



Job pack: Social Cohesion and Tolerance Advisor

Job Name	Social Cohesion and Tolerance Advisor
Employer	VSO International
Duration	12-24 Months
Job purpose	The Social Cohesion and Tolerance Advisor will work with local partners to promote peaceful coexistence, communal harmony and tolerance. The volunteer will undertake research to understand inter-communal conflicts and reconciliations in order to design frameworks and programmes to build a culture of tolerance and respect for ethnic and religious diversity to promote peaceful coexistence. S/he will explore viable and sustained community-based initiatives for reconciliation and peacebuilding

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1. Job Description

field like security sector reforms, International Negotiations, International relations, social science experience in a related sector or context

Responsibilities	Key Performance Indicators	Competencies	Skills and Knowledge
<p>Promote Inter-Communal Harmony: The Volunteer will work with CSOs, Media and religious Institutions, and community to design, implement, monitor and evaluation national, state and community-based initiatives on communal, ethnic and religious harmony; and promote inter-communal exchange programmes. Using Innovations, S/he will work with partners to identify emerging initiatives as entry points to promote tolerance and cohesion e.g inclusive education with mother-tongue language, peacebuilding, women and disability rights, participation, leadership, responsible business practices etc.</p> <p>Develop people-centred mechanisms and tools for building tolerance and social cohesion: Work with partners and provide technical support to develop frameworks, diverse models to build capacities and facilitate people to engage in community, religious and ethnic tolerance.</p> <p>Technical Support to Mobilize and Organize diverse Tolerance and Cohesion Groups: The Volunteer will support innovative initiatives associated with ethnic, religious, political, women, PWDs, EAOs and youth groups to create and strengthen diverse tolerance and cohesion groups. S/he may provide technical support to develop innovative initiatives for targeted groups e.g. Youth focused activities – film, art festivals, theatre, sports to promote reconciliation, tolerance and social cohesion.</p> <p>Promote Accountability for Community and Social Cohesion and Tolerance: Work with partners and community to facilitate accountability of government for inclusive democratic and peace processes,</p>	<p>Working closely with the Programme Managers in VSO and partners, the volunteer will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and Sustaining working relationships The social skills to build and actively maintain working relationships that foster teamwork and collaboration with others for the benefit of a common goal. • Open Minded and Respectful A non-judgemental approach that values other people and culture. • Seeking and Sharing Knowledge Recognition that learning is a two-way and continuous process. • Facilitating Positive Change The ability to analyse problems and develop lasting solutions in line with VSO approaches. • Adaptability A flexible approach and the ability to adapt behaviour to different situations. 	<p>A University degree in Peace Studies, Conflict Resolution and related</p> <p>Experience and demonstrated results in technical support in conflict resolution, peace building and related work on gender equality, women participation and leadership in a developing country context</p> <p>Demonstrated understanding of issues and challenges related to conflict, democracy, ethnic and religious tolerance.</p> <p>Experience in decision making positions, advocacy and/or influencing a range of decision-makers e.g. national governments, intergovernmental organisations, UN organisations.</p> <p>Excellent communication and social skills, the ability to work closely with a variety of stakeholders in a developing country and non-English speaking context.</p> <p>Ability to work independently as well as with multiple stakeholders in a time-pressured environment.</p> <p>(Desirable)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to work both as team member and independently. 2. Proven ability to create and maintain effective working relationships with high level stakeholders 3. Experience in women, peace and security initiatives with wide understanding on international standards for promoting women role in peace processes

Responsibilities	Key Performance Indicators	Competencies	Skills and Knowledge
<p>building resilience, social cohesion and community tolerance. The Volunteer may support such approaches as the use of score cards, community parliament to discuss, undertake community-led monitoring and support local partners working to hold state and non-state actors accountable.</p> <p>People-centered Research, Advocacy and Campaign on tolerance: The Volunteer will work with partners to undertake evidence-based research on community tolerance and social cohesion. S/he will provide technical support to partners to engage in and influence policies and practices at all levels on community, ethnic and religious tolerance and social cohesion. The Volunteer will work with various stakeholders to support peace, democratic reforms, community (ethnic and religious) tolerance campaigns.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience The self-confidence to work with a variety of situations, diverse people and ambiguity. 	<p>4. Awareness and sensitivity of political/socio-cultural context of Myanmar and wider South East Asian region</p>

2. Personal considerations

In addition to the job description, the following information should be used when considering whether a placement is suitable for you.

Personal health considerations

If you have a significant current or past medical condition and/or you have general concerns about staying healthy as a volunteer, please use this information to assess whether this placement will be suitable for you.

