

## *Summary Report-*

### **Workshop on Victim Assistance**

Nov 27 2009 | Caribe Hotel, Cartagena, Colombia



#### **Introduction:**

On November 27 2009, ICBL organized a workshop on victim assistance (VA) to prepare the VA Focal Points, survivors and campaigners, for the Cartagena Summit. The workshop also allowed the group to work on plans post-Cartagena.

Over 60 people, including survivors, practitioners, researchers and campaigners, participated in the workshop. The workshop helped the participants to identify post-Cartagena VA priorities, finalize the Survivors Call to Action for the Cartagena Summit, share experiences and lessons learned, and provide recommendations to help newcomers' advocacy activities on VA.

#### **Opening remarks:**

**ICBL's Executive Director Sylvie Brigot opened the workshop** with general remarks on the impact of Mine Ban Treaty on VA over the past decade. She thanked the VA Focal Points and survivors, whose hard and great work has led to many achievements in the area of VA. Sylvie reiterated the fact that ICBL remains committed to improve VA in affected countries as much as it can. In conclusion, **Sylvie encouraged the VA Focal Points to maintain the great momentum towards protecting the rights of survivors and persons with disabilities around the world.**

### **Achievements and challenges since Nairobi Summit:**

The meeting started with an **overview of VA over the past five years (2005-2009)** by Landmine Monitor Editor Megan Burke. The overview focused on achievements and challenges in VA26 States. Megan noted that there has been consistent progress in **coordination, awareness about survivors' needs, national ownership and reporting**. She highlighted six countries (Albania, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Sudan, Uganda and Thailand) that have shown progress in planning, coordination, inclusion of survivors in the planning process, and national ownership. Megan concluded her presentation by identifying a number of big challenges including **insufficient international resources, unsustainable services, and a lack of inclusion that hampers progress on victim assistance**.

### **Cartagena Action Plan on VA:**

Tamar Gabelnick, the ICBL's Treaty Implementation Director, explained the substance of the draft VA actions of the Cartagena Action Plan (CAP) and the role of civil society in implementing this plan after the Summit. Tamar described the **VA actions of the CAP as strong and service oriented actions that can bring positive change to the lives of individuals, if appropriately implemented in next five years**. She highlighted the action on availability, accessibility, and inclusion as important actions to be taken into account in implementation. Tamar went through the ICBL's Message Booklet and requested the participants use the VA messages when lobbying the concerned government delegations during the Summit and afterwards.

### **Collaboration with Governments:**

The workshop continued with a discussion on collaboration and coordination between civil society and government **to enhance VA efforts post-Cartagena**. Sheree Bailey, the VA Specialist of the Implementation Support Unit, provided an overview about how states in affected countries may view collaboration and coordination between government and civil society. She requested the participants of the workshop **increase their efforts to work closely with governments in a positive and constructive manner in the post-Cartagena period**, and she offered her views on how to create a more constructive relationship.

### **Synergies:**

**Connecting the Dots** is a booklet which was published by Survivor Corps in 2009. It was presented to the workshop participants by Nerina Cevra of Survivor Corps. The booklet describes the connections and coherence that exist between Mine Ban Treaty, Convention on Cluster Munitions, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It provides useful insights on shared principles and objectives of the three conventions. **It aims to enhance the implementation of each convention by synergizing advocacy efforts**.

## Best practices:

After this session, three presentations on best practices in Afghanistan, Uganda and Bosnia & Herzegovina were delivered by Suliman Aminy of ALSO, Margaret A. Orech of ULSA and Ramiz Bicrovic of LSIBH. The presenters **shared their great experiences and lessons learned**. They also provided a set of recommendations to new focal points and advocates for their advocacy activities on VA. They emphasized on importance of peer support and socio-economic inclusion as effective ways to sustain inclusion of landmine survivors in their communities. Furthermore, all three presenters highlighted the **value of paradigm shift from medical and charity towards human-rights based approach**. Margaret concluded the session by recommending three key points from her experiences to be taken into account when doing advocacy on victim assistance:

### Consistency:

- Being consistent in delivering my messages
- Working with particular survivors until I was able to exploit their maximum potential

### Networking

- Survivors as well as other stakeholders as allies in delivery my advocacy agenda

### Volunteerism

- I realized that I have to do what I should do “

## Advocacy tools:

The morning session was closed by an introductory presentation on the second edition of the VA booklet [“So you want to advocate for VA?”](#), that was produced by the ICBL in November 2009.

