

CASE STUDIES FROM VSO's EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND HIV& AIDS PROGRAMMES 2004-2005

These case studies are written by international volunteers and colleagues, and describe ways of working that have contributed to the change objectives of the organisation in which they are based, and to the overall objectives of the VSO programme area in that country. The texts are thus written in a personal rather than a formal reporting style.

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Bangladesh: Harrison Masereka – HIV & AIDS Counselling Training Adviser



Harrison Masereka – HIV & AIDS Counselling Training Adviser HASAB and VSO Volunteer .Harrison lives and works alongside friends and colleagues in the local

community in Bangladesh. Developing these relationships is vital for an effective contribution by an international volunteer.

The case study below is from Harrison's placement as part of the VSO Bangladesh programme in HIV&AIDS and Sexual Health. Objectives are to contribute to partner organisations providing more effective, non-discriminatory and/or appropriate HIV & AIDS and sexual health services/programmes, and achieving greater organisational sustainability.

1. Process followed by Harrison and his colleagues:

Harrison recognised the need to spend time analysing the potential for developing a HIV & AIDS counselling training project at HASAB. To this end he completed the following activities within the first 9 months of his placement:

- HIV & AIDS counselling training needs assessment of HASAB and its partner organisations
- Curriculum development for HIV & AIDS counselling training
- Development of HIV & AIDS training manual to support staff and community volunteers
- Designed and facilitated counselling training workshops for HASAB staff
- Helped to develop project proposal for the creation of HASAB as a counselling training centre
- Funding secured from Family Health International

2. Implementation of the Project:

Having completed a situational analysis, developed materials and secured funding for the project HASAB has been launched as an effective provider of HIV & AIDS counselling services. Additional staff have been recruited to become HASAB 'Master Trainers' in order to support the project.

To date the following training has been completed:

- HIV & AIDS and STI counselling orientation trainings – (1 training, 16 counsellors)
- Core training – 4 week workshops, 4 courses, 12 trainees per course
- Supervisory monitoring visits of 1 month of each 4 week course
- Basic orientation. Counselling training – 2 courses conducted and 4 already planned in the future, 16 participants per training
- Supervisors orientation – done after each core training – 4 courses, 2 days each, 8 participants per course
- Training of the HASAB Master Trainers – 6 senior/masters trainers trained, 1 month long course, these were held at HASAB and Master Trainers are then able to train others

3. Contribution made by international volunteer to capacity building in HASAB

a) Impact of training on trainees

- A team of professional HASAB based counsellors is in place
- Those trained have had previous inaccurate assumptions about what counselling is challenged and are now skilled
- Professional counselling service of improved quality delivery by counsellors as a result of training received through HASAB
- Improvement in the lives of target groups receiving counselling from HASAB trained counsellors
- Supervisory monitoring visits confirm changes in practice and skills by counsellors who have received HASAB training.

- Counsellors are empowered and more confident as a result of improved problem solving skills
- De-mystification of HIV & AIDS achieved amongst counsellors trained by HASAB which then benefits client groups

“Through the HIV & AIDS services, particularly counselling, public stigma and organisational stigma attached to HIV is slowly coming down. This is manifested by the growing number of organisations yearning to incorporate HIV activates into their systems, such as voluntary counselling and testing” (Harrison, Msakera, VSO volunteer)

b) Changes in organisational practice at HASAB:

- Formation and development of training modules and curriculum of different counselling trainings. Counselling curriculum developed for counsellors working with the following issues/groups – Intravenous Drug Users, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Men who have Sex with Men, Voluntary Counselling and Testing
- HASAB staff are now technically empowered to offer training on HIV counselling (a team of 2 senior trainers and 4 master trainers now exists – all trained by the VSO volunteer and now able to run counselling training courses themselves)

c) Organisational sustainability

- HASAB is able to raise funds by charging more affluent organisations for counselling training services.
- HASAB has grown in confidence and increased its reputation. Existence of a successful project has contributed towards attracting other donors (HASAB now runs an additional 3 projects (UNICEF, MJ, GAHIM)

Future plans for accompaniment from international volunteer :

HASAB have requested and VSO have agreed to a 12-month extension of Harrison’s placement. The following work priorities have been presented as a rationale for this request:

- Further follow up programmes to ascertain quality of training by the trained master trainers
- Carry out specific counselling training to those working with special risk groups as follows:
 - Injecting Drug Users and other drug users
 - Men who have Sex with Men
 - Floating, hotel based, brothel based sex workers
 - Internal migrants
 - Prevention of vertical transmission of HIV
- Further development of specific counselling training modules for the above packages
- Conducting refresher courses for the already trained counsellors
- Contribute towards the implementation of the newly approved projects of HASAB

Final thoughts from the volunteer:

“Though Bangladesh is still one of the countries in Asia with the least infection rate according to records the geographic, behavioural, economic and social patterns existing are suggestive to a looming AIDS epidemic in the near future.

