

**Local Activism Strategy and Activities (2 hours)**

DRAFT - For Field Test

*Local Activism Series  
Staff Skill Building Library  
Raising Voices*

*(SASA! Start Phase Logo)*

This module is part of a *Staff Skill Building Library* developed by Raising Voices. The *Library* consists of competency based training modules designed to strengthen skills of staff implementing or supporting community-based violence against women (VAW) prevention programs. The *Library* is designed for organizations using the *SASA! Activist Kit for Preventing Violence against Women and HIV* but can be used by anyone working to mobilize their community to prevent VAW. If you are not using *SASA!* simply replace the word *SASA!* wherever you see it in the text with the name of your methodology.

This module is part of the Local Activism series in the *Staff Skill Building Library*.

All materials in the *Library* can be downloaded at [www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php](http://www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php) or requested at [info@raisingvoices.org](mailto:info@raisingvoices.org) The *SASA! Activist Kit* can be downloaded at [www.raisingvoices.org](http://www.raisingvoices.org)

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## Local Activism Strategy and Activities (2 hours)

### Objective:

- Get inspired by the way Local Activism can work in our everyday lives to create a critical mass for social change to prevent violence against women and HIV.

*By the end of this session, participants will be able to:*

- Describe the local activism strategy and how it will work with the other strategies to create a critical mass.
- List some ways of conducting local activism activities (e.g., quick chat, community conversation, drama, soap opera, etc.)

### Preparations:

- Ask participants to read: Local Activism Strategy Overview and SASA! Start Tips Booklet, Local Activism section pp. 4-14 before the session.
- Write Local Activism Purpose on flip chart (**Local Activism Strategy** No. 20)
- Photocopy 1 copy of **Who Creates Community Change?** and cut apart questions.
- Photocopy Optional Handout, if desired: **Local Activism: What Activities Can We Use?** for each participant.

## Steps:

### Local Activism Strategy

#### 1. Explain:

- *In most communities, there is silence about violence against women (VAW). It is considered a normal, private matter in which people should not intervene.*
- *The idea that VAW is a private matter is one example of a “community norm”. Community norms are attitudes, values, rules and behaviors that are widely accepted in the community. What we know about community norms is that they can and do change—which means we can change them!*
- *In this session, we will discuss how we can use the Local Activism strategy and suggested activities in SASA! to change community norms and encourage people to take action to prevent VAW and HIV.*

#### 2. Ask: *Has anyone ever personally witnessed negative comments about women, or even abuse or sexual harassment of women, and wanted to speak up, but then kept quiet?*

#### 3. Ask for a show of hands.

*(Note: If no one is willing to volunteer, reassure people this has happened to almost everyone at one time or another, and offer an example of your own if necessary to start people talking.)*

#### 4. Reminding people of confidentiality, invite a volunteer to briefly (5 minutes or less) act out an experience of witnessing a negative comment about women, or other scene of abuse. Clarify that they can ask any other participants to come in and play a role to recreate the scene, including them, keeping quiet.

*(Note: We specifically want to act out scenarios that are not related to physical violence, because we do not want people to single-handedly put themselves in the middle of situations that may not be safe for any of us alone. We can talk more about how to safely intervene with physical abuse later in training, with a module called Keeping Our Activism Safer.)*

#### 5. Thank the participants for sharing the brief scene.

#### 6. Explain: *Most people have had this happen to them at least once in our lives. Sometimes, it is hard not to hold onto those memories and replay them in our minds, wishing they had gone differently.*

#### 7. Ask the volunteer first, then invite other participant contributions: *What might you have done or said, if you could go back, to safely intervene in what you saw happening?*

#### 8. Have participants act out one of those ideas that they feel would be safe and realistic.

#### 9. Ask: *What might have been different if we had done or said this?*

#### 10. Solicit responses, e.g.

- We might have been able to help someone.
- We would feel better about ourselves because we would have acted on what we believe.
- Something might have changed in the person’s mind or life.
- Social change might have been sparked—because we might have started to change a community norm.



11. Summarize:

- *We don't relive these moments to make ourselves feel bad, but to think about how important it is, going forward so things can be different. When, before, we felt isolated and powerless, we can now feel connected and with the power to create change.*
- *Small actions can make a big difference in someone's life.*
- *Our words and actions can have a ripple effect so that our lives touch others. This is how we change community norms!*

12. Explain: *We are going to do an exercise. We are going to stand all around the room far apart from each other so none of us can touch each other when we stretch out our hands.*

13. Invite participants to stand up and get in this position, then face forward to still hear the rest of the instructions.



14. Explain: Now, I will start this exercise. The rule is that I have to find one person near me—who represents my neighbors or friends or family in my community—and as quickly as possible, hold their hand. They must then take me along with them and find someone else near them to hold their hand, and so on. Let's do it as fast as we can.
15. Ask: Ready?
16. Explain: Ok, let's go!!!
17. Grab someone's hand and follow the group around until everyone is holding hands.



