



Goal Report 2010/11 – Education

Education for All

The *Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2011* indicates extraordinary progress towards the Education for All (EFA) goals. For example, the number of children out of school has fallen significantly – 67 million in 2008 compared to 85.5 million in 2006. In sub-Saharan Africa, enrolment ratios rose by one-third despite a large increase in the primary school age population. However, the school dropout rate is alarming. Ten million children leave school before they complete a full primary cycle every year in sub-Saharan Africa alone.

Many governments have been under pressure to increase their investment in secondary education as well as vocational training and non-formal education. Persistent education inequities are increasing among and within countries. Progress on specific EFA goals, in particular education quality, early childhood care and education, skills development and adult literacy is too slow.

The quality of education remains a key concern for VSO because millions of children are emerging from primary school with reading, writing and numeracy skills far below expected levels. According to *2011 EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO 2011)*, 1.9 million teachers will be needed by 2015 to achieve universal primary education – more than half in sub-Saharan Africa. The financial crisis has had a direct impact on education budgets, affecting resources for hiring and training enough teachers.

VSO and education

VSO currently has 17 education programmes supporting approximately 231 partners. The impact of the implementation of VSO's new strategy *People First* over the last year has led to significant change in our education programme. There remains good evidence of inclusive education work being carried out in disability programmes in Kenya and Uganda and innovative examples of education projects across the other goal areas.

As a result of VSO's strategic change, there are four new education programmes being planned in Kenya, Sierra Leone and Uganda. The new DFID-funded South Sudan programme will also have a strong education element.

Over the past year we have continued to deepen our understanding of what 'impact' and 'reach' means for VSO in our education work. We have largely done this through the data gathering processes for our self-assessment reporting and development of a new global baseline. This has led to a better understanding of how to measure reach in some countries for education (eg not counting all children enrolled in a province/region where VSO input is primarily focused on pre-service teacher training through teacher training institutions) and providing a stronger attribution to VSO's interventions demonstrated through separating out indirect and direct outcomes. On a global level,

VSO is at present reaching a total of 5,252,086 children (2,718,760 boys and 2,533,326 girls) enrolled in schools supported by VSO partners.

Working through volunteers and beyond

In addition to our more conventional capacity-building roles through volunteers and partnership development, we are strengthening innovative interventions to support education work and examples of thinking 'holistically' in planning processes, and we expect to see more of this in the next 12 months.

An example of VSO's strategic approach is in Ghana, where VSO partners with three districts. One of the district education directors spent three months on the VSO-managed Commonwealth Fellowship with the UK Department of Education and a London Education Authority, and implemented his learning on education management issues and inclusive education. With the support of international volunteers, he rolled out an in-service teacher-training programme in his district and made key management changes within the District Education Office.

As described in our recent publication *Gender Equality in Education*, we continue to support programmes to increase our impact in education through our multi-layered approach. This includes multiple interventions at multiple levels of the education system – from the school and local community to national level policy. We believe that to improve the quality of education for girls and boys in any given school requires a combination of interventions in overlapping strategic areas. These interventions relate to our key areas of work in education on the ground: teaching and learning, education management and community engagement. They are reinforced and showcased through our regional, national and international level policy and advocacy work in support of teachers' issues and gender equality in education.

Progress towards our objectives

Five of VSO's education programmes (Ghana, Cameroon, Thai-Burma, Namibia and Ethiopia) conducted an evaluation against a baseline set in 2008 as part of our reporting to donors. Changes in these five countries are representative of overall change across the education goal area.

Objective: To improve the quality of teaching in schools, teacher training colleges and professional development centres serving poor and marginalised groups, especially girls and children with disabilities.

The total number of teachers currently reached by VSO through support to in-service, continuous professional development and pre-service teacher training is 134,738 (63,056 of whom are female) across 17 education country programmes. The proportion of female teachers that we're reaching in 2011 has risen from 41% to 46% since 2010.