What we would like to see happen is a more concerted effort to reduce the infection rate. WE can contribute towards this giving HIV/AIDS a human face by demystifying it from the monster shape to a usual shape like any other viral disease that we have lived with for ages immemorial. This can be achieved by:

- *More awareness creation programmes at all social sectors e.g.: schools, institutions, local grass roots, the army etc.*
- *Encouraging partnerships/working together among the existing HIV/AIDS service partners, other than struggle for the fittest attitude existing now.*

The two case studies below are from programmes contributing to HIV&AIDS Education within the formal system



VSO/Liba Taylor

Zambia: HIV & AIDS Education Campaign blossoms in North Western Province

Documented by international volunteer teacher at Kabompo High School

Kabompo Secondary School was one of the first schools to do SHARP (SOLTECH HIV Awareness Resource Project) with their pupils. SHARP is an eight-session workshop for school pupils, which focuses on some of the key issues about HIV – transmission, prevention, stigma, traditional practices, and dangerous times and places. The programme is very successful, and is enjoyed by pupils and facilitators alike. However, until a year ago, SHARP was only happening in four schools – secondary schools in North Western Province of Zambia where there were VSO teachers.

After a meeting with some representatives from VSO in London, and also with the District Education Officer, it was decided that the VSO volunteers in Kabompo could benefit more people if they tried to extend their work beyond the confines of Kabompo Secondary School. The most obvious programme to try and introduce at different levels of education (e.g. basic, primary) was SHARP.

Before this, SHARP had been quite resource-intensive, or at least relative to the resources available in Kabompo. So I, together with a VSO colleague, extensively edited the workshop, relying on chalk, blackboards, and rough paper, rather than flipcharts and marker pens. Also, the language was made simpler and more

analogies were included, in an attempt to make it easier for basic school pupils to understand.

One of the most powerful parts of SHARP is a game, called the HIV game. In this game, participants follow a sexual history given to them on a card, and then exchange fluids from a cup, according to their sexual history. Following an 'HIV test' at the end, people realise how quickly HIV can tear through a community. The participants are told that only one person had HIV at the start.

In the original SHARP, the game used either starch solution and iodine; or sodium hydroxide with phenolphthalein indicator. These chemicals were present at the Secondary School, but not at any of the other schools in the District. My main input was the designing of a version of the game using locally available resources. The HIV virus would be represented by lemon solution, and the indicator for the HIV test would be a solution made by boiling the very common purple bougainvillea petals, which are present throughout the year.

This innovation meant that the programme to introduce SHARP to every school in Kabompo District could go ahead. SHARP has now been introduced into 55 basic schools in Kabompo, through a series of workshops held in various 'zones' in the District. These workshops were facilitated by Zambian and VSO volunteer teachers working together, and featured demonstrations of sessions from SHARP, so that teachers could follow the demonstration, and then run the workshop with their pupils. The HIV game has been performed for local communities in more than one place.

We also designed a scheme to introduce SHARP to every school in the Province, and this scheme is nearing completion. In this scheme, VSO teachers have visited the central zone of five Districts in the Province, and in each case have held the same demonstration workshop. They also identified the most enthusiastic participants, who have been trained as 'teacher trainers' to repeat the job of the VSO volunteers in the various 'zones' of their Districts. Only one district has not been visited, and that will hopefully be visited early next year.

