

VSO Narrative Summary & Learning Report for PPA 2004-05

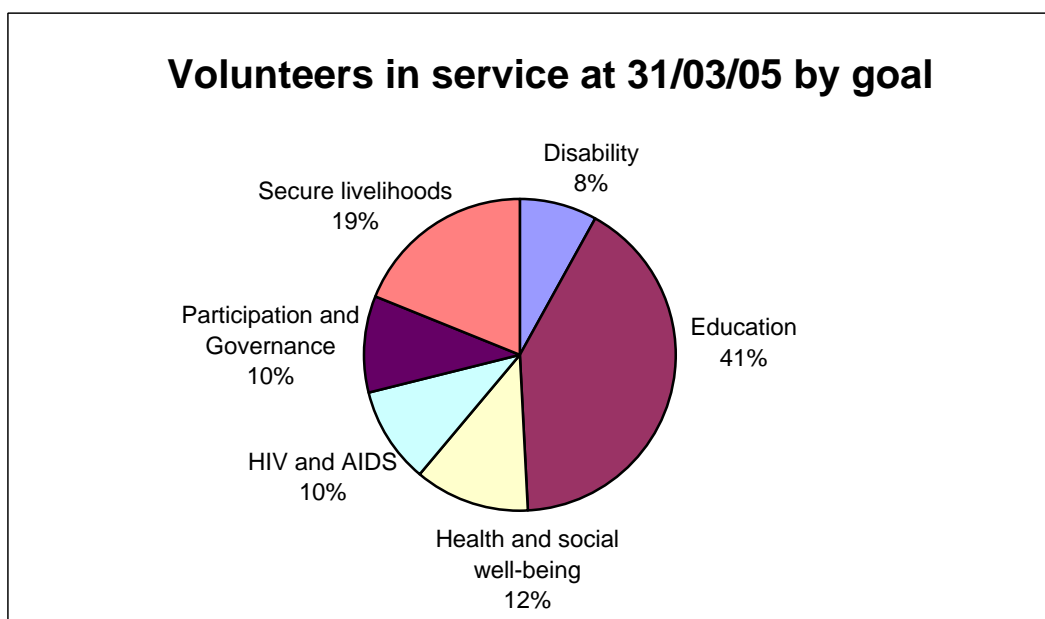
This summary narrative is based on reports from nine country programmes, and includes strategic outcomes and case studies from core outcome grids for HIV and Education (Annexes One, Two). It outlines the *approach to reporting* in a PPA transition year, *VSO's organisational effectiveness and transparency*, impact of the *external context*, strategic outcomes for *individual* capability building, *capacity building* and work on *pro poor policy*. It offers *key organisational learning about programmatic ways of working, and current challenges*, conclusions from the *dialogues with DFID Country Offices* (Annexe Four), a *Risk Analysis* matrix, and, finally, some key points on progress on *public awareness raising* on development issues, and *organisational partnerships in UK* (from Development Awareness Outcome Grid & Learning Narrative in Annexe Three). The full country reports with case studies are available.

1. PPA Reporting in Transition Year

In a transition year from VSO's first to second PPA, VSO has reported against the strategic outcomes in PPA 2. It was recognised that this approach would contribute to outcome-focussed planning and review processes in country programmes, even though programmes have been for the most part in the planning, rather than implementation, stage of their new strategies. Thus the emphasis has been on *progress* towards outcomes, and on consultation with partners and stakeholders to produce country level reports that can be referred to in subsequent years. The agreed methodology for PPA 2 has been used, and VSO is therefore reporting on programme work on Education, and HIV&AIDS goals in Ghana, The Gambia, Ethiopia, Malawi, Rwanda, Zambia, Cambodia, Nepal, Bangladesh (eight Education programmes; six HIV programmes). This is the core sample from which outcomes and learning have been verified, with additional evidence from other programmes to confirm these findings. Outcomes have been identified on the basis of plausible association rather than attribution. A significant part of the reporting process has been that all nine countries have submitted their reports to *DFID country offices* for feedback, and for use as a basis for a dialogue on learning and possible collaboration (see relationship with DFID below, and Minutes in Annexe Four).

