

Our impact

Creating a fair world for everyone



VSO creates lasting change by unlocking the power of people. We bring together local, national and international volunteers to work alongside the world's most marginalised and vulnerable communities to build generational change.

Our vision
**A fair world
for everyone**

Our purpose
**Creating lasting
change through
volunteering**




Since we started in 1958, we have worked in over 90 countries, deployed over **80,000** volunteers and supported almost **60 million** people.

Impact in 2021/22

8.2 million people were reached over 4.2 million indirectly and nearly 4 million directly including:

 Over **5.5 million** through our education projects

 Almost **500,000** through our resilient livelihoods programme

 Over **1.2 million** through our health projects



Over **900,000** through our wider work on resilience, inclusion and social accountability.

To help people prepare for disaster, build peaceful communities, tackle genderbased violence, and create inclusive societies for people with disabilities.



51% of the people we worked with were women



4% of the people we worked with were people living with disability

Who we work with, our approach

Our approach to development is providing a sustainable, long-term solution to complex global problems, that are affecting millions of vulnerable people around the world. This impact report provides an overview and some examples of what we have achieved during 2021/22 and highlights the amazing impact that we are making in a wide range of contexts around the world thanks to supporters like you.

Doing development differently

Our volunteering for development approach focuses first on those who are left out by society – those living in extreme poverty, or with disability and illness, those who face discrimination and violence for their gender, sexuality or social status. These are not passive “beneficiaries” of aid. They are the “primary actors” at the heart of our work. It is from their viewpoint and actions

that we seek to define the issues, opportunities, and solutions that deliver sustainable and locally led change. VSO’s volunteering for development method provides opportunity for everybody to bring about lasting change.

What do we mean by primary actors?

Primary actors are the marginalised people in communities that we work with whose needs we respond to in our programming. They are the ones engaging in projects, working with us to better understand the community’s needs, and working with volunteers to build a fairer world. Our responses are driven by demand from the poorest and most marginalised. We always work with local partners who can guide the most effective support.

Why do we use that term?

‘Primary’, because they are principal contributors to VSO’s work and they shape the design and delivery of programmes. ‘Actors’, because they are active agents. VSO doesn’t do development to communities, it works alongside them.



Agness Chibale, a VSO community volunteer, of Mwanayama Village on the mainland in Samfya district, Zambia.

TALK Project

Our volunteering for development method

Our volunteering for development method recognises the importance of relationships in forging a shared understanding and commitment and building collective action to lasting change. Through blended teams of community, national and international volunteers, it brings together a diversity of perspectives and experience to generate insights, innovate ideas and undertake actions that can address the underlying causes to complex problems facing our communities. It inspires and ignites the potential for active citizenship everywhere across the globe to step forward and drive the change that will create a fair world for everyone. All our programmes address the root causes of marginalisation by focusing on three areas – what we call “core approaches” – that reliably tackle the structures, systems and conditions that make people vulnerable. These core approaches are fundamental to our volunteering for development method, ensuring the people we work with have the confidence and capacity to bring about change in their own lives.





Rabina being assisted by Samjhana Thapa (Big Sister) with her studies. Rabina was born with Cerebral palsy and could never attend school until Empowering a New Generation of Adolescent Girls with Education (ENGAGE) project supported her.

VSO's three core approaches

Social inclusion and gender

Millions of people face discrimination because of their gender, age, disability, cultural background, sexual orientation. VSO aims to dismantle the causes behind exclusion in all its forms.

Resilience

Disasters, disease outbreaks and other shocks and stresses can have a devastating effect on communities. Those who are already vulnerable are most at risk. Our goal is to work with communities and societies to create stronger systems and capability wherever we identify vulnerability or fragility to shocks and stresses.

Social accountability

Many people around the world are denied basic rights that are guaranteed in law, or may be subject to laws that are unfair or unjust. Corruption, fear, and unequal power dynamics stop people from speaking up and demanding a fairer, more just society. VSO works to support people exercising their voice, no matter who they are or where they are from. We also work alongside authorities responding to the needs of people they are there to serve.

Our values

A group of people, including a baby, smiling and interacting outdoors. The background is a blurred image of a group of people, including a baby, smiling and interacting outdoors. The image is dark and serves as a background for the text.

