

phase

1

community  
assessment

# community assessment

## phase 1

### Overview

In the first phase of the Project, Community Assessment, the aim is to investigate the common beliefs and attitudes about domestic violence held by various groups in the community and to begin to build relationships with community members and leaders. The information gathered will help guide the Project by allowing you to initiate the process of change at a stage appropriate for the community. In this phase, you will also start preparing staff members to respond to the challenge of mobilising the community to prevent domestic violence.



This first phase of the Project corresponds to the first step in the Stages of Change Theory: pre-contemplation. Individuals in the community may not be aware of the occurrence of domestic violence that surrounds them or may not have identified or labeled it, or its consequences, as a problem in their own lives or in the community. The process of gathering information will begin to make domestic violence a public issue, and many community members will become more aware of it.

During this phase, community members may begin reflecting on domestic violence, discussing it with friends, and recognizing it as an important social issue.

### Overall Objectives

- Learn about common perceptions and practices regarding domestic violence in the community.
- Prepare the community for the subsequent phases of the Project by developing relationships with community members and establishing the Project's infrastructure.
- Strengthen capacity of staff to begin implementing a domestic violence prevention project.

### Focus: Collecting Information and Emphasizing Human Rights

The Community Assessment phase will help you figure out how to promote the right to safety and the prevention of domestic violence in your community by better understanding where the community stands on the issue. As your organisation learns what community members think about domestic violence, it is important that the theme of human rights is emphasized and promoted through all activities and interactions with the community. Practically speaking, in this project, a human rights or rights-based approach means promoting the belief that all people are equal in value. This means that despite different roles that community members assume, everyone, women and men, children and youth, without regard to their sex, age, religion, status, ethnicity, or any other social difference, has a right to safety and justice. This Project will focus on the right to live free of violence, particularly within the home and intimate relationships, by emphasizing the responsibility of all people to be non-violent in their words and actions.

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## Approach: Listening, Learning, Preparing

The first phase is a time for active listening, learning, and preparation for subsequent work with the community. This phase emphasizes asking the right questions and listening to what people think and feel about domestic violence and women's rights. The project staff should avoid telling people what to think, and instead help community members explore their own opinions and beliefs.

An essential first step is to start building relationships of trust with different groups in the community. How you approach community members, leaders, and institutions in this first phase will, in many ways, determine their willingness to work with you throughout the Project. It is important to make sure all staff members feel prepared to represent the organisation, discuss domestic violence, and describe the Project. During this phase, the organisation should increase its community presence and make sure staff are familiar with the community's geography, culture, key institutions, community members, and leaders. From the outset, demonstrate in words and actions that preventing domestic violence requires the support and active participation of a range of community members and that your organisation is committed to working through this process with the community.

## Activity Ideas

Below is a list of all of the activities described in the Community Assessment phase. Each activity is categorized under the strategy with which it corresponds. It is important to complete at least one activity in each strategy to adequately reach a diverse cross section of community members. Conducting as many activities as you reasonably can within each strategy will increase community members' exposure to the ideas and maximize your impact.

The Action Research activity is not categorized under a strategy since this activity should be completed at the outset and lays the foundation for the Project's direction and focus. Action Research requires the active involvement of all staff, as it will deepen their understanding of community perceptions and strengthen their relationships with community members.

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## Action Plans

Create Action Plans, at the beginning of each phase, that state your objectives and the key activities you want to accomplish to achieve those objectives. It is recommended that you create an Action Plan for each strategy and then put them together to create an overall Action Plan for the phase. Organize a meeting to discuss the Action Plans as a group.

## Completing Action Plans

### Steps

1. Ask staff members to read the description of the current phase before coming to the meeting, especially the objectives, focus, and activity descriptions. If staff members are experienced in planning, they could come prepared with draft Action Plans for their respective strategies, otherwise they can be done collectively.
2. As a group, briefly review the objectives and focus of the phase and make any changes or additions you feel are appropriate for your organisation and community.
3. For each strategy you plan to use, develop SMART objectives (page 27).
4. On flipchart, list the chosen activities for the first strategy (i.e., Learning Materials). Choose

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your activities from the Resource Guide and from your own experience. Select activities that will help you achieve your objectives.

5. Fill out an Action Plan sheet for the first strategy. Write your objective(s) for that strategy and list and describe each activity according to the information requested for the various columns (see appendix E for an Action Plan Column Guide).
6. For each strategy, repeat steps 3, 4 and 5. Take care to remain realistic and focused on the objectives. Remember, it is important to have a variety of activities, at least one from each of the five strategies.
7. Compile the Action Plans for all of the strategies to create an overall Action Plan for the phase. Assess the number of activities, timeframe, and capacity of the staff to make sure your plans are feasible.

## SMART Objectives

Precise work and positive outcomes come from meaningful objectives. One useful tool for developing meaningful objectives is to ask yourself: "Are they SMART?"

Specific	Does it state exactly what you want to achieve?
Measurable	How will you measure progress?
Attainable	Is the objective realistic and achievable?
Replicable	Will others be able to replicate your success?
Time-Bound	When will the objective be achieved?





Strategy:—

**phase:**

**Strategy Objective(s):**—

[illegible]

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## Monitoring and Documentation

Learning as you implement this project is a crucial part of directing your work and developing future Action Plans. Learning is enhanced through monitoring and documentation mechanisms. Focus attention on how you are monitoring and documenting progress and ensure that the mechanisms you put in place will allow you to effectively review the ongoing work and reflect on your experience at the end of the phase. Ensure that regular monitoring activities are conducted and consider using the documentation forms described below to keep written records of your progress.

### Meeting Notes

Meeting Notes document the weekly supervisory meetings held with each strategy department and help monitor progress and accountability (appendix G).

### Activity Reports

Activity Reports are simple forms completed by staff members, resource persons, community volunteers, and other individuals conducting activities that track detailed information about each activity's implementation, outcomes, and lessons learned (appendix H).

