



POINTS OF VIEW



CAP workshop participant from Cambodia

8. SUPPORTING GIRLS' RIGHTS

PROGRAMS FOR GIRLS & FEMALE YOUTH NOTES FROM CAP INTERNATIONAL MEETING

“Effective programming for girls must deal with the symptoms, the effects and causes of their mistreatment and violations of their rights. It is not enough to deal with the effects of war on girls, the social foundation of these actions must also be tackled. This coordinated approach requires a long-term strategy that combines capacity building with support for victims, advocacy campaigns with public education on gender issues.”

We suggest the following approaches in working with war affected girls and young women:

1. Support for victims of war

“This should include peer support groups and counselling. It should also include education programs on health, particularly on reproductive health and child care. Because of the instability in our countries, so many girls have lost contact with their families. Many of them are pregnant or have children but don't know what to do. Also, they have no knowledge of the signs of sexually transmitted diseases and how to obtain treatment for them.”

2. Capacity building for girls and young women

This should include the following:

- Confidence building: Girls can be very shy and reluctant to talk in public. They feel that they have nothing to contribute. We need to build up their faith in themselves and in their capacity to speak. This should include discussions on gender issues.
- Literacy Training: Girls should be given priority as their education has often been forgotten.
- Programs to promote self reliance. This needs to include skill training and monitoring. It is not enough to just give girls training and then send them off. They lack confidence, they need support to see how they are doing. So it is very important to follow-up with them.

3. Advocacy programs

We need national and international meetings to discuss gender issues and to identify war crimes against girls and women.

4. A review of cultural practises

We know that we need to keep our culture but there are some aspects of it that are repressive and can affect girls' development and their self-respect. These need to be re-examined.