Collaboration

- Empower poor and marginalised people to take charge of their own development
- Share skills and knowledge to create long lasting, sustainable change
- Build collaborative partnerships that promote innovation, growth and impact

Knowledge

- Lead volunteering for development, setting the standard for ourselves and others
- Use evidence and insight to guide our actions
- Recruit the right people and work where we have the greatest impact

Inclusion

- Stand beside and advocate for those who have been denied choice and opportunity
- Promote diversity and equality throughout our work
- Encourage different, inquisitive perspectives

Integrity

- Commit to safeguarding and take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and harm
- Treat others with respect, as equals
- Be open, transparent and accountable in everything we do





A deaf client explaining challenges in accessing sexual reproductive health services during deaf awareness week in Isiolo, Kenya.

Reaching the most marginalised

Family Planning for All

For people who are marginalised, access to information and services on family planning, can be hard to come by. In many counties across Kenya, less than 45% of women are using modern contraception and this figure is far lower amongst persons with disabilities, poor rural women and marginalised adolescent girls. Yet, the evidence is clear that when people have that access, mothers and children are less likely to die, children are healthier and happier and overall economic and social well-being is improved.

For people with disabilities, access to family planning is limited by both social and environmental factors. Poor and inaccessible infrastructure can mean that they cannot physically enter health facilities. Family planning information is often unavailable in braille or sign language. But perhaps the biggest hurdle is overcoming the prejudices and cultural beliefs against disability.

This experience was all too familiar to Rael Akinyi Lumumba, a nurse in Mombasa County. Rael's parents are both deaf. Growing up, Rael witnessed the difficulty her parents had accessing healthcare. When Rael fell ill and had to be taken to hospital, she was only seen by medical staff when a cleaner realised that her mother was unable to communicate what she needed.

VSO is working with 7 other organisations across 19 Kenyan counties to provide inclusive family planning services through the UK Aid funded “Delivering Equitable Sustainable Increases in Family Planning” (DESIP) project.

As part of this project, VSO volunteers are training health care providers and county health management teams to understand the needs of rural poor women, adolescents, youth and people with disabilities, the social and physical barriers they face and to factor these into better planning and delivering healthcare services.

Rael, for example, was able to draw on her personal experiences to discuss the challenges of communicating with deaf patients. The training she received means she is better equipped to sensitize her colleagues about social inclusion and to work with them to overcome their own prejudices and assumptions about those living with disability. Nurse volunteer, Rael Lumumba has been awarded the prestigious “Best Nurse Practitioner for Mombasa County” for her work with persons with disabilities, including her outreach to reach the most marginalised and vulnerable.



National volunteer Aarati Patel, explaining about female birth control methods to local women in Gaur municipality, Nepal.

Taking volunteering for development to scale

A key part of our VSO strategy is to make a bigger contribution to delivering the Sustainable Development Goals by scaling up the impact and influence of our work. It is a strength of our volunteering for development methodology that evidence and lessons from our programming can be analysed and applied in different contexts. Over the last year, we have continued to build initiatives that deliver at scale, ensuring that no-one is left behind.

Inclusive Education focal teacher Jean Baptiste Ndayisaba describes the difference this work has made:

“Right now, we can assess the needs of students and use different strategies to provide support so we can teach them at the right level. Girls’ performance has increased because we have been able to pay attention to their needs and the number of enrolled pupils with disabilities has greatly increased due to home visits.

Before, many students with disabilities were not attending schools. Teachers and school leaders were not skilled on the way to teach and treat students with disabilities and learning difficulties. All community members had mind-sets that children with disabilities had to be enrolled in special schools only, but now they are attending regular schools.”

Attending a Building Learning Foundations Community of Practice session in Rulindo, Rwanda.



Reaching Every Child in Rwanda

Like many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the Rwandan education system faces significant challenges: large class sizes, a lack of teaching materials, unqualified teachers and high dropout rates. This problem is particularly acute for children with learning difficulties or disabilities, who face stigma as well as physical barriers to accessing education. Some believe that children with disabilities do not have the right to education and that schools cannot meet their needs.

COVID-19 has disrupted education in Rwanda and brought further hardship to poor families. Students fell further behind in their education and the impact was even more pronounced for those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The Building Learning Foundations (BLF) project is a UK Aid funded partnership between VSO, Education Development Trust, and British Council which is improving basic education in every government-aided

primary school in Rwanda, reaching over 4 million children. As part of its work, VSO is leading a pioneering disability intervention in 486 schools across 30 districts.

