

Chapter 1

Special Feature “Development of Support for Crime Victims within the Community”

The Basic Act on Crime Victims (hereinafter referred to as the Basic Act), which has been enacted since December 2004, writes “now that everybody has a higher probability to become a Crime Victim, it is required to make policies from the Crime Victims' viewpoints, and to make a step forward to realize a society where their rights and profits are well protected (Preamble of the Basic act)”.

Based on this intent, relevant Ministries and Agencies have been implementing various measures in light of the Basic Act, the First Basic Plan for Crime Victims of December 2005 (hereinafter referred to as the “First Basic Plan”), and the Second Basic Plan for Crime Victims (hereinafter referred to as the “Second Basic Plan”) (the Cabinet Decision, March 2011).

In addition, local governments that are “responsible for formulating and implementing the measures with regard to support for Crime Victims, according to the situation of their area, based on the appropriate division of roles with the State” (Article 5 of the Basic Act) have also been

expanding their initiatives on the issues of crime victims such as establishing ordinances and guidelines, setting up crime victim policy division and comprehensive response desk to provide relevant information to crime victims and others.

The coordination among the State, local governments and related organizations are also underway in order to ensure the crime victims to be able to obtain appropriate information of various support systems in timely manner and to be connected to appropriate service providers without difficulties so that the victims may restore their peaceful life.

In addition, for the State and the local governments to be able to further implement and promote their crime victims measures, it is important to raise public awareness on the necessity of crime victim measures not only in the perspective to support someone else but also to prepare as the potential victim. For that, this chapter introduces current situations of support for crime victims within various communities.

Section 1: Efforts to Foster the Understandings

Without the understanding of and the cooperation from the ordinary citizens, crime victims would not be able to receive the most needed respect and consideration from those surrounding the victims. Under these circumstances, any measures taken by the State and local governments would also not be fully effective.

Therefore, the Article 20 of the Basic Act provides that “the State and Local governments shall take necessary measures to deepen citizens' understanding on Crime Victims' present conditions and the importance of giving consideration to their honor and peace in life through educational and PR activities”. Also to effectuate this Article, the Second Basic Plan lists 28 measures in “V. Specific measures for the priorities --Part. 5: Efforts to Foster the Understanding among Citizens and to Earn Their Consideration and Cooperation.”

Crime Victims' Week poster



(1) Implementation of Advocacy Projects by the Cabinet Office to Raise Public Awareness of the Situation of the Crime Victims

The Cabinet Office held advocacy events in Nagano, Nagasaki, Osaka, and Okayama during the “Crime Victims’ Week”, posted the results on

Conference in Nagano



Conference in Nagasaki



the website of Cabinet Office Crime Victim Policies, and distributed the report of the events to related organizations.

The Cabinet Office also co-hosted advocacy “workshop projects”, with local governments in accordance with each project’s aims.

Conference in Osaka



Conference in Okayama



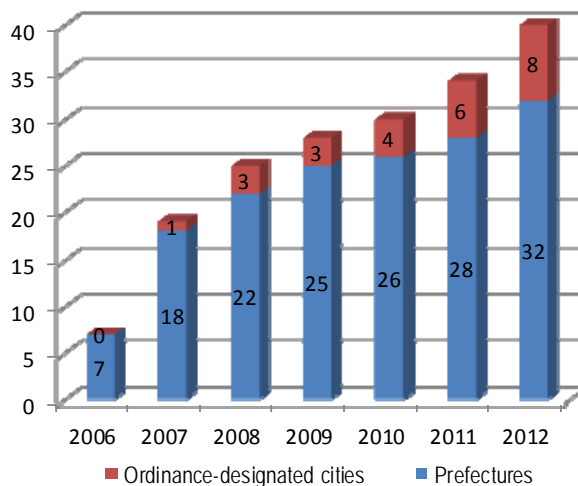
(2) Implementation of Advocacy Projects by Local Governments to Raise Public Awareness of the Situation of Crime Victims

The Cabinet Office, through training workshops for local government officials and other means, has been requesting local governments to carry out their own advocacy projects to raise public awareness to promote understandings on the crime victims. The number of prefectures and ordinance-designated cities which held some event such as an open lecture or symposium in fiscal year 2006, when the measures under the First Basic Plan had started, was only seven. However, this number has increased to 40 in fiscal year 2012.

