

Assessing *SASA!* Programming: Tips and Tools

Programming for Prevention Series, Brief No. 5

Background

SASA! is a community mobilization approach to prevent violence against women (VAW) and HIV developed by Raising Voices in Uganda. A randomized controlled trial conducted with the Center for Domestic Violence Prevention, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and Makerere University demonstrated *SASA!*'s community-level impacts on preventing intimate partner violence against women and reducing the social acceptability of violence.¹

Diverse organizations around the world are using *SASA!* in a variety of settings. While the *SASA!* approach is adaptable and may look different in some contexts, there are specific aspects of program design and implementation that are important indicators of effective and impactful programming.

This brief details aspects of quality *SASA!* programming to identify areas of strength that can be further leveraged and maintained, as well as the areas that need attention and support. To assess fidelity to *SASA!*, see [Fidelity to the *SASA!* Activist Kit](#); for tips on adapting *SASA!*, see [Adapting *SASA!*: Tips and Tools](#).

Who can use this Program Brief?

This Brief provides guidance for organizations, technical assistance providers, researchers, and funders. This is not a tool for evaluating program impact; rather, it can be used to assess the quality of *SASA!* programming and to promote safe and effective implementation of *SASA!*

How was this Brief created?

This Brief draws from research conducted by Raising Voices and the University of California, San Diego on adaptations and implementation of *SASA!* by Beyond Borders in Haiti, the International Rescue Committee in Kenya, and the Women’s Promotion Centre in Tanzania, as well as Raising Voices’ accumulated knowledge through years of providing technical assistance to organizations using the *SASA!* Activist Kit. The research is part of a larger project aiming to understand *SASA!* adaptations (funded by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women).

How to use this Brief

This Brief is intended to help structure an assessment and critical review of *SASA!* programming. We recommend that a core team—including program officers, monitoring and evaluation officers, and managers—dedicate several hours to this process, using the Brief as a worksheet to focus analysis and discussion. Repeat the process biannually or annually to note improvements and further strengthen programming. Remember, the intention is to reflect and learn about the program, as well as develop concrete actions that support effective programming; thus, honesty and accurate responses will make the exercise significantly more meaningful.

Part 1. The basics

Record some of the basics of this assessment process:

Date of assessment discussion	
Name of organization	
Who is involved (names and/or designations)	
Current phase of <i>SASA!</i>	

Part 2. Organizational capacity

This section presents aspects related to your organization’s internal capacity to support quality *SASA!* implementation. An organization’s internal capacity includes leadership, staff, resources, systems, and culture. Note that different individuals may have diverse perspectives, particularly if the organization is strongly hierarchal, as perceptions of organizational capacity stem are typically influenced by one’s position in the organization.

Step 1: Reflect

Please rate each from 0 to 4 (0=very weak; 1=weak; 2=satisfactory; 3=strong; and 4=very strong), adding descriptive comments that explain the rating and help inform the recommendations for moving forward.

	Organizational capacity marker	Rating	Explanation
1	Our organization's leader (executive director or program director) is vocal and consistent about her/his support for SASA!		
2	Our organization's leadership understands SASA! and provides technical support on implementation (e.g., participating in team meetings, reviewing work plans and reports)		
3	The SASA! team has participated in SASA! training for the phase being implemented, ideally facilitated by a SASA! expert		
4	The SASA! team and organization regularly participate in personal and organizational reflections on p wer		
5	There are at least two SASA! internal training or practice sessions each month for staff		
6	The SASA! team demonstrates understanding of key SASA! concepts		
7	There is at least one person who assumes leadership and responsibility for SASA! in the organization		
8	Staff demonst ate capacity in facilitating SASA! training sessions and activities		
9	There is a clear procedure to ensure knowledge transfer and institutionalization of SASA! capacity in the organization		
10	There are a clear orientation plan and content for new staff		
11	There is secure funding for three years of SASA! implementation		
12	The funder is committed to supporting SASA! programming and understands what it takes for it to be effective.		
Add the ratings and divide by 12 for Organizational capacity average rating			

Step 2: Analyze

Describe your assessment of organizational capacity: two strengths and two areas of weakness, along with linked actions.

For example:

Strength 1: Executive director is very supportive of SASA! and understands what it takes to implement SASA! well.

Strength 1 Action: Executive director meets program team at least twice monthly to provide technical oversight and support.

Part 3. Program structure

This section supports reflection on how SASA! programming is structured in your context. The number of staff needed will depend on the SASA! strategies used and the size of your communities. Alongside the staff members supporting the local activism strategy, you also need staff capacity or roles such as project coordination, learning and assessment, and media and advocacy. Two critical aspects of SASA! programming are: a) the number of community activists (CAs) and staff, and the size of the community; and b) the capacity of staff to provide regular, in-person support to CAs throughout all phases of SASA!.

Step 1: Reflect

Name of community where SASA! is implemented	Approximate population of community	Distance from organization's office to community (travel time)	Number of CAs working in each community
			Women: Men: Total:
			Women: Men: Total:
			Women: Men: Total:

The following is an approximate guide to the level of coverage needed to achieve a critical mass for attitude and behavior change at the community level. The numbers provided are approximate.

