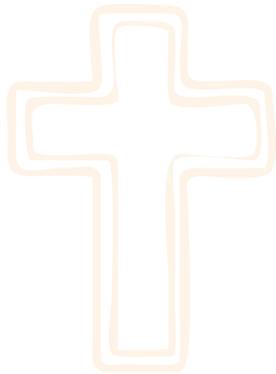


SASA!

Faith

Community Action
Groups in the
Support Phase





Note: There is basic information in the *SASA! Faith* guide about the types of activities you may want to conduct with community action groups in the Support phase. In this document, you will find additional activity ideas and expanded information on working with each type of community action group.

In the Support phase you will continue to work with the action groups that were started in the Awareness phase. With them, you will move beyond raising awareness about the issues of power, violence and HIV. Specifically, you will seek to enhance the groups' knowledge, skills and resources for providing and role-modeling positive forms of support.

Health and Social Welfare Action Groups

Health and social welfare providers give critical support to women experiencing violence and/or HIV. In the Support phase, the health and social welfare action group focuses on improving the quality of care and services for women experiencing violence and/or HIV.

Recommendations for the Support phase:

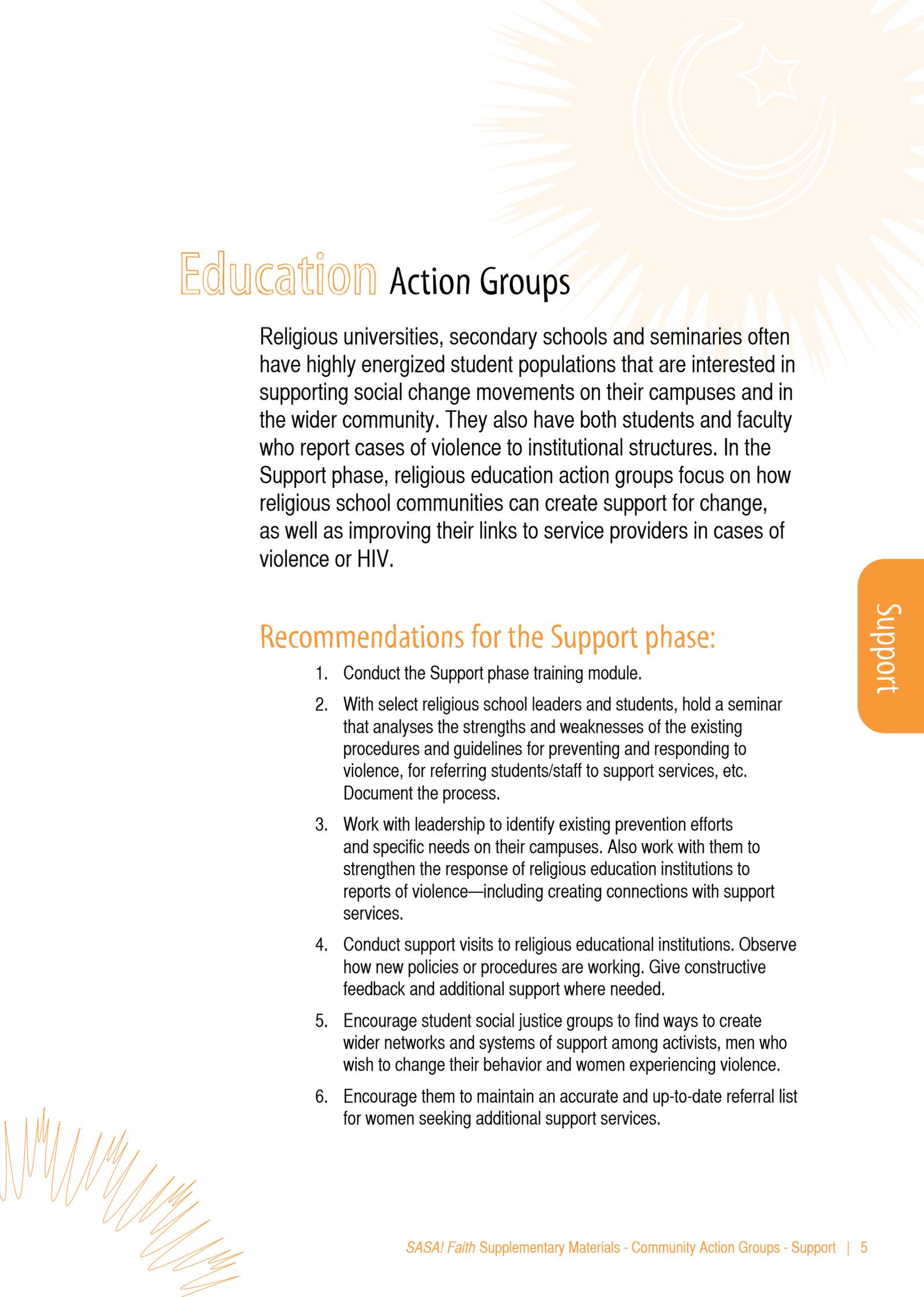
1. Conduct the Support phase training module.
2. With select leaders and providers, hold a seminar that analyses the strengths and weaknesses of existing procedures and guidelines for preventing/responding to violence within their clinics, hospitals, premarital counseling curricula, home-based care procedures, etc. Document the process.
3. Work with leadership and providers to strengthen the services and response of providers when they encounter issues of violence against women. This may include revising existing client intake procedures and protocols for handling clients sensitively, or revising protocols for premarital counseling.
4. Conduct support visits to health and social welfare providers. Observe how new protocols or procedures are working. Give constructive feedback and additional support where needed.
5. Encourage health and social welfare providers to continue to do community education about the issues of violence against women and HIV with clients seeking services and in community outreach, using *SASA! Faith* materials.
6. Encourage them to maintain an accurate and up-to-date referral list for women seeking additional support services.

