

Uganda



VSO Uganda Strategy

2012-15

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Foreword

VSO is a leading independent non-governmental organisation. 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 their time, their expertise and their 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 poor people's access to quality essential services, information and ideas that link them to the wider world. The VSO network helps poor and marginalised people understand their rights while empowering them to participate as equal, fully-valued members of their society.

VSO Uganda

Context

In 2006 northern Uganda emerged from a prolonged period of intense conflict. The introduction of multi-party politics has broadly coincided with peace in the north of the country and the expulsion of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The conflict caused the displacement of millions of people in northern Uganda. Since 2006 there has been gradual democratisation and political liberalisation. There is relatively free media coverage and the role of civil society is increasing, which has spurred economic growth.

Despite positive economic growth, millions of Ugandans live in absolute poverty; only 9% of the population has access to electricity and the vast majority of people depend on rain-fed, subsistent level agriculture, which leads to widespread food insecurity. Over 50% of Ugandans are under the age of 15 and rapid population growth strains the government's aim of transforming Uganda into a middle-income country.

What we do

Work together: Our international volunteers transfer knowledge and experience not accessible locally, while local partners use their skills and cultural understanding to make an impact in their own communities.

Knowledge brokering: 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 the poor and bring knowledge to those responsible for deciding on and implementing policy. This provides opportunities to raise the voice of communities to influence individuals and organisations that set and deliver policies that affect their lives.

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, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. We consider sustainability, empowerment and capacity building our overarching goals. The work and ambition outlined recognises and appreciates existing accomplishments and reflects our commitment to ongoing consultation and collaborative implementation.

Country facts

Population – 35.8 million

Median age – 15 years old

Life expectancy – 54 years old

HDI rating – 161 out of 187 (least developed country)

Education – 56% of boys and 51% of girls complete primary education. 5% of boys and 3% of girls complete secondary or higher education

Health – 76 deaths per 1,000 live births. 6.7% of the population (2.3 million) is infected with HIV/AIDS

Economy – The GDP growth rate in 2011 was 6%. 28% of the population lives on less than US\$1.25 a day



Partnership: the way we work

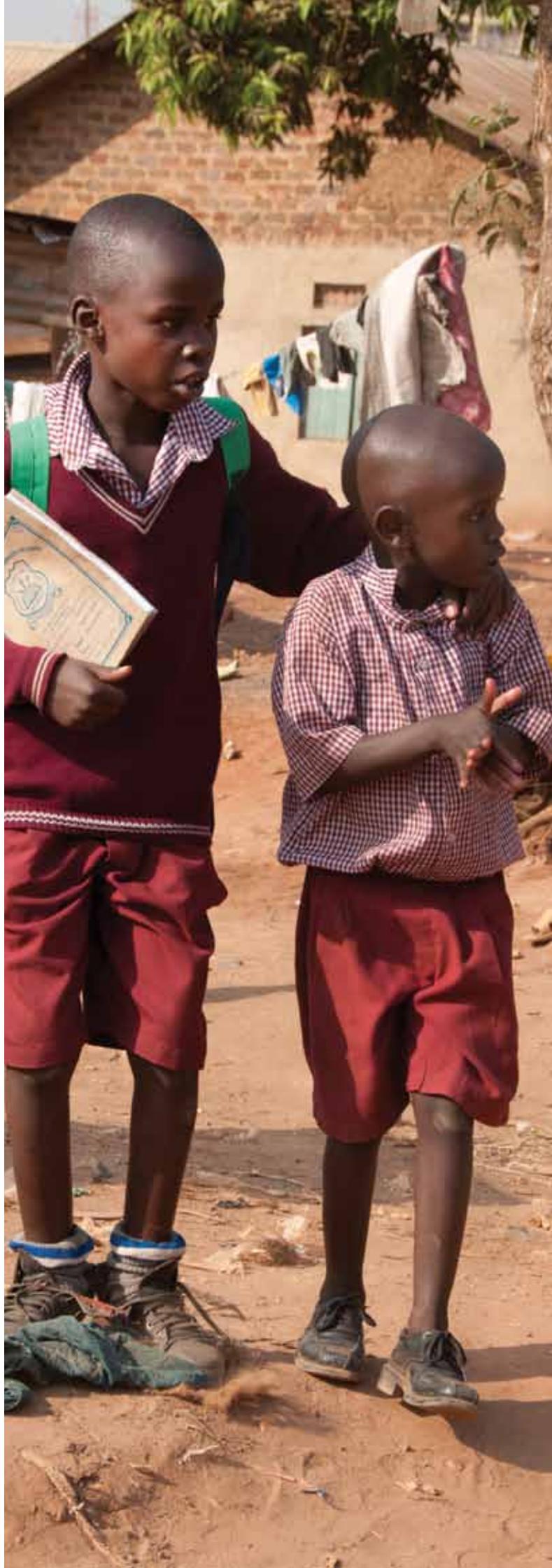
Our partnerships are long-term mutual commitments with organisations to achieve common objectives focused on challenging inequality and exclusion. Partnerships are based on a common set of values, equity within the relationship, a shared vision of success and a mutual commitment to working and learning together. We build partnerships with local organisations such as:

