

Programme Area Summary

Country: Indonesia

Programme Area: Disability Economic Empowerment Programme 2006-2011

What is the aim of the programme area?

Job opportunities for people with disabilities have increased and they have a better income and control over their income.

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

People with disabilities in Indonesia are one of the most disadvantaged groups in society, having to face:

- Stigma and discrimination
- Lack of access to health and social care
- Lack of education
- Lack of independent work

The people with disabilities lack real opportunities and decent work. It is extremely difficult for them to find a job in the informal or formal sector. Consequently only a very small percentage of people with disabilities have gainful employment. This means they are dependent on others, or in many cases, living in poverty.

Key beneficiaries and partners

VSO Indonesia pursues a rights-based approach to its disability work¹ and works with partner organizations that are committed to either pursuing or developing a similar approach. VSO's work in the disability sector has been guided by the DREAM-IT Programme (Disability Rights Empowerment Awareness and Mobility in Indonesia and Thailand) and regular consultations with the Disability Country Advisory Team (CAT) and other organizations, as to the direction of the programme and activities within it.

Economic empowerment for people with disabilities is a relatively new area for VSO globally although it is recognised as important. This was felt to be less of a risk for VSO Indonesia because it builds on past work with some existing partners, rather than developing a programme focused on education and disability (in which VSO globally has more experience), which is relatively new for VSO Indonesia. There are only a few existing partners currently working in the area of education and it was considered a major risk that new partners would not be available for VSO Indonesia to work with.

Key objectives of the programme and the cross-cutting themes

- Identified formal sector employers employ more people with disabilities in a more equal way.
- More people with disabilities (supported by VSO partners) generate their own income through mainstream productive activities.

The main areas of focus for greater employment/economic activity of people with disabilities in this programme are:

¹ Difference between welfare perspective versus rights based approach to disability:

- Welfare: Services are provided to people with disabilities on a charitable/handout basis. There is no guarantee that individuals will receive any services, or that they will be involved in decisions about the services they receive.

- Rights: People with disabilities are treated as equal citizens with the right to receive the same services as the rest of the population. They are involved in decisions about the services provided for them.

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- Formal Sector (mainstream employment) – objective 1 focuses on this sector
- Informal sector (self employment, small business development etc) – objective 2 focuses on this sector
- DPO/NGO managed (cooperatives etc) – objective 2 also focuses on this sector

Current programme activities

The new Disability Programme is divided into 3 main phases. Phase 1 started in June 2006 and involves programme development, including further research into the specific area of focus of the programme, development of partnerships and identification of key targets and resource organisations, more detailed planning and logistics (such as staff recruitment and the establishment of appropriate systems before the start of phase 2 of the programme).

Four volunteers are carrying out research on:

- formal employment opportunities for people with disabilities and identify key target employers;
- opportunities in the informal sector;
- working with partners on gender mainstreaming;
- working with partners on partnership issues

The findings of this research will help the Programme Office develop the Disability Programme Area Plan. Analysis of the research findings is ongoing and a more detailed plan will be made available after May 2007.

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

Rights Based Approach: VSO Indonesia will follow a rights based approach to disability, aiming to move beyond the welfare approach, which is still predominant in Indonesia. The programme will focus on equal and inclusive employment for people with disabilities in mainstream economic activities, not special or segregated activities.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Approach: CSR is a process in which corporations take responsibility for the social consequences of their actions. VSO will seek to engage with the existing CSR agendas of targeted employers, to promote the employment of people with disabilities.

There are risks involved in going in this direction, there is only very little experience within VSO globally working in this area. This means that there are no examples of good practices in terms of developing and setting up a programme, which is fully focused on this area.