	Type of community			Relevant assessment question
	Densely populated	Sparsely populated	Extremely sparsely populated	
Description	Communities where residents live in close proximity and it is possible to walk around the community in less than an hour	Communities where residential areas are more spread out and residents could reach the community center within a one-hour walk	Communities where small groups of residents and/or families live more than an hour's walk from the next small group; there may be no discernible community center	What type(s) of community are you implementing SASA! in? Densely populated____ Sparsely populated ____ Extremely sparsely populated____
Recommended staff-to-CA ratio	One staff member for approximately every 25 to 30 CAs	One staff member for approximately every 20 to 25 CAs	One staff member for approximately every 15 to 20 CAs	What is your staff-to-CA ratio? One staff member or every ____ CAs
Recommended CA-to-community member ratio	One CA for approximately every 1,200 to 1,500 community members	One CA for approximately every 600 to 800 community members	One CA for approximately every 400 to 500 community members	What is your CA-to-community member ratio? One CA for every _____ community members

Please note:

- The CA-to-community member ratio does not mean one CA will directly reach this number of community members but rather that one CA's activities can expect to have a ripple effect on this number of people. The ratio is the approximate balance needed to create a critical mass for change within a given community. For example: If you have two staff members supporting local activism in a densely populated community, these staff can support up to 60 CAs (two staff members x 30 CAs). These CAs can indirectly reach up to 90,000 community members (60 CAs x 1,500 community members). This means the total community size should not exceed 90,000 for quality programming.
- Using these ratios does not guarantee similar results to the SASA! study. Quality programming also requires regular activity (e.g. CAs running at least one to two activities per week), strong staff capacity, fidelity to the SASA! methodology (see *Fidelity to the SASA! Activist Kit*), and contextual adaptation (see part 4, "Adapting SASA!").

Based on the above recommendations for program structure, rate the following from 0 to 4 for your organization (0=very weak; 1=weak; 2=satisfactory; 3=strong; and 4=very strong).

	Program structure marker	Rating	Explanation
1	There are enough staff to achieve the recommended staff-to-CA ratio		
2	There are enough CAs to allow for sufficient coverage of communities		
3	There are roughly equal numbers of female and male CAs		
4	Staff are able to provide in-person support to each CA during a community activity at least once per month		
5	Staff are in place to fulfill additional roles such as overall coordination, learning and assessment, and media and advocacy		
Add the ratings and divide by 5 for Program structure average rating			

Step 2: Analyze

Describe your assessment of program structure: two strengths and two areas of weakness, along with linked actions

For example:

Weakness 1: There are not enough staff to achieve the recommended staff to CA ratio.

Weakness 1 Action OPTIONS: a) Hire additional staff if budget allows; b) Assess time and capacity of other organizational staff able to take on supervision of some CAs; c) Reduce the number of CAs in community; d) Initiate a peer-to-peer support system for CAs to buddy and support each other; e) Increase the number of times per month the staff meet the CAs as a group for additional support and supervision.



Part 4. Adapting SASA!

This section focuses on how your organization adapted SASA! for your specific context, organizational capacity, and community. For substantial adaptations (such as adapting beyond translation or outside East and Southern Africa), please see [Adapting SASA!: Tips and Tools](#).

Step 1: Reflect

Based on your organization's work to adapt SASA!, rate the following from 0 to 4 (0=very weak; 1=weak; 2=satisfactory; 3=strong; and 4=very strong).

SASA! adaptation marker	Rating	Explanation
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
Add the ratings and divide by 7 for Adapting SASA! average rating:		

Step 2: Analyze

Describe your assessment of organizational capacity: two strengths and two areas of weakness, along with linked actions.

For example:

Strength 1: Executive director is very supportive of SASA! and understands what it takes to implement SASA! well.

Strength 1 Action: Executive director meets program team at least twice monthly to provide technical oversight and support.

Part 5. Implementing SASA!

This section focuses on SASA! implementation by reflecting on the strategies being used and the activities being conducted. It requires intimate knowledge of SASA! programming in your community.

Step 1: Reflect

Based on your organization's implementation of SASA!, rate the following from 0 to 4 (0=very weak; 1=weak; 2=satisfactory; 3=strong; and 4=very strong).

