

Rwanda



VSO Rwanda Strategy

2012-17

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Quick facts

Population: 10.7 million with highest population density in Africa

Official languages: Kinyarwanda, English, French

Human Development Index (HDI) rating: 166 out of 187 (Least Developed Country)

Gender: the proportion of parliamentary seats held by women is 57%, the highest rate in the world

Median age: 19 years old

Life expectancy: 58 years old

Economy: 45% of people in Rwanda live below the poverty line, with the vast majority living in rural areas. Over 80% live on less than US\$2 a day.

Growth rate: Between 2000 and 2010, Rwanda averaged a growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 8.48%.

Photography: ©VSO/Ben Langdon



Foreword

VSO is a leading, independent, non-governmental organisation (NGO). We believe that change happens because people make it happen. Providing food, infrastructure and machinery is important, but we believe people are the key to overcoming poverty.

That's why we work through volunteers. Drawn from many countries and all walks of life, they give of their time, expertise and passion. Volunteers share their skills within carefully-selected partner organisations, ranging from grassroots groups to government ministries. It's a powerful, cost-effective way to create lasting results.

Together we work to improve disadvantaged people's access to quality essential services, information and ideas that link them to the wider world. The VSO network helps disadvantaged people understand their rights and empowers them to participate as equal, fully-valued members of their society.

What we do

Work together: Our volunteers and programme staff work with partner organisations active in education, disability and citizen engagement, to build their capacity (at individual, organisational and institutional levels) through transferring knowledge and experience not accessible locally, while local partners use their skills and cultural understanding to make an impact in their own communities.

Knowledge sharing: Through workshops, conferences and national and international exchanges we connect individuals and organisations so that they can share knowledge, perspectives, ideas and practices. This provides access to knowledge for those who are often excluded.

Advocacy: We conduct research, pilot and evaluate innovative approaches, give voice to our beneficiaries and bring knowledge to those responsible for deciding on and implementing policy.

How we do it

Our efforts focus on increasing the impact of existing government and civil society development efforts to strengthen organisational and human capacities. We work alongside our partners, volunteers and ultimate beneficiaries in a consultative, inclusive and respectful manner in all stages of programme design, monitoring and evaluation as we consider sustainability, empowerment and capacity-building our overarching goal. The work and ambition outlined in this plan recognises and appreciates existing accomplishments and reflects our commitment to ongoing consultation and collaborative implementation.



Our vision

VSO Rwanda has an ambitious vision that guides our country strategy:

- Children in Rwanda finish basic education equipped with the knowledge and skills to further their education, their personal and social development, and contribute towards the economic development of their country.
- People with disabilities in Rwanda are able to actively participate in community life and have access to appropriate, quality services, including health, education, and livelihoods.
- Youth in Rwanda are actively engaged in their communities and have skills that are relevant to the Rwandan labour market, ultimately resulting in increased employment.
- The Government of Rwanda recognises volunteering as a way to develop individual capacity and as a significant contributor to the country's development.

The context in Rwanda

Despite major progress since the 1994 genocide, Rwanda is still a deeply impoverished country and faces huge development challenges. In the most densely populated country in Africa, many people are subsistence farmers and some struggle with food security, malnutrition, and environmental degradation. A large number of households are headed by women, orphans and people with disabilities who bear the burden of poverty. Rwanda aims to complete its transformation from a post-conflict nation to a thriving, middle-income, regional trade and investment hub. To enable this progress, Rwanda needs to create wealth and invigorate the private sector; ensure that young people have the skills to participate in this growth; improve basic services for all; increase the accountability of the state to its people, and address potential causes of conflict and fragility.

VSO in Rwanda

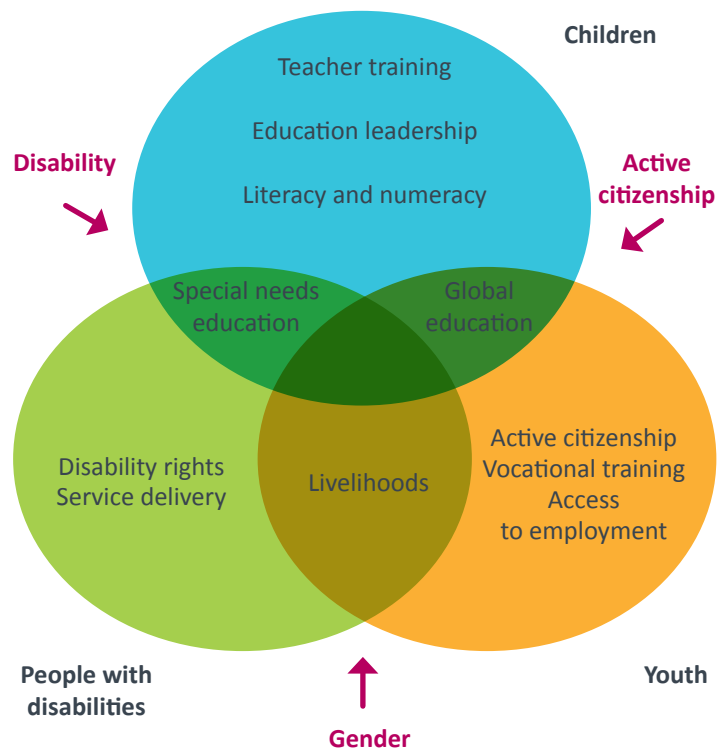
VSO Rwanda brings skilled, experienced professionals to Rwanda, who work on volunteer terms and conditions, in basic education, disability and citizen engagement.

