

YOUTH.

PERSPECTIVES

PARTICIPATION!



VSO changes lives for the world's most marginalised people. Our unique approach of Volunteering for Development puts people at the centre of creating sustainable, systemic change to their own lives and communities. From local community organisations to national governments, we bring the best people together to coordinate collective action.



OUR APPROACH

We mobilise volunteers with different skillsets, from overseas consultants to local youth, to build trust, relationships, and pass on technical skills. Our highly-skilled volunteers provide a cost-effective alternative to traditional development consultants or staff. Most importantly, we work alongside marginalised people, in their own communities, to build deep local contextual knowledge and bring about profound and lasting impact.



IMPACT

Last year, working in conjunction with communities, NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs), youth groups, host-country government agencies, and policymakers, our programmes reached over 1.5 million people in 24 countries across Africa and Asia-Pacific in the sectors of **Health, Education and Livelihoods**.



VSO focuses its volunteering for development efforts on reaching the most vulnerable and marginalised youth. We build the capacity of key stakeholders, while promoting evidence-based employment and entrepreneurship models, in order to:



**EMPOWER
YOUNG PEOPLE**

with knowledge of market demand and opportunities so they can make informed choices in their pursuit of self-employment.



**EQUIP YOUTH WITH
TECHNICAL SKILLS**

and experience required to meet the demands of employers and the market.



**FOSTER YOUTH
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

by promoting enterprise opportunities, and increasing access to services like business development, finance, networking and mentoring.

All our programmes are led by community aspirations and needs, as well as current structures and systems to ensure interventions do not endanger existing sources of food and income.





“VSO puts youth at the center of the program through direct engagement in the program’s design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.”

Youth champion Fridah Okomo

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMING

VSO has worked with over 30,000 youth volunteers in 25 countries working on 137 projects. These youth volunteers mobilise communities to access income-generating opportunities, demand quality health and education services, and raise awareness around issues like child marriage.

VSO safeguards the rights of impoverished young people by involving them in local and global issues that matter the most to them, and investing in their wellbeing through quality education, decent work opportunities and robust and inclusive health services. By working in partnership with youth organisations, youth-led networks, governments and donors, we encourage young people to participate in their own development – empowering them to engage with key stakeholders and gain a sense of ownership in the process.

VSO has appointed two youth advisers to our international board of trustees to meaningfully engage with young people, thereby ensuring youth voice is central to the organisation’s strategic direction and organisational development.

EQUIP YOUTH WITH SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

We work to empower people to take greater control of their own lives, so they have the skills needed to attain secure, decent incomes and fulfilling employment opportunities.

1. DEVELOPING PRACTICAL SKILLS

We work closely with vocational training institutes to deliver recognised, relevant training that people value, and building teacher capacity with practical training and coaching. We also help to facilitate vocational outreach work, such as on-the-job vocational studies and training, and train-the-trainer approaches where young people take training out into rural areas.

2. CAREERS GUIDANCE AND JOB MATCHING

We work with partners to establish careers centres, providing information about future options, as well as skills development, including CV writing and interview preparation. Our online job matching platform supports students to find job opportunities, once their skills have improved.

3. SOFT SKILLS FOR THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

Technology and the digital economy are shaping how and where we work, and these skills we need. We recognise that this creates both opportunities and threats. We support people to develop the skills they need to thrive in the changing world of work.

ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION



THE PROBLEM

Youth growing up in low-income countries are at a disadvantage with only 19% of youth able to expect to find a job with a living wage, while in high income countries, 86% can look forward to a job providing them with a living wage. Job markets are not growing fast enough to absorb the million or so young people who come in to the labour market every month in Sub-Saharan Africa.

“Partner with young people to build a better, more resilient world for all generations.”

*Youth at Heart strategy,
principle 3*



OUR SOLUTION

VSO supports micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to grow. This approach is specifically focused on generating decent employment opportunities for poor and marginalised communities by promoting inclusive business development. We work with local partners, government and volunteers to offer business development services to help entrepreneurs move their businesses into the formal economy. We do this while also addressing many of the barriers that poor and marginalised people including women, face in reaching their aspirations and expressing their voices.

Professional expert volunteers pair with national volunteers to deliver our training and advisory services. Individuals or teams with relevant skills in marketing, financial modelling, strategy and people management offer advisory services to MSMEs at several stages of their development with the ultimate goal to develop these enterprises in both scale and capacity to provide secure employment.

