VSO Nepal has been carrying out ongoing orientation/sensitisation for its staff and volunteers (across the 3 programme areas) on issues related to HIV & AIDS. VSO Nepal is also working towards finalizing its work-place policy on HIV & AIDS, which will be shared with all staff, volunteers and partners. VSO Nepal is also working towards orienting/sensitising its partners' staff on issues related to HIV & AIDS.

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

- The majority of donor support to the epidemic is on programme delivery. However, our initial research at the time of PAP development has clearly identified capacity gaps of organisations to deliver effective programs.
- Thus the primary focus of our support has been on organisational development and capacity building of our partner organisations.
- In order to effectively address the issues around limited capacity of organisations delivering HIV & AIDS services as well as empowering people infected by and vulnerable to HIV & AIDS to advocate for their own rights, VSO Nepal's HIV & AIDS programme has implemented a comprehensive Organisational Development (OD) approach for capacity development of its partner organisations.
- The approach involves assessment of the OD gaps, formulation of an OD plan and mentoring support through experienced international volunteers and other different training opportunities to effectively address these OD gaps. The OD process includes a comprehensive assessment of the organisation by its staff, board members, services users and donors. Based on the assessment, organisational development priorities are identified which is a basis for VSO Nepal's support to the organisation.