

Feeding Data Back to Program and Community: Guiding Tips for Staff Responsible for Monitoring and Evaluation

Objective:

- Develop skills to use collected data to provide regular feedback to program and community.

Part 1: Staff Feedback Sessions:

Why give regular feedback to staff about M&E data?

Giving program staff timely feedback about SASA! implementation is useful for 3 main reasons:

1. It allows staff to realize strengths and weaknesses in programming, and to improve implementation while there is still time.
2. It helps determine where to focus scarce staff time and resources to achieve the best results possible.
3. It allows staff to see the benefit of M&E to the program, and helps increase their support of collecting monitoring data.

When should we hold staff M&E feedback sessions?

It is highly recommended that someone on staff be responsible for creating a session once a month, to allow for feedback and discussion on the progress of implementation, a basic gauge of current impact, and creation of action points to build on successes and strengthen areas of concern. Having the session at a regular time each month, toward the beginning of the month, allows the staff responsible for M&E to have time to put together the presentation with all the data from the previous month. The dates and times of meetings depend on staff's convenience.

What should staff M&E feedback sessions include?

M&E feedback sessions should include the information that staff feels is useful to directing implementation of the project. It includes both the M&E officer and staff impressions of progress as well as data collected and analyzed from the **Activity Report Forms** and **Outcome Tracking Tools** in SASA!. There is an outline attached to this form that includes several suggestions of things to cover, which can be adapted to each organization's needs.

Note: A sample power point presentation by Janet Nakuti, M&E Senior Program Officer at Raising Voices, from a staff feedback session to CEDOVIP in Kampala, is available for organizations to use as a sample, if desired. There are many different formats besides power point that may be useful for your organization, or you are welcome to adapt this presentation to your needs and use it as a template. In addition, easy to use charts and graphs templates are available, to create graphic depictions of progress toward SASA! monitoring and evaluation indicators. info@raisingvoices.org

Staff Feedback Session Possible Outline

Purpose: To assess progress toward SASA! objectives in the (Start/Awareness/Support/Action) phase in the (Month/ Year).

Objectives of SASA! Awareness Phase:

1. **Outcomes: What is the level of acceptance of SASA! ideas demonstrated from community comments during activities?** (Use chart from *Outcome Tracking Tool* compilations, if available. If recent data is not available, give basic, informed opinions and tell people when data may be coming.)
2. **Community Activist (CA) and other SASA! Activist Skills**
 - a. Are about equal numbers of community men and women being engaged?
 - b. Is the number and location of activities ok? (Is the number enough, and are the locations well-distributed throughout SASA! communities?)
 - c. Are the activities being conducted by CAs diverse or are they only using one or two types of activities?
 - d. What is the level of CA skills? (not being directive, facilitating discussion, use of right language, grasp of concepts, etc) What additional support might they need?
3. **Staff Skills and Outputs**
 - a. Monitoring of activities (e.g., Are staff in the community regularly? Are they seeing a range of activities? Are they making an effort to visit many CAs? Are they visiting different areas in the community?, etc).
 - b. Support to CA's (timing (right after activity), feedback to CA's, language being used, leadership development of CA's, assessment and reporting of what is going on, etc.)
 - c. Use of resources.
 - d. Staff teamwork/ support to each other.
4. **Other** (this section is important—if there are things not on the template in other places but are coming up, put them here!)
 - a. E.g. include pieces of data from recent Rapid Assessment Survey or other methods, not covered in other sections.
 - b. New methods and upcoming events.
 - c. Other emerging issues.
5. **Presentation of additional charts and graphs**
6. **Recommendations and action planning**

Part 2: Community Feedback Sessions:

Why give feedback to the community about M&E data?

There are a few times throughout the life of SASA! that the community takes part in a great deal of data collection activities as respondents, and during all of SASA! implementation, staff work to foster a sense of community ownership of activism. In order to help community members and SASA! activists see the benefits of data collection, and to help them to understand the impact their activism is making, it is useful to give them feedback about what we are finding out about violence against women and HIV in the community.

When and how can we give M&E feedback to the community?

Feedback sessions and celebrations for CA's and SASA! activists may be held:

- ✓ Regularly, when there is something important to share about implementation.
- ✓ After each phase, as you prepare to go to the next phase.
- ✓ General community informational sessions, in which CA's should be included and highlighted.

Feedback sessions for the general community may be held and Information Sheets may be created:

- ✓ After baseline data collection to share results.
- ✓ After Rapid Assessment Survey data collection to share and celebrate progress.
- ✓ After follow up evaluation, to share results.

What should community M&E feedback sessions include?

Community feedback sessions should speak, in accessible terms (not technical, M&E terms) to what community members may care about. For example, did the assessment find that violence is a problem in the community? What were the results of our assessment? What difference has the program made?

For program use and adaptation to your needs, the following sample tools are attached:

- Sample agenda and talking points are attached for a community M&E feedback session.
- Commonly asked questions and challenges the community may raise in informational sessions, so staff can practice answering such questions and challenges in accessible terms (without technical M&E language).
- Sample SASA! information sheet from the baseline assessment by Raising Voices and CEDOVIP in Kampala.

Sample Agenda and Talking Points for Community M&E Feedback Session

Sample Agenda

30 minutes - Welcome and Introduction to SASA! - Program staff and local Community Activists (CA's)

10 minutes - Reasons for the Information Gathering - Program staff

20 minutes – Drama on Results/Information Gathered - - Program staff and local drama troupe/ CA's

30 minutes: Questions and answers - moderated by program staff

Talking points – Feedback on baseline results:

- SASA! was created for the community, and is here to benefit the community in many ways (explain benefits to each sector of community).
- To know how best to work with existing community realities, we had to ask questions about VAW and HIV in the community.
- This type of information can help us know where we started from, and help to see where we need to go to prevent these problems in ways that benefit our community, specifically.
- To get this information, we cannot ask every community member because it would take too much money and time. So we asked x number of people in the form of a survey, and x number of people in depth questions in discussions called focus groups. We randomly selected these people.
- Present the data in an accessible way.