Ten VSO education programmes have reported improved use of child-centred, inclusive methodology by teachers and teacher trainers. For example, in Cambodia teachers in all six VSO supported provinces have been developing their own resources and using them in their teaching after training. Individual mentoring has enabled them to continue to do so. As a result of these workshops, classrooms now have a more positive learning environment. Teachers are more motivated, confident and friendly, and engage better with the students.

VSO partners continue to support teachers to improve their skills, knowledge and attitude in a variety of ways. These include building the capacity of teacher trainers on pre and in-service training

in programmes, as well as support given to continuous professional development and distance learning programmes in order to reach as wide a range of teachers as possible, particularly those in rural areas or previously unqualified teachers. For example, in Mozambique 1500 primary teachers (40% female) received professional training through distance-learning programmes.

There are significant improvements in the use of inclusive methodology, particularly on the inclusion of children with disabilities in the classroom. For example, in Mozambique, Ghana, Thai-Burma, Guyana, Tanzania and Cambodia teachers trained through VSO partners all expressed an increased confidence in how to effectively engage children with disabilities in active classroom learning. In Ghana in the Talensi Nabdam district, there is evidence that school girls are more confident to actively participate in class as a result of training teachers to encourage equal participation of girls and boys in class throughout 154 schools.

Challenges

There is a strong programme of work in VSO Ethiopia to address the shortage of female teachers as a result of the affirmative action policy backed by the Ethiopian government to maximise the number of female entrants to tertiary level Institutions, targeting female students specifically within VSO's education programmes is a challenge as working within the education system doesn't always allow for positive discrimination interventions.

Many teachers during partnership reviews and focus groups (Ghana, Cameroon and Thai-Burma) expressed an awareness and desire to be more inclusive in their practices but many still struggle to apply their learning. VSO programmes are addressing this through supporting school supervisors and head teachers to monitor the application of skills and VSO's new global baseline aims to capture 'effective' application of skills learnt as opposed to just those who receive training.

Objective: To improve management of education, systems and resources for poor and marginalised groups, especially women and people with disabilities.

One hundred and fifty-one VSO partners (including district education offices and colleges of teacher education) are supporting improvements in education management across 17 countries.

In 12 countries, VSO is currently building the capacity of 11,464 education managers (head teachers, schools supervisors, district education office staff etc), of these 3,491 are female. Rwanda, Ghana, Tanzania and Cambodia have all reported improvements in quality supervision and support to teachers as a result of VSO volunteers providing leadership and mentoring training to head teachers and education managers.

Improved partner systems and processes for collecting and analysing statistical data, and increased capacity of partner staff to use information and technology as a result of volunteer support has been reported by a number of education programmes.

Namibia, Ghana and Ethiopia all reported improved school management through more regular and effective planning, management meetings and general management practices. Thai-Burma and Ghana specifically reported improved relationships, communication and collaboration on education issues between education authorities and other agencies at district and local levels.

Seventy-eight VSO partners are supporting 5,194 parent-teacher associations and community organisations across 17 countries to engage more effectively with education and school management issues.

In Ghana, Cameroon and Cambodia community engagement activities continue to contribute to increased enrolment, retention and transition. For example in Ghana, the VSO partner NAWAG has supported 40 girls with mentorship and training to become ambassadors for improving the number of girls at school. Sixty per cent of these girls transitioned from primary to secondary school. Safety and retention of schoolchildren, particularly girls, has also improved as NAWAG lobbied for the provision of boreholes in Nadowli to enable girls to spend less time fetching water, which affects their attendance at school.

In Cameroon, VSO's work in enhancing education management at the community level and promoting the inclusion of girls in school has seen a significant scaling up, involving the efforts of international volunteers paired with national volunteers working in school clusters. Creating and supporting mother teacher associations (MTAs) has resulted in active female community leaders ensuring schools are better funded both through IGAs and effective fee collection, as well as being more responsive to the needs of students and being increasingly accessible to girls. School mapping exercises, enrolment campaign and school planning development in Cambodia have contributed to increased transition rates of students from primary to lower secondary school including a significant increase in female students compared to 2008-9 school year [Education Management and Information Systems (EMIS) 2009-10 – MoEYS].

