

Programme Area Summary

Country: Mongolia

Programme Area: Secure Livelihoods 2005 - 2010

What is the aim of the programme area?

VSO Mongolia will contribute to reducing the number of people living in poverty in up to three regional centres, peri-urban districts of Ulaanbaatar and in rural areas.

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

The key development trends that this programme area plan seeks to address are poverty and unemployment. These are seen to be major causes of the challenges currently facing Mongolian society. Examples of such challenges include: the continued rise in alcoholism and associated problems of family disintegration, domestic violence and declining health statistics; the appearance of street children; children dropping out of school and rural-urban migration resulting in the first urban slums of Mongolia. Female-headed households and disabled people have been identified as most vulnerable to these challenges. This has guided the focus of VSO's Secure Livelihoods programme area. Currently, Uvurkhangai, Darkhan-Uul, Dornod aimag and Nalaikh district of Ulaanbaatar have been chosen as focus regions for our work.

Key beneficiaries and partners:

The ultimate beneficiaries of the Programme will be poor herders and citizens living below the poverty line in rural towns in three regions and in peri-urban Ulaanbaatar. These beneficiaries will be reached by supporting our partners in their work with these groups and the Programme aims to support partners to focus their work on the most disadvantaged amongst the target group. Disabled people will be a particular focus during the first years of the Programme Area Plan and possibly female-headed households in the later years. However, due to the small size of the population of Mongolia, it is not unrealistic to aim to target a large percentage of poor herders and citizens living below the poverty line in our chosen geographical regions.

These organisations are our partners:

- Mongolian State University of Agriculture in Ulaanbaatar
- Business Incubator in Darkhan-Uul and Uvurkhangai aimags
- Chamber of Commerce in Darkhan-Uul aimag
- CHF in Dornod aimag
- Construction college in Ulaanbaatar
- Erdenezuu school in Uvurkhangai
- Equal Steps, NGO in Ulaanbaatar
- Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ulaanbaatar
- Mercy corps. In Ulaanbaatar
- Mongolian Women Farmers Association, NGO, in Ulaanbaatar
- Mongolian Textile Institute in Ulaanbaatar
- Norwegian Lutheran Mission in Darkhan-Uul and Ulaanbaatar
- Research Institute of Animal Husbandry
- State Central Veterinary Laboratory in Ulaanbaatar

Key objectives of the programme and the cross-cutting themes?

- Partners will have improved the quality of services that create opportunities for disadvantaged people to have a secure livelihood.
- Partners will have increased the accessibility of their services for the most disadvantaged people.

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- Partners will have improved products and services that increase the market for rural produce.

Current programme activities

Focus of International Volunteer Placements:

To work with local organisations who deal with volunteers to:

1. Facilitate organizational development processes that would improve and enhance coordination and collaboration within and among network committees (i.e. capacity building, resource mobilisation, and information, databank and advocacy)
2. Facilitate/assist in commitment building exercises and volunteering activities of member organisations in relation to its overall VMG
3. Assist the organisation in enhancing its resource mobilisation and development capability

Youth Programmes

There is a YfD volunteer currently working in the Mongolian Women Farmers Association and Equal Step NGO as a fundraiser involved in training and writing proposals for both NGOs. Requests have been sent for replacement of YfD volunteers to continue the work.

Partner exchange visits/study tours

A study tour have been planned for staff and students of Mongolian Textile Institute to increase awareness of contemporary design for both Mongolian staff and students and to raise the quality of design education at MTI. It aims to improve the quality of education and design knowledge within the MTI by strengthening the links with the University of Central England in Birmingham (UCE). Direct beneficiaries will be MTI Lecturers and design students. Indirect beneficiaries will be industries who are able to employ graduates with improved design ability.

Workshops, training & conferences

VSO Mongolia established a network for Secure Livelihoods volunteers during the volunteer networking workshop held in Ulaanbaatar on 12-13 March 2007. Volunteers were able to share their experiences, resources and ideas. The next workshop for volunteer networking is planned in April 2007.

Providing grants and/or equipment for partners

VSO Mongolia has a small grants fund for partners for organising training and publishing booklets etc.

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

Secure livelihoods is a new area for VSO Mongolia. VSO Mongolia aims to address the needs of the poor by working with employment offices and training institutes that provide support to small businesses or those who will establish or work in such businesses. These activities will focus on increasing the potential of small businesses to provide a viable livelihood to one or more people. In addition we will support the needs of herders to become more competitive in a market economy. Improving marketability of products, improving basic business skills and promoting community based tourism are all areas in which we hope to work. Although many organisations are working in secure livelihoods, many of them overlook capacity building an area in which VSO has unique and valuable skills to offer.