2. Organisational Effectiveness and Transparency

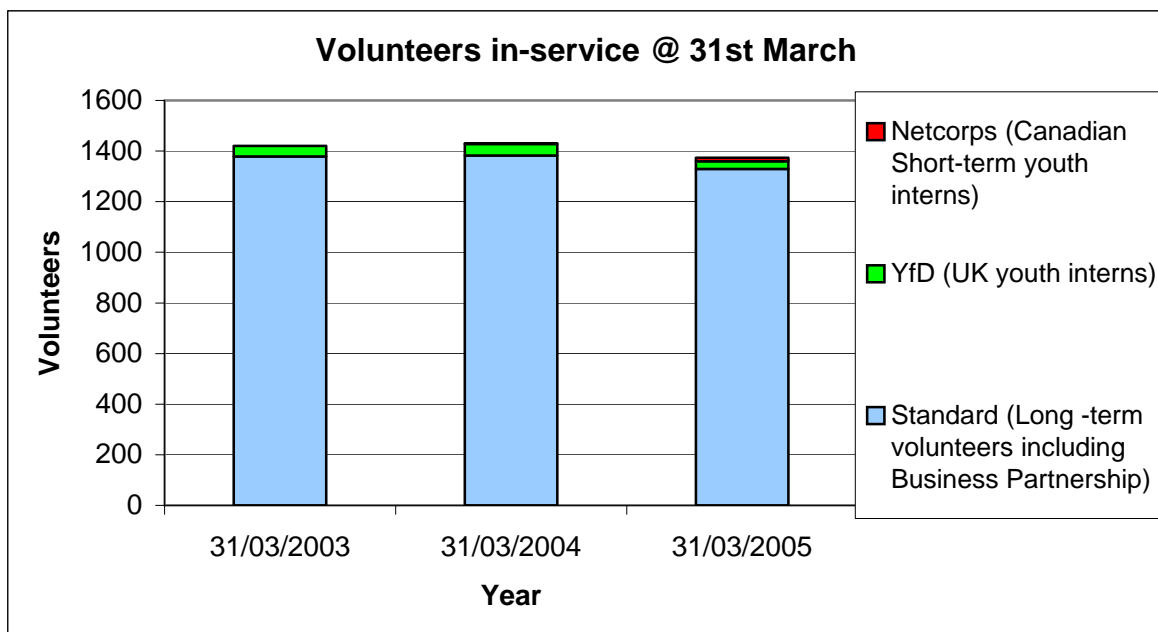
VSO had thirty-six country programmes in 2004-2005, having closed The Balkans and Kiribati, and opened in Sierra Leone during the year. VSO continued to engage in programme work in its six goal areas of HIV&AIDS, Education, Health & Social Well Being, Disability, Secure Livelihoods and Participation & Governance. The diagram below indicates the level of volunteer activity in the different goal areas in 04-05 and is not expected to change significantly over the next three years.



Objectives at partner/organisation level continue to be rated as successfully met by three quarters of our partner organisations. There also continues to be a similar percentage satisfaction rate amongst partners and volunteers, the monitoring of which we have improved in the last two years through use of a more independant volunteer survey. The chart below shows these trends.



Volunteer numbers: The bar chart below shows current volunteer numbers over the last three years. It is becoming increasingly difficult to measure volunteer numbers as there is a more diverse range of volunteer types – short-term volunteers such as Netcorps, Business Partnerships - and use of tools such as LINKS learning exchanges, support for national volunteering and work with advocacy networks and coalitions. It is expected that the method of communicating scale of activities will change for PPA reporting in 05-06 to better reflect activity levels.



Unit costs of long term volunteers have risen from £11,693 per year (03-04) to £12,183 per year (04-05) As well as sending slightly fewer volunteers than planned, we have recognised that VSO costs are also rising as a result of increasing our contribution to volunteers living allowances (normally born by partners). This is as a result of working with partners who are increasingly resource poor, but who are also strategic partners. We hope to make progress on reflecting unit costs of all VSO activities in 05/06.

3. External Context for VSO in 2004-05

The build-up to possible changes in donor-country policies towards the South has led to a growing consensus that absorptive capacity needs to be prioritised in the expansion of Aid. This speaks directly to VSO's distinctive competency in strengthening human resources for building capacity of government and civil society organisations. It has highlighted the importance for programmes of supporting the process of decentralising services, good governance, strengthening the public sector (at both local and national level), migration, and the rights of disadvantaged groups around services. VSO has responded to the increased availability of cheaper generic HIV drugs and the loss of committed monies for Global Health Fund as a result of U.S withdrawal, by re-focussing on treatment in both programme and advocacy work, focussing on the Rights of PLWHAs (People living with HIV&AIDS), and supporting access to existing funds. In education, the potential for pro poor policy change internationally has reinforced VSO's policy initiative on teachers, and its advocacy for increased basic education funding. The missed Millennium Development Goal on Gender Parity in Education, has renewed determination to engage with this challenging area of education programming, in support of DFID's Girls' Education Strategy. VSO recognises the opportunities for VSO experience to be heard at policy level, as a result of the climate for change created by the increased commitment from UK government to Africa, the recommendations of the Commission for Africa, and wide-spread popular support for the Make Poverty History campaign started in 2005.

