

Programme Area Summary

Country: Indonesia

Programme Area: Health and Social Wellbeing 2003 - 2009

What is the aim of the programme area?

To improve the health status of women of childbearing age and children under 5 years in Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) province.

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

The key indicators of maternal and infant health in NTT province are the worst in the country. The maternal mortality rate in NTT province is 554 per 100,000 births (where the Indonesia average is 307). The infant mortality rate is 59 per 1000 live births (Indonesian average is 35). Some of the causes for this high mortality rate are unhealthy living practices, quality of and access to community health care services, delays in referral to treatment centres, poor early detection or prevention of illness and poor nutrition.

Key objectives of the programme and the cross-cutting themes

- To assist VSO's partner organisations to improve access to and quality of health services
- To improve the ability of partner organisations to develop and implement community based maternal and child health programmes

VSO Indonesia attempts to incorporate the rights of disabled people in all its programming, and the health programme takes a rights-based approach to health. There are also close links between the Health Goal and the Livelihoods and Disability Goals.

Key beneficiaries and partners

Beneficiaries are women of child-bearing age and children under 5 years. Indirect benefits are felt throughout the communities and health service providers. Partners are listed below.

- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – such as Yayasan Tananua, Yayasan Kesehatan Untuk Semua, Yayasan Ayo Indonesia, Yayasan Harapan Sumba and the Sumba Foundation
- Government health authorities – predominantly the local (district) level government health offices, but also coordination with the provincial health department
- Hospitals – both public hospitals and private, church-run hospitals
- Multi-lateral donors – VSO is formally part of a health system strengthening programme between the Governments of Indonesia, Germany and the UK, with funding from GTZ (the German government development agency) in the “Making Pregnancy Safer” programme

Current programme activities

Focus of International Volunteer Placements

Volunteers will work in nine districts throughout NTT province. VSO attempts to place volunteers working at four different levels within each district (however, depending on our partnership profile in each district, this is not always fully achieved). These are local community based, non-governmental organisations; community health centres (via NGOs or government partners; district hospitals and district health authorities.

Some volunteer placements focus on partnerships with local non-governmental organisations who working with the community and health service providers. They work

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with colleagues to develop community health programmes which focus on preventative approaches, health promotion, the availability and accuracy of information, the importance of nutrition, awareness of health rights and mobilisation of villagers to make better use of available public health services. They also help to strengthen the organisations themselves, for example in training and capacity building methodologies, information management and IT systems, planning and evaluation techniques, building networks and fundraising.

Other volunteers work alongside colleagues in improving health system management at district level and medical services in district hospitals or community clinics. This can include working at management level or directly with patients as well as mentoring, training and building the skills of health care managers and service providers.

All placements aim to increase awareness of health rights among both men and women. The focus is on increasing knowledge of healthy living practices, the importance of nutrition and mobilising village women to make better use of available public health services.

Workshops, training & conferences

VSO Indonesia conducts an annual Health Sector workshop for all health volunteers and partner organisations to learn and share knowledge and experiences. Training, whether formal or informal, forms a large part of most volunteers' jobs. VSO also supports the implementation of the Desa Siaga ("Alert Village") initiative, a nation-wide community-based health strategy of the Government of Indonesia whereby villages become prepared to ensure proper care for pregnant women, through the formation of 5 networks (notification, transportation, blood donor, health saving, and family planning).

Partner exchange visits/study tours

Exchange visits are encouraged across the partner network in Indonesia to mutually share learning and lend technical assistance according to skills sets and needs of partner organisations and volunteers.

Providing grants and/or equipment for partners

VSO Indonesia has some small funding for partners, to enable grantees to implement small-scale projects.

Development of publications or other materials for training or communication

- Rights based approach handbook for health workers
- Health Training resources CD for partners and volunteers
- VSO Indonesia Health Programme Starter's Pack

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

Within a highly decentralized government health system, VSO's tight geographic focus and multi-level partners means it can have a significant impact at district level and is positioned at the health system's interface with disadvantaged community members.

Through its involvement in the multi-lateral governmental "Making Pregnancy Safer" programme, VSO is uniquely positioned to contribute to a stronger health system in Indonesia by having a direct channel to influence policy makers through the feedback of volunteers and local organisations working directly with communities.