18. Explain: *Great! Good job. See how fast that was?*
19. Invite participants to take their seats.
20. Explain:
  - *Earlier in this session, we saw what a powerful difference it makes to speak up when we witness attitudes and behaviors that maintain the silence around VAW.*

- *In this exercise, we saw that, by reaching out to the people right around us—our family, neighbors and friends in daily life—soon we are all involved.*
  - *These are the basic principles in the Local Activism strategy in SASA!*
  - *If we each learn to speak out, just in the course of our own lives, in our own corners of the community—in time, there will be enough activists to change community norms and to prevent VAW and HIV.*
21. Post pre-written Local Activism purpose: To create “everyday” activists by engaging women, men and young people in accessible, grassroots initiatives.
  22. Ask: *With this purpose in mind, why is it central to the Local Activism strategy that community activists be the ones that drive change in the norms and beliefs of the community about VAW and HIV?*
  23. Write responses on flip chart, e.g.
    - Regular people speaking out to their neighbors and friends, in their daily lives, is the way change in social norms happens.
    - If community activists drive the process, it ensures SASA! ideas reach all corners of the community.
    - It enables community members to explore the implications of power, violence against women, and HIV/AIDS in relation to their own lives.
    - It provides community members the information and opportunities for exploring, challenging and changing community norms about power between women and men.
    - It is more sustainable because community activists live in the community. If it is NGO-led, our impact ends when we can no longer work in the community and only goes as far as we can reach.
  24. Explain: *Let us explore more about the importance of Local Activism being driven by community members themselves. We are going to imagine what would be different if SASA! work was all led by NGO workers.*
  25. Invite 2 volunteers to come forward and sit at the front of the room.
  26. One of you will assume the role of an NGO staff member. Think realistically about what NGO staff can do. The other will assume the role of a trained Community Activist. Think realistically about what a CA can do.
  27. Allow a few moments for each to assume their roles.
  28. Explain: *Now, we the audience want to ask the NGO staff and the CA a few questions. The only rule is that you both answer honestly, thinking about the role you are playing.*
  29. Distribute questions: **Who creates community change?** to participants.
  30. Invite participant with Question No. 1 to ask their question of the NGO staff and CA. Remind both to keep their answers realistic (and brief)! Repeat process with Questions No. 2-5.
  31. Ask: *Having heard the NGO staff and the CA discuss, who do we think has more influence over community social norms change?*
  32. Explain:
    - *It is clear that there is a role for NGO staff in supporting social change—but it takes everyday activists like CA’s, in every community, to drive community change.*

- *Think again about the role play we did this morning, where we thought of ways we could speak up and say something to promote peace and nonviolence rather than keeping quiet in the face of abuse.*
  - *Think of how many more opportunities the CA has to do that in her/ his own community than an NGO worker has—and think of how much more receptive the community may be to that engagement.*
  - *This is why SASA! focuses on creating everyday activists to drive change!*
  - *Staff are valuable, too—we can make sure CAs are trained and mentored, increase the quality of the activism, and do what we can to support the CA's work—remembering we will not be there forever, and always ready to move to another community to help spark a similar process of activism. We can also be activists in our own communities and lives—we all have power to create change!*
33. Direct participant focus back to the Purpose of Local Activism on the flip chart.
34. Explain: *This purpose fits with SASA's overall purpose to create social change at all levels of the community that prevents VAW and HIV.*
35. Ask: *How does Local Activism fit with the other strategies: Communication materials, Training and Media & Advocacy—to create a critical mass and prevent VAW and HIV?*
36. Brainstorm as a group, and write responses on flip chart, e.g.
- Local Activism uses **Communication Materials** as tools in social norm change.
  - Local Activism is driven by Community Activists who need **Training** to create the best impact with their time.
  - Community Activists participate in **Media and Advocacy** work as well—being interviewed on radio programs, participating in community events, advocating with local officials, and in many other ways.

### **Local Activism Activities Overview**

1. Explain: *There are many local activism activities to choose from in SASA!. They are designed to provoke thinking and discussion in communities among women and men — young and old, and of all levels of education. They are designed so anyone can use them.*
2. Ask: *What are some Local Activism activities that you know about in SASA!? Have participants list a few.*
3. Distribute Handout- **Local Activism: What Activities Can We Use?** Explain what the handout is and allow people to look through for 1-2 minutes. Ask a few volunteers to mention an activity from the handout they have never used before. Discuss briefly, then ask people to put the handout down, until the end of the session.
4. Explain and Summarize:
  - *Local Activism is a strategy with a purpose, so how, where and with whom we do activities can be strategic.*
  - *SASA! includes a whole range of activities. Some of them will appeal to different types of people. Some are better for big groups, some for smaller groups, some for individuals. They have different take home ideas to focus on getting people to question different community norms related to VAW and HIV.*
  - *This variety allows Local Activism activities to be selected and adapted to every community's context.*

