

## *Programme Area Summary*

**Country:** South Africa

**Programme Area:** HIV & AIDS and National Volunteering – need date

### **What is the aim of the programme area?**

To increase support and protection for the local volunteers.

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

South Africa has a strong legacy of volunteerism, which forms the basis of a vibrant civil society. According to a recent report from Social Survey's<sup>1</sup>, approximately 49% of the NGO sector in South Africa comprises full time volunteers working without compensation.

The size and scope of these numbers are likely to increase as more South Africans continue to take on voluntary work in response to the growing HIV&AIDS pandemic affecting the country. The growing number of people taking on voluntary work means that mechanisms will need to be developed to ensure the proper support, management and protection of volunteers.

The VSO National Volunteering Programme will not be limited in its geographical focus as the programme is still in its developmental stages. Working groups and informal partnerships have been established with organisational partners in each of the 9 provinces and will be further develop based on the needs identified and programmes bring implemented respectively.

### **Key beneficiaries and partners**

- Civil Society Organisational Partners, including Witwatersrand University/Community University Partnerships – Wits Volunteer Programme; National Development Agency; Volunteer Centre Cape Town; Tsogang Sechaba Community Project (HBC); Soweto Care Giver's Network
- Government (Dept. for Social Development, Umsobomvu Youth Fund)
- Local Community Volunteers (informal and formal)

### **Key objectives of the programme and the cross-cutting themes**

- To improve support for initiatives geared at improving the policy and resource environment for the local voluntary sector in South Africa.
- To increase the capacity HIV&AIDS programmes organisations to develop and manage local volunteering programmes.
- Links to other PAPs: National Volunteering is closely linked with any discussion of HIV&AIDS in South Africa. Based on this rationale, the National Volunteering programme will comprise one of three parts (the other two being Women and Children) of the core HIV&AIDS programme in South African. Based on this relationship, the NV programme will support and in some cases integrate its placement and programme activities with those from the HIV&AIDS Women and Children programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> Russell, Bev 'An Overview of the South African Volunteering Sector' (Presentation), Social Surveys, Johannesburg, South Africa, July 2004.

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### **Current programme activities**

#### *Focus of International Volunteer Placements*

- International Volunteer Placements (Volunteer Management Volunteers)

#### *Workshops, training & conferences*

- NV Reference Group Meetings on National Volunteering Framework
- Volunteer Programme Development and Management Course, Xavier University, PI

#### *Partner exchange visits/study tours*

- African Network Study Tour to the Philippines
- Global Exchange Programme
- Commonwealth Fellowship to the UK
- European Commission TCS Project: 300 Volunteers trained in Accredited Comprehensive HBC, Support Group Facilitation and Treatment Literacy

#### *Providing grants and/or equipment for partners e.g. small grants fund*

- Small Grants (Technical Assistance for Volunteer Sending Organisations/VSO's and Capacity Building Training for Volunteer Involving Organisations/ VIO's)

#### *Other partnership activities*

- NV Task Team Report Back to Council

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

VSO SAf has been able to play a brokerage role in mobilising the sector towards a framework that relates to the rights and needs of local volunteers. Directly, we have created an enabling environment for policy formation and facilitated wider networking and resource sharing between organisations working with volunteers throughout the country.

Our approach has been largely participatory in nature with programme decisions being made based on consultations with partners at grassroots level. As a result, we have developed and sustained the trust of local organisations despite our status as an international organisation.

#### *Other notable issues that have come up during implementation*

We have used a range of VSO's activities to raise the profile and policy and resource base for the volunteer sector. Nonetheless, more work is needed to facilitate efforts at organisational level into a national structure.

Questions need to be answered around the increasing role that VSO can play in the development of tools for effective volunteer management in the country. In particular, being considered is the idea of sharing its experiences and tools (VMS Training Curriculum, VMS Benchmarking tool and Volunteer Policy) in volunteering with partners in South Africa. Applied to the South African context through a series of consultations and review, they might be rolled out nationally to Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO's) as well as serve as a platform for the development of much needed Volunteer Sending Organisations (VSO's) in the country.