4. Progress towards Strategic Outcomes (detailed evidence in attached HIV&AIDS – Annexe One and Education –Annexe Two- Core Outcome Grids)

4.1 Individual capabilities are built in order to effect positive political, social and economic change for poor people.

Education

- In almost all sample countries, there have been changes in the motivation and practices of *teachers*, including *newly trained teachers* who have particular obstacles to surmount in transferring theory to practice in a school. These changes have expanded the range of teaching styles and roles in the following ways:

using more interactive teaching methods
 using more visual aids
 accessing previously unused government resources for Teaching & Learning Materials
 using more appropriate learning materials
 moving towards student-led learning
 reflecting on their own practice
 assessing needs of disabled children and developing materials that include them

- *Teacher trainees* in three countries are using more interactive methods in class, and are usually employing more creative teacher led techniques such as increased use of locally made visual aids.
- *Sustainability of intervention*: In one sample country (Ethiopia) fifty per cent of senior managers ('deans') of Teacher Education Institutions have been trained in more student centred interactive methods, and are *teaching them to their own students*. Embedding change in the system is still a challenge in the majority of programmes. One key success factor is the development of shared change objectives for teacher education with senior management.
- In three sample countries, *students* are participating more in class, are more enthusiastic about learning and more comfortable with interactive methods. Reliable data on learning outcomes, such as examination results, is not available.

- In three sample countries, a core group of *students and teachers* are more knowledgeable about HIV&AIDS and gender equality - mainly through extra-curricula activities. In Malawi, *every teacher trainee receives HIV&AIDS awareness training* as a result of VSO support. Key elements in success in this area are support from management, and from a significant number of colleagues. Below is an example of this type of work from a non sample country.

China: ‘ During the break she stood up and said: “I’ll tell you the truth...I’m HIV positive.” The noisy classroom became silent suddenly for a minute, then warm clapping. A moment later you could hear the sound of weeping. We couldn’t believe what we had heard. All of us were so surprised. You know, she was so young and had such a good character. We clapped for her courage. She trusted us...I can’t find the right words to describe the situation. It was so moving. According to some latest materials, we know that the number of people living with HIV has increased quickly in recent years and more than half of them are young people. For college students like us peer education is one of the best ways to spread the information about HIV & AIDS.’ *Except from peer education report in Teacher Training College by Chinese trainee.*

- In two out of eight sample programmes, *parents’* changed attitudes towards education of their disabled children, as demonstrated by increased school attendance.

HIV&AIDS

- The main area where outcomes for individuals can be seen is around the rights of People Living with HIV & AIDS (PLWHAs), and challenging stigma are outlined in formal *Education* system (see Education above)
- Support to partner organisations has encouraged *individuals* to feel confident to speak out about HIV&AIDS thereby breaking down barriers around stigma and discrimination.
- *Partner organisation staff* in one out of six sample country programmes (Bangladesh) have put experience gained on Exchange Visits to high prevalence countries such as Uganda, into practice in their own organisations.

4.2 The **capacity of organisations** is enhanced through people-centred approaches, working in partnership and supporting volunteerism. The government and civil society organisations and networks VSO supports, will then increase their contribution to pro-poor political, social and economic change.

Education

- Education institutions (e.g. Rwanda Library Service, Ghana National Service Secretariat), in more than half of eight sample programmes, have improved *efficiency* of pro poor service delivery by strengthening data collection for planning, and adopting more strategic approaches to management. The example below illustrates how long term accompaniment from a volunteer can contribute to change in local government. This volunteer intervention has formed a key part of the strategic plan for VSO in Education in Rwanda.

Case Study – Education Management Advisor, Kigali Ngali, Rwanda.

The VSO Management Advisory position in Kigali Ngali has developed into a support role that is uniquely ‘VSO’. Although roughly equivalent to a Head of Division post, being a volunteer post ensures that the role remains advisory as opposed to managerial, with the emphasis on coaching as opposed to training. Although there have been some very visible support activities undertaken by the VSO Advisor, such as specific IT skills development or support for the new data management project (EMIS), most of the activities take place ‘behind the scenes’ in the form of working one-2-one with colleagues, demonstrating good practice (e.g. chairing meetings, communicating openly), coordinating activities between colleagues, following up trainings with ongoing support and unofficial supervision, and through keeping up to date with (the many) policy and systems developments coming from the Ministry of Education centrally.