- government ministries, departments and institutions at local, district and national levels
- non-governmental organisations, national volunteering organisations, community-based organisations, membership organisations such as disabled people's unions and peer support groups, such as those for people living with HIV and AIDS.

We work closely with government to ensure our interventions are closely aligned with national 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, to ensure that interventions are appropriate for the specific situation of the partner and in order to maximise the impact of VSO's support.

Implementation through volunteers

- **Long-term overseas volunteering (professional placements of up to two years):** Our volunteer professionals help build social infrastructure by passing on their expertise. They come from both the global north and south.
- **Short-term specialist assignments (positions of six months and under):** Our highly 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 for professional growth and experience.
- **National volunteers:** Volunteerism is the backbone in many of our communities. We support groups of community volunteers as well as associations of volunteers operating in our countries.



Our impact

VSO has been in Uganda since the 1960s during which time we have:

- worked with national and local government and civil society to improve the quality of health, education and livelihoods services that are inclusive, accessible, and accountable to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups
- worked with civil society to develop communities – promoting the social inclusion of disadvantaged members of the communities and advocating with government for their rights.

Our overall programme goal is twofold:

- to support post-conflict recovery and development in northern Uganda, in particular the districts of Gulu, Lira and Kitgum
- to support national level development.

Our programme focuses on three development goals.

	Primary education	Primary healthcare	Livelihoods
Inclusion	Every child is able to access and complete quality primary education	Every mother and child is able to access quality primary health care services	All youth are able to access sustainable livelihood opportunities
Accountability	Every child and parent is able to hold the state to account for the delivery of quality primary education services	Every mother and child is able to hold the state to account for the delivery of quality primary health care services	All youth are able to hold the state to account for the delivery of livelihoods-related services

VSO Uganda develops an annual activity summary and monitoring and evaluation framework, detailing expected results, monitoring and evaluation schedules, our reach and resources set aside for the purpose.

Target groups

VSO Uganda works with the following target groups.

Youth	Women	Children
Mentally ill Informal institutions Young mothers Orphans and vulnerable youth Youth living with HIV/AIDS Unemployed	Rural women and urban poor Women with disabilities Women living with HIV/AIDS	Formerly abducted Abused or vulnerable Children with disabilities Girl mothers Orphans Rural girls

VSO Jitolee

VSO Uganda hosts a recruitment base for VSO Jitolee, our Kenyan federation member. VSO Jitolee recruits Ugandan volunteers for overseas placements in VSO's country programmes worldwide. Returned volunteers are active members of the VSO community, contributing to various initiatives including national volunteering. The recruitment of Ugandan volunteers is an important element of VSO's work in Uganda. VSO seeks applications from qualified and experienced professionals, including health workers, natural resource managers, organizational development specialists, fundraisers and civil engineers.



Our focus

Education Facts

- 53% of children enrolled in primary school graduate.
- 4% of children finish secondary school or higher education.
- Almost 40% of women and 16% of men aged between 15 and 49 years are illiterate. Levels of illiteracy amongst women increase with age, whereas they remain fairly constant for men, reflecting historically poorer access to education for girls

Our goal

High quality, accessible and inclusive education services available for all.

Key education strategy

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in primary and secondary education through in service training and improved methodology, leadership, and accountability.
- Support education departments and primary teachers colleges in budgeting, planning, human resources development and management.

Key activities

Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards (BRMS) is a government initiative supported by VSO. It aims to improve the quality of primary education and early childhood development, leading to improved learning achievements, completion and retention. The project covers all regions of the country working through primary teacher colleges.