As a result of this programme to introduce SHARP, and also as a result of the new HIV game, many pupils are now doing SHARP – a recent evaluation of the programme in Kabompo District alone gave questionnaires to some 500 pupils, and it is hoped that that is only a fraction of the people that are benefiting from SHARP

*Note SHARP is based on materials from *Stepping Stones*, written by Alice Welbourn and for which there is a world-wide practitioners network. The latest version of SHARP is called SHARPER and those interested should contact VSO UK

Zambia: Support for HIV&AIDS education through maths teaching in National Curriculum

"The Mathematics of HIV&AIDS" gives teachers the right answer

by international volunteer replaced as a Mathematics teacher, Chassa Secondary School

Zambia's Ministry of Education has instigated many worthy programmes for teaching pupils about HIV and AIDS, but these often encounter problems in achieving widespread adoption and implementation. As a Maths teacher at Chassa Secondary School, I felt a more pragmatic approach was needed. I had employed HIV&AIDS statistics in my lessons and decided to use my 2½-years experience of teaching in Zambia to write a guide for integrating HIV&AIDS education into Maths lessons, putting the needs of teachers first.

'The Mathematics of HIV&AIDS' is designed to be flexible and easy to use; it consists of a series of Maths questions set within the context of HIV&AIDS that do not require any special training to use or require teachers to change their normal teaching style. Using the guide has practical advantages for teachers - using a contemporary issue will engage pupils more with the subject and results should improve - but at the same time, teaches pupils about HIV&AIDS. For example, by drawing a histogram to show the age distribution of AIDS cases, pupils are not just learning about statistics, but can see for themselves that casual contact and mosquitoes do not transmit HIV. In terms of HIV&AIDS education, the guide emphasises that young people are at risk and the comparative risks of different sexual behaviour, as well as the basic facts about the epidemic and prevention.

RESULT A first draft of the guide was circulated to Zambian and international volunteer Maths teachers alike, and their feedback was used to produce a final version that has been approved by the Ministry of Education for distribution and use in Zambian schools. Once some funding for printing is sourced, it is my hope to get 'The Mathematics of HIV&AIDS' on the desk of every Maths teacher in Zambia. The guide also has the potential to be used in other countries - it can be easily adapted by simply changing the country-specific data used in the questions. With luck, my guide will allow many more people to join the fight against HIV&AIDS.

Case Studies from programmes contributing to education management capacity at district level



Rwanda: Education Management in Kigali Ngali

The VSO international volunteer 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 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, 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 on trainings with ongoing support and unofficial supervision, and through keeping up to date with 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.

The model is strong, but of course the reality is that there are obstacles. The difficulty of placing a VSO Advisor within the Provincial organograms has caused both logistical problems (delays in salary payments) and management problems (what is the 'status' of a VSO Advisor?). The lack of capacity within the teams at a time of enormous change makes creating the time for formal meetings between the Advisor and the Provincial Management Team difficult and follow ups are therefore not as structured as would otherwise be the case.

However, progress has been made in a relatively short space of time (the placement began in September 2003). Although it cannot be directly attributed to the work of the VSO Advisor, there is a recognised link between her work and the fact that Kigali Ngali has made good progress amongst the 12 provinces in implementing its planning, budgeting and Monitoring & Evaluation systems. This has been attested to by (amongst others) the Director of Planning at the Ministry of education; and is evidenced by the concrete requests for similar placements to be developed in three other Provinces.

Nepal: education management – process of support and results

The District Education Office in Rautahat district and the municipality of its district centre, Gaur were first contacted by VSO Nepal in 2001 as an exploration of working in central terai districts. The DEO at that time expressed an interest in subject specific teacher trainers. Although this was long before the development of the current programme, our learning was already indicating that subject based teacher training is often difficult because there are other changes needed in the education system and practice. In order for VSO Nepal to have impact in education there was need to focus initially on aspects such as participatory teaching techniques, lesson planning and classroom management before improvement in effective teaching in subject and content can be seen. Over the next months discussions and workshops with the District Education Office and municipality staff led to the development of 2 placements in the district, one based in each organisation and both for education advisers who would support the DEO in running effective awareness raising programmes. This was very different to the science teacher trainer first requested!

Colin and Sandra Upham arrived in Nepal in February 2003 and after their in country induction travelled to Gaur that April. They spent their first months in post getting to know the staff, teachers, colleagues and students, learning about the education issues in Nepal and particularly in Rautahat district. As part of their familiarisation process in the municipality they spent time visiting all of the schools in the catchment area and over the first three months in placement they gathered baseline data from each school in the municipality area. This information included number of male teachers and female teachers, number of male and female students, pupil teacher ratios, subjects taught, school records showing attendance, school dropout, exam results, and activity and observations on the running of the school. As well as providing useful information on which to base their proposed work, this exercise in itself also led to Sandra and Colin building credibility, trust and good working relationships with their colleagues.