Challenges

Increasing community engagement in school management is a difficult area to support as at the grassroots level the participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) and parents' associations is often still very weak, despite increased participation of the CSOs in education processes at national levels. However, this is a vital component of VSO's multi-level approach to improving the quality of education and there are strong linkages with other goal areas under this indicator, for example 76% of girls who drop out of school do so to take on caring responsibilities for family members affected by HIV and AIDS.

Despite promised decentralisation and delegation, there are still overly bureaucratic and inefficient central systems for decision-making. Infrastructure and communication are also often poor at all levels. Staff turnover within many local education authorities is high creating a big challenge for sustainability. In addition to this, addressing gender inequality remains a challenge as the male to female ratio in education management and leadership positions is still very imbalanced. Only 30% of education managers in VSO partner organisations are female, (and in some countries, The Gambia for example, it is as low as 20%), which means women and issues relating to girls' education are often not well represented at higher levels.

VSO is addressing this through the inclusion of a 'gender' equality measure for all VSO partners as part of the new global baseline.

Objective: Education provision is more inclusive of learners from poor and marginalised groups, especially girls and children with disabilities.

A number of barriers to enrolment for girls are being addressed by VSO partners through strategic interventions. For example, in Cameroon intensive focus on barriers to girls' access to education through community engagement and awareness-raising activities has led to a significant increase in girls' enrolment in schools and districts supported by VSO partners.

In Cambodia, the establishment of counselling for girls in schools has helped reduce the dropout rate in higher grades in primary schools. In the Cambodian region of Mondulseiema, Koh Kong, 13 girls returned to school as a result of girls counselling and student councils' work. Enrolment and

promotion rates increased in Cambodia, especially of the target groups (girls, children with disability, ethnic minority children) while dropout rates generally decreased. Based on evidence from six VSO-supported provinces for the 2009-10 school year, the overall enrolment rate of children to grade 6 has been increased by 2.1% in Battambang, 1.4% in Kampot, 2.7% in Koh Kong, 0.1% in Monduliri, 7.2% in Ratanakiri and 2.7% in Ratanakiri while the promotion rate has also been increased by 10.9% in Koh Kong, 2.0% in Kampot, 7.0% in Monduliri and 0.1% in Battambang.

The proportional increase in enrolment of children with disabilities in VSO-supported schools is as a result of increased awareness at community level and volunteers supporting the diagnosis of children with disabilities. However, it is also because of improved data collection at all levels of the education system, particularly at national level by Ministries of Education in Mozambique, Ghana, Cambodia and Guyana, where data wasn't previously systematically collected for children with disabilities.

Policy and advocacy

More than 60% of VSO programme managers actively participate in and contribute to national education policy development, education sector planning and reviews, and working groups. In Rwanda, Cambodia, Nepal, the Gambia, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Tanzania, VSO participates in different working groups that monitor the progress of Education for All goals. In Rwanda, VSO is well placed to feed in information and anecdotal evidence from VSO volunteers working in the districts, directly to the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC). One such example is a case of a school that had been closed down because the land had been illegally requisitioned and used to establish Colton mining operation. When VSO reported this to MINEDUC, action was taken immediately and the mining operation was closed down so that the school could re-open.

At international level, VSO has been successful in increasing the participation of teachers and civil society organisations in policy dialogue on teacher issues. For instance, in January 2011 the International Conference on Teachers for EFA in Africa held in Nairobi included representatives from a teacher's union. National coalitions from Mozambique and the Gambia presented their findings of research on unqualified and contract teachers, which influenced the communiqué of the conference.