The Director of Education has highlighted several strengths to this approach. It has given him and his team 'thinking time' i.e. more space for situation analysis and development of new proposals. He states that the Advisor has 'helped us to plan and to maintain a focus on what we plan to do' through work on prioritisation and following up of action plans. This has included 'helping us to coordinate internal and external activities, and following through decentralised strategic planning' through assisting with the development and monitoring of District plans, and helping to liaise between the Province and its government and NGO partners. There is a recognised link between her work and the fact that Kigali Ngali has made most progress out of the 12 provinces in implementing its planning, budgeting and M&E systems. This has been attested to by (amongst others) the Director of Planning at MINEDUC; and is evidenced by the concrete requests for similar placements- along same model - to be developed in three other Provinces. *Excerpt from VSO Rwanda annual report 2004-5*

- In more than half of sample programmes, a small but significant number of schools are developing the *capacity to deliver more inclusive child centred education* that responds to needs of children affected by HIV and AIDS; girls and disabled children. In three countries this is replicated at teacher training institutions/in service level.
- *Community participation*: Four out of eight programmes have supported changes in education systems at district and provincial levels that have contributed to improved *community participation in education management*. For example in Cambodia, there is a better understanding of accountable school management at community level, and increased provincial office capacity to train head teachers in school leadership that includes a people centred approach to community involvement.. In Malawi, the national education campaign (see case study below) has increased community awareness of rights.

HIV&AIDS

In this reporting year, this is the strongest area of VSO's work in HIV&AIDS. Activities in *all* six sample programmes have aimed to build the capacity of partner organisations of people living with HIV&AIDS, and support networking within movement.

- Five out of six sample programmes have made *significant progress towards capacity building outcomes with government and civil society partners*, resulting in more effective pro poor service delivery. This is confirmed by progress on capacity building in the majority of VSO programmes. The supporting HIV core outcome grid (Annexe One) gives detailed examples; as well as exploring the link with *mainstreaming* as an approach in which many volunteers are trained. Among the sample countries, the exception on capacity building is Nepal, who have experienced repeated periods of instability., but who have successfully developed and used an organisational development framework for initial partnership development. In summary, capacity has been built in the following ways:

Development of strategic plans
 Development of human resource policies and practices e.g. workplace policies and manuals.
 Development of planning and co-ordination systems e.g. for services at district level
 Development of financial systems
 Enabling Southern volunteers (e.g. from Kenya and Uganda) to input their experience
 Development of resources e.g. information booklets by children and for children in South Africa
 Development of fund raising capacity
 Development of M&E system
 Training of trainers (i.e. partner staff who can train others) in health skills for positive living; inclusive of symptomatic sero-positive people
 Training of trainers in HIV counselling
 Training of trainers in sexual health materials development
 Supporting home based care of chronically ill
 Introducing gender into discussions and planning

- *Effective small grant allocation and monitoring* that enables smaller organisations to expand services, and develop systems that meet challenging donor requirements (in Malawi, Zambia, Bangladesh, Ethiopia)

- Capacity support in two sample programmes, has resulted in *increased funding flows* to national CBOs and NGOs.
- In two out of six sample programmes, VSO has been able to create opportunities for *relational development amongst partner organisations* at district level - leading, for example, to shared learning.
- In one sample country programme (Zambia), VSO has *proactively facilitated the establishment of coalitions*, and *intra organisation partnership building*. Additional examples come from India (see below), and from Namibia where a network of six organisations supporting Orphans & Vulnerable Children was developed.

India: Building the capacity of the positive people's network at state level a volunteer has been working as an Organisational Development Advisor with En-Joy in Kolkata since July 2004. She has also been able to supporting the unification and restructuring of four similar organisations in Kolkata into a state level alliance called Bangla Network of Positive People (BNP+) which has five branches at district level, including En-Joy. Her time has been shared between En-Joy and BNP+ and has helped them both develop better systems as well as to define distinct roles and responsibilities for the state and district level structures. *VSO India annual report 04-05*

4.3 Local, national and international policies in 2 priority goal areas are more pro-poor, and more effectively implemented. VSO aims to improve the lives of men, women and children affected and infected by HIV& AIDS, and those denied access to quality Basic Education

Education

National level

- In more than half of sample programmes, a combination of staff and volunteers have influenced *national education policy so that it promotes more inclusive education service delivery* e.g. in education policies and national teacher education curricula that include disabled children.
- In two sample programmes (and in three outside sample), *Valuing Teachers* research and messages on teacher 'voice' and morale have been successfully used to *initiate national coalitions* e.g. The Maldives Ministry of Education to host a series of stakeholder VT Steering Group meetings. *This represents a change in policy discourse but not in implementation.*
- In two sample programmes, coalition advocacy campaigns based on *Valuing Teachers* research have led to pro poor changes in education policy implementation e.g. recruitment of 5000 teachers in Zambia, and example below.