- *Note: If it seems useful discuss how to plan which Local Activities to use, strategically, more discussion is available in the Staff Skill Building Library's **Local Activism Planning** session.*
- *The Local Activism strategy is the heart of SASA! because it fosters activism among community members themselves. Without Local Activism, we could not reach the people needed to create a critical mass for change!*

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## Validation Options

Validation is another way to say “assessment” or “pre/post-test”. It is used to determine whether the participants in a training learned what the facilitator intended for them to learn. Instructions for how to use each validation method can be found in *Training Validation Methods: A how-to guide for assessing participant learning* downloadable at [www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php](http://www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php)

Select validation methods for each competency using the table below:

1. Choose whether the competency (specific skill) needs to be validated at a group or individual level.
2. Looking at the validation methods listed in that category (group or individual), select only **one** of the validation methods marked with an 'X' for each competency.
3. Plan a time in the training agenda to use the validation method you've chosen to test each competency.

Competency (Specific skill)	Suggested Validation Methods									
	Group Validation <i>Use if it is sufficient for the group, as a whole, to demonstrate the competency</i>					Individual Validation <i>Use if essential for each participant to demonstrate the competency her/himself</i>				
	Activity in Training*	Game Show	Card Game	Answers Bingo	Pick and Play	Activity in Training*	Exit Interview / Role Play	Game Show (All Play)	Written Quiz	
Describe the Local Activism strategy and how it will work with the other strategies to create a critical mass.**		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
List some ways of conducting Local Activism activities (quick chat, community conversation, drama, soap opera, etc.)**		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	

\* Activity in Training includes many possibilities, depending on the module, including brainstorming, group practices, debates, agree/disagree/not sure exercise, and others.

\*\*See Validation Questions for this competency, to be used in Game Show, Card Game, Answers Bingo or Pick and Play methods, on next page.

## Validation Questions

- Name one way the local activism strategy works with another strategy to help create a critical mass for social change.
- List 2 Local Activism activities.
- Facilitator's Note: Find out what the participants really learned! These cards can be cut out and used with Game Show, Card Game, Human Bingo or Round Robin in a Bag validation methods. Full descriptions of how to use each of these validation methods are available in the Raising Voices Competency Based Training Library. Download at: [www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills](http://www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills) and go to "Validation Method Descriptions".

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## Who creates community change?

Question No. 1: How many hours a day do you spend in the community?/ How accessible are you if someone in the community wants to find you?

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Question No. 2: Who do you know in the community?

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Question No. 3: What do you know about the events, priorities, and social norms of the community?

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Question No. 4: Who trusts you in the community?

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Question No. 5: How much longer will you likely be present in the community (1 year, 5 years, 10 years, etc)?

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## Local Activism- What Activities Can we Use?

What activities can we use to encourage local activism? There are as many answers to that question as there are communities. Below are suggestions to spark your thinking:

**Community Conversations:** Facilitated discussions about violence against women (VAW), with a gathered group of people at a market or other venue. Often uses communication materials (like posters, comic sheets, picture cards, etc) or engaging and provocative questions to encourage thought and conversation.

**Quick Chats/ Health Chats:** Short, informal, unscheduled discussions with people who are going about their daily routines (housewives, people standing at taxi/ bus stands, market sellers, health workers, etc) or door-to-door chats with people, about violence against women.

**Film screening:** Showing the SASA! film, with facilitated discussion afterward, can be entertaining and educational. Set up your own showing, or get a local video hall to show a particular film, and give you a chance to facilitate dialogue afterward.

**Soap Opera Discussion Groups:** Community activists gather a group of friends, neighbors, or coworkers and play pre-recorded Soap Operas on violence against women, for discussion. Participants get together for 1-2 hours every week or two to discuss the booklet, soap opera, or other communication materials.

**Community Action Groups (CAG's):** Groups of individuals, often already existing in the community, who come together to discuss and take action on VAW issues.

**Vigils:** A vigil is a gathering that remembers a person or event. It can be a powerful tool to focus community attention on the negative, often fatal, consequences of VAW. You may remember all the women who have been hurt, or a specific woman who was killed, etc.

**Dramas:** Train local drama troupes, or form a new one, to understand the basics of violence against women. Provide drama sketches or work closely with the group as they develop one, and be sure someone is there to facilitate conversations during pauses in the drama, or afterward.

**Creating supportive environments:** Work with places like beauty salons, barber shops, health care centers and others to create conversations about violence against women while people wait, and post communication materials in their spaces.

**Community Events/ Celebrations:** An open, community event or celebration held to encourage or appreciate community member participation in the program, share information, and provide a forum for discussion about the issue—inspiring further activism. Can include sports competitions or other aspects to make it fun and encourage participation.

**Etc:** What else might you do to encourage local activism?

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