

Programme Area Summary

Country: South Africa

Programme Area: Women, Girls and HIV&AIDS 2005-2009

What is the aim of the programme area?

To decrease vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa

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

Subsequent to the VSO SA Country Strategic planning the Women/girls & HIV & AIDS programme were identified as the key area of programme to be involved in South Africa.

With 24.8% HIV&AIDS infection rate¹ and an estimated 5 million adults and children living with HIV&AIDS, South Africa is among the worst affected countries in the world. The country is home to half of all HIV- positive people in the nine Southern African Countries hardest hit by the pandemic, and it has surpassed India as the nation with the greatest number of people living with HIV&AIDS.

As the pandemic has ravaged Southern Africa, women – many of them poor and many of them HIV-positive – have played a key leadership role at the community level. Yet their contribution has rarely been recognized or supported by those with decision-making power. And although women and girls account for the majority of new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa, this has not been reflected in the policies or the material resources committed to fight the disease.²

The Women, Girls & HIV& AIDS programme will not be limited in its geographical focus as the programme. We received Programme funding from TMF until 2010, which is also possibility of the programme to be expanding to other regions too.

Key beneficiaries and partners

Civil Society Organisation partners-KwaZulu Natal Network on Violence Against Women (KZNNVAW) Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention & Training (ADAPT) Reproductive Health & HIV/AIDS Research Unit (RHRU) Institute for Women's Development (NISAA) People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA)Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Project (TVEP)
Crosscutting partnerships

- Governance – working relationship with Department of Education in Eastern Cape
- Social Movements - The labour movement and trade advocacy groups provide the social impetus to address the practical economic needs of the working class as well as the structural causes of inequality in general and women's disadvantaged position in particular. Partners that have strong roots in these groups include Khanya College, Rural Development Service Network

Key objectives of the programme and the cross-cutting themes

- 1.To increase economic initiatives empowering disadvantaged women
- 2.To increase community based and life skills education initiatives on sexual reproductive rights

¹ Sentinel study 2001

² UNAIDS Executive Director Peter Piot in his *Call to Leadership* from the Report of the Secretary General's Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV&AIDS in Southern Africa, July 2004.

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3.To increase advocacy activities on Women and HIV&AIDS.

Current programme activities

Focus of International Volunteer Placement

- Small business development process with CPC and FNHCC through the EC-funded Treatment Care and Support (EC-TCS)

Workshops, training & conferences

- Project Seminar on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights conducted with KZNNVAW
- Capacity building workshops on Sexuality & Reproductive Rights for staff volunteers and partners with RHRU 4.Workshop on HIV and Men in Tanzania attended by ADAPT
- Attendance in the international AIDS Conference in Toronto of the Programme Manager

Advocacy and Global Education

- Community Advocacy Workshops in Alexandria with ADAPT

Partner exchange visits/study tours

- Study tour to the Philippines on Women and HIV&AIDS participated by VSO, KZNNVAW, ADAPT, RHRU, POWA, NISAA and TVEP

Development of publications or other materials for training or communication

- Launching of Training Manual on the link between Violence Against Women/Girls and HIV&AIDS with KZNNVAW

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

The programme focus is on women's rights. This makes it unique in VSO and most international development agencies whose core business is not gender or women's issues. Our approach has been largely participatory in nature with programme decision being made based on consultations with partners at grassroots level. The study tours and exchanges provide opportunity for local partners to learn from each other as well as learn from similar experiences in different contexts. Resource mobilizing on behalf partner organizations. Consultative approach with partner organizations as a results we have developed and sustained the trust within the local organizations despite our status as an international organization. Cookie Edwards of partner KZNNVAW has received a Human Rights Award.