With children returning to school after the long COVID lockdown in Rwanda, many children with disabilities enrolled at school for the first time as part of a government Back-to-School campaign. VSO international volunteers have mentored national volunteers who are trained Special Needs Education Coordinators (SNECOs) to support teachers to identify children with learning difficulties, to take action to meet their needs and to teach more inclusively, for example through using bespoke teaching materials. Over 486 teachers in schools supported by VSO's Disability Intervention were supported reaching 90,000 families across all 30 districts in Rwanda, encouraging engagement between home and school and allowing early intervention where developmental delays or learning difficulties were identified for students.

Working in Fragile Contexts

VSO's strategy is to focus our support on those who are most marginalised and vulnerable. As a result, we increasingly work in what are termed "fragile contexts". These are places where factors such as climate change, conflict, and political instability create greater risk for people living there and where the state, system or community struggle to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. Our approach is to look at bridging the long-term development needs of those living in these places and the immediate challenges of living in a vulnerable context.

Working in fragile contexts requires a careful and sensitive approach to ensure that existing tensions are not inflamed, risks are not increased and that any support takes into account the varying needs of those who have been put at risk, displaced or are living with conflict. Our Volunteering for Development method builds the capability of primary actors living in fragile contexts so that they are better able to anticipate, plan for and respond to future challenges as well as seeking to meet their immediate needs.

Over the last year, as part of this work, we have responded directly to nine emergencies in places like Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and the Philippines. This work is built on our long-term programme of training and building national volunteer responders in countries around the world using our volunteering for development method.



FOOD SECURITY AND SPARC:

FERTILIZER TRAINING AND

PRODUCTION



Women from the Philippines take part in a training on biofertilizer production.

Healing from Ecological Crisis and Conflict

After six decades of conflict between armed groups and government forces, Mindanao, one of the Philippines' most southerly islands, is slowly recovering. Whilst a peace deal was struck in 2014, that peace is still fragile. The Philippines is prone to typhoons, exacerbated by climate change. There is an ongoing concern that devastating economic and ecological consequences of extreme weather could exacerbate existing ethnic hostilities.

The coastal ecosystems around the Philippines are some of the world's most heavily fished. Changing weather patterns and the effects of overfishing mean that daily life is hard for locals, dependent on the fishing industry. Fighting has left Mindanao significantly less developed than other parts of the Philippines. Simmering tensions could lead to conflict once again.

In the Sultan Naga Dimaporo region, the most prominent industries are fishing and seaweed farms, but both are vulnerable to the tropical storms and

typhoons which are increasing in intensity. The devastation caused by these natural disasters mean that fishing is often too dangerous and seaweed crops are frequently ruined.

VSO and our local partner organisation, Lanao Aquatic and Marine Fisheries Centre for Community Development (LAFCCOD) are working with fishing households in order for communities to become more self-sufficient. Training and development will allow for other income streams less dependent on weather conditions.

Piloted in 2019, the project was first targeted at women in the fishing community. Participants were trained to make organic biofertilizer from fish waste, vegetables and the seaweed crops ruined by storms and typhoons. The women make an income from selling the biofertilizer, which contributes to protecting their families from the economic shocks caused by changing weather.

The women are working with local rice farmers reliant on buying chemical fertilizers for their crops. The biofertilizer is organic, cheaper than chemical alternatives and supports soil health.

Last year, the project expanded to train 100 men, women and youth who were members of the political group Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the ex-revolutionary group who has successfully forged a peace agreement with the government. The project encourages the indigenous Moro people and non-Moro communities to work together through sharing skills and technology. Taya Delis, a former member, has taken part in the training; “I can’t describe how important it is for our community to participate in these income generating activities. It’s very relevant for those of us who are older and find it difficult to find work due to our age.”

Ernesto Delicano, a community supporter of the marine protected area, has seen the benefits of the initiative;

“Both Moro and non-Moros are now working together as a community to protect and maintain our marine sanctuary. This has led to a much better relationship between the two groups.

Whenever there is a misunderstanding amongst us, we bring it to the table to discuss the problem and make sure that we come up with a compromise to resolve the issue.”

By collaborating and having the opportunity to learn from one another, the community is beginning to heal the island’s ecological crisis while building livelihoods that are more resilient to economic and climate disasters.

Building Knowledge, Delivering Influence

VSO is probably best known for the inspirational work of its thousands of volunteers on the ground. But we have also invested in through research and practice to increase and deepen our understanding of how volunteering can create a fairer world and how it can best deliver sustainable impact at scale. Over the past six years, we have sought to apply and share our knowledge to strengthen volunteering globally. We have begun to make a significant contribution beyond the direct work we do ourselves by working with a range of partners to also leverage the power of volunteering.