### Strategy Summary Reports

The team or individual responsible for each strategy can write a Strategy Summary Report at the end of each phase. This report provides a summary of activities conducted, identifies successes and challenges, and proposes recommendations for the next phase (appendix I).

### Phase Reports

Phase Reports document the lessons learned in each phase. Strategy Summary Reports can be compiled by the Project Coordinator to create an organisational, narrative Phase Report. These reports are important in documenting the Project's development.

## Action Research

A key component of the Community Assessment phase is the Action Research. This research will provide your organisation with a deeper understanding of the perception and practice of domestic violence in your community. The information gathered will inform the approach you use and the issues you choose to focus on during the Project. It will give you a quick picture of common beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors regarding domestic violence in the community.

By using Action Research, your organisation will accomplish the following:

- Deepen your understanding of the types of violence in the community, who is being affected, and the common perceptions about domestic violence.



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- Assess where community groups and individual community members stand in the stages of change.
- Build trust with different groups.
- Build credibility for working on domestic violence.
- Begin to build relationships with community members and professionals.
- Begin to identify key individuals who will support and join the domestic violence prevention efforts.
- Make your organisation and its goals more familiar to the community.



## Research Methodology

The Action Research described in this phase relies on qualitative research methods and does not require a high degree of technical expertise. Qualitative research methods are conducive to Action Research because they seek to understand the experiences and beliefs of participants and the context in which they live. It is useful for all project staff to learn Action Research techniques and to participate in the process of gathering and analyzing community perceptions. This first-hand experience and involvement of all staff will help ground the project efforts in the reality of the community.

If your organisation has the capacity and resources to undertake large-scale quantitative research, it can be useful in adding credibility to the Project and convincing decision-makers that violence against women is an important issue that demands urgent action. However, to conduct this type of research effectively requires substantial time, energy, skill, research expertise, and financial resources.

Regardless of the methodology you choose, it is important to conduct the research with care and adequate support. Violence is a sensitive issue, and asking individuals to share their experiences and beliefs can be a difficult and even dangerous experience. It is, therefore, important that your organisation is committed to working with the community to prevent violence after the research is completed.

For the purposes of this Project, we suggest three qualitative research methods that can be used responsibly and effectively without substantial prior training or experience:

1. focus group discussions (FGDs)
2. questionnaires
3. interviews with 'key informants'



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## Action Research Preparations

### Steps

1. Before conducting the Action Research, make sure that staff fully understand and can respect the following principles:
  - Participation in the research is completely voluntary.
  - The emotional and physical safety of participants is always most important.
  - Personal information revealed by participants will be kept strictly confidential.
  - Informed consent must be sought and received from all participants.
  - Support mechanisms (e.g., counseling, shelter, health care, etc.) exist within your organisation or through referrals to other NGOs or social services.
  - The findings will be interpreted responsibly and used to guide the Project.
2. Establish objectives for your research. Together, discuss the following questions:
  - What specific things do you want to accomplish with the Action Research?
  - Under the theme of domestic violence, are there specific issues you want to learn more about?
  - Are there specific groups of women who are more vulnerable to abuse?
  - Are certain types of domestic violence occurring more often?
  - Are there certain cultural beliefs that community members use to 'legitimize' violence?
3. Prepare a Topic Guide. A Topic Guide is a list of open-ended questions the facilitators use to help participants think about and communicate their views about domestic violence. To prepare a Topic Guide, brainstorm a list of questions that will focus and systematize your research. Keep to one topic even if other questions are interesting. Also, make sure the questions are 'open-ended', meaning that they require more than a yes or no answer. Choose the eight most essential questions from your brainstormed list and organize the questions so that they follow a logical sequence and each question builds on the previous one.  
**For example:**
  - What do you understand by the term 'domestic violence'?
  - What types of domestic violence happen?
  - Do you think domestic violence is a problem in the community? If so, why?
  - Why do you think domestic violence happens?
  - Who in the family most often commits violence (or experiences it)?
  - Is domestic violence an expected and acceptable part of marriage?
  - If you knew someone who was experiencing violence and they wanted to get help, where would you suggest they go?
  - Do you think anything should be done about domestic violence? If so, what?
4. Refine your Topic Guide. Get feedback from colleagues and pre-test it with a small sample of community members to further refine it. Once complete, use the same Topic Guide for all the FGDs and interviews.
5. Prepare a project pamphlet. This is a project summary to distribute to community members

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when you meet them and after the research activities (page 39).

6. Prepare a referral sheet. Compile a list of community services for women experiencing violence to distribute after the research activities (page 40). This is an essential activity. Your organisation has an ethical responsibility to be aware of the existing services for women experiencing violence before conducting research on domestic violence.
7. Contact relevant local officials and community leaders. Introduce the Project and elicit their support/permission for the Action Research activities (page 55).
8. Prepare post-research presentations. See below for ideas on how to introduce your organisation and explain how the information gathered in the Action Research will be shared with the community.

## Post-Research Presentations

The time directly following the FGDs, interviews, and questionnaires is ideal for briefly explaining your organisation and the Project. Remember to make your presentations short because participants are probably tired from the research and have been sitting for a long time. The excitement and professionalism you show in this presentation can strongly influence community members' decision to participate in the Project. Consider the following outline for your presentation.

1. Thank the group for participating and emphasize the importance of their participation to the community and the Project.
2. Explain how you will share the information gathered in the assessment with the community. Try to be specific (e.g., exhibitions, in a community celebration, radio programs, etc.).
3. Give a brief summary of your organisation.
4. Describe the Project. Stress the importance of community participation and discuss how community members will be deeply involved.
5. Describe the many different opportunities for participating, such as volunteering, distributing materials, participating in community events, and donating time or materials (e.g., paint, cloth for banners, supplies, a shop/building wall, services, etc.).
6. Pass around a sign-up sheet for people interested in getting involved. Ask them to include their name, contact information, and how they feel they can contribute.
7. Explain that discussing personal issues like domestic violence and women's rights can sometimes bring up difficult feelings and experiences for participants and that this is a normal response.
8. Invite people to speak with you after the session or at your office about the Project or their personal feelings and experiences related to domestic violence and women's rights. Distribute a referral sheet of available counseling or social services in the community (page 40).
9. Distribute your project pamphlet (page 39).