After the Desain holiday in October that year, they returned to Gaur to find the town in a frenzy – the Executive Officer (EO) of the Municipality had seen an opportunity for Gaur to become a model in striving for universal primary education. Gaur had the notable record of being one of the poorest municipalities in Nepal and this was seen by the Executive officer as an opportunity for progress. He knew that Colin and Sandra had considerable data from their baseline collection and asked for their help in widening out their survey into all homes in the municipality so that a true picture of how many children were not going to school could be developed. Over the ensuing weeks the Municipality mobilised a team of workers to gather a complete demographic record of all families in the catchment area, including information such as number of households, ethnic group/caste, mother tongue and religion. The number of pre-school children, primary aged children and post primary children was recorded as was the literacy status, educational achievement, schooling status of various age groups including drop out rates and reasons. The survey also explored the community's perception of a quality education and characteristics of a good school.

Once compiled the data was analysed with and the "Municipal Primary Education Plan" devised for Gaur Municipality for 2061 – 2065 and this was submitted to the Ministry of Local Development (MoLD). This plan has been used now as the basis for a further 10 Municipalities in Nepal and potentially across all Municipalities in Nepal.

In addition to the work Colin and Sandra were able to achieve in the Municipality schools and DEO in Gaur, their presence facilitated a significant opportunity for Gaur and other Municipalities.

Colin and Sandra ended their service in December 2004 and prior to that spent one month handing over their work to Rik Aarden and Peggy Van der Horst who will work with the DEO and Municipality for the next two years. The handover period enabled Rik and Peggy to learn in situ from Colin and Sandra and minimised the often lengthy learning period in placement and meant that Rik and Peggy have been able to start working effectively in the district.

The approach of gradually building solid relationships with the partners (DEO and Municipality) has clearly been appropriate and constructive, and shows that progress is clearly underway towards the programme objectives, as indicated by the DEO in Rautahat:

“DEO Rautahat has been very lucky to have VSO volunteers for last three years. Colin and Sandra also did very good work. Rik and Peggy are also helping me in planning and improving the quality of education . The District Education Office needs to get involved with all public issues and does not have enough time to think and plan the activities. VSO volunteers have helped me to understand the education problems better and also they have suggested some ideas to solve these problems most of which do not necessarily need any money .Because of VSO's input, I hope the office will be more efficient in delivering and implementing EFA programme in the district”.

Sadananda Jha, District Education Officer, Rautahat DEO

Ghana: Education management – tackling causes and taking management action

VSO had developed a very participatory programme objective for strengthening the capacity of Ghana Education Service District office staff and head teachers to provide a functional support to improve education delivery. To achieve this objective VSO placed an international volunteer management support officer in the Bongo District Education office to work with the Director, Front line Assistant Directors, Circuit Supervisors, and Head teachers.

Before

Before the volunteer arrived the District Education office used to analyze the District Basic Education Certificate Examination BECE in a fairly simple way to show which schools were leading and which schools were last as well as pass rates for girls and boys. This was not followed up with planning with individual schools as to how the situation could be turned around. Communities were less involved in talking about improving school results.

What was done

The VSO volunteer started to look at the analysis of the BECE results together with the Examinations officer. He trained the examinations officer to how to analyze the performance of the schools on subject basis, come out with district average performance for each subject determine which school fell below or above the district average, etc.

A meeting was held with head teachers led by the Examinations officer; Assistant director and the volunteer to discuss the results find reasons for poor performance and set target for improvements. The targets were written and copies given to the District Education office team. There was intensified supervision by Circuit Supervisors, volunteer, AD supervision 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 measure to be taken.

Evaluations and planning meetings

Outcome

As results all the worse performing schools falling below the district average in 2003 came up above the district average in 2004. The over all effect was that it moved the district from 53 position on the league table to 29 position. Girls' performance

improved even though 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 puts it "*we were encouraged to visit schools more for as we saw him go we were also encouraged to go*"

Conclusion:

It improved teamwork for the Assistant Director supervision now worked more with the examinations officer and all of them more with head teachers. Potential to improve motivation of teachers as subject teacher wards were introduced.