



National
Volunteering

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Since 2003, VSO has been developing the concept of National Volunteering (NV), encouraging people to understand, influence and own the development of their countries and communities. NV is a powerful 21st century approach that puts local volunteers at the heart of the development of their communities by increasing their voice and participation in decision making.

How does National Volunteering work?

VSO uses its expertise to help its partner organisations run their own volunteering schemes. We don't recruit our own local volunteers but support more than 200 National Volunteering (NV) partners in more than 35 countries worldwide helping them to create and coordinate their programmes. VSO provides technical support and training on volunteer programme development and management.

NV programmes are tailored to fit our partner organisations. The development opportunities we offer include training, study tours, building partnerships and networks, work placements in the UK and youth programmes, such as Global Xchange. We also provide the support of international volunteers, small grants and seed funding to help organisations get development projects off the ground.

What are the benefits?

Because National Volunteering (NV) works in conjunction with international volunteering and other VSO interventions, it has an even greater impact in alleviating poverty.

NV has enabled VSO to continue to make an impact where international volunteering was no longer possible, for example, in the Balkans, Zimbabwe and Pakistan.

VSO Pakistan has completely re-engineered its programme. Now young people are leading the way, planning and running volunteer programmes that fight poverty in their communities. They are great examples of active citizens.

One local NGO in Jharkhand, India, used VSO seed funding for its UDAAN initiative involving 400 youth volunteers who have received training on leadership, needs assessment, project planning and development issues. The project is helping tribal women to access primary health care and enabling disabled people to access medical and pension entitlements.

“Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship and is essential for democracy. The course taught me the importance of encouraging others to succeed.”

Zambian participant



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Across the world, National Volunteering (NV) helps VSO develop exciting projects with young people who have so much to offer their communities.

In Mindanao, an area of the Philippines facing ongoing conflict, VSO's partner organisation Kapamagogopa Incorporated is helping young Muslim volunteers to work with peace organisations on emotional and economic resilience programmes. Here, NV has been adopted as a strategy to forge peace.

We help partner organisations talk to decision makers and ensure that laws and policy support volunteering to take place, legally, safely and effectively.

The National Volunteering Bill for Mozambique was ratified by parliament on 2 December 2010. VSO played a key role in this process, bringing together representatives from government and civil society to draft the bill. The law will support local volunteers - particularly women who provide home-based care to those living with HIV and AIDS - because it defines their rights and recognises the contribution of volunteers to Mozambique's development.

Our experience shows us that NV is a cost effective and creative way to deliver programmes that have a major impact on alleviating poverty.



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