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## Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

A FGD is a facilitated discussion that elicits the opinions and emotions of participants on a specific theme. It is not a training session. The facilitator does not offer new information but asks pre-planned questions (i.e., questions from the Topic Guide) and asks probing questions to learn what participants think and feel. It has been our experience that FGDs conducted in single sex groups, especially with an issue as sensitive as domestic violence, allow for a freer exchange of ideas and opinions. Furthermore, dividing single-sex groups according to age also allows for more open dialogue. For example, a 20-year-old woman is more likely to open up with her age-mates than with women 10 – 15 years older. This has been especially true with groups of general community members. In professional sectors, however, mixed-sex groups often work well, since participants tend to speak about the community they serve instead of their personal experience. Divide groups as appropriate for your community.

### Before the FGDs

1. Plan how you will gather participants for the FGDs. Participants should include general community members and individuals from the sectors you plan to work with closely (e.g., teachers, health care workers, police, religious leaders, etc.). FGDs could combine complementary sectors (e.g., health workers with social welfare staff or police with judges, etc.). Each FGD should have between 8 to 12 participants.
2. Plan how many FGDs you will facilitate. Make this decision based on the size of your community, staff capacity, and available resources. Remember that FGDs can provide a substantial amount of raw data. Decide on the number of FGDs to conduct based on the amount of time and skill your organisation has to analyze the data. Six to ten FGDs within the general community and two to four within your chosen sector(s) is usually reasonable.
3. If staff members are inexperienced in facilitating FGDs, work with them to increase their understanding of the process and strengthen skills necessary to use the methodology. Create an opportunity for them to practice and receive constructive feedback before they attempt the techniques in the community. A trained facilitator and note taker are required for each FGD.
4. Identify a private, quiet area to hold the FGD. Look for a place without distractions or interruptions, where participants can sit comfortably in a circle.

### During the FGDs

#### Facilitator Responsibilities

1. Ensure that the participants are comfortable. Create a safe environment from the outset through your words and actions.



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2. Briefly introduce yourself and explain the FGD. Emphasize that all the information gathered will be compiled and shared with the community and that no one's name will be used.
3. It is important to get consent from participants. Ask participants directly if they feel comfortable participating and invite those who prefer not to participate to leave. Assure participants that this is a valid choice and that your organisation respects their decision. Tell participants that anytime during the process, if they are uncomfortable and do not wish to continue, they can leave.
4. Set ground rules for the group (e.g., confidentiality, one person speaks at a time, respect, non-judgmental listening, everyone is given an opportunity to speak, etc.).
5. Ask the questions as listed on the Topic Guide. Listen without judgment and without providing answers or correcting participants.
6. Keep the discussion focused on the questions. Gently refocus the group when needed.
7. Monitor the quality of the discussion. Ensure all participants have an opportunity to speak. Stop anyone from dominating the conversation. Keep the discussion flowing and introduce new questions at appropriate times.
8. Be aware of the time and pace questions accordingly. The discussion should not last longer than 50 to 70 minutes as participants will usually tire and lose concentration.
9. Make a short post-research presentation (page 32).

## **Note Taker Responsibilities**

1. Prepare for note taking of the FGD ahead of time. On a blank sheet of paper write a specific title for the discussion (e.g., FGD: Women, Ages 18 – 25, Mabatini Village). This page will be used when analyzing the results. On another blank sheet of paper write the first question from the Topic Guide at the top of the page. Create similar sheets for all the questions, so that if there are eight questions on the Topic Guide you will have eight different sheets, each with a question on it. Leave an ample margin for coding the answers, and, at the bottom of each sheet, draw a rectangular box and write the word 'Summary' next to the box.
2. Write the participant's answers on the sheet with the corresponding question. Record the answers from each contributor. Develop symbols to abbreviate emotions, such as excitement, anger, passivity, joking, etc. As note taker, you are required to record all the information. You should not participate in the discussion unless the facilitator requires assistance.
3. Tape-record the session. But only do this if the group consents and you feel that it will not influence what people will say.
4. Support the facilitator in making the post-research presentation (page 32).

## **After the FGDs**

### **Compiling and Analyzing the FGD Data**

1. Soon after the FGD, the note taker and facilitator should sit together to debrief the session.

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Start by discussing your overall impressions of the discussion and record these on the title sheet.

2. Review the notes. First, organize the notes in the order of the questions asked. Then, starting with question one, the note taker should briefly report all the answers recorded. The facilitator should add any comments or impressions not recorded.
3. Code the answers. Add words or symbols in the margin of each sheet to identify the different types of information that you collected.

**For example:**

- Identify the key themes or issues raised in each answer (e.g., write the word 'physical' beside answers that refer to physical violence such as hitting or punching).
  - Mark answers most relevant to the research.
  - Highlight revealing quotations as a reminder to include them in the final report.
4. Decide together how you will summarize the answers in the summary box.
  5. Repeat steps 2 to 4 for all the questions.
  6. Create a cover sheet. The cover sheet records the title, date, time started and finished, number of participants, location, a brief description of the group (e.g., women, age 30 – 40), and your overall perceptions of the discussion. Attach the cover sheet to the notes pages and file for later analysis.

**Tip:** Avoid waiting until several or all of the FGDs are conducted to code and summarize the data. You will find yourself with an overwhelming stack of raw data. Postponing summarisation will also mean that you lose out on the tone and nuance of the discussion that will be fresh in your mind directly after the FGD.