	SASA! implementation marker	Rating	Explanation
1	Staff have and follow clear, detailed work plans		
2	CAs were selected using the criteria and process in the "Identifying Community Activists" guide in SASA!		
3	Community mapping was done to identify and engage key groups in the community, and work plans reflect those decision		
4	Resource persons (e.g., police, health care providers, local leaders) have been identified or ongoing engagement through SASA!'s "Community Mapping" exercise		
5	CAs and resource persons are supported to create quality work plans using the monthly activity planner		
6	Each of the SASA! strategies is being used		
7	CAs and resource persons are trained for a minimum of three days prior to each phase and participate in skill-building sessions at least once a month		

	SASA! implementation marker	Rating	Explanation
8	Staff demonstrate respect and solidarity with CAs (for example, connecting with them and their families on a personal level)		
9	Less than 10 percent of CAs have dropped out		
10	Each CA is doing at least one activity a week in their community (relevant for each phase)		
11	Staff provide onsite mentorship during CA activities at least once a month		
12	A good balance of women and men in the community participate in SASA! activities, or when same-sex activities are used, they take place for both women and men		
13	Community members and/or CAs are not provided financial incentives to participate in SASA!		
14	SASA! activities are held in easily accessible areas in the community and are informal and discussion-based (e.g., CA does not "lecture" the community)		
15	CAs and resource persons have printed materials to use in their organizing (e.g., quick chats, posters)		
16	Regular collaboration meetings have been done with CAs, service providers, local leaders, and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs)/networks		
17	Community leaders are regularly engaged and feel involved in SASA!		
18	Resource persons are regularly visited at their places of work for mentoring and support		
19	**If working with media, SASA! ideas are regularly highlighted in local news and media outlets		
20	**If working with media, quality relationships are fostered with key journalists		
	Add the ratings and divide by 20** for SASA! implementation average rating: **If not working with media, divide by 18		

Step 2: Analyze

Describe your assessment of SASA! implementation: two strengths and two areas of weakness, along with linked actions

For example:

Weakness 1: *Staff have generalized work plans that do not include details of the CA activities.*

Weakness 1 Action: *Support CAs to complete detailed work plans that describe where, what and when they will conduct activities (if not already in place); integrate supporting CAs into Local Activism staff work plans with at least three visits per week.*

Part 6. Learning and assessment

This section focuses on monitoring and assessment activities for SASA!. For more guidance on SASA! learning and assessment tools, please see [SASA! and SASA! Faith Learning and Evaluation \(L&E\)](#).

Step 1: Reflect

Based on your organization's SASA! learning and assessment practices, rate the following from 0 to 4 (0=very weak; 1=weak; 2=satisfactory; 3=strong; and 4=very strong).

	Learning and assessment marker*	Rating	Explanation
1	Organization conducted a baseline rapid assessment survey (RAS) (including data entry and report) with a minimum of 100 women and 100 men		
2	Staff sample CA activities to monitor and support each month, completing approximately 15 outcome tracking forms and 20 community activity reports each month		
3	CAs have been trained on and submit each month their activity report forms		
4	Community activity reports reflect a diversity of SASA! activities (e.g., quick chats, poster talks, dramas) and facilitating CAs, have complete information (including CA feedback section), and are stored and entered into a database		
5	Outcome tracking forms reflect a diversity of SASA! activities (e.g., quick chats, poster talks, dramas) and facilitating CAs, have complete information, and are carefully stored and entered into a database		
6	At least two staff are able to complete the outcome tracking form and have conducted practice sessions to promote consistent rankings		

	Learning and assessment marker*	Rating	Explanation
7	All learning and assessment data is carefully stored and entered on a monthly basis into an Excel or Access database, and can easily be aggregated and shared as needed		
8	Analyzed data is shared with staff and CAs on a quarterly basis, with concrete actions identified		
9	Rapid assessment surveys are done near the end of each phase, and analyzed and shared with staff and CA		
10	RAS is available in the local language, and modifications have been made as necessary to reflect the community context		
11	Lessons from learning and assessment data are actively used to inform programmatic directions and needs		
12	Informal feedback mechanisms are in place to learn about CAs and community members' perceptions of ongoing programming, including any unintended or harmful effects		
	Add the ratings and divide by 12 for SASA! learning and assessment average rating:		

* All numbers noted in this table are to provide overall guidance; precise numbers depend on the scope of your SASA! programming.

Step 2: Analyze

Describe your assessment of learning and assessment for your organization's SASA! program: two strengths and two areas of weakness, along with linked actions

For example:

Strength 1: RAS was carried out in communities prior to programming.

Strength 1 Action: Share results with CAs and other stakeholders to promote ownership, understanding, and buy-in on SASA! programming and results.

Moving forward

Congratulations on doing this assessment. Remember, the intention is to find a eas where you can enhance your SASA! programming to enable stronger impact and effectiveness. Discuss the results with your SASA! team—agreeing on realistic improvements you can make and celebrating existing strengths. Complete the following simple action plan to help structure your program moving forward, revisiting this process biannually or annually to ensure follow-through and to identify areas that need attention:

Keep doing this!	Changes needed	Time frame
1.	1.	
2.	2.	
3.	3.	
4.	4.	
5.	5.	



The **Programming for Prevention Series** is a collection of Program Briefs designed to address critical challenges and questions in violence against women prevention programming. This publication (Brief No. 5) was produced with funding from the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women; however, the views expressed and content included do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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Endnotes

1. Raising Voices, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine & Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (2015) *Is Violence Against Women Preventable? Findings from the SASA! Study Summarized for General Audiences*. Kampala, Uganda: Raising Voices.

