

Programme Area Summary

Country: Rwanda

Programme Area: Disability 2005-2009

What is the aim of the programme area?

VSO Rwanda aims to support Disabled people meet their needs such as income, shelter, mobility and basic rights as well as gain access to mainstream services such as education and healthcare including sexual and reproductive health care. The result is a cohesive society where disabled people are seen as valuable contributors.

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

VSO Rwanda has engaged with disability issues frequently in the past and has developed an expertise when it comes to supporting Special Education, inclusive education and integration of children with disabilities into mainstream classrooms. The four-year civil war, genocide and aftermath drew the issue of disability to the forefront and VSO recognizes the potential for positive change in this sector.

The Programme Area Plan highlights the goal of providing improved quality of professional services and care within centres for disabled people as well as empowering people receiving the services to articulate their needs.

Key beneficiaries and partners

The key beneficiaries are men, women and children with disabilities.

VSO Rwanda hopes to engage with Ministry of Local Government and Community Based Development (MINALOC) who provide a grant for The Federation of Associations and Centres for Disabled People in Rwanda (FACHR) who have at least 12 existing centres or associations and provide a strong entry point for VSO Rwanda. In addition, VSO Rwanda will continue to work with special needs staff in existing institutions in Kigali and Butare that provide care and support for disabled people such as Ministry of Education and Butare School for the Deaf.

Key objectives of the programme and the cross-cutting themes

- 1) Increase awareness and knowledge of the needs and rights of people with disabilities, among those responsible for the planning and delivery of services.
- 2) Strengthen capacity of DPO partner organizations so that they represent and respond to the needs of their members: male and female.
- 3) Improve quality of services which address the special and basic needs of people with disabilities.

Crosscutting themes:

Globally it is recognized that disabled women are doubly disadvantaged. Disabled girls are less likely to attend school, receive adequate health care, create a family, inherit land, or have access to credit or work and therefore represent an extremely marginalized group. VSO Rwanda aims to analyze the gender situation across all sectors of work to gain a better understanding of its relationship to disability. In addition, disabled people report a lack of knowledge and preventative measures for HIV & AIDS infection. This is as a result of an existing myth that disabled people are less likely to be sexually active. VSO Rwanda seeks to include general HIV & AIDS awareness promotion activities (already running in the Education Programme) in the Disability Programme.

Current programme activities

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Focus of International Volunteer Placements

- VSO Rwanda has a need for specifically skilled and qualified volunteers such as Teachers of the Deaf, Special Education Teachers, and Occupational Therapy Trainers. The expectation is that the number of requests for these types of volunteers will remain low.
- Organizational Development Advisors, Community Based Rehabilitation, and Researchers will see a distinct rise in the Disability Programme as VSO Rwanda moves more towards meeting its' first objective. Some of these placements are expected to be short-term placements.
- VSO Rwanda will also host a number of Youth For Development volunteers linking younger deaf volunteer with the new programme in the National Youth Council in Rwanda.

Workshops, training & conferences

- VSO Rwanda organized and participated in a Disability Stakeholder Workshop in 2005 attended by 39 other local and surrounding country NGOs as well as the Ministry of Education, the US Embassy, Save the Children UK and Handicap International.

WHAT MAKES VSO'S WORK IN THIS PROGRAMME AREA SPECIAL?

Non-disabled people frequently view others with an impairment as a burden to society and unable to make any contributions whatsoever. Along with people's attitudes, physical barriers that impede a disabled person's access to services and the ability to work further marginalise disabled people. VSO Rwanda has taken a Rights-Based Approach which is unique in that the various needs of disabled people are addressed as a matter of right and not privilege. VSOR will encourage its partners to involve disabled people, parents, and children in as many ways as possible to discuss how needs can be met in Rwanda.