

ACCESSIBILITY IN CAMBODIA

Good morning everybody, i will talk about accessibility in Cambodia.

The new World Health Report on Disability says

Physical, social, attitudinal environments can either disable or foster participation and inclusion.

It also tells us

Make change by Incremental improvement.

In Cambodia this means make change step by step.

This morning i will focus on 3 topics of accessibility, the first:

1. ACCESS TO SERVICES: eg, Rehabilitation, Health, Psychosocial.

How do Persons with disability access services?

Well

. Either the survivor travels to the service or
the service travels to survivor.

Travel is the key word in a country still rebuilding after war and displacement.

Survivors live in many different small villages, often the road are extremely bad, sometime flooded. There are lots of opportunities for free massage, as you bump along to one of the 11 Rehabilitation Centres which provide very good free prosthetics and physiotherapy.

So two issue the roads and money for transport:

Recommendation:

* Step by Step fix the country roads, this help everyone in the community. (Ministry of Roads)

* Rehabilitation centres continue to reimburse transport for vulnerable PWD, THIS IS A GOOD CAMBODIAN PRACTICE.

(MASLVY)

. ACCESS TO Health and hospital care: we have government hospitals and health centres but we must pay for the doctor the medicines and for the surgery. Emergency Hospital provides free medical care.

Recommendation: Free hospital care for vulnerable PWD (urgent). (Ministry of health)

Now the service going to the survivors

ICRC has a free Mobile Programme which provides visiting services to some heavily affected provinces. The rehabilitation centre used to provide outreach visits but the withdrawal of International NGOs funds stop this service and also money for wheelchairs. If this continues over the next few years it will be is a cause of concern.

The reality in Cambodia as i have said is that most rural villages are small, and in any village perhape there are 1 or 2 or even 7 people with disability.

Some of the best examples of helpful psycho social support is peer support provided by peer “counselors” on motor bikes who ride many kilometres a day to accompany and support vulnerable survivors.

A second way is gathering women with disabilities or men or children, enabling them to tell their stories and encourage one another. Here they have access to friends and good advice.

General Recommendations on access to services:

1). Finish small booklet in Khmer and English for survivors (person with disabilities) and interested people about services available for each district of each province by 11MSP.

Only include services which really assist survivors.

(This is already started with/ CCBL, CMAA and in collaboration with MASLVY.)

2). At provincial level (not national capital) action focus meeting of government, NGO, Survivors about:

.naming services available in each district and lack of services

. who the PWD are in each district and their situation

. Step by step plans for addressing the needs

By 11 MSP in at least two provinces Convened by MASLVY, CMAA, CCBL and interested NGOs and survivors.

3). Government gives enough funding to Province Centres or District Centre to support outreach activities to get to know and serve survivors. (Ministry of Finance/MASLVY)

4). ICRC ensure mobile clinics continue (ICRC)

2. ACCESS TO EDUCATION: - The learning place needs to be accessible

- The person with disabilities needs to be able to get there

In CAMBODIA the law says all schools must be physically accessible. In the country side most primary schools try to achieve this with ramps BUT some Universities are terrible (and many city schools.) In my university there is a lift but for the President! By the time I ask to use it, the key is found, the class is finished and i prefer to walk 5 floors. My friend Rattana is worse off. He has to climb 3 floors on his hands to study IT.

At very least universities should welcome the opportunity to teach Person with Disabilities and arrange class locations to suit the relatively small number who attend. Many survivors are very keen to have more education. Scholarships are needed for the poorest ones, and encouragement and a culture that tries to see each person as a person of special dignity who should have the chance to develop the best of their capacity.

Increased availability of internet will benefit survivors along with the rest of the population.

Recommendations:

* 5 scholarships per year for Person with Disability to study at university. (Ministry of education)

* Graduate survivors go with scholarship winner to make university aware of need of PWD. (Survivors)

* Schooling assistance provided for person with disability who want to continue Secondary- (Ministry of Education/ business people)

Today i have not spoken about people with special learning needs, like mentally challenge children or blind children.

ACCESS TO ECONOMIC SECURITY: The Cambodian law says that employers must give jobs to people with disability. It is good to have a law but i sometimes wonder if they just give jobs because the law says so. I want employers to respect our ability.

Many Cambodians try to earn their living with selling groceries or making crafts. Some have small co-operators or work together in groups. Small grants could help others.

Many people try hard but there are some people who will never be able to work and there should be a fund which provide for the most vulnerable.

Recommendations:

- Publicize the ability of survivors (survivors)
- Safety net fund at provincial level, well monitor by good person in the community for vulnerable people.
- In one province a group of successful survivors gives small business revolving grants to 3 others survivors in 2011. (Survivors). When the new survivors are successful they give a revolving grants to a new survivors.

There are many recommendations *could make but these are some of the ones I think we can do soon.*

Thanks you,