

Introduction to Advocating on Victim Assistance (Jesus and Firoz)

Roundtable and warm up

Concepts, tips and tricks

Practical concepts and lessons

Exchange of views, questions and answers

Why is victim assistance important to you? – Introductory question

- Part of my work
- CCM
- Provide help
- VA FP
- My fellows needs
- To better support victims
- I am a survivor – know more about know rights and needs
- Tips to better advocate for own rights
- To provide for a better future
- Learn more to better advocate
- Rewarding to work with victims
- Getting warring parties to take responsibility for their actions, including responding to needs of victims
- See that needs of victims lacking in many ways

What is VA? 6 pillars:

1. Data collection – to know the situation, needs, priorities, numbers of victims, where they live, livelihood
2. Emergency and medical care – first aid, continued medical care, esp. those who lose limbs
3. Physical rehabilitation – this is important means of empowering victims, prosthesis, OT, PT, wheelchair
4. Psychological support – parallel to disability, from first day, are traumatized, so need support, from peers, from professionals; this is a long term process
5. Social and economic inclusion
6. Laws and policies – to protect rights of persons with disabilities by law

What are we asking for? **Protect and promote the rights of and address the needs of survivors/victims and their families.**

- Difference from Convention on RP Disabilities – added value of weapons convention

What is advocacy – speaking up for, or acting out, on behalf of yourself or someone else

For rights, needs, interests

Key Principles

- What person says and wants is most important thing
- Advocacy enables individuals to do more for themselves and lessens dependence on others
- Empowerment
- Advocates should not have a conflict of interest

Session Notes Santiago, Chile 8

- Advocates need to be independent

Advocacy models

- 1) Self Advocacy
- 2) Citizen Advocacy – someone else speaks on behalf, often govt official
- 3) Peer Advocacy
- 4) Collective Advocacy – for a common goal
- 5) Professional Advocacy

Handout – “So you want to advocate for Victim Assistance?”

p. 6 – hints on what need to keep in mind when doing advocacy on VA

Jesus – presentation

- In different countries, we have different perspectives on advocacy
- **Rwanda** – advocacy is a bit slow, simply because there are some stages you have to go through, still in early stages of developing local organization and have certain challenges
 - information
 - categorization
- **Lao** – work with the govt, rather than lobby it, provide workshops to govt ministries, and then formulate work plans in that setting
- Need focal point within government, how to do it, important to develop relationship and show them how important it is
- Want to influence decision-makers – for them to promote the victim assistance; so we invite all the decision-makers to sign and ratify the convention and they also have to respect the commitments they have made
- **Lao** (??) – advocacy is good, but if you live under a communist regime, how you can do advocacy; if you live in USA, Spain or other – must easier b/c grassroots orgs can lobby govt; but countries like Cambodia, Lao, Vietnam – much harder; grassroots not getting education; how to promote grassroots advocacy

Advocacy depends on country – resources, receptiveness of govt?

- Advocacy can be simple action that survivor can take
- Advocacy can be a variety of actions taken to draw attention to a certain issue and encourage decision-makers to offer solutions
- Advocacy levels
 - Individual
 - Local
 - National
 - Regional
 - International

Types of advocacy – educational actions, legal actions, political actions

- When political, diplomatic action do not work – need to pass through to legal action

Creating positive changes Session Notes Santiago, Chile 9

- Being sure of what we want – be empowered
- Speaking up for ourselves
- Being organized
- Encouraging decision-makers
- Drawing attention of the media
- Teaching about our needs

To do all these things, we need to be committed

What does advocacy mean on the national level?

- Know local laws – need to understand the system
- Speak to the right people
- Train politicians, government officers on issues related to our rights
- Unify voices of survivors – this is part of organizing
- Promote creation of public policies
- Show capacity
- Getting organized
- Persistence

Challenges

- Lack of will of decision makers, lack of resources
- Lack of knl about what we need, are talking about
- Indifference
- One voice alone is weak
- They are always busy
- Lack of resources
- Frustration

Achievements in El Salvador

- Law adapted to respond to survivors needs
- Government approved of payment to survivors
- Govt will provide credits to survivors

Questions to floor – what are challenges to your country on VA? Do you have concrete examples of how you overcame a challenge?

- Thoughts on being able to include both men *and* women in advocacy efforts – how to best hear the needs of each group and not let one side overshadow the other
- Afghanistan – have over 1million people with disabilities
- Differences between what the law *says* you can get and what *happens* in real life
 - o Ex, entitled to get prosthesis every 3 years, but very hard to get actual approval for that; everything exists on paper, the laws are there, but the state won't make a move to do anything unless pushed and that's where advocacy comes in
- DRC – lobbying non-state armed groups; need to convince them to participate in struggle against mines, even though they aren't under the control of the government

Question to Lao campaigners – „what are the hot issues in Lao in terms of VA, and how can this group help you?“

- Take advantage of this type of activity to advocate the host country