VSO has continued to argue for improved terms and conditions and management for teachers throughout the year, with a range of education agencies. For example, VSO sits on the steering committee of the International Taskforce on teachers for Education for All (EFA). We attended the taskforce's policy dialogue in Jordan and the Inclusive and Supportive Education Conference in Belfast at which the VSO Cambodia education programme manager presented about inclusive education work. In the UK, we continue to support the work of the GCE coalition, which lobbies to influence DFID education policies.

National level achievements and success stories for VSO supported policy and advocacy initiatives

VSO conducted the Valuing Teachers research in Mozambique with our *Teachers Talking* report and in The Gambia with the *Qualifying for Quality* report, highlighting the impact of unqualified and contract teachers. The findings of the research have informed national and international level policy dialogue surrounding teachers' issues. For example, as a result of VSO's Valuing Teachers research, The Gambian Parliamentary Select Committee welcomed the proposal to form the Teachers Service Commission which will manage teachers' recruitment to address qualified teacher shortage in The Gambia. VSO is a member of EFANET and the Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education in Cambodia has decided to develop a new teacher policy and the framework responses to the recommendations of the VSO Cambodia's Valuing Teachers report.

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training has responded to the recommendations from the *Leading Learning Report* on quality education and head teachers. For example, the Ministry has developed and agreed to roll out a local model of practice based on learning from the research. The budget is in place and two professional volunteers have been recruited to begin the trial.

The Thailand Government has committed to develop a new registration law to allow migrant children to have access to Thai school systems. (See case study on Thailand-Burma)

In Rwanda, following intensive lobbying on the part of VSO and other development partners (including the British Council, UNICEF and USAID), the language of instruction in the early years of primary education reverted to Kinyarwanda (from English) from the beginning of 2011 academic year. (See case study on Rwanda)

Recruitment of volunteers

For 2010/11 in total, we achieved 292 volunteer arrivals against 295 planned. This included:

- 227 long-term volunteer arrivals against a corporate planned target of 243
- 57 short-term volunteer arrivals against a corporate planned target of 50
- 12 Youth for Development volunteers against a target of 11.

While this is a great achievement and a testament to good work by education programme managers and volunteer and placement advisers, recruitment has remained an ongoing challenge needing constant work and vigilance in order to deliver on programme plans. Education managers and primary teachers remain difficult to recruit. It is also difficult to find volunteers who are willing to undertake more rural placements with poorer infrastructure.

This year saw VSO's last cohort of short-term head teachers travel overseas in January 2011 as part of the Leaders in International Development partnership with the National College and head teacher unions in the UK. A review of the scheme over the past five years is currently underway with a report expected soon.

The majority of education programme placements in 2010/11 have been focused on education management and primary teacher training with a range of other types of placement including: EMIS, advocacy, gender research, community roles working with parent teacher associations.

Case studies

Thai-Burma: Migrant Education Project leads to improved access and quality of education for disadvantaged girls and boys

Burmese Migrant Workers Education Committee (BMWEC) is a community-based organisation which has worked to support migrant schools since 1998. By the end of 2010 BMWEC had 39 member schools which provided education for more than 7300 children.

World Education (WE) is an international non-governmental organisation specialising in curriculum development and providing teacher and head teacher training support to disadvantaged groups, particularly displaced people.

VSO has been working with BMWEC and WE since 2007 on a migrant education project. VSO placed volunteers with the two partners to support the trust and relationship building among NGO/CBOs and Thai authorities, capacity-building organisations and their staff, curriculum development and implementation, and teacher training. In addition to volunteers, VSO also provided small grants to partners to implement inclusive education activities. For example, to produce inclusive educational material, organise training and study visits, student camps, and so on.