## Interviews

Interviews can provide in-depth contextual information about domestic violence in the community. The information gathered in interviews can help your organisation understand the violence that is happening in the community on a more personal level. This method of Action Research complements the FGDs and questionnaires and can be conducted rather easily. Interviews are also a good way to begin to create relationships with community members and leaders. You may want to conduct 8 to 12 interviews. It is useful to select general community members as well as individuals in the community who could provide a unique perspective and speak in broader terms about violence, instead of just sharing personal experiences. These individuals, sometimes called 'key informants', may include a community leader, religious leader, nurse, doctor, counselor, member of the police, social welfare official, traditional healer, or midwife. These key informants have considerable contact within the larger community and will be able to share broader experiences in the community and specific information from their sector. It is especially important to involve participants from the sectors that will be involved in the Training of Resource Persons (ToRP) (page 48).



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## Steps

1. Set a time and place to meet the participant. Make sure it is a relatively quiet place free of disruption where s/he will feel free to express opinions and talk openly.
2. Explain the interview to the participant. Assure the participant that everything s/he reveals is confidential. Explain that the information gathered in the interview will be compiled with the other research data, and ask, directly, if the participant agrees to the interview process.
3. Assure the participant that there are no right or wrong answers. Encourage her/him to be as honest as possible.
4. Follow the Topic Guide for FGDs (page 31). Using the Topic Guide will ensure that the information from the interview is relevant.
5. After you have asked the questions on the Topic Guide, also ask the participant what her/his sector (e.g., police department, health care system) feels it could do to prevent domestic violence. Follow-up on any specialized information that the participant can provide (e.g., a police officer may have statistical information, a nurse may know about frequently reported medical problems that result from domestic violence, etc.).
6. During the interview, record the participant's answers as described for the FGD (page 34).
7. Give a modified, informal post-research presentation (page 32).
8. Soon after the interview, review your notes and make any changes or clarifications as necessary. Compile and code the interview as described for the FGD (page 34).

## Questionnaires

As a part of your Action Research, you may want to use questionnaires to further your understanding of domestic violence in the community. Collecting information in a variety of ways will broaden your perspective and serve to enrich your understanding when you compare information from various sources. The questionnaire is often popular with community members who may not feel comfortable sharing their feelings publicly in a FGD but who can read and write easily. The questionnaires may be most useful in professional circles or for community members in leadership positions. Variable literacy levels and the association of questionnaires to school examinations may limit their usefulness and applicability with general community members. The associations to school examinations are likely to affect participants' answers as they may feel intimidated, nervous about writing personal information, or that they have to answer 'correctly'.

## Steps

1. Base the questionnaire on the same Topic Guide that was used in the FGDs and interviews.
2. Keep it simple. Clearly word questions using simple and informal language. Develop questions that require only a 'tick' response.
3. Pre-test the questionnaire. A pre-test will provide insight into problems or confusion with the questionnaire and will save time later on.

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4. Hold a meeting to administer the questionnaire. Choose a quiet and private location where you will be free from interruptions.
5. Explain to participants, before you hand out the questionnaires, that everything they write will be confidential and that they should not put their name on the paper. Also, explain that there are no right or wrong answers; participants should just try to answer as honestly as possible.
6. Explain the other types of research being conducted. Emphasize that all the information gathered will be compiled and shared with the community. Invite anyone who does not want to participate to leave, emphasizing that they do not have to participate.
7. Depending on the group, you may want to read each question aloud and provide an opportunity for participants to ask for clarification.
8. After administering the questionnaire, have a box or an envelope where participants can put their papers when finished.
9. Make a post-research presentation (page 32).

## Compiling and Summarizing Questionnaire Data

1. Compile the questionnaire information using a blank questionnaire form as a template.
2. For each question, go through all the completed questionnaires and indicate all the answers on the blank questionnaire. For example, for question 1, go through each completed questionnaire and mark or tick the answers in the appropriate spaces on the template. If you have fifty completed questionnaires, the total number of ticks in all the options for question 1 on the template should add up to fifty (e.g., 28 'yes', 20 'no', and 2 'don't know'). Repeat for all the questions.
3. Add the responses for each question to create a summary. For example, at the end of this process, you should be able to summarize how many participants answered 'yes', 'no', and 'don't know' to each question.
4. If appropriate, calculate the percentage of respondents who said 'yes', 'no', or 'don't know' for each question.

## Research Analysis

At this point, you have a substantial amount of information from the three methodologies and summaries of the raw data. The challenge now is to summarize and analyze all the data into a report. Since you summarized the information from the FGDs and interviews in the same systematic way, you should have several sheets of answers to each of the questions on your Topic Guide. It may be helpful to work with a small group (3 or 4 staff) to analyze the data.

## Steps

1. Organize the sheets of data. Place the sheets for each question in a separate stack (e.g., all the question 1 answer sheets together and so on). Number each stack to match the number of





the corresponding question in the Topic Guide. Number the sheets in each stack starting with the question number and then a letter. For example, sheets in the stack for question 1 would be numbered 1a, 1b, etc.

2. For each question, discuss the existing coding and summaries, and, working in pairs, identify two or three significant themes or responses. Write these on a separate sheet of paper. Record the number of any sheet with highlighted quotations that you may want to use in the final report. These quotations should represent the tone and substance of the data.
3. Analyze the overall data summaries for each question through small group discussions. Do the summaries fit with your experience? Do they truly represent the reality and adequately reflect information gathered?
4. Compare the responses from each of the methodologies used. Do they corroborate each other? Do numbers from questionnaires complement what participants were saying in FGDs or interviews? If not, why? Do you feel participants distorted their experiences to please the facilitator? Use only information that seems reliable.
5. Write up the findings in an Action Research Report. Use the two or three significant themes or responses identified for each question and the result of the analysis in steps 3 and 4. Weave appropriate quotations into the text of your report. Circulate the report for feedback from others involved in the research. Modify as necessary.
6. Summarize the Action Research Report. Identify the key findings in a 10- or 12-point summary, as many people will not be interested in reading the full report. This summary can be distributed to community leaders, ToRP participants (page 48), journalists, and community members. Remember that the report is only one way of disseminating the information. There are many other creative ways to share the information with the community, such as exhibitions (page 41), radio programs (page 51), community meetings (page 145), or community celebrations (page 60).