Malawi: The Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education has a strong track record of influencing government, and in the past year has worked with a VSO volunteer to build organisational capacity. In addition, the coalition has researched the implementation of government education plans in Policy Investment Framework (which CSCQBE had strongly supported as a protected PRSP expenditure), and published reports in media exposing lack of progress. The results of this public monitoring are in themselves a contribution to good governance. *VSO Malawi annual report 04-05*

International Based on co-ordination from international level, seven out of twenty-two education programmes are making use of Valuing Teachers advocacy project for policy influencing in their own national context.

- GCE/VSO lobbying of IMF on economic conditionalities that restricted financing of teachers resulted in recruitment of teachers in Zambia, and challenged policy discourse to the extent that *IMF published official rebuttal of VSO position.*
- Lobbying on same Financing Teachers also brought acknowledgement and a promise of support in G7 debates from Canadian Finance Minister.

- Dissemination of Valuing Teachers messages through inclusion as case study in EFA Global Monitoring report (UNESCO/DFID supported).

HIV&AIDS: The strongest area of policy work in this goal area is a focus on hearing the voice of positive people through strengthening their organisations, and directly supporting their representation in decision making processes. In addition to sample country programmes, India and South Africa have made progress in supporting partner led *advocacy for men and disabled people*. Other areas such as corporate advocacy initiatives are still at an early stage

International

- VSO has contributed to Stop AIDS coalition success in securing *commitments to Universal Free treatment by 2010* in UK Labour Party Manifesto, and in Commission for Africa recommendations.
- VSO made an acknowledged contribution to WHO 3X5 campaign *gender commitment*.
- Based on its research on gender and HIV (including emphasis on greater involvement of men), VSO was able to *contribute to consultations on DFID strategies* developed in UK and in India.

5. Key Organisational Learning about Programmatic Ways of Working, and about current Challenges

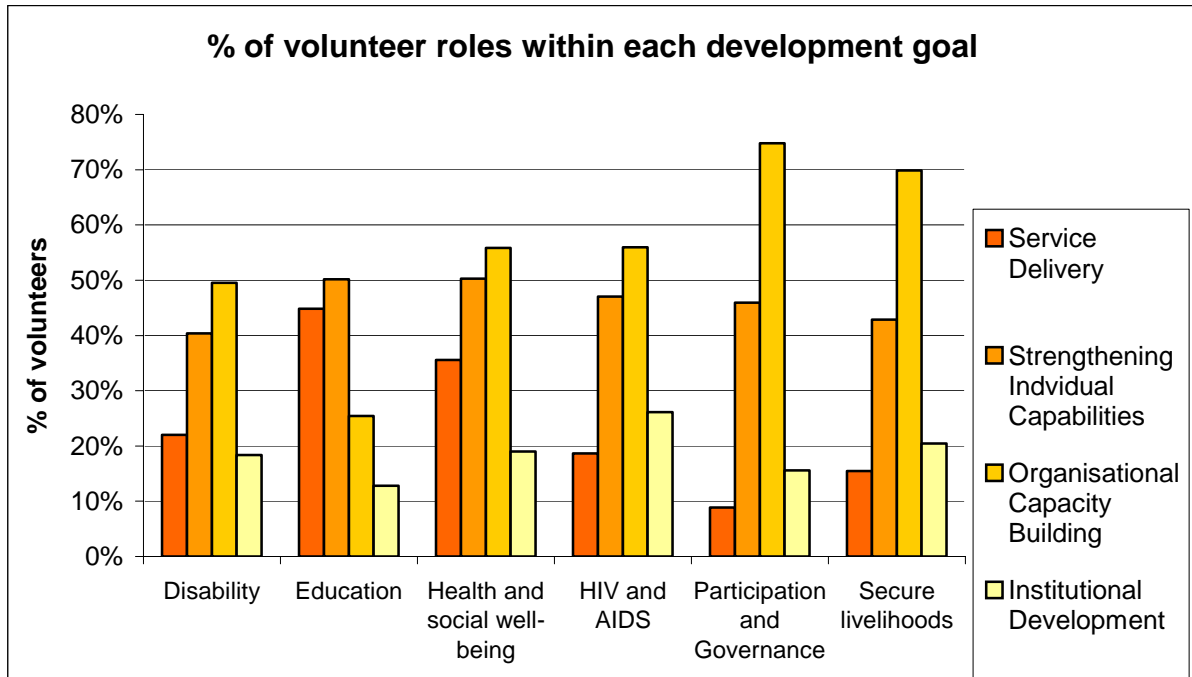
5.1 Achievements in Partnership Development

Having completed a period of programme area planning that has involved intensive consultation with stakeholders, and existing and potential partners, programme offices have developed strong foundations on which to deepen long term partnerships where *shared change objectives* e.g. around specific capacity building strategies such as mainstreaming HIV, changing practices of teacher educators or increasing accountability to community members, can be clarified and agreed for the next 5+ years. Equally important, has been to agree these objectives as part of a strategic programme area plan which all partners support, which can be reviewed using agreed methods, and fed into future planning.

