

Programme Area Summary

Country: Mongolia

Programme Area: Education 2007 - 2010

What is the aim of the programme area?

To make a significant contribution to improvements in the quality of teaching and to make education provision more inclusive in Darkhan-Uul, Dornod and Uvurkhangaï aimags¹ and in up to two peri-urban districts of Ulaanbaatar.

Why is VSO working in that particular Programme Area and region?

With the transition to a market economy in the early nineties there were many factors that affected education provision. A lot of children dropped out of school and many teachers left their jobs. The factors that contributed to the high dropout rate included financial constraints that families with school-aged children faced and children were required to help with herding and earning money for living.

Since the late nineties there is an emerging consensus on the need for quality and inclusive education amongst all the stakeholders. Although there have been some positive changes, there are still issues in the education sector. The education offered to disabled children does not respond to their needs due to complete lack of special needs education curriculum, a shortage of professional teachers and lack of capacity to mainstream those children. Children living in remote areas have limited access to education, especially pre-school education.

There is currently considerable momentum for change in the Education sector. With the approval of the second Education Master plan 2006-2015, Mongolia's admission to the Fast Track Initiative and a number of international organisations and NGOs developing their strategies to support this, it is a good time for VSO Mongolia to be refocusing the activities in education to strengthen the education system.

VSO Mongolia (VSOM) is well placed to contribute to the two priorities of the Education Sector Master Plan:

- 1) Access and Coverage (ensuring that all elements of society- urban and rural, rich and poor, nomadic and settled, as well as geographical locations and ethnic groups- will have access to education in the future)
- 2) Quality and content (guaranteeing that the 'needs for the development of the country, economic growth and the well-being of the people' will be met)

Key beneficiaries and partners:

In Ulaanbaatar:

- Mongolian Education Alliance, Mongolian NGO
- Lotus centre
- Save the Children Fund UK
- University of Humanities
- School of Foreign languages and culture of the National University of Mongolia

In Darkhan:

- Darkhan Insitute
- Darkhan Education Department

In Dornod:

- Dornod Mongol Institute
- Dornod Education Department

¹ *Aimag* is a medium-size administrative unit. There are 3 cities and 21 *aimags* in Mongolia. *Aimags* are divided into *soums*. *Soums* are divided into *baghs*.

Programme Area Summary

- Kindergarten #10

Key objectives of the programme and the “cross-cutting”/“mainstreaming” themes:

- Teachers and teacher trainers of the partnering education institutes will have improved their teaching skills by adopting needs-based and learner-centred approaches.
- Education managers, teachers and school social workers will have acquired skills to include disadvantaged children in education.
- To contribute to improvements in inclusive education policies and their implementation through collaborating with other education actors.

The Education programme will incorporate the cross cutting theme of disability. It will focus on awareness raising and advocacy to promote education for the disabled.

Current programme activities

Focus of international volunteering

- To support in-service teacher training at schools and kindergartens to enable teachers to identify needs of the learners and use learner-centred approaches
- To support pre-service teacher training in ELT at teacher training institutes by training the student teachers in inclusive and learner-centred methodologies
- To contribute to improving school management
- To support training of well-skilled social workers
- To train national English teacher trainers
- To strengthen the general capacity of partnering education NGOs
- To strengthen the partnerships with existing and potential partners in education
- **To help in the development of Child Protection strategy for Mongolia**

Support to national volunteering

- **There is already a link between the Education programme and VSOM's National Volunteering work. The Education programme will continue to support the National Volunteering initiative started by a VSO volunteer and his colleagues to train ELT teacher trainers. VSOM will explore ways to connect the Darkhan Institute with the Dornod Mongolian Institute to expand the NV project in teacher training.**

Research

- VSO Mongolia is planning to be a part of VSO's advocacy research project “Valuing Teachers” in early 2008. The research aims to reveal the factors that motivate and demotivate teachers in their jobs and to take the findings to the policy-making levels.

Linking/training/professional support for partners

- Partners to share information and experiences through offering the exchange study visits and joint workshops and seminars.
- Volunteers have established a network to provide each other continuous professional and personal support.
- Partners have an opportunity to be involved in LINKS (Learning through International Knowledge Sharing) activity to learn from experiences of other countries.
- We offer the expertise of our Programme office based volunteers such as Net corps and STAP volunteers to our partners when needed.

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

Since VSO Mongolia started its work in Mongolia in the early nineties it focused on English education since English was considered by the government of Mongolia the most

Programme Area Summary

significant language to enable the country to expand relations with the outside world. Therefore, VSO volunteer English language teachers and methodologists have acted as key people in the education area so far.

There are many other issues in the education sector, which the VSOM education programme focuses on in order to make a greater impact on the lives of disadvantaged children. We now focus our programme on improving quality and inclusion in pre-school, primary, and secondary education. We will however continue to support English language teaching at teacher training level as an important strategy to achieve improvements in the quality of education building on our previous experience.