## Action Research Application

After the Action Research Report is complete, meet together as a staff and key community members (if appropriate) to discuss the major themes that arose in the research. Fully discussing the findings and the perceptions and practice of domestic violence in the community will enable you to decide what aspects the Project will emphasize. You can enhance community ownership and responsibility and make your work more effective by selecting the most commonly raised issues for the Project and discussing them within the context described by the community members themselves. For example, you may have learned that violence usually begins early on in marriage, that community members feel domestic violence is a private matter that should not be discussed



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publicly, or that community members feel women are to blame for the violent behaviour of their partners. Choose some of these issues to focus on throughout the Project.

Additionally, use the information in the research to help you determine which stage of change you have found community members. For example, if the research reveals that the community has a solid understanding of human rights, domestic violence, why it happens, and the negative consequences for women, men, children, and the community, and the community as a whole sees domestic violence as a serious and legitimate problem that needs addressing, you may choose to skip or do minimal activities in the Raising Awareness phase and move on to Building Networks. If this is the case, remember to review the Raising Awareness phase carefully because much of the groundwork for identifying and strengthening the capacity of key groups is found within that phase.

## Learning Materials



The activities in the Learning Materials strategy are limited for the first phase because it is important to first understand community beliefs about domestic violence and women's rights. The information gathered in the Action Research will allow the project staff to strategize how best to approach the issue in subsequent learning materials. Learning materials staff will also work closely with community members to develop materials (i.e., exhibitions, songs, stories, drama, see community celebration page 60) for disseminating the research results to the community.

## Project Pamphlet

During the course of this project, your organisation will meet and develop relationships with many new people and organisations. The way the staff presents the organisation and the Project will affect how others will perceive the organisation and its work. All staff members working on the Project will be asked to explain its objectives and strategies to other professionals and community members, particularly in this first phase. Often times, even among staff members, there can be substantial difference in how the organisation or Project is described. The process of developing a project pamphlet can bring cohesion to staff explanations of the work. Even those who have a long history with the organisation may find it useful to practice articulating the accurate and concise summaries that a pamphlet provides. A project pamphlet also offers staff something tangible to give to people they meet who are unfamiliar with the organisation or the Project. In this way, the pamphlet can reinforce oral descriptions of the work and give interested parties more detailed information.

If you choose to design a project pamphlet, try to use strong and positive images and make sure the words are simple and concise. If you do not have funds for professional printing, a pamphlet can be easily made by hand or with a computer and then photocopied. Refer to the Guidelines for Creating Learning Materials (appendix J).

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## Information for Project Pamphlets

- organisational and Project background
- mission statement
- objectives of the Project
- brief description of the Project
- information about staff
- area of operation
- logo, hours of operation, address, and contact information



## Referral List

Raising the issue of domestic violence in the community can bring up many emotions and difficult feelings for community members, especially for women experiencing violence. Participation in research activities where women and men are asked to discuss their personal experiences with violence may be a painful process. Discussing domestic violence or hearing others talk about it, may prompt women who are experiencing violence or men who are being violent to seek assistance, counseling, or support.

It is important to identify existing services in the community and compile a referral list before embarking on the research. This will include legal aid clinics, counseling services (in health care centers, NGOs, religious institutions, etc.), shelters, family protection units or women's desks at the police department, etc. Try to identify what services there are for women and men in your community.

## Steps

1. Meet with a small group of staff members and/or community members.
2. Brainstorm a list of all the available services in the community. Remember that they can be formal (professional) services or informal support networks.
3. Keep in mind that, even if a community does not have any formal services, there is very likely an informal system of support for women through social networks. List the names of the individuals that women rely on for support or advice.
4. After the group brainstorming session, contact each service and collect the necessary details for the referral list: name, location, telephone number, name of contact person, hours of operation, type of services offered, etc. As you are contacting these service providers, ask them if they know of similar services in their area and get details.
5. Visit services that are unfamiliar. Although it is very difficult to assess the quality and type of services offered in either the formal or informal sector, it is important to visit any service outlets that you are not familiar with to try to determine the quality and perspective of their services.

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For example, if you visit an individual in the informal sector and they tell you that women are the cause of violence, or you visit a religious institution in the formal sector and they explain that violence is women's 'cross' to bear, do not put them on the referral list. If you feel the services are reasonable, ask them to describe the type of services available and ask them if you can include them on the referral list. Collect the relevant information.

6. Complete the list, making sure that all entries provide the same types of information, and distribute it after Action Research activities (page 32).

## Exhibitions

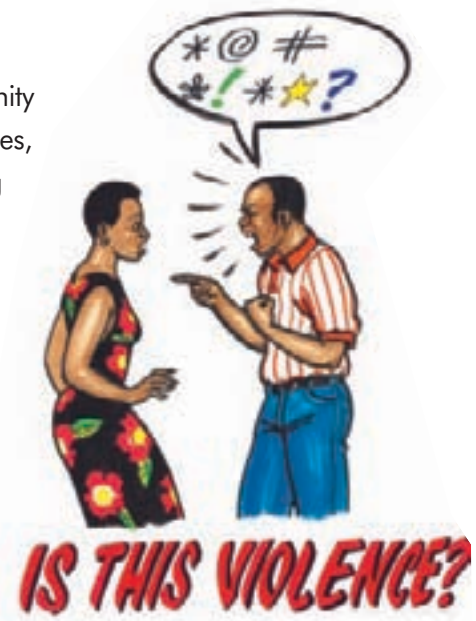
Exhibitions are an engaging way of mirroring back to the community some of the thoughts, feelings, and experiences they shared during the Action Research. Exhibitions use pictures to represent ideas and information. For example, if many community members discussed women's heavy work burden as a reason why women are not interested in sex and then are raped by their husbands, one exhibition could illustrate the differences in workload between women and men. Be creative! Work from the Action Research Report to design the exhibitions with other staff members, community members, volunteers, or groups who participated in the research. Try to design exhibitions so they provoke debate, spark controversy, and stimulate critical thinking. This is more engaging than just giving information. Often this can be done with very few words, or no words at all, by using picture codes.

