



# **Disability Advocacy Workshop**



***Supplement:***

***Post-Workshop Advocacy Support Strategies***



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***This supplement was developed to help program managers learn about strategies they can use to help their participants apply what they've learned by supporting them in implementing the action plans they developed in the Disability Advocacy Workshops. Program managers can use these strategies to support their workshop alumni in the months and years following each workshop.***

## Parent Support Groups

If families of children with disabilities do not have the emotional and/or financial support to care for them, it can be difficult for the child to succeed. Parents are often the most successful advocates for children with disabilities; the more they understand, the more they become involved in their children's lives. Workshop alumni may support parents and caregivers of children with disabilities by inviting them to parent support groups or helping them establish these groups. Such groups have helped hundreds of parents provide for their children financially, emotionally, and physically. Many have also become active advocates for their children's rights and counselors for other families impacted by disability. Some of the ways one can support these alumni activities include:

- Advising them on how to gather and recruit parents of children with disabilities to join or start parent support groups
- Training them on how to establish and facilitate parent support groups and select their leadership team
- Helping existing parent support groups find opportunities to share their experiences and advise parents of children with disabilities on how to advocate for their children's rights
- Gathering parent support groups to share best practices and lessons learned with one another

## Community Disability Advocacy

Workshop alumni may work to sensitize their communities about the true definitions, causes and treatments for disability as well as the legal and theological mandates that protect the rights of people living with disabilities and their families. Some of the ways one can support these alumni activities include:

- Helping community leaders organize and prepare disability talks to deliver at community gatherings, weddings, funerals, church sermons, etc.
- Supporting Community Disability Advocacy Groups, to come up with creative strategies to inform communities about disability like writing songs, performing dramas, producing poetry, etc.
- Sharing audio and video examples of community sensitization performances to help Community Disability Advocacy Groups develop similar performances as part of their outreach strategies
- Helping pastors, traditional healers and chiefs develop constitutions for their Disability Support Committees and Parent Support groups
- Ensuring transportation for Community Disability Advocacy Groups so they can attend public events to share their messages
- Support Disability Advocacy Groups in developing inclusive messaging and marketing materials like t-shirts and brochures to help promote their group



- Organizing food drives, volunteer days and fundraising events to raise support for people living with disabilities in their communities

#### Disability-related Policy Improvements

Policy changes and enforcement are essential for long-term, significant improvements to the treatment, care, education and protection of children living with disabilities. Some of the ways one can support these alumni activities include:

- Developing and distributing reference materials such as a Disability Law Guide and Disability Summary document that community leaders can refer to in their public talks and advocacy efforts with other leaders, community members and families impacted by disability.
- Organizing abuse prevention and reporting workshops for adults, teachers, community leaders, and children in partnership with the workshop alumni
- Work with workshop alumni to solicit commitment letters, funding and waivers from local leaders for services to educate and care for children with disabilities in their regions
- Co-facilitate workshops to educate parents and guardians on their children's rights and how to advocate for those rights

#### Service Provision and Referrals

Accessing care is often challenging for families impacted by disability who may not know what services are available to them or how to secure transportation and funding to access those services. Some of the ways one can support alumni in helping families access care include:

- Providing transportation to help local leaders visit families impacted by disability for counseling, care, inclusion and referrals
- Developing and distributing a list of services with locations and contact information for community leaders to know where to refer children for proper medical care and/or education
- Helping workshop alumni establish needed resources in their communities like classrooms and/or schools, physical therapy centers, mobile clinics, assistive equipment, etc.
- Securing funds, scholarships, tuition waivers or medical waivers to help children whose families may not be able to afford the education or medical care they need
- Introducing workshop alumni to providers and staff at social service offices and nonprofit organizations where they can refer children and families in need
- Educating workshop alumni on how to assist families in registering with government services like the National Council For Persons With Disabilities in Kenya.
- Co-facilitate workshops to educate parents and guardians about their children's disabilities and how to access care and services for them

#### Alumni Reports and Meetings

In addition to helping workshop alumni implement these aspects of their action plans, we suggest collecting monthly reports from each workshop alumni. An example reporting form is included in



the disability workshop guide. On these reports, the alumni will have documented their disability advocacy efforts, achievements and challenges. These reports help program leaders to understand where the alumni are performing well and where they may need further assistance in addressing the needs of families impacted by disability in their communities.

Program leaders may also gather the workshop alumni together in meetings where they can share best practices and lessons learned with one another. These meetings help the leaders to feel a sense of identify as community disability advocates and community with their colleagues. Such meetings often provide an opportunity for creative problem-solving and brainstorming new strategies for outreach and inclusion of children with disabilities.