The new Planning & Review system that has been systematically developed and introduced since the DFID 2003 review confirmed this as an area of concern, has been embedded in planning and operationalised incrementally at local partner level. The transition to a strategic outcome-led approach from a volunteer-led approach will largely centre around successful working relationships with key partners at district, regional, and national levels. VSO has prioritised support to this area for a 2 year period (04-06) through staff development, publishing partnership guidelines and holding workshops to share learning across programmes. This is in addition to senior staff accompaniment in Programme Planning & Review activities. In this process of organisational change, VSO has also prioritised learning from other NGOs and partners themselves, especially government. One significant learning point from partnership building that has been reported this year is the need for a range of partners across levels of seniority within an organisation and also with elected representatives. This strategy would respond to high staff turn over and attrition in partner agencies.

5.2 Balance of service delivery and capacity building

The implementation of a more strategic or programmatic approach to working involves a move away from volunteers solely delivering services, and towards split roles, or roles where building capacity for the long term is the sole purpose of role within clear partnership objectives. The chart below shows the balance between these roles within each goal area. It is interesting to note that there is more emphasis on service delivery in support for public services in health and education. (n.b. VSO has developed a more rigorous system for determining service delivery. For example, all teacher trainers are now counted as service delivery unless they have a specific capacity building role.)



There is also benefit to partners and to VSO in terms of programme learning and advocacy in sustaining partnerships at all levels, including at the grass roots. One challenge with partners whose human resource is fragile and declining is to avoid moving from serial gap filling on service delivery to serial gap filling on capacity building e.g. as teacher educators or district co-ordinators. In cases where due to an emergency situation VSO is responding primarily by supplying staff for direct service delivery, this has to be complemented by other long-term measures that address the root causes of the human resource problem. The example below illustrates this analysis.

Malawi: In view of the emergency situation in the national health service created largely by poor terms and conditions for health workers, and lack of financial resources, VSO was asked to be part of a government and donor plan to improve the health system, and in particular the roll-out of ARVs in a high prevalence country. *VSO has recruited thirty international volunteers doctors and nurses* and will continue to do so on an annual basis. This is part of the overall donor plan to increase salaries of medical staff, build and finance training capacity in-country, and take measures to slow down staff attrition.
VSO Malawi annual report 04-05

VSO with the help of DFID is increasing its organisational investment in learning about capacity building of pro poor services through the secondment of a key staff member to the Scaling Up Services team in the UK Policy Division in 05/06.

5.3 Challenges in North-South Advocacy for Pro-Poor Policy Change and Implementation

There have been successes over the reporting period in increasing communication with, and influencing of different levels of decisions makers; as well as sharing of information between international and national levels. There have also been some national level successes where information and opinion gathered at local level has been fed into national agendas facilitated by a VSO programme office e.g. Nepal, Bangladesh, and Malawi. The main challenge corporately is to sufficiently empower programmes and partners in management of corporate advocacy initiatives, and to be *led* by local and national level concerns, rather than by international agenda. A strength in this area is VSO engagement in global coalitions and initiatives for pro poor change that also aim to work in a participatory way e.g. grass roots survey for Commission for Africa (February 2005) carried out by VSO programme offices.

5.4 Effective use of Aid monies

There is an area of work that is emerging as a way in which VSO can make an effective contribution to development. Examples from the period of reporting include:- the increased effectiveness of donor funding for Cambodian education in EQIP programme, and the flexible use of small grants by VSO programme offices and volunteers. The case study below from Ethiopia illustrates how such interventions work in practice.