Media Action Groups

Media outlets are often asked to report stories of particular cases of violence. In many cases, that is the only time they report on the issues of violence against women and HIV. In the Support phase, media action groups focus on how the media can expand their involvement in these issues through activities such as, (1) spreading the word about existing support services for women experiencing violence and HIV, (2) reporting testimonies that demonstrate the importance of support in creating change, and (3) examining their own reporting practices around cases of violence.

Recommendations for the Support phase:

1. Conduct the Support phase training module with the group.
2. With heads of media houses and influential journalists, hold a seminar that analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the existing procedures and guidelines for reporting on cases of violence compared with international standards in reporting. Document the process.
3. Work with leadership and journalists to strengthen the quality of reporting on cases of violence against women.
4. Encourage the media action group to observe how new policies or procedures are working. Give constructive feedback and additional support where needed.
5. Suggest ways to use the radio and story ideas available in the Support phase activities (page 190).



Education Action Groups

Religious universities, secondary schools and seminaries often have highly energized student populations that are interested in supporting social change movements on their campuses and in the wider community. They also have both students and faculty who report cases of violence to institutional structures. In the Support phase, religious education action groups focus on how religious school communities can create support for change, as well as improving their links to service providers in cases of violence or HIV.

Recommendations for the Support phase:

1. Conduct the Support phase training module.
2. With select religious school leaders and students, hold a seminar that analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the existing procedures and guidelines for preventing and responding to violence, for referring students/staff to support services, etc. Document the process.
3. Work with leadership to identify existing prevention efforts and specific needs on their campuses. Also work with them to strengthen the response of religious education institutions to reports of violence—including creating connections with support services.
4. Conduct support visits to religious educational institutions. Observe how new policies or procedures are working. Give constructive feedback and additional support where needed.
5. Encourage student social justice groups to find ways to create wider networks and systems of support among activists, men who wish to change their behavior and women experiencing violence.
6. Encourage them to maintain an accurate and up-to-date referral list for women seeking additional support services.

Peer Action Group

Women's, men's and youth groups; prayer groups; and other peer groups in the faith community see each other on a regular basis and usually know intimately about the challenges and joys in each other's lives. However, violence against women and HIV is sometimes not even talked about in these spaces. The *SASA! Faith* Team can work with peer action groups to help them create safe and supportive spaces for discussing these topics.

Recommendations for the Support phase:

1. Conduct the Support phase training module with group leaders/representatives (for them to then go back and repeat the module with other members).
2. Spend time with the different groups. Help them identify how and under what circumstances group members may need support. Remind them that everyone needs support, not only women experiencing violence or HIV. Women, men and young people striving to balance power in their relationships also need support, as do activists who are speaking out on these issues in the community.
3. Help the groups identify other formal or informal services in their faith community where their members could seek out and give support to others. Foster additional support mechanisms where needed, and encourage training for key point people.
4. Work with the group to create a values statement—a statement of what the group believes (i.e., in the worth and dignity of all people, human rights for all, equality of women and men, nonviolence, etc.). When conducted in a participatory way, this exercise can act as a values clarification exercise for the group, while guiding members and the future direction of the group.
5. Establish a support mechanism for group members in need. For example, if a young person is feeling pressured to have sex, a woman is experiencing violence, or a man is finding it difficult to stop using violence, have a system in place so that members can ask for and receive support—either internally from other group members or from outside the group.
6. Encourage groups to create a small fund that members can draw on in times of crisis.

Security Action Group

By now, you have created relationships with the security sector both at the higher and lower levels of the hierarchy. In this phase you will focus on improving the support services that your security group provides to women experiencing violence.

Recommendations for the Support phase:

1. Conduct the Support phase training module with both leaders and front-line staff.
2. Meet with the security leadership. Gather information about the procedures and guidelines in place for handling cases of violence against women.
3. With select leaders and officers in the security sector and select religious leaders, hold a seminar that analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the existing procedures and guidelines for referring people experiencing violence. Document the process.
4. Build a strong working relationship with the security personnel. Conduct support visits to officers handling cases directly. Sit with them as they handle cases (if clients consent); observe how they treat clients, the procedure for taking a case, the advice given.
5. Help officers improve their service delivery by:
 - a. giving constructive feedback
 - b. working with leadership to revise existing procedures and standing orders or create interview guides and protocols for handling cases of violence against women
 - c. creating formal training (seminars, workshops, etc.) and informal training opportunities (one-on-one meetings, observations, role-modeling, etc.) to strengthen security officers' capacity to respond appropriately to violence against women.
6. Create a referral system with the group. Identify the existing formal and informal services available in your faith community, so that they can refer clients for further support. This is especially important for police officers. Remember, police officers are not counselors; their role is to handle cases as defined by the existing laws of the country.
7. Hold a meeting where different service providers in your community who can meet face-to-face, present the services they offer and explain procedures for handling violence. Personal connections made here will contribute to better referrals later.