

## *Programme Area Summary*

**Country:** Philippines

**Programme Area:** Disability 2005-2010

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

To promote the equal access of persons with disabilities (PWD) to their economic, political and social rights. To achieve this, VSO is building the organisational capacity and resilience of partners, improve their effectiveness and capability to advocate more effectively for disabled rights and promote mainstreaming of disability issues among all programme areas and partners.

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

Constraints imposed by the exit of VSO from the Philippines in 2010, together with VSOP's past experience of working in Region IV, mean that the programme is strategically and geographically focussed in Manila and Cebu city.

The city of Cebu has shown an exceptional commitment to becoming a role model in terms of inclusion, equal participation, non-discrimination, governance and empowerment for PWDs. It has expanded human and financial resources in order to become "the country's first and most PWD friendly city and destination in the Philippines". VSOP is in a strong position to be involved in this work and is part of an existing network of stable, established partner organisations working in disability issues there. VSOP hopes to use this as an opportunity to create examples of 'best practice' in terms of integration and participation of PWDs that can be used to advocate for similar outcomes in other local government units (LGUs).

There are two specific gaps that still need to be addressed:

- failure of governance: from the perspective of PWDs decentralisation has meant that LGUs are not able to deliver services, there are few champions at local level to advocate disability rights and LGUs lack specific skills and sometimes interest to provide equal rights to PWDs.
- restricted civil society capacity: NGOs/ Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) often lack capacity, resources and capability to implement interventions, especially at provincial level.

### **Key beneficiaries and partners**

In Manila:

- Philippine Federation of the Deaf
- Catholic Ministry for the Deaf
- Philippine Deaf Resource Centre
- AKAP Pinoy

In Cebu City:

- Local Government Unit
- CLAN-MPC
- Handicapped Anchor in Christ
- Gualandi Volunteers Service Programme

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

- To strengthen Deaf people's access to information and communication through supporting advocacy on specific issues at national level, i.e. use of SL interpreters on TV, promotion of Filipino Sign Language (FSL) in the media.

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- To build the capacity of disability organisations at the national level and in Cebu to empower disabled people and advocate for their rights
- To develop knowledge and understanding of disability and gender issues with volunteers and partners in their work, to ensure that all of VSOP's interventions and that of our partners are all done with gender and disability mainstreaming in mind.

Recognising the specific vulnerabilities of physically impaired women and children and the additional burden of acting as carers to the disabled, the programme places special emphasis on gender and governance as cross-cutting themes.

### **Current programme activities**

#### *Focus of International Volunteer Placements*

- Volunteers (LTV and STVs) will work in a capacity development role both at National level in Manila and with local Cebu based DPOs/NGOs
- VSOP will continue coordinating work with government agencies, which may include STV working with Dept. Social Welfare and Development, National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (e.g., on programme development, vocational rehabilitation centres, monitoring and evaluation) and to work on advocacy related to disability and gender.
- LTV and STV may be working with the city of Cebu on accessibility, town planning and with Cebu based DPOs/NGOs on organisational advise, advocacy (see below), communication and media, micro enterprise development, resource mobilisation and policy research
- As the total number of volunteers is limited (6 volunteers at any time), volunteers may be working with more than one partner

#### *Support to national volunteering*

- The Disability Programme is committed to identifying opportunities to strengthen existing programmes and develop openings for PWDs to volunteer, and for PWD organizations to benefit from the voluntary efforts of others.

#### *Workshops, training & conferences*

- VSOP offers workshops for volunteers and partners (during ICT) on Disability as well as information materials, tools for volunteers to use to advocate disability rights.

#### *Partner exchange visits/study tours*

- VSOP will facilitate workshops, skill-sharing conferences, exchange visits, study tours and secondments with/to partner organisations. The programme is driven by the capacity-building needs identified by our partners.

#### *Advocacy and Global Education*

- VSOP is working with PWDs and AKAP Pinoy on the acknowledgement of Filipino Sign Language, promoting the Philippine Magna Carta for the Disabled, the Accessibility Law and UN Standards for Disabled People.

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

Though small in size, the programme seeks to maximise its impact by working with strategically selected partners that are able to advocate at the national level, while demonstrating examples of best practice within the context of a local government setting at the provincial level. AKAP Pinoy (Manila) is the first organization to unite all national disability groups and to direct their advocacy efforts towards a structured and purposeful campaign for the full implementation of disability rights.

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VSOP partners are also beginning to develop more ways of sharing and cooperation built on their previous networked activities. Disabled people continue to face many challenges over employment, access, communication barriers and negative stereotypes. The VSOP programme works to empower some of the most vulnerable to find their own unique solutions to their problems.