Picture codes are images full of emotion and context that tell a story or pose a question to the viewer through pictures not words. They engage and encourage participants to interact with the exhibition instead of being passive viewers. You may consider creating picture codes using some of the questions from the Action Research Topic Guide. This can help more community members feel part of the discussion and the Project. The exhibitions can be put in



community gathering places, especially if there are staff or community members present to facilitate discussions with viewers.

Exhibitions can be installed in different places in a community (e.g., health centers, police stations, local government offices, etc.) or during the community celebration (page 60). Using exhibitions or picture codes instead of speeches or presentations places community members at the forefront of the community celebration, not your organisation. Exhibitions can provide an opportunity for community members to share and present their perspectives to their peers. This increases community ownership of the information and the issue. Debates around exhibitions can be somewhat unpredictable and controversial but can be quite interesting, dynamic, and interactive! Placing plenty of staff and volunteers around the exhibitions and picture codes can help facilitate the discussions and monitor any potentially heated disagreements.



## Steps

1. Work with other staff or community members to review the Action Research Report and/or discuss key themes that members raise.
2. Choose several topics for the exhibitions within the larger theme of domestic violence or women's rights that you have chosen to address in the Project.
3. In a small group or in pairs, ask staff or community members to create thought provoking exhibitions or picture codes (appendix J) to represent the topics and the information learned in the community.
4. Pre-test the exhibitions with a small group of community members before using them and modify any that need changes (appendix K).
5. Write key questions for the facilitators of each exhibition.
6. Set up the exhibitions and enjoy the discussions!



# community assessment



## Strengthening Capacity

This strategy engages different groups to increase their understanding of domestic violence and further develop the skills to prevent it. The Strengthening Capacity strategy includes staff development, training of resource persons, and community capacity building activities. All Strengthening Capacity activities emphasize participatory learning in which the participants are an active and important part of the process. Activities encourage participants to think critically about the issues and come to their own conclusions, instead of being lectured or told what to think.

Many of the Strengthening Capacity activities in this and subsequent phases are based on a Community Activism Course (CAC, appendix Q). The CAC can be used systematically over a period of time with consistent groups of participants (i.e., staff, resource persons, community volunteers, etc.). Alternatively, parts of the CAC can be presented as short modules in various training settings (e.g., residential workshops with other training partners, seminars, short training sessions, meetings, etc.). Working from the same core set of activities with different participants and in different settings can build consistency and enable even inexperienced facilitators to feel competent in conducting capacity strengthening activities.

Strengthening staff capacity is an essential component of a successful organisation and project. It is important that staff feel they have the skills, knowledge, and resources to work effectively on preventing domestic violence. Staff capacity building activities increase skills, deepen conceptual understanding, enhance staff confidence, and maximize the impact of the Project's work. They will also help staff participate more meaningfully in the project planning process and learn from their ongoing experiences.

## Weekly Check-Ins

A healthy, supportive work environment can energize staff, spur collaborations and increase motivation. One useful mechanism for creating this type of environment is to begin holding weekly staff check-ins. During these meetings, staff members can share the activities accomplished in the past week, their plans for the week ahead, and any issues that arose during their work.

These brief meetings will allow for:

- staff to share achievements and concerns
- the group to learn how separate components of the Project are progressing
- collective problem-solving
- building a sense of cohesion, unity, and solidarity between the departments
- staff to feel recognized and supported
- space to discuss progress, strategize, and make any necessary changes in approach





Try to find about one hour for this check-in each week. Each staff member can facilitate the meeting in turn, thus strengthening staff capacity in facilitation as well. It is suggested to use weekly check-ins throughout the Project.

## Staff Development Meetings

Promoting women's rights and an end to violence in the community requires a great deal of courage, yet often staff members' own beliefs, experiences, or lifestyles are not in complete harmony with what the organisation or Project publicly promotes. This conflict is natural and to be expected. But, if not addressed, it can lead to uncertainty and an unhealthy split between personal and professional identities. For example, at work, staff members might feel they are outspoken and articulate anti-violence activists, while at home, as wife, partner, mother, or friend, they may be struggling to make changes in their own relationships and lives. When working on such personal issues like domestic violence or women's rights, it is especially important that staff members are supported in their personal development. It should not be assumed that staff members have these issues worked out in their own relationships or families. Culture and socialization are strong, and staff members, just like community members, need to be supported on this journey. Investing in staff development will have important personal implications, contribute to staff solidarity, and will strengthen and deepen their work in the community.



For about two hours once a month, or once every two weeks, you may choose to have a staff development meeting. We suggest that each staff member facilitate a meeting in turn bringing her/his own issues to the group. This way, all staff members will have an equal voice in setting the agenda. You may want to establish ground rules around confidentiality to create a safe environment. Meetings can be used for personal growth and skill development, or staff may want to use some sessions to discuss challenging issues that emerge in their work. For example, they may want to discuss how to respond to religious leaders when they base their arguments on the Koran or Bible or how to respond when learning that one of the community volunteers is violent toward his partner. These meetings can greatly increase staff cohesion, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, and can decrease burnout. To begin with, you may choose to use some of the material from the community volunteer sessions (page 87) or some of the following suggestions.

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## Topics for Staff Development Meetings

- Domestic Violence and Shame
- Men and Masculinity
- Community Activism
- Self-Esteem
- Assertiveness Skills
- Professionalism
- Time Management
- Counseling and Listening Skills
- Giving and Receiving Feedback

## Organisational Image Seminar

As your organisation will be at the forefront of this new community initiative, the image you project of yourselves and your work will greatly affect community participation and the degree of acceptance and influence you have in the community. It is essential that your organisation is aware of its public image and how stakeholders and various community members view the organisation. For example, if the general community perceives your organisation to be impersonal, upper class, and indifferent, they will be less likely to identify with you, your ideas, or to see your organisation as an ally. If this is the case, your ideas and activities may be received with skepticism or doubt. This activity, which takes about two hours, helps staff reflect on how they, and others, see the organisation.