At the same time, the voices of the poorest and most marginalised often go unheard, trapping people in poverty, due to systems and societies that have not

been built for them. Our policy and advocacy work takes a bottom-up, evidence-based approach. We work alongside the most marginalised people to ensure their voices are heard on policy and practice decisions that affect their lives. VSO's blended volunteering approach helps to promote the voice of primary actors and build their networks, bridging the gap between government or service providers and marginalised groups. Our volunteers do this by bringing their own expertise and understanding of how to influence policies and systems.

Over the past year, VSO has supported the development of a range of policy changes including the disaster risk reduction plan in Zimbabwe, advocated for a right-to-food bill in Kenya, supported the Government in Cambodia to develop guidelines to protect vulnerable children from dropping out of schools, and led civil society groups and volunteers in Nepal to influence a new 10-year National Education plan, among other policy influences.

In 2021/22, VSO has ensured that volunteering is adequately recognised and supported through

the development of government policy frameworks in Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Malawi, Mozambique, and Nigeria. In all these countries, progress has been made in developing and implementing national policies to enable and advance volunteering.

During the same period, VSO has partnered with the African Union to develop a continental volunteer policy and to support an Africa wide volunteering platform that will reach millions of people and support a thriving civil society.

We continue to build VSO's knowledge and thought leadership in volunteering for development progressed with the production and dissemination of 13 reports evidencing the effectiveness of Volunteering for Development methodology in VSO programmes. Five of those reports were presented at UN and academic conferences. These included papers covering youth and community volunteering, the Global Standard for Responsible & Impactful Volunteering, climate resilience and green jobs, twinning between the UK and Global South health institutions, and the voice and participation of the most marginalised people (primary actors) in VSO programmes.



For the last 33 years Chiv Koemuoyth has taught pre-school in Siem Reap, dealing with a lack of resources.

Chum Srey Nga, frequently participates in VSO training and the GREEN project activities. Subsequently, she is able to build up her floating vegetable garden on the shores of the Tonle Sap Lake, Cambodia.



Looking forward



I am grateful to all those individuals, institutions and companies who've worked with us in the last year.

Together we've shown we can work with the most vulnerable to change our world for the better. This is the power of our collective action.

There is, sadly, still much to do. Global inequality is rising because of the global pandemic, the impact of the climate emergency and shrinking civil society space. Together, these are threatening the world's ability to deliver the Global Goals. The gap between those who have access to resources and those who don't has never been bigger. At the same time, finances to do this work are increasingly constrained. This is the context in which our new VSO strategy and operating plan must respond.

We know there is a real opportunity to tackle inequity and ensure no-one is left behind. Our ambition remains to bring lasting and positive change to the lives of primary actors by using the transformational power of volunteering.

Over the next six years, we will continue to deepen the impact of our programmes by focusing on ensuring equal access to opportunity and resources for those people who are marginalised by society. We will continue to build the resilience of communities and countries to anticipate and withstand shocks and disasters. We will continue to support the ability of the most vulnerable to hold governments to account and, in turn, to work alongside governments responding to and meeting the needs of their populations. At the same time, we will support the mobilization of active citizens around the world through volunteering and we will use our knowledge and evidence to build recognition of volunteering as a transformational contribution to the delivery of the Global Goals.

We can be proud of what we have achieved with your support. With your help, we can be confident about fulfilling our plans for the future to leave no one behind.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Goodwin'.

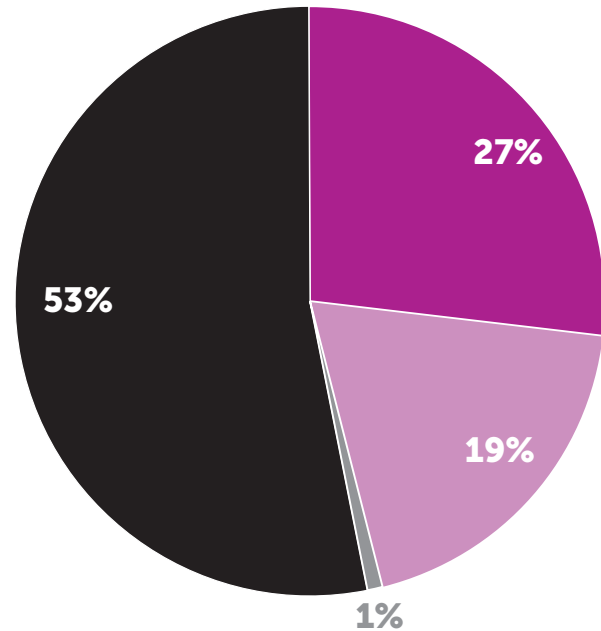
Philip Goodwin, Chief Executive Officer

Where our money comes from

In 2021/22, VSO's total income was £33.3 million. The money came from generous individuals, trusts, corporates and institutions.