The role is suitable for people with no history of pre-existing medical conditions that require routine health care management. Because of the need to work in mostly rural settings, good quality social services will be limited. The job may also require working under pressure occasionally to meet deadlines, although the job holder will have opportunity to rest and leave as standard provisions allow at VSO. Food provisions will typically be based on local staple foods and therefore specific food preferences with a long shelf life will have to be purchased from the city or nearby bigger towns in advance.

All volunteers require medical clearance from a VSO medical adviser before they are able to take up a placement with VSO. Occasionally, VSO may consider that this placement is too great a risk for you in terms of your personal health and you would be advised to consider a different placement. For further guidance about medical assessment and volunteering with a medical condition please see the [frequently asked questions on VSO website](#).

Access to medical care and support

The standard and quality of local medical care and support available at this placement will depend on its location within the country. Health facilities are likely to be more poorly resourced in rural areas in terms of medical expertise, equipment, infrastructure and regular supplies of medication. However, this may not be the case in the capital city or in a larger town, where in some countries there may be a reasonable standard of medical care. The following gives you an indication of where the placement is in relation to the country office and how easy it would be to make the journey if you were ill. Extra care just like in any other situation will be necessary in matters of security. This placement will be in either Nairobi, Pretoria, Bangkok or Kingston - UK.

If you wish to discuss your personal circumstances or health concerns in confidence with VSO's medical team before you apply for this placement please contact medical@vsoint.org.

Accompanying partner or family: If you have a partner or children who are planning to accompany you to your placement, please use this section to assess whether this placement will be suitable for you.

Accommodation for the placement will vary between the various training sites, but where possible accommodation for families will be sought. VSO Myanmar would be keen to ensure that candidates with families have equal opportunity to come if possible. Visas are available for accompanying partners and children, although school facilities will be of poor or variable quality beyond Yangon.

Motorcycle requirements

You may wish (it is optional) to ride a motorbike as a pillion passenger as part of this placement, although it will not be essential. If you would like to ride a motorbike as a passenger, please bring a helmet meeting VSO's standards. Most volunteers will find a bicycle sufficient.

Security information

Most of Myanmar is a very safe. There is still some conflict around the periphery, but international volunteers' movements into such areas are restricted. For more rural placements the risk of snakebite and scorpion bite are present and Dengue fever is a country wide risk. Malaria risk is variable depending on location, and where it is of high risk the volunteer will be recommended to take anti-malarial prophylaxis.

1. Background and contextual information

VSO is an international development organization with over 58 years of experience working with volunteers to eliminate poverty. VSO has been in Myanmar for just over two years but our work is still in its initial phase. This post will enable us to significantly extend our work in civil society development, particularly around capacity building in advocacy and will be of significant reputational value to VSO's programming in all sectors.

The post of Gender Advisor is part of a wider civil society strengthening initiative by a local partner.

This post will be a new one to the programme and so essentially offers the volunteer the ability to shape the position and work. There will be considerable scope for independent creative approaches and independent decision making, and the opportunity to guide the wider work of the Civil Society and Media Project.

In Myanmar, civil society organisations (CSOs) often deliver services that complement or extend state provision. With the strictly limited state expenditure on basic services, improving the ability of CSOs to continue and to extend their work will be a large part of this position.

CSOs play a vital role in holding government to account, demanding better national, regional and local policies, better services, and representing the interests of different stakeholders. In Myanmar the space for civil society to operate has been strictly limited in recent decades, but this is rapidly changing. This role will contribute to creating a vibrant and diverse civil society—connecting communities and building social inclusion and accountability.

Myanmar is transitioning towards a fledgling democracy, and CSOs will be important players in consolidating and extending gains in this area. The volunteer will work to strengthen CSOs ability to advocate for and strengthen engagement with government and for change in public policies. In addition, working toward greater public awareness of democratic reform issues or for greater public awareness of these issues, may become part of this role.

The potential for civil society organisations to influence policy and practice varies from country to country and over time within particular countries. At present in Myanmar we may be seeing the opening up of space and influence. Socially-connected, urban civil society organizations can predominate in policy dialogue processes, and longer-term support is necessary to build the capacity and social capital needed by smaller organizations to engage effectively in policy dialogue. This post may begin the process of building capacity and broader-based coalitions which can take a number of years, and support to networking may be as important as support for individual organisations.

It is important for potential applicants to understand and be adept in developing and maintaining strong working relationships. The civil society network in which the volunteer works will need to find in them a supportive colleague who helps to bring an excitement to try new ideas and develops their confidence in new approaches, and this will need a high level of tact and diplomacy. In addition, a strong sensitivity to cultural nuance and non-verbal signals will be key. In addition, a good understanding of the history and context of Myanmar will be vital in order for the volunteer to avoid the perception as a individual interfering the sensitive aspects of Myanmar's domestic affairs.

Further information on VSO's work in each of the countries we work in can be found on the [VSO website](#).