

Programme Area Summary

Country: Papua New Guinea

Programme Area: Disability 2005-2009

What is the aim of the programme area?

To enable and support children, women and men with disability in target areas experience increased social well-being, participation and equity in society

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

VSO has a history of supporting service provisions in Papua New Guinea and has a credible name in the country. There are inadequate services to improve the quality of life of disabled people and VSO has the capacity to contribute in the development of services such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy that can enable disabled people to experience independence.

Stigma against disabled people is a problem in Papua New Guinea. A large number of disabled children, mothers of disabled children and disabled women face stigma and discrimination. VSO's direct contribution has been to support the setting up of the National Disability Resource & Advocacy Centre. This effort has been sustainable because one of the VSO partners is providing the required support. The centre promotes disabled peoples organisations in Papua New Guinea so that disabled people themselves can advocate for their rights. VSO has also significantly contributed in raising the awareness and provided support in the development of disabled people organisations and national advocacy organisation such as National Disability Advocacy & Resource Centre.

Key beneficiaries and partners

The programme will benefit primarily disabled people through a range of interventions and partnerships. Strategic partnerships have already been formed to support disabled people rights to access quality services and address stigma and discrimination.

- Divine Word University, Madang
- National Department of Health (Provincial Hospitals in various provinces)
- Callan Services for Disabled Persons, Wewak (A national level disability NGO)
- Creative Self Help Centre (local level NGO), Madang
- National Orthotic & Prosthetic Services (NOPS), Lae (Government Division -part of National Department of Health)
- Cheshire Home, Port Moresby (Local level NGO)
- National Department of Education, Port Moresby
- National Department of Community Development, Port Moresby
- National Board for Disabled Persons, Port Moresby
- Senta Bilong Helpim Centre (local level NGO), Vanimo
- National Disability Resource & Advocacy Centre, Madang (currently small but with strong potential to become a national organisation)

Key objectives of the programme and cross-cutting themes

Recently VSO PNG has undergone a rigorous process of programme review that has led to amended programme objectives:

- To enable disabled people to access appropriate Hospital and Community based rehabilitation services
- To promote disability as rights-based mainstream development issue amongst VSO volunteers, partners and communities

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Emphasis in the second objective will be on the development of disabled people's organisations and promoting inclusive education for disabled children. The programme will also address stigma and discrimination through working on HIV and AIDS and gender issues as cross cutting themes. Development of a revised programme area plan is in progress, which will integrate and then mainstream effectively HIV and AIDS and gender issues.

Current programme activities

Focus of International Volunteer Placements

- VSO volunteers (mainly physiotherapists) continue to set up and strengthen physiotherapy departments in various provincial hospitals. VSO volunteers are also managing and teaching a diploma course on physiotherapy provided by Divine Word University.
- While sustaining the input around physiotherapy, VSO has changed the programme direction to address disability rights in a holistic way and started supporting community-based organisations to strengthen the CBR programmes in Papua New Guinea. More work has been done in raising awareness on disability rights and will be continued in future to address stigma and discrimination issues. VSO volunteers are also being recruited to work in the areas of community development, advocacy and organisation development to develop and strengthen organizations of and for disabled persons.

Workshops, training & conferences

- Monitoring & Evaluation Workshop: An innovative M&E workshop was organised in March 2007 for all Education and Disability programme volunteers. This workshop helped disability volunteers to understand the M&E systems and procedures and they were also trained to use "Most Significant Change" technique as a monitoring & evaluation tool.
- National Disability Conference: This is an annual conference on disability organised by the National Board for Disabled Persons. This year VSO will actively participate in setting up the agenda of the conference.
- Disability Equality Training for VSO staff in September 2007
- National Physiotherapy Conference, September 2007

Support to national volunteering

- A CBR & National Volunteering roundtable was organized in order to share the concept of national volunteering with different stakeholders. This workshop also provided an opportunity to share and learn from the experience of two participants from a volunteer management course in Philippines. These participants were working as Team Leaders in the CBR programme of Callan Services.

Providing grants and/or equipment for partners

- VSO is supporting and funding NOPS to implement National Wheelchair Service.

Development of publications or other materials for training or communication

- Disability Research Report produced by VSO volunteer will be published shortly. National Department of Community Development has provided financial support to publish this research.

Other Partnership Activities:

- National Wheelchair Service Network: VSO has been supporting NOPS to implement a project on National Wheelchair Service. This is the first of its kind service in Papua New Guinea and has great potential to support disabled people who need wheelchairs for mobility. More than 250 wheelchairs have already been distributed and used by

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disabled people. This project is externally funded through a range of donors such as British High Commission, Guernsey Overseas Aid Commission and GDS in the UK.

- Initiating an innovative project on developing Disabled People Organisations in Morobe Province in Papua New Guinea:
- VSO has undertaken a direct initiative to support the development of disabled people organizations in Morobe Province in collaboration with NOPS and Morobe Special Education Resource Centre. The project will start when a potential VSO volunteer – Community Development Advisor will join the project in July 2007. National Department of Community Development has indicated to support this project financially for this year.
- Accessibility study: VSO and Creative Self Help Centre have undertaken a study to understand the accessibility for disabled people in Madang Province. This study is led by a VSO volunteer who has a visual impairment. This study is also helping to raise awareness in the community and sensitizing disabled persons that they have rights.

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

Establishment and improvement of physiotherapy services. Next year, eleven national physiotherapists will be working in provincial hospitals because of VSO's direct contribution in setting up physiotherapy services in Papua New Guinea.

Over a period of one year, VSO has successfully changed the direction of the disability programme by adopting a strong rights-based approach. Support to small community based organizations has been very recent. This is interesting because VSO didn't develop such partnerships before.

One of the pioneering efforts by VSO is establishment National Disability Resource & Advocacy Centre that is now supported by Divine Word University. A multi-stakeholder partnership has been developed to support the project on the development of disabled people organizations at the grassroots in Morobe Province – a completely new initiative in PNG.