Ethiopia: Within the SNNPR region it can be said that communities working on HIV and AIDS at the grass roots level are now faced with less bureaucratic systems and now enjoy better access to regional co-ordinating bodies for HIV (HAPCOs). The VSO volunteer advising on fund management has worked with HAPCO staff to put in place standard proposal templates and reporting systems. Effective monitoring and evaluation systems are under development. In these tasks further assistance was available to the SNNPR HAPCO from the VSO database manager working alongside her Ethiopian counterpart.
VSO Ethiopia Annual report 04-05

5.5 Supporting decentralisation

As an organisation whose distinctive competency is building human resource capital, VSO has been working to support decentralised services from national to provincial and district levels for some years in both Asia and Africa programmes. The 2003 DFID review identified working at regional and district level as a particularly appropriate entry point and over the last year VSO has clarified its direction in decentralisation processes. It has moved away from an emphasis on support at central policy level to a range of interventions that includes local levels, where policies are implemented. This has involved VSO in clarifying the nature of partnership with government as although the main partner may be the Ministry of Education or Agriculture within a National Plan of Action, there is also a need for a working relationship with units of government at local levels who have a degree of decision making authority for negotiating with VSO (see also partnership development above). The case study below illustrates where one partnership with a district education office has brought tangible learning results for children from poor families in a disadvantaged rural area.

Ghana: The volunteer Education Adviser in district office started to look at the analysis of the BECE test results together with the Examinations officer and Assistant Director. He coached the examinations officer to how to analyze the performance of the schools on a subject basis, come out with district average performance for each subject to determine which school fell below or above the district average, etc. A meeting was held with head teachers, led by the Examinations officer, to discuss the results, find reasons for poor performance, and set targets for improvements. Following this participatory process, there was intensified supervision by Circuit Supervisors, the volunteer, Assistant Director supervisors and other members of staff to check on how schools were progressing towards the target. Issues identified were shared among staff back at the office for corrective measures to be taken.

Result: All the worse performing schools falling below the district average in 2003 came up above the district average in 2004. The overall effect was that it moved the district from 53rd position on the league table to 29th position. Girls' performance improved, even though it was still lower than for boys. Head teachers were equipped with planning and management skills. There was improved and regular supervision for, as one Circuit Supervisor put it "we were encouraged to visit schools more for as we saw him go we were also encouraged to go" It improved teamwork as the Assistant Director Supervisor now worked more with the examinations officer, and all of them worked more with head teachers.

VSO Ghana annual report 04-05

VSO is also pursuing a strategy in 'Participation & Governance' that assesses effectiveness of volunteer interventions by their potential to contribute to accountability and transparency mechanisms that make realisation of the rights of disadvantaged groups to basic services possible. Again these directions have to be part of partnership development. In the period of reporting, progress towards this outcome has been in

terms of increases in capability of local government e.g. increased representation of women within Technical Advisory boards, but the outcomes have yet to be seen. Where there have been successful outcomes, there has usually been a direct intervention to strengthen disadvantaged groups in making their voice heard by decision makers e.g. in Uganda the NAADS sub county organisation gave voice to local farmers' groups to influence the proper administration of funding mechanisms of Regional Agricultural Bureau. This focus on good governance in support for decentralised government services does not mean withdrawal of support for systems strengthening or for enhancing quality of services, but governance is a vital part of the intervention for achieving 'pro poor delivery of services'.

5.6 Potential of Mainstreaming

The success of HIV mainstreaming (understood as starting from an analysis of the purpose, mandate and routine functions of an institution, and at the work of the whole organisations; as well as its own vulnerability to HIV&AIDS) in strengthening individual, organisational and policy work in this goal area, could be adapted to the mainstreaming of gender and disability in a number of goal areas. Programme offices have often started from discussion of attitudes to gender inequality amongst staff and volunteers as a way of initiating gender and development programme planning. Disability, on the other hand, has usually been integrated into programme areas such as Education. The challenge is to absorb mainstreaming into the programmatic approach. Organisational learning as a result of a VSO secondment to the DFID Policy Division Civil Society Department for co-ordinating consultation on Girls' Education strategy has been helpful in respect to increased mainstreaming of gender into education. The HIV&AIDS Mainstreaming Guide for VSO Offices (January 2005) has been well received by organisations outside VSO in UK and overseas.

6. VSO Dialogues with DFID Country Offices as part of PPA reporting to ICSD (see agreed Minutes in Annexe Four)

One of the most significant developments in the reporting process was the opportunity to have a structured and purposeful dialogue with DFID Country offices. This was, in practice, difficult to arrange as staff in both organisations have heavy workloads. It is, therefore, a success in itself that eight out of nine sample country programmes held meetings. In six countries these meetings were held with the adviser or a team of advisers, and in The Gambia and Ethiopia the Head of Office took part. In three cases (Rwanda, Ghana, Cambodia) partner organisations were also present. This kind of dialogue reflects the importance of managing relationships with UK Civil Society at different levels. It is perhaps especially relevant in the context of Direct Budget Support, which, although extremely positive, has created a need to re-visit the working relationship with civil society organisations.