## The way forward:

Sister Denise Coghlan of JRS Cambodia introduced **an important session on identifying VA priorities for the post-Cartagena period**. Denise insisted on the importance of **grassroots level economic empowerment projects that effectively change the day-to-day lives of survivors and persons with disabilities**. She singled out **lack of funding as a major challenge** in the provision of VA services.

Following the introduction, Elke Hottentot from Handicap International and Firoz ALIZADA from ICBL presented a draft list of VA priorities; then they asked the participants to further develop the list of priorities and identify progress made and gaps and challenges for each area of priorities.

*Workshop participants identified six priorities for advocacy work in the post-Cartagena period: **coordination, availability & accessibility, capacity building, economic inclusion, synergizing VA efforts with the CRPD, and CCM implementation and resource mobilization***. These elements are also mentioned in Cartagena Action Plan actions #23 to #33.

They also identified some progress and challenges in past five years.

<b><i>Progress in VA:</i></b>	<b><i>Challenges/gaps/weaknesses:</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordination among VA stakeholders has improved in many affected countries. Inter-ministerial coordination mechanism has been established in some affected countries.</li> <li>- Laws and action plans have been developed in most of the affected countries.</li> <li>- In some countries the capacities of VA practitioners have improved.</li> <li>- The number of persons represented by disabilities' organizations has increased.</li> <li>- In some affected countries, service providers (NGOs) have been prioritizing economic inclusion within their VA/disability programs, (in previous years, physical rehabilitation used to be the priority).</li> <li>- Many of the affected states joined the CRPD</li> <li>- Progress has been noted in the area of physical rehabilitation in many countries</li> <li>- Public's knowledge about rights and needs of persons with disabilities has been increased to some extent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disability often not seen as a priority by decision makers</li> <li>- Lack of information about the needs and magnitude of the challenges faced by persons with disabilities has caused barrier in VA project implementation</li> <li>- Ministries' policy makers' knowledge is very limited with regard to the rights and needs of persons with disabilities</li> <li>- Available services are not accessible to persons with disabilities</li> <li>- VA programs remain limited to capitals and urban areas; the survivors and persons with disabilities that live in remote areas cannot access the services they need</li> <li>- The economic needs of persons with disabilities have not been adequately addressed in vast majority of the affected countries; this resulted in the highest rate of unemployment among persons with disabilities.</li> <li>- Lack of awareness by employers</li> <li>- Survivors' inclusion in VA programs has been very limited</li> <li>- Survivors' capacities have been too low to compete in job market</li> <li>- Some VA programs did not match the needs and priorities of survivors.</li> <li>- Lack of funds</li> <li>- Collaboration between government and NGOs remained limited</li> </ul>

NGOs' challenges to implement VA:	Governments' challenges (from workshop participants' point of views) to implement VA programs:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VA has not been a priority in governments' national development and poverty reduction programs</li> <li>- Lack of funding to implement VA projects</li> <li>- Lack of consistency between government and NGOs policy/works</li> <li>- Duplication in service provision and competition between NGOs (including de-mining NGOs and companies)</li> <li>- Lack of capacity within Government to lead/take ownership of VA programs</li> <li>- Short-term and unsustainable projects due to funding constraints</li> <li>- Lack of civil society interest towards VA ( in Peru, Nicaragua)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Competing priorities (war, poverty, drought...)</li> <li>- Lack of resources, in particular financial resources</li> <li>- Lack of political will</li> <li>- Lack of capacity to enforce laws in many affected countries</li> <li>- Bureaucracy slows proceedings</li> <li>- Lack of understanding about survivors' needs and rights</li> <li>- Too centralized in decision making</li> <li>- Relying on external capacities</li> <li>- Limited knowledge about conventions' languages in local levels (within concerned ministries)</li> <li>- Complex organizational structure</li> <li>- Lack of VA focal points</li> <li>- Regular changes of decision makers</li> </ul>

### **Survivors Call to Action:**

The Survivors Call to Action was drafted by VA Focal Points prior to the workshop. Firoz presented the draft to the workshop participants, and after a short discussion the Call was approved by the workshop participants. The Call to Action aimed to enhance VA programs in order to bring real changes to the day-to-day lives of survivors and persons with disabilities from 2010 to 2014.