Note: It may be useful to use drama techniques to present results. For example, to present the data "4 out of every 5 of the people we asked in your community said . . ." invite 5 people to stand and then divide 4 out to go to one side of the room, while the fifth stays on that side. There are many other easy ways to make statistics more concrete and understandable.

- Present next steps and open up for questions and answers from the community.

Talking points – Feedback on ongoing monitoring:

- Just as a reminder, SASA! was created for the community, and is here to benefit the community in many ways (explain benefits to each sector of community).
- To know how best to work with existing community realities, we have found many ways to ask questions about VAW and HIV in the community.

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- We often go out into the community, and listen in on community activities where people are discussing VAW and HIV together. We listen to what people are saying, and see if there is any change in the way people in general used to think of things and the way they are thinking of things now. We look at specific levels of knowledge, or different attitudes, or skill levels, or even people's behaviors that have been found to relate to either preventing or promoting VAW and HIV.
- Present the data in an accessible way.

Note: It may be useful to use drama techniques to present results. For example, to present the data "4 out of every 5 of the people we asked in your community said . . ." invite 5 people to stand and then divide 4 out to go to one side of the room, while the fifth stays on that side. There are many other easy ways to make statistics more concrete and understandable.

- Share good news and celebrate accomplishments (e.g. number of activists, number of activities that have taken place in the community, how welcoming people have been to have these discussions, some sense of problems community identifies in relation to VAW/HIV, an example of how things are changing, what groups are working on it, etc.)
- Present next steps and open up for questions and answers from the community.

Talking points – Feedback on follow up results:

- Just as a reminder, SASA! was created for the community, and is here to benefit the community in many ways (explain benefits to each sector of community).
- To know what impact SASA! has created in the community, we had to ask people the same questions we asked at the beginning of SASA! and compare the answers, to see if there were changes in knowledge, attitudes, skill levels, or behaviors related to VAW and HIV.
- This type of information can help us to see what changes have been made, and either celebrate our accomplishments or let us know specifically what type of additional work might need to get done to create change.
- Just as in the baseline, we could not ask every community member all of our questions because it would take too much money and time. So we asked x number in the form of a survey, and x number in depth questions in discussions called focus groups. We randomly selected these people.
- Present the data in an accessible way.

Note: It may be useful to use drama techniques to present results. For example, to present the data "4 out of every 5 of the people we asked in your community said . . ." invite 5 people to stand and then divide 4 out to go to one side of the room, while the fifth stays on that side. There are many other easy ways to make statistics more concrete and understandable.

- Spend some time sharing good news and celebrating accomplishments (e.g. stories of change, what activists and groups are continuing to work on the issues, etc.)
- Present next steps and open up for questions and answers from the community.

Commonly asked Questions and Challenges in a Community M&E Feedback Session

Note: The following questions and possible answers are just a few of many you might anticipate in your community. It is a good idea to brainstorm on your own or with a group of staff the questions you think might come up in the community M&E feedback session, and practice together answering those questions.

Community Question: What do we get out of this information gathering?

Possible answer: Good question! This community benefits from this research in many ways, because the information gathering we do here is connected to the type of activities we do here in the community, every day, along with our community activists (introduce CAs and other SASA! activists). We gather information to help make the activities and program on violence in the community stronger.

(Note: Explain again the benefits of nonviolence to community, making sure to frame the benefits to the possible interests of the person asking the question.)

Community Question: Why did the researchers not come and ask me and my family about our views and experiences?

Possible answer: The researchers could not speak to everyone in the community—that would have taken years. Instead, they asked a certain number of randomly selected people. If we ask enough of these people, researchers tell us that it means we have gotten a fair representation of the views that exist in the community. We are glad you are here now to give us your thoughts!

Community Question: Did the people who participated in the research get paid to do it?

Possible answer: No, they did not. They volunteered their time to do this. We are so grateful to the people who gave part of their day to contribute to this research, which would benefit the whole community. We do not pay for people to participate in research, in part because we are an organization that wants to work long term here and contribute in other ways. Also, we do not pay because it means that a certain type of people might, out of need for cash, participate if they otherwise would not and this influences results. Others in the community who have other means of getting cash might be less likely to participate—which means we would not be really getting good information that represents the *whole* community. Also, we do not want to make someone answer our questions if they feel they cannot say no because they need cash.

Community Question: Why did you decide to study violence against women and HIV only? Our community has many problems.

Possible answer: If we try to take on every problem at once, we are likely to achieve nothing in the end. But we know that violence against women and HIV are big problems in the community, and we know we have the expertise in our organization to help the

community to do something about these problems. We are glad that other organizations and community members have talents to work with other problems. Our talents are with preventing violence against women and HIV—2 very important problems that, together, we can do something about.

Community Question: Why don't you people talk to each other?!?—another organization came out the week after you did and asked all about AIDS, and someone else about sanitation.

Possible answer: It can get exhausting to answer all these questions, and we apologize if you are getting asked too often to answer questions for organizations. We hope that you find that your time pays off for the community. In the future, also do not hesitate to let us know before we conduct a survey if a similar survey has already been conducted. (Reiterate benefits to the community of SASA/ program, assuring you talk about the benefits that might be of interest to the particular person asking the question/ posing the challenge.)