### Steps

1. Meet together as a group and introduce the idea of organisational image: what it is and why it is important to the Project.
2. In small groups, ask staff members to describe the organisation in their own way. Encourage creativity by suggesting that they could draw a picture that represents the organisation, create a short radio commercial, write a brief description, or tell a story that illustrates how they see the organisation and its work.
3. Come back together and ask each group to share their creations. Discuss the different views.
4. Next, hold a brainstorm to list the major groups with whom your organisation will work closely during the Project. This could include the police, general community members, health care workers, teachers, religious leaders, other NGOs, etc.
5. Ask staff members to form pairs and have each pair choose one of the brainstormed groups that will most likely be involved in the Project. Each pair should answer the following questions with their community group in mind. Remind staff to base their discussions around what they imagine their chosen group would say or feel even though this may be quite different than how they feel themselves. Questions to discuss include:

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- How does this group understand your organisation? What three words would they use to describe what your organisation does?
  - How does this group feel about your organisation? What three words would they use to describe how they feel about your organisation?
  - Has your organisation worked with this group in the past? In what way? What were the key lessons learned?
  - Are there any sensitive issues or past problems that need resolution or special care to work with this group?
6. After about 15 minutes, ask each pair to share their thoughts with the whole group. Encourage others to contribute their ideas and add or change things as necessary. Discuss if the general perceptions each group has of your organisation are accurate. If not, how did they come to these perceptions? What, if anything, would you like to change?
  7. After each group presents their work, brainstorm ways to build on or change each group's perception of the organisation and its work. Brainstorm a list of concrete ways you could work to change any negative perceptions. Try to be as specific as possible. Use this information when you plan your work with these groups.

## Community Activism Course

The Community Activism Course (CAC) is a specific, systematic, and in-depth course to strengthen the participants' capacity to prevent domestic violence (appendix Q). The course is designed to strengthen conceptual and practical skills. It includes intensive learning through three workshops over the course of 9 to 18 months. The groups most likely to go through the whole course are project staff, resource persons (i.e. health care providers, police, social welfare officers, etc.), community volunteers, and domestic violence watch group members. Special modifications for each of these groups are discussed, yet the core activities remain the same. In addition, the activities that make up the course can be used in short sessions with various groups involved in the Project. In this phase, become familiar with the course and plan how you will incorporate it into ongoing strengthening capacity activities.

## Overview of the Course

The course begins by building relationships with the participants. This is an essential component of the course as the success of the process depends on the trust and credibility your organisation is able to create with participants. Each workshop follows a common format, and the activities are designed to be participatory and experiential. In each of the workshops, participants are challenged to deepen their understanding of how to prevent domestic violence and practice skills that will assist them in putting what they have learned into practice. Importantly, at the end of each workshop, the participants plan activities they will implement within their workplace or community. This is an essential aspect of the CAC, and, as such, requires extensive follow-up support for



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participants to maintain motivation and learning and to maximize the success of their activities.

The first CAC workshop, ***Understanding Domestic Violence***, discusses how the participants understand domestic violence, why it happens, and its negative consequences on women, men, children, and the community. Practical Action Plans are then developed to outline what each participant can do in her/his workplace or community.

The second CAC workshop, ***Human Rights Awareness***, reviews the participants' experiences of implementing their Action Plans. Lessons learned are identified and problems solved collectively. Participants go on to discuss the importance of formulating domestic violence prevention work based on a human rights framework. This includes exploring various international conventions that articulate the values underpinning this approach. Participants discuss and practice some of the skills, they need to implement activities in their workplaces or community. The group also spends time updating and modifying individual Action Plans based on the discussions in the workshop and their own personal development.

The final CAC workshop, ***Advocating for Women's Rights***, begins with a review of individual experiences. This will be followed by a collective analysis of how power is distributed within the community and the implications of this for different members within it. This analysis emphasizes the implications for women, men and children. Based on these discussions, the importance of changing existing norms and decision-making processes that exclude women are emphasized. Practical strategies and personal skills for advocating for women's rights are discussed. Finally the participants, once again, revise and update their Action Plans.

## Who Is This Course For?

This course can be conducted with various participants including:

- project staff to build their capacity to undertake the Project.
- resource persons and professionals chosen from strategically identified sectors of the community to influence the practice within existing institutions (this could include health care providers, police, social welfare officers, religious leaders, etc. page 49).
- community volunteers or domestic violence watch group members recruited by your organisation to prevent domestic violence in the community (pages 57, 153).

Although the structure of the course will be the same for all three groups, the depth and the tone of each workshop will vary depending on the experience, needs, and relevance to each group. While each workshop is described in detail, you may choose to modify activities or supplement the workshop based on your needs and experience as a facilitator as well. Also, some workshops offer alternative activities for specific time slots.



## How Long Will the Course Last?

If your organisation is implementing the five phases of the Project, a suggested timeframe is as follows:

<b>Phase 1</b>	Participant Identification
<b>Phase 2</b>	Workshop 1
<b>Phase 3</b>	Workshop 2
<b>Phase 4</b>	Workshop 3
<b>Phase 5</b>	Ongoing Follow-Up

The process with staff is designed to be one step ahead of the CVs and resource persons. This is to ensure that the staff members feel that they have had an opportunity to learn and apply ideas and skills discussed in the workshop before they have to discuss them with the community members. It is suggested that staff complete a modified CAC 1 before Phase 1 begins and complete CAC 3 by Phase 3.

You may choose to continue the group process beyond the three workshops using, for example, a participant led workshop that addresses specific issues that emerged during the training process or strengthens skills or knowledge of the participants' choice. Ensure that there is at least three months between each workshop for meaningful implementation of the Action Plans.