### **Interventions for the VA Parallel Program of the Summit:**

The workshop ended with work in groups by VA Focal Points to prepare interventions and presentations for the VA Parallel Programs and side events of the Summit. The following focal points volunteered to lead the sub-groups (on Coordination: *Ramiz Becirovic*, on Data Collection: *Parsanna Kuruppu*, on Policies, plans and legal frameworks: *Tirza Leibowitz*, on Monitoring and Evaluation: *Kim Hoa Nguyen*, on Capacity Building: *Purna Shova Chitrakar*, on Accessibility: *Suliman Aminy*, on Physical Rehabilitation: *Elke Hottentot*, on Psychological and psychosocial support : *Jesus Martinez*, Economic reintegration/inclusion: *Bekele Gonfa* and on

*Awareness Raising: Mamady Gassama. And Stan B. Nerina C. and Firoz agreed to coordinate the work of sub-groups).*

### **Workshop's Outcomes:**

- I. Participants increased their understanding about the past five years' impact of the MBT on VA, including various achievements and challenges since the Nairobi Summit.
- II. Participants increased their knowledge about the Convention on Cluster Munitions, CRPD and the coherence between them. They received useful advocacy tools to harmonize their MBT-focused advocacy activities with the CRPD and CCM's implementation.
- III. Participants were informed about the potential effectiveness of the Cartagena Action Plan on VA.
- IV. Post-Cartagena VA priorities: *Coordination, Availability & Accessibility, Capacity Building, Economic Inclusion, Synergizing VA efforts with the CRPD and CCM implementation and Funding*, have been identified and created a road map for the 2010-2014 period.
- V. The "Survivors' Call to Action" for the Cartagena Summit was improved and approved.
- VI. Participants were energized with the information about VA activities of the Summit and got ready to actively participate.
- VII. VA interventions for the Summit were prepared with the full participation of the workshop participants.

### **Follow up on workshop's outcomes:**

- I. Using the findings of workshop, ICBL will write up a rationale for choosing six priority areas (*coordination, availability & accessibility, capacity building, economic inclusion, synergizing VA efforts with the CRPD and CCM implementation and funding*) to justify the importance of these elements in line with the Cartagena Action Plan. Afterwards, the priorities will be presented to VA Co-Chairs (Peru and Turkey) and other affected and donor States to take them into account when implementing the Cartagena Action Plan. Meanwhile, a copy of the priorities will be circulated to all VA Focal Points to be used as an advocacy tool to improve VA on the ground.
- II. In June 2010, a follow up workshop will be organized (prior to Intersessional Standing Committee meetings in Geneva) to ensure the effectiveness of the VA focal points' advocacy activities in line with the six areas of priorities.

- III. A number of training webinars will be conducted to assist VA focal points to do advocacy activities with regard to implementation of CAP to promote VA on the ground.
- IV. Survivor Corps will develop guideline to promote synergies between MBT, CCM and CPRD on the ground.

*Annexes:*

***1-Agenda***

**Workshop on Victim Assistance  
November 27 2009  
Caribe Hotel, Cartagena, Colombia**

**09:00-09:15 Welcoming Remarks**

By: Sylvie Brigot, Executive Director of the ICBL

**09:15-09:30 Introduction of victim assistance activities during the week of the Cartagena Summit**

By: Firoz Alizada, Treaty Implementation Officer of the ICBL

**09:30-10:00 Overview of victim assistance in past five years: Achievements and Challenges**

By: Ms. Megan Burke, Landmine Monitor Editor, Nicaragua

**10:00-10:15 Introduction of the Cartagena Action Plan and the civil society role in implementation of this plan**

By: Mrs. Tamar Gabelnick, Treaty Implementation Director of the ICBL

**10:15-10:30 Enhancing victim assistance efforts post-Cartagena: The importance of collaboration between civil society and government.**

By: Ms. Sheree Bailey, Victim Assistance Specialist of the Implementation Support Unit