Where our income came from 2021/22

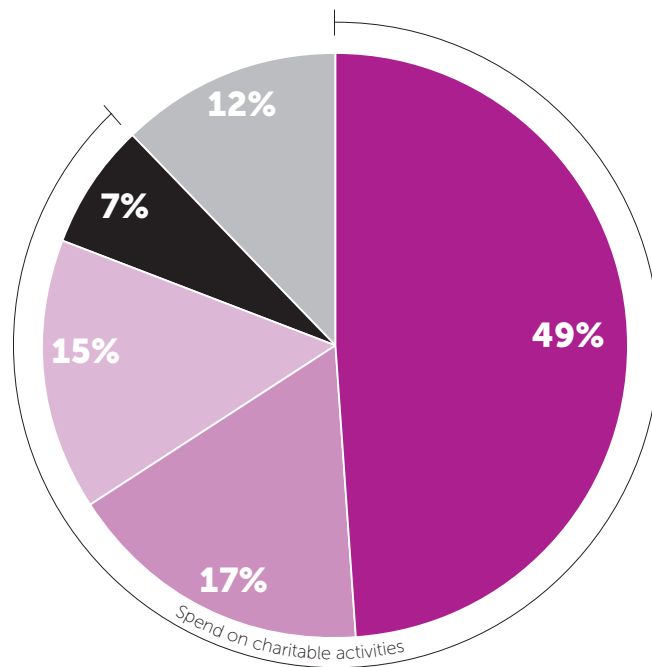
- Institutional Grants: 53%
- FCDO Volunteering for Development Grant: 27%
- Individual giving: 19%
- Other income: 1%



**TOTAL
INCOME
FOR THE YEAR
£33.3m**

How the money was spent 2021/22

- Inclusive Education: 49%
- Health: 17%
- Resilient Livelihoods: 15%
- Core Approaches: 7%
- Raising funds: 12%



**TOTAL
EXPENDITURE
FOR THE YEAR
£38.8m**

Thank you

Our work wouldn't be possible without the dedication and support of thousands of people, partners and organisations. From the volunteers who share their time and skills in our programmes around the world, to the partners who work with us on programme development, delivery, research and fundraising. From the staff and supporters who work tirelessly on our behalf, to the people and organisations who donate the vital funds needed to support our work – and all those who generously choose to leave a gift in their Will. The change is being felt



by over a million people around the world, right now. Together, we're working towards a fair world for everyone. Thank you. Here are just some of the individuals and organisations who made a vital contribution to our work in 2021/22.



African Union • AmplifyChange • Amplio • ARM
• Avert • British Council • Citi Group • Civil
Society and Indigenous People's Mechanism of
the Committee on World food security • Dubai
Cares • Education Cannot Wait • Education
Consortium • Education Development Trust
• European Commission • ERIKS • Foreign,
Commonwealth & Development Office • Global
Affairs Canada • Global Campaign for Education
• Global Partnership for Education • Greg Dyke
and Sue Howes • GSRD Foundation • Hempel
Foundation • Imagine Worldwide • Institute of
Development Studies (IDS) • International Civil
Society Centre (ICSC) • International Forum for
Volunteering in Development • Irish Aid • Jersey
Overseas Aid • KfW • Lego Foundation • London
School of Economics • Mastercard Foundation •
Medicor Foundation • MESH Guides (Education
Future Collaboration) • Ministry of Foreign
Affairs of The Netherlands • NHS Lewisham and
Greenwich Trust • Nyagatare Hospital in Rwanda
• Onebillion • Pan African Climate Justice Alliance
(PACJA) • Population Services Kenya • Randstad •
Robert Carr Civil Society Networks Fund • Royal
Norwegian Embassy • Scottish Government •
Southern Africa Network of Prisons (SANOP) •
Standard Chartered Foundation • Tackle Africa
• The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation • The
British Asian Trust • UNESCO • UNFPA • UNICEF
• United Nation Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI)
• UNOCHA • UN Trust Fund • UNV • University of
Northumbria • University of Nottingham • USAID •
Weeshuis der Doopsgezinden • Wees een Kans •
Wemos • WHO

**If you would like to know more about VSO's work
worldwide, visit www.vsointernational.org**

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