The response to the strategies and programme area plans was positive. Agendas were largely aligned e.g. Capacity-building, Education, HIV, Rural Livelihoods, Governance and Rights, and the two organisation had potential for working in complementary ways. In Zambia, for example, VSO can build skills where DFID is offering financial support. There were some questions about whether should be working at Basic or Secondary level in education, and how experience from first hand experiences could be best utilised for other players learning and for advocacy. In Ghana, DFID staff suggested that VSO explore scaling up successful pilots to national level. Other interesting points were positive feedback on the merger with beso, and the important contribution of South-South volunteering. DFID Zambia offered to support VSO in making strategic contacts, and DFID Ghana recommended that VSO participate in Ministry of Education committee for secondary education.

The outcome of almost all meetings was recognition that sharing of learning from the different levels, and scales, at which VSO and DFID work, was valuable. In The Gambia, DFID welcomed VSO working in different areas as this would give DFID an opportunity to learn about trends, (for example in Rural Livelihoods and Disability), through attending VSO reviews in these sectors. The advantage of attending VSO reviews was echoed by staff in Nepal. In all cases, the dialogues resulted in a mutual agreement to have regular meetings in the year ahead, and these will be minuted for the next PPA report.

7. Raising Public Awareness of Development: In a year of change for this area of our work in UK, the key achievement has been internal: the development of a Global Education Strategy that focuses on community cohesion, social inclusion and active citizenship in UK.

In addition, there has been progress in volunteer willingness to engage with global education and media activity on their return (e.g. 2 country programmes - Rwanda and Gambia are trialling a more strategic approach to integrating global education into their programme planning, the Global Educators Network of 600 individuals, establishment of on-line Global Educators Register as part of our work on the Global School Partnerships programme – see case study below).

Global School Partnerships Consortium (VSO, British Council, UKOWLA, CEF funded by DFID)

The Global School Partnerships database holds 608 school partnerships - involving 684 UK and 684 Southern schools. The actual total number of links and partnerships is estimated to be between 800 and 1,200. The database shows that this is a growing community as 37% of the partnerships are less than 2 years-old.

In terms of the partnership projects, 50% of the partnerships are now specifically working on joint curriculum activities with a global dimension. Citizenship, Geography, English and Arts are the most common curricular areas that benefit from partnership projects.

VSO's strategy for maximising the returned volunteer resource depends on the *quality of organisational partnerships*, as our strategic aim is to contribute to work of organisations in field. Over 2004-05, we identified a number of new partnerships with UK organisations to help increase development awareness and understanding within their sectors. Examples of such partner organisations are:

- CSV, in its schools work, with its Retired and Senior Volunteer Networks,
- Learning Centres for disadvantaged young adults;
- Inner-city and county LEAs in their leadership programmes for teachers;
- SGA groups (such as the TUC use of SGA funds for Development Awareness raising amongst its members);
- The Social Entrepreneur sector e.g. UnLimited
- The Refugee Council in their mentoring programme.

VSO aims to strengthen the systems for evaluating partnerships in the coming year. Work with the Global School Partnerships consortium has increased our understanding of quality partnerships in the Development Education sector.

- The importance of the honesty and integrity in both the working and personal relationships within the consortium
- The key strength of the consortium, which lie in its collective wealth and diversity of experience in the development, development education and education fields
- The fact that, although each partner comes from a very different background, there are shared values that underpin the programme and these bind the consortium strongly together and ensure it is focused and effective.

*Penny Lawrence & Sara Cottingham
June 2005*

8. RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX FOR OUTCOME VIABILITY AT START OF PPA 2 PERIOD (APRIL 2005)

	IMPACT	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
PROBABILITY				▶
LOW		-Complexity of partnership arrangements in UK reduces outcomes for partners in South. -Partnerships lead to ineffective outcomes.		-Global insecurity affects peoples' willingness to volunteer; as well as their effectiveness in-country. -Adverse publicity as a result of raising issues in the press.
MEDIUM			-Capacity of organisations weakened by outward migration -Building capabilities threatened as a result of HIV&AIDS -Basic service systems become increasingly dysfunctional in Low Income Countries -UK volunteering ethos does not get stronger, and highly skilled volunteers not found. - Returned Volunteers do not engage with strategy at a level where they have coherent impact - International labour market trends and global security adversely affect recruitment -Quality of reporting inadequately reflects quality of programme.	Broader society have limited interest in development education messages
HIGH	▼	-Difficult to work on policy in attributable way -Impact of development awareness by RVs too indirect to measure.	Additional funds sought are not forthcoming, donor policies change	Current global politics and security may have negative effect on development agenda - and public opinion.