10:30-10:45 Coffee break

**10:45-11:30 Synergizing our efforts on implementation of Mine Ban Treaty, Convention on Cluster**

**Munitions, UN-Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

By: Ms. Nerina Cevra, International Advocacy Officer of the Survivor Corps, USA

**11:30-12:30 Improving advocacy efforts on the ground: Good practices and recommendation**

By: Mr. Suliman Aminy, Afghan Landmine Survivors Organization, Afghanistan  
Mr. Ramiz Bicirovic, Landmine Survivors Initiatives, Bosnia and Herzegovina\  
Ms. Margaret Arach Orech, Uganda Landmine Survivors Association, Uganda

**Advocacy tips and tricks booklet, “So you want to advocate for Victim Assistance?”**

By: [Firoz Alizada](#)

12:30-14:00 Lunch break (lunch will be provided by ICBL)

**14:00-15:30 VA goals for post Cartagena: What will you ask your government to do in next five years to make progress on VA? What should ICBL ask governments to promote VA in general?**

Speaker: [S. Denise Coghlan, JRS, Cambodia](#)

Facilitators: [Mrs. Elke Hottentot, Handicap International, France](#) & [Firoz Alizada](#)

15:30-15:45 Break

**15:45-16:00 Presentation of the final version of the Survivor’s Call to Action**

[Firoz Alizada](#)

**16:00-17:00 Plan for the week of Cartagena:** Sharing the lobbying messages on Victim Assistance, Identifying focal points for side events and parallel programs, and signing up for lobby Meetings

[Ms. Nerina Cevra](#) and [Firoz Alizada](#)

Annexes attached:

*i.* Background information

*ii.* Presentations

*iii.* Survivors Call to Action

*iv.* List of participants



Participants' photos



Group work on Latin American countries



Group Work - Asia

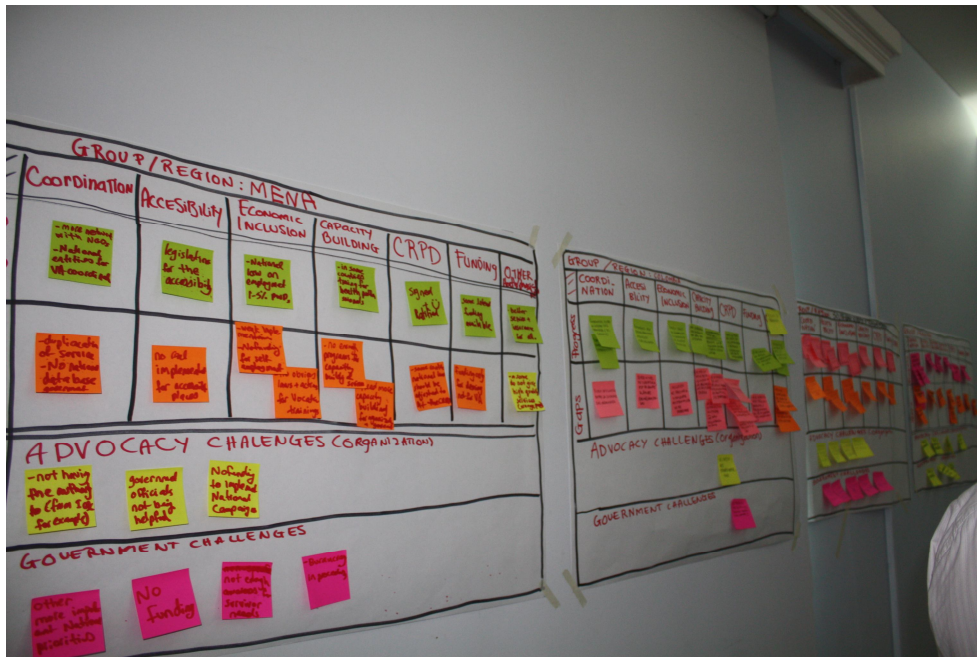


Group Work -Africa



Group work – Arab region





Results of the group works



Survivors deliver their Call to Action at the Cartagena Summit

More photos: [http://www.icbl.org/index.php/icbl/image\\_folio\\_wrap\\_frame/wrap](http://www.icbl.org/index.php/icbl/image_folio_wrap_frame/wrap)