

SASA! Mobilizing Communities to End Violence against Women and HIV/AIDS (Uganda)

SASA! is a programme developed by Raising Voices to address the links between violence against women and HIV/AIDS. The methodology, based the [stages of change theoretical model](#), is meant to inspire, enable and structure effective community mobilization to prevent violence against women and HIV/AIDS.

See a short [video](#) introducing SASA! and a longer [video](#) illustrating more of the programme approach.

SASA! uses four strategies: local activism, media and advocacy, communication materials and training to reach a variety of people in a variety of ways. The programme approach has four phases, including the **Start** phase, to foster *power within* programme participants to address the connection between violence against women and HIV - engaging only a small selection of additional community members; the **Awareness** phase, to engage the community to become aware of men's *power over* women and about how the community's silence about this power imbalance perpetuates violence against women and its connection to HIV/AIDS; the **Support** phase to engage the community in offering support to one another - joining their *power with* others to confront the dual pandemics of violence against women and HIV/AIDS; and the **Action** phase to engage the community in using their *power to* take action, with an aim to normalize shared power and non-violence, demonstrate its benefits, and as a result, prevent violence against women and HIV.

The implementation tools include:

- SASA! videos: [Short version](#) (6 minutes) or [long version](#) (30 minutes)
- SASA! [Screening Guide](#)
- SASA! [Activist Toolkit](#), including a number of resources for local activism, media and advocacy, communications, support and training across each phase.

Initially implemented in a few communities in Uganda, SASA! is being scaled-up across the country with support of the [United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women](#).

The programme includes a variety of monitoring tools to help organizations assess and reflect on their efforts in the community. The tools, designed for activist organizations are simple yet provide meaningful information to feedback into programme design to make SASA! implementation stronger and more effective. The SASA! methodology suggests that change happens in stages, and starts

with awareness, preparation for action, implementation and then maintenance of change. They have therefore developed a set of indicators for each stage of the strategy, that measure changes in:

- Attitudes towards violence and gender relations
- Knowledge about the harm that violence and unequal power relations can cause in a family and a community
- Skills that enable activists to become change agents in their lives and their communities
- Behaviours, at the personal/family level, and at the community level

Each of these dimensions would be measured periodically, for example, every 6 months, using simple tools such as a quick survey of activists and community members, and sessions to reflect on the progress of the work. In addition, the programme has set up a monitoring system whereby NGO staff provide feedback and support to community activists, and at the same time document changes in the way people are talking about the issues of the programme (for example, do most people think that women deserve to be beaten or not?)

These tools do not provide data that can be used to measure impact, but they do provide powerful and meaningful information to community activists and programme staff, and complement the findings of more rigorous studies, such as the SASA! impact study (described below).

Raising Voices, the Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP), the Gender Violence and Health Centre at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Makerere University and PATH collaborated to design and carry out a study to evaluate the effectiveness of the SASA! community mobilization initiative in Uganda. The study was initiated in 2007 with a [baseline assessment](#) and focus group discussions which highlighted high levels of violence and deep seated harmful gender norms. Almost half of currently or ever married women reported having experienced physical or sexual violence from a partner and half of the men reported using one or more forms of controlling behavior with their partners in the past year.

This study will provide evidence about the potential role and impact of the SASA! approach in addressing gender inequality, violence against women and HIV/AIDS – and is one of the few rigorous impact evaluations being conducted of community mobilization efforts focusing on violence and HIV.

The specific aims of the study are to:

- Assess the three year impact of the programme on the balance of power in relationships; past year experience / perpetration of partner violence; and past year HIV risk behaviors by men and actions in response to violence by women;
- Investigate the processes and causal pathways through which levels of gender-based violence and HIV behaviors are promulgated and change over time, including the impact of active involvement in the intervention on community volunteers and other resource people who work regularly with the intervention;
- Document the process of implementing the SASA! programme, and the economic costs of programme delivery;
- Use the research findings to inform methods to monitor the future replication of the SASA! methodology.

What is particularly unique about this study is that, while the major aim is to measure the impact of SASA! using rigorous methods, it also aims to develop tools that can be used by other groups to plan, monitor, and assess their own interventions at the community level.

To assess the impact of SASA!, surveys measuring knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviors of men and women in the community are being administered in sites where the programme is being implemented as well as comparable control communities that are not receiving the intervention – at baseline before implementation, and again, three years after its initiation. In addition to quantitative research, complementary qualitative research is exploring how the dynamics of relationships, violence against women and HIV behaviors may change over time, including the impact the intervention on community activists, leaders and service providers. Focus group discussions shed light on community responses to the programme and experiences with promoting non-violent relationships. The qualitative data collection is being conducted twice yearly, and includes focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with community volunteers, local leaders, police and health workers. The impact evaluation will be completed around March 2011.

SASA! Monitoring and Evaluation Tools:

Planning Phase: SASA! includes two tools that help organizations think through a strategy.

- The phase plan form provides an overview of activities planned for that phase and outlines the corresponding strategies, outcomes, circles of influence/ specific groups, anticipated reach/ exposure, timeframe and responsible persons.
- The strategy plan form enables members responsible for each specific strategy to further break down their activities and ensure comprehensive planning. It includes the activities, outcomes, specific groups, timeframe, venue, responsible persons and resources required.

Monitoring Phase: SASA! includes a variety of monitoring tools to help teams keep track of the process and progress along the way which can be used by activists, stakeholders and NGOs.

- The [activity report form](#) is filled out after each activity and captures the details of that activity, including who attended, how many people attended, successes, challenges and responses that can be used to plan and improve follow-up activities.
- The [activity outcome tracking tool](#) facilitates tracking of progress on key outcomes for each phase. Tracking is done by observing activities and ranking the degree of resistance or acceptance of community members participating. It is designed to be flexible to cater for different capacities of groups using SASA! and can be easily adapted for similar efforts.
- The [strategy summary report](#) is an overall summary of the activity report forms which can be completed at the end of each quarter or phase depending on the organization's monitoring framework. It offers a quick at-a-glance picture of activities conducted throughout the time period which then feeds into end of phase reports.

Assessment (Evaluation) Phase: SASA! includes two main types of assessment exercises. These exercises should be conducted before the programme intervention and again at the end of the programme intervention.

- [Assessment dialogues](#) are a qualitative method for gathering information from select community members similar to focus group discussions, with a prepared question guide to facilitate the session.
- [Rapid assessment surveys](#) are tools for gathering data to help understand and assess change in knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours among community members.

The SASA! tools employ a combination of quantitative methods, such as a quick survey that can be implemented in communities to measure changes in attitudes and behaviours, as well as qualitative methods, such as participatory mapping, story-telling, and new tools such as the “[most significant change](#)” method.

See the [SASA!](#) page on the Raising Voices website and a [power point presentation](#) for more information on the programme and on the evaluation process.