

Programme Area Summary

Country: Zambia

Programme Area: Participation and Governance 2005 - 2009

What is the aim of the programme area?

To contribute to the improved welfare of women, youth and children by enabling them to be involved in decisions that affect their lives.

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

International and even national development agencies shun working with district councils because they are often resource challenged in terms of both human and financial resources. VSO Zambia has chosen to work with councils because unlike central government councils are closer to the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups

Key beneficiaries and partners

Key beneficiaries are women, youth and children. Key partners include local authorities (councils), civil society organisations (CSOs), youth organisations and government (decentralisation secretariat, Ministry Of Youth, Sports & Child Development)

Key objectives of the programme and the cross-cutting

1. Support the establishment and strengthening of decentralised district structures
2. Enhance citizen ability - especially people living with HIV and AIDS, women, youth and children - to know and claim their rights
3. Increase women and youth participation and leadership at strategic decision-making levels.

Current programme activities

Focus of International Volunteer Placements:

- Policy research, analysis and advocacy
- Organisational development
- Resource mobilisation
- Leadership development
- Training and manuals development
- Sensitisation and awareness building
- HIV and AIDS Work place policy development

Workshops, training & conferences:

- Programme Area Review workshop (September 07)

Support to national volunteering:

- One partner underwent training in Philippines

Partner exchange visits/study tours:

- Study tour to South Africa planned for 8 partners from councils where VSO has partners. Tour planned for June 2007. This tour is being funded by LINKS

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

- One youth organisation (Youth Development Foundation) will receive a computer from VSO Zambia to as a contribution to the Get Connected Project which is aimed at training youth people in IT including internet. Two thirds of the trainees on the project would be female youth.

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Other partnership activities:

- 5 partners have been earmarked for 3 months Commonwealth Professional Fellowships placement with counties in the UK starting September 2007

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

The challenge remains to work with government to develop the decentralised structures, while simultaneously increasing citizens' awareness of their rights. Women's leadership skills in particular need strengthening. Such capacity building will shift disadvantaged citizens, especially women, from 'beneficiary' or passive recipients of development to active agents of change, able to challenge the culture of exclusion, co-direct their own development, and call for accountability from the government.