

Programme Area Summary

Country: Nigeria

Programme Area: HIV and AIDS

What is the aim of the programme area?

VSO Nigeria aims to strengthening the capacity of partner organisations to provide a sustainable response and abate the spread of HIV and AIDS in 6 target states in Nigeria including Kano, Osun, Lagos, Cross River and Abuja TCT.

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

Around 4 million Nigerian adults and children live with HIV and AIDS, accounting for almost 10% of the total population. The age group 20-24 years has the highest national prevalence of 5.6% while among women aged 15-24 years is 5.2%. VSO's work on HIV and AIDS started as a cross cutting theme in 2001 to address the issue raised by volunteers who felt the reality of the epidemic was becoming increasingly apparent. Currently VSO is working with partner organisations to strengthen their capacity to enable them to design, implement and manage their prevention initiatives in a sustainable manner.

Key beneficiaries and partners

Young people, especially women, were identified during the consultation as the most vulnerable and worst affected by spread of the virus. Youth friendly health services, counselling or family planning organisations are the target for support by VSO.

Partners include:

- Strengthening Nigeria's Response (DfID funded programme) in partnership with VSO, Action Aid International and Family Health International.
- Faith Based organisations and private sector initiatives such as Guinness Diego and DHL Nigeria on workplace capacity building programmes
- Local, regional and national networks/consortium structures in each of the geographical patches
- Community Resource Centres
- Adolescent Health and Information Projects
- Education As A Vaccine Against AIDS; Daughters of Charity and Partners for Development
- Youth Empowerment Foundation, Development in Nigeria and Life Vanguard (LIVA)

Key objectives and crosscutting themes

- To increase capacity of organisations working in HIV and AIDS prevention programmes
- To strengthen and facilitate collaboration, networking, and mutual learning among partners in order to develop greater coherence and integrated multi-sectoral response to HIV and AIDS
- To facilitate the development of appropriate communication strategies for behavioral change as an integral component of programme implementation.
- To promote mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS in partnership with education establishments and community service organisations in focal states.

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There are cross-linkages with Education. VSO will place ten volunteers in Education placements to facilitate the mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS in their institutions. Gender is a cross-cutting theme because studies have shown that many factors restrict a woman's ability to take full control of their lives. Women are increasingly becoming infected with HIV and at as significantly younger age than men. In the four objectives outlined, VSO will focus on gender issues relating to empowering women, addressing the needs of young women and girls living with HIV and AIDS and constructive involvement of men in activities to reduce gender inequality. Through advocacy, VSO will take advantage of its wide reach in remote areas to advocate gender equality and raise the level of HIV and AIDS awareness in communities especially among the vulnerable groups like commercial sex workers and girls.

Current programme activities

Focus of International Volunteer Placements

VSO Nigeria projects a request of between 15-20 volunteers in Health, Business and Management, Social and Community and ICT over a two-year period. Over the next six years, 48 volunteers will be requested for the implementation of Strengthening Nigeria's Response (SNR).

Workshops, training & conferences

Participatory workshops with all partners and volunteers will be held bi-annually. Yearly Partnership Review Workshops will be held with the aim to review progress towards PAP objectives. Self evaluation reports will be completed by volunteers and partners for biannual workshops and placement reviews.

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

VSO gained experience of working directly with HIV and AIDS organisations during the early stages in 2001 with direct placements supporting capacity building and counseling, research and documentation on HIV and AIDS. The success across the country contributed to the recognition of what VSO can achieve in this field. VSO's choice to focus mainly on prevention is where it feels it can make the most impact. Youth have been prioritised because it was found through research that they respond better to guidance and advice offered informally. Youth also provides VSO with an effective entry point for preventative initiatives in the Education sector as well.