We are working in partnership with Link Community Development, supporting the Directorate of Education Standards.

We help to improve the quality of subject based teaching, especially maths and science in teacher training colleges and selected primary schools

We also contribute to education research and advocacy for policy change

Implementing partners include: Link Community Development, Ministry of Education and Sports, Primary Teachers Colleges, District Education Offices, various NGO partners.

Health Facts

- 42% of births are attended by a health professional.
- 60% of health services are provided by non-domestic health care workers such as volunteers.
- 16% of the population has special needs of some kind.

Our goal

High quality, accessible and inclusive health services available for all.

Key health strategy

- Improve access and quality of primary health care services.
- Support government and civil society in administration, programme planning, financial management, human resources and monitoring and evaluation in health services.
- Engage local government to plan for and improve inclusive services for people with disabilities.

Key activities

We are one of four countries working on the global VSO initiative, Valuing Health Workers, which supports the achievement of health-related Millennium Development Goals. A research report has been produced and an advocacy strategy will be developed to take the recommendations forward, in partnership with civil society coalitions, professional associations and health ministries.

We are working with the district health offices in Lira and Gulu Districts to build knowledge on the current health status of the people in the two districts and the ability of the districts to implement health services for the people. This will lead to cost effective and innovative strategies to improve basic health care in the districts.

We are working towards establishing a full and independent speech and language therapy department within Makerere University and Mulago National Referral Hospital, including the domestication of curriculum delivery through development and recruitment of national lecturers.

Implementing partners include: Mulago National Referral Hospital, International Medical Foundation, Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council, Gulu and Lira District Local Governments, various NGO partners.



Secure livelihoods

Facts

- 80% of Ugandans live in rural areas, with 70% of the population dependent on subsistent level, rain-fed agriculture.
- Youth, especially in the north, have low employment opportunities and a lack of education.

Our goal

Opportunities for youth in northern Uganda to find gainful employment.

Key secure livelihoods strategy

- Increase household income and promote equity.
- Enhance the availability and quality of gainful employment.
- Promote a sustainable population and use of the environment and natural resources.

Key activities

Our Youth Employment and Local Governance project aims to improve socio-economic opportunities for youth in northern Uganda (Lira and Gulu districts) by increasing opportunities for employment and strengthening the capacity of local leaders to represent disadvantaged people, especially youths.

Our Fair Climate Youth Enterprise Programme: Join Our Core, is based in the Rwenzori region of Uganda. The programme works with youth and local partners to develop social enterprise skills to address challenges associated with climate change, with a key emphasis on the three Ps – people, planet and profit.

Implementing partners include: Most At Risk Populations (NGO network), Forum for Education NGOs Uganda, National Forum for People with HIV/AIDS Network, National Youth Council, National Alliance for Volunteering Efforts, Uganda National Volunteer Link, African Network for Protection and Prevention of Children Against Neglect (ANPPCAN), Action For Development (ACFODE), Action for Cooperation in Research and Development (ACORD).



Engagement

Civil society is vibrant and developing fast in Uganda. Civil society organisations are engaged in all sectors and contribute to service delivery as well as advocacy and holding authorities to account.

Our goal

Non state actors and civil society networks that are vibrant, contribute to the development of their communities and hold government to account.

Key activities

Our project Nurturing the Young Trees to Make a Thick Forest: Protecting and Empowering Children and Youth in Northern Uganda involves three national partners. It aims to promote peace, reintegration and the protection of young mothers and youth affected by the prolonged conflict in the Gulu and Apac districts of northern Uganda, by developing livelihoods.

We partner with a range of civil society organisations, supporting them to develop and improve the quality of the services they provide.

Implementing partners include: Most At Risk Populations (NGO network), Forum for Education NGOs Uganda, National Forum for People with HIV/AIDS Network, National Youth Council, National Alliance for Volunteering Efforts, Uganda National Volunteer Link, African Network for Protection and Prevention of Children Against Neglect (ANPPCAN), Action For Development (ACFODE), Action for Cooperation in Research and Development (ACORD), Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA), various other national and international NGOs, district unions for people with disabilities, district level NGOs, Collaborative Effort for Alleviating Social Problems (CEASOP), local farmers groups, local youth councils.

Key volunteering skills needed

VSO Uganda has a need for specifically skilled and qualified volunteers in the fields of education, health, livelihoods, agriculture, organisational development, policy implementation and research.

ISBN 978-1-903697-35-1



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