Previously, most of the advocacy projects were lectures and symposia. However, considering the recent increase of overlapping promotion Month or Week of other policy areas, there are needs of advance PRs to raise sufficient public interests to invite them to those venues of “Crime Victim” lectures/symposium or to search other effective measures to advocate the issue.

In that perspectives, several original efforts could be seen as followings: Saitama Pref. sat up a PR booth at the local soccer stadium during the professional league games; Tochigi Pref. toured municipalities with crime victims and their support organization to hold panel exhibition in municipality government buildings ; Okayama and Kumamoto Prefectures held exhibitions in the prefectural libraries; Iwate, Saitama, Shizuoka and Osaka Prefectures and Yokohama, Osaka, and Sakai Cities held in- train or in-station advocacy exhibition at JR trains and/or subways; Nagoya City opened a volunteer course for beginners.

Numbers of events (lectures/symposium) by year



Memoir of University Students who Participated in a Participatory Enlightenment Campaign on Crime Victims (Excerpt)

H.S.: A then senior at Kanazawa Seiryu University, the Human Science & Sports Department

I participated in a preparatory meetings twice, made campaign goods, and joined a campaign for crime victim support at Komatsu Airport. When making goods, I chose the colors and fonts by considering recipients' impression. I tried many patterns but it was very difficult to convey the message of crime victim support through design.

Participating to such advocacy activities let me realize how little "crime victim support" has spread in society. In fact, when I was distributing flyers at Komatsu Airport, some had responded that they had no idea what crime victim support means, and others tilted the head in confusion.

I do not know when I myself may become a crime victim and it is same with my family or friends. I really think that "crime" could be within close proximity. Also, since I may meet crime victims in the future, I thought that I should further raise my sensitivity to such issues and engage in crime victim support activities. I did not know about such activities before, but now that I have known, I would like to learn further and to tell people who are yet aware of crime victim support about what are being done that even seemingly a small help could be asked.

T.H.: A then junior at Chukyo University

I participated in the second forum as one of the panelists. This was a good opportunity for me to gather my thoughts and express my opinion.

I felt challenging to have clear idea on what I, as a student for this moment can do and how I may contribute after I started to work after hearing a story directly from a victim. Though I usually had not thought about what I can do for some cause but this time, as I came to know the actual situation, I contemplated deeply.

Lastly, speaking in front of people and listening to the lecture by Ms. Okamoto (a crime victim) in this volunteer activity were a valuable experience for me. We students were able to present our feelings and opinions at the forum and also were able to share our experiences through the university's seminar with other students. This kind of projects should be more often initiated since allowing such opportunities for students who soon to begin their careers and play a responsible role in the society could yield various merits not only for those students but for the society in

general.

T.H.: A then freshman at Kanazawa Seiryu University, the Human Science & Sports Department

I was invited to join this activity on crime victim support by someone who had been my senior at high school. The components of the whole project were panel discussions, making goods, and making a visual ad. I was offered to be a panelist of the panel discussion.

On the day of the forum, listening directly from the crime victim evoked my emotions incomparably stronger than reading her story for preparation. Her every word struck my heart. I wondered what I can do for her, is there anything I can say to relieve her some way, or my careless words better not to reopen her wounds. But I wanted to share my thoughts with everyone and the audiences to think about the topic as well. So I decided to express whatever I felt as a panelist and that was how the forum proceeded. I had invited my friend from my university to hear the panel discussion. Though it was only one person, if more people are to join one by one, then gradually became one big circle to inform many people on crime victim support, then the support activities can become larger than ever. I would like to continue to actively participate in the advocacy from now on.