In terms of the new curriculum implementation there is good progress. Since WE introduced a complete curriculum for three subjects to migrant schools in mid-2009, and then provided ongoing support and monitoring of the curriculum usage, now more schools and teachers are using the WE curriculum. Teachers said they feel more confidence in using new teaching methodology and they have better knowledge of each subject. One teacher said, "I do not have problem with students losing concentration in the class in the afternoon anymore because I know how to use games and activities to get children's attention and involvement. They enjoy the learning and I do not feel stressed and tired."

Some teachers said what they like the most about the new curriculum and teacher training is the follow up and ongoing support from WE's teacher training team, whose capacity has been built through VSO volunteers. The team will visit and observe each teacher during the working day and provide feedback and support to teachers. One of the teachers said, "The visit and feedback helped me find the solution for the problems I face in the class. At the same time I know how to improve my teaching. The most important thing is I know that there will always be support when I need it."

The work with Thai authorities, especially local education office helped to bring the security and confidence to teachers and school personnel. Now the teachers feel more confident to travel to and from work because they have teacher ID cards. Teachers also feel more secure when teaching in school because the education office provided each school with a sign in both Thai and English. When Thai officials visit the school they will know that it has been recognised by the education authorities. The local education office also organises Thai language trainings for teachers in migrant schools. The training will help teachers and students improve their Thai language skills which will help them to live better and more safely in Thailand.

VSO supports relationship building between CBOs/NGOs and Thai authorities by placing volunteers in these different organisations. Volunteers have been working as a bridge between these groups. In addition to this the volunteers also worked together to improved the education provision for migrant children through training and meetings. VSO also provide small grants to partners to encourage them to work together for the improvement of education for migrant children. The grants

help partners to meet together regularly to discuss challenges and concerns, support teacher training and development of educational material and translation.

Rwanda: Improving the quality of learning for poor and marginalised girls and boys

VSO's objective to improve the quality of teaching and teacher training is evident in the Nyanza District of Rwanda, where VSO volunteers have devised and implemented a unique education training programme.

The volunteers supported a group of Rwandan advanced primary teachers, whose pedagogical strategies will cascade down to their colleagues. With support and mentoring from their head teachers, the primary teachers act as coaches to implement a training programme focused on improving the quality of learning. VSO Rwanda placed two volunteers in Nyanza District, one of 30 districts in Rwanda.

In 2010, the volunteers jointly carried out a comprehensive needs assessment, focusing on classroom methodology and education management in 46 of the Nyanza District's 76 primary/Groupe Scolaire schools. After 100 teachers were observed across the curriculum and head teachers were spoken to, the volunteer identified areas of expertise within schools.

The outcome was the development of a two-year comprehensive primary methodology programme in conjunction with in-depth head teacher training to improve the quality of learning. Methodology training sessions were successfully run for 1,075 primary teachers. In parallel, head teachers in each sector were eager to work as a cohesive unit, creating their own self-help and mentoring group. Initially, they were given training on data analysis to allow them time to observe lessons and support their teachers so as to become mentors in their own right.

Follow up sessions for individual teachers and schools were then conducted to ensure that the long-term benefits of the training could be monitored and evaluated. This also led to a series of training sessions on leadership and management in various educational areas.

In early 2011, the Nyanza District National P6 Examinations 2010 results provided hard evidence that there had been a district-wide significant improvement in the number of students gaining a pass in (88.12% 2010, 75.98% 2009) over the last year, with no school achieving under 50% pass rate (four schools last year). This level of success is very commendable as this was the first year in which all the exam papers were written and answers expressed in English and all well above the national average.

Key statistical information 2010/11

	No of Programmes	Volunteers (%)	Total Expenditure (£000)	Unrestricted Expenditure (£000)	Restricted Expenditure (£000)
Education	15	25.8%	11171	7619	3552
HIV and AIDS	15	14.3%	8848	2261	6587
Disability	10	9.5%	3879	2063	1816
Health	13	13.6%	6066	4114	1952
Secure livelihoods	25	22.1%	10936	6954	3982
Participation and governance	14	14.7%	7301	5444	1857