

## *Programme Area Summary*

**Country:** The Gambia

**Programme Area:** Education 2004 - 2009

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

To improve the quality of inclusive primary education for all boys and girls for core subjects in rural areas.

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

Education is a key government priority area. It is recognised as a means of creating economic growth, reducing poverty, eliminating disadvantage and creating access to social development. The Education programme covers all regions in the Gambia but there is specific focus given to Region 5 because of VSO's role in the implementation of the DfID funded Basic Education Support for Poverty Reduction (BESPOR) project.

### **Key beneficiaries and partners**

The key beneficiaries are primary school children, serving teachers and teacher trainees. The implementing partners are Region 5, Gambia College, BESPOR team and Headquarter Directorates at DoSE.

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

- Teachers: to provide improved pre- and in-service teacher training for male and female primary teachers in order to encourage the transition to relevant learner-centred methodologies
- Management: to increase the capacity of educational managers at national, regional and primary school levels, and also to involve the community in school management through PTAs etc
- Curriculum: to advocate for and support the development and implementation of a primary curriculum that is appropriate to the needs of all girl and boy students

However, during the April 2006 Education Sector Review these objectives were revised as follows to be in line with the 10 year Strategic Education Plan for the Department of State for Education, The Gambia.

- Teaching and learning: to provide improved pre- and in-service teacher training for male and female primary teachers in order to encourage improved teaching and learning in Gambian schools
- School management: to provide support in the development of a Whole School Development Model and carry out capacity building of all stakeholders in line with the needs of the WSD pilot
- Sector wide management support: support to key Head and Regional Office management functions, including, as needed, to curriculum development, quality assurance, strategy development, IT support, etc

Gender issues are mainstreamed in the Education PAP. The aim is to contribute to the creation of a more equal society for women and men, girls and boys with the intention of reducing poverty and other forms of disadvantages. The provision of inclusive education means special needs education is also mainstreamed.

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### **Current programme activities**

#### *Focus of International Volunteer Placements*

- In-service teacher training in Region 5
- Pre-service teacher training in Gambia College
- Support to the Whole School Development in Region 5
- Support to Sector-Wide Management – EMIS, Education quality improvement and curriculum development

#### *Workshops, training & conferences*

- Variety of workshops to support the Whole School Development project
- Workshops to train teachers and cluster teacher trainers
- Quarterly education sector workshops
- Partnership reviews
- Annual VSO conference

#### *Research*

- Valuing Teachers research being conducted

#### *Advocacy and Global Education*

- VT research is nearing completion and plans are on the way to recruit a long-term volunteer to support the Education For All campaign network.
- Staff and volunteer were introduced to Global education. Possibility of pushing this agenda forward is being explored for 2008-09

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

- There is a placement support grant which volunteer could use

#### *Other partnership activities*

- The Education PM manages the volunteer at the Child Protection Alliance (CPA). We are exploring ways that this placement could address the issue of corporal punishment in schools. This is both a child protection and education issue.

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

Education is a national priority and provision for quality education is even a bigger priority. There is a shortage of trained teachers and even those that are trained need regular updating. Many teachers in both management and classroom levels exhibit considerable skills gaps. VSO's unique contributions are to bring volunteers who will contribute to the improvements of teachers' skills in the classroom. VSO also contribute to the strengthening of the strategic management capacity of the education sector. Generally most people and partners value VSO contributions as genuine.