VSO Rwanda is seen by government and development partners as one of the leading international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) working on quality education, supporting teacher training before and during service, school leadership and policy development on quality education. VSO Rwanda plays a leading role in the Special Needs Working Group of the Rwanda Education NGO Coordination Platform. We help ensure that plans are aligned with the Ministry of Education's work and that lessons learnt are shared widely.

We have supported the disability movement in Rwanda to become more effective. They are now able to represent the

Who we work for

VSO Rwanda works in an integrated way with children, youth and people with disabilities so that they can access quality basic services and actively participate in community life.



needs of people with disabilities to the Government of Rwanda, ensuring inclusion in policy development and implementation.

VSO Rwanda focuses our people first, poverty-reduction strategy in three key programme areas: education, disability, and active citizenship and employability of youth.

We estimate the financial value of a volunteer at US\$248 a day. This is based on average salaries that volunteers would receive in their own countries. Based on this, we estimate the value of volunteers in 2011/12 at US\$3,326,672. In 2012/13 it will be around US\$6,588,368. Our programme budget in 2011/12 was US\$942,394. In 2012/13 it will be US\$1,044,023.



Rwanda education facts

- Enrollment in primary education is good – around 95%. However, relatively high repetition and dropout rates (13% and 14% respectively) point to issues with the quality of education – what are children learning in the classroom?
- Almost 40% of children in Primary 3 (P3) are currently not reading at the level expected for their grade.

Key education strategies

- To ensure children in basic education are learning in the classroom through learner-centred methodologies, and lessons and assessment systems are relevant to the needs of the child and the Rwandan context.
- To improve the quality of teaching in basic education schools by ensuring pre-service and in-service teachers are proficient in learner-centred methodologies, and are equipped to teach basic literacy and numeracy in the classroom.
- To ensure that basic education schools are lead effectively and effective education management systems are implemented at all levels.

Implementing partners:

Ministry of Education, Rwanda Education Board, Kigali Institute of Education (for teacher training colleges) and district education offices.

Education programme funders:

USAID via EDC, UNICEF, Cuso International and DFID.

Rwanda disability facts

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that over 15% of any population are people with a disability – in Rwanda this would mean 1.5million people.
- Women with disabilities are an extremely marginalised group in Rwanda – girls with disabilities are far less likely to attend school, receive adequate healthcare, create a family, inherit land, or have access to credit or work.

Key disability programme strategies:

- To mainstream disability into the policies, programmes and delivery mechanisms of government and other development actors leading to positive impact at grassroots level.
- To strengthen national organisations of people with disabilities in their capacity for advocacy and to respond to the priorities of their constituents.
- To improve the quality of services aimed at people with disabilities.

Implementing partners:

Ministry of Local Government, National Council of People with Disabilities (NCPD), National Umbrella of Disability Organisations of Rwanda (NUDOR) and their member organisations, schools/ centres for children with disabilities and local authorities.

Disability programme funders:

DFID, Cuso International, Swedish Association of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (SHIA)



Rwanda youth, active citizenship, and employment facts

- 43% of the population are under the age of 14.
- More than 80% of Rwanda's population are primarily subsistence farmers, with less than 20% in formal employment.

Key active citizenship and youth employment strategies:

- Provide governmental support for a significant youth programme with plans for greater youth involvement, active citizenship, skills development and access to employment.
- Increase opportunities for youth to contribute toward Rwanda's development and have better access to employment opportunities.

Implementing partners:

Ministry of Youth, Diaspora Department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Itorero – Government Forum on peace-building, citizenship, cultural values etc.

Programme funders:

DFID and Cuso International.



Partnership: the way we work

VSO Rwanda is unique in working alongside other development INGOs and government, engaging in real development of the country's capacity. Our model of working through people brings something different to the table, alongside other INGOs who bring money and expertise. By working within and alongside national structures, our volunteers can help ensure lasting change through working day-to-day with the people of Rwanda, rather than conducting one off training or the financing of specific initiatives.

VSO Rwanda works very closely with the Government of Rwanda to ensure our interventions are closely aligned with government strategies and are supporting the development priorities of the country. Our programme approaches are determined in conjunction with partners, following an assessment of their needs and capacity. This ensures interventions are appropriate for the specific situation of the partner and thus maximise the impact of our support.

Implementation through volunteers

- **Long-term international volunteering (professional placements of up to two years):** Our volunteers help build social infrastructure by passing on their expertise. They come from both the developed and developing countries.
- **Short-term specialist assignments (positions of six months and under):** Our experienced professionals provide support on short-term assignments ranging from research studies and training seminars to exchange visits by members of parliament.
- **Diaspora volunteers:** We provide a mechanism for diaspora members to contribute back to their country of origin in a meaningful and targeted way.
- **Corporate volunteers:** We offer private companies a unique way to support international development efforts and encourage employee engagement opportunities.
- **Regional volunteers:** We build on natural migration patterns within the East African Community (EAC) and offer opportunities for individuals to contribute valuable time and gain professional growth and experience.
- **National volunteers:** Volunteerism is the backbone of many communities in Rwanda. We support community volunteers in working effectively in their communities, as well as national initiatives that support volunteering for Rwanda's development.

Key volunteering skills needed

VSO Rwanda has a specific need for skilled and qualified volunteers such as primary school teachers and teacher trainers, special education teachers, and business managers.



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