The CAC is for your reference only. Adapt it according to the needs and knowledge of your groups. The activities are designed to link personal experiences and perspectives to a broader analysis of violence. We suggest this approach, because interactive, reflective workshops can have a more profound and sustained impact on participants. These types of workshops allow people to internalize the issues instead of just understanding them at an intellectual level. This is especially important when working on an issue like domestic violence as it touches personal assumptions about gender, equality, and justice.

## Preparing for Training of Resource Persons (ToRP)

A major component of the Strengthening Capacity strategy is the Training of Resource Persons (ToRP). This is an in-depth collaboration with individuals from a relevant sector(s) in the community to build their understanding of domestic violence and develop their capacity to bring about change in their workplace. The resource persons will be important institutional agents of change in efforts to prevent domestic violence. In this phase, the focus is how to



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choose a sector(s) and identify the resource persons who will participate in the ToRP.

## Choosing a Sector(s) for the ToRP

Choosing which sector(s) to work with in the community and deciding which resource persons could be influential in bringing about change for your community requires some thought. Your choices will depend on your organisations existing relationships and involvement with different sectors, the relevance of each sector to domestic violence, and the level of commitment and interest shown by potential resource persons and sector leadership.

Most community activities can be divided into six broad sectors.

**Health sector** responds to the health needs of the community. This includes government hospitals, private hospitals and clinics, mobile units, midwives, traditional birth attendants, healers, and community-based care systems.

**Security sector** responds to the safety concerns of the community. This includes the police (formal and traditional), judiciary (including customary law and local courts), and even the military.

**Social sector** responds to the social concerns of the community. This includes non-governmental organisations and agencies, religious institutions, and government run social welfare agencies.

**Education/Information sector** provides information and builds skills within the community. This includes schools, universities, training institutions, and media organisations (print and electronic).

**Economic sector** creates wealth within the community. This includes businesses and employers.

**Governing Sector** is responsible for protecting the rights of the community members. This includes local government, national ministries, parliamentarians, etc.

## Steps

1. Consider the following questions.

- Do you have established relationships with any sector(s)?
- What expertise does your organisation need and have to work with a sector of choice?
- Where are you likely to find allies?
- Where is your support needed the most?
- Which sector has significant influence in your community?
- Which sector spends a significant amount of time dealing with domestic violence?



- Which sector, if reformed, would have significant impact on how domestic violence is viewed and responded to in the community?
  - Where can you achieve meaningful impact in a relatively short time?
2. Based on the above analysis, choose one or two sectors to examine more closely. You may want to have a meeting with project staff members to consider the above questions carefully. Consult other knowledgeable members of your community and the information gathered in the Action Research before you make the final choice.
  3. Once you have identified one or two potential sectors, analyze the current situation within the chosen sector(s). You may want to contact the sectors you are considering to assess their level of interest and discuss the possibility of a partnership with them. First, consider the following questions:
    - What is its current belief system toward women and domestic violence?
    - What is its current practice in relation to domestic violence?
    - What is the degree of relevance and influence of the sector on domestic violence?
    - Who are the potential resource persons?
    - What are the existing strengths of the sector?
    - What are the existing weaknesses of the sector? How might they negatively impact its involvement in the ToRP?
    - What mechanisms exist within the sector that you can build on?
  4. Based on the above analysis, choose the sector(s) that you will focus on in the Project. You may choose to combine relevant sectors within the ToRP process. This can be beneficial to the participants and the community by increasing the range of sectors involved and strengthening links between sectors. However, too much diversity can lead to shallow representation of each sector thereby making policy and practice changes difficult. Remember to begin with a sector(s) that shows real interest and commitment in working with you and the issue of violence and where you see meaningful potential for change.
  5. Develop a strategy for building relationships with the key individuals within the sector(s) that may be interested in working to prevent domestic violence. Many of these individuals may become resource persons who will participate in the ToRP. When building relationships, you may choose to invite key staff and leadership from the sector(s) to a seminar, visit them at their office, or write them a letter. Use a method that demonstrates that you value their experience, recognize the importance of their sector, and are interested in working with them specifically.
  6. Meet with senior managers, respected leaders, and influential officials within the sector to seek official endorsement for participation in the ToRP.

## Selecting Resource Persons

### Who is a resource person?

- Anyone whose opinion is respected in the sector.

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- Anyone who has the power to make decisions that affect the sector.
- Anyone involved in developing policy within the sector.
- Anyone who is enthusiastic about leading changes in the workplace or their community.
- Effective managers and supervisors.



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## Steps

1. Identify resource persons from your chosen sector(s) who are interested in and can commit to the entire ToRP process.
2. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding that clearly outlines expectations, requirements and commitments of your organisation and the resource persons.
3. Meet with the potential resource persons and their supervisors and obtain a commitment for participation in the ToRP process and its implementation within the sector.
4. Invite all the resource persons for a pre-course meeting to:
  - briefly introduce your project to prevent domestic violence and specifically the ToRP process
  - address any questions or doubts the participants may have
  - clarify your organisation's expectations and commitments
  - clarify logistical arrangements

media & events



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## Media and Events

This strategy is often the more public face of the Project. Implementation of the activities in this strategy will depend on the types of media outlets in your community and how affordable they are to use. The information gathered from the Action Research (page 29) will inform the Media and Events work, as it does all other strategies. It is important in this phase to begin learning about the media institutions in your community and assessing which might be most appropriate for subsequent work.

## Radio Programs

Radio is an excellent way to reach large numbers of people, and some stations are willing to give NGOs a reduced rate or even free time slots. Try to get a time block on the radio (or even television, if appropriate for your community) to share the findings from the Action Research. The program could be in many different formats.

### For example:

- Several staff members could discuss the research, describe the kinds of people that participated, and summarize the questions asked and the community responses.
- Using an interview style, you could invite several representatives from each of the groups that

# 1 phase

participated in the research to share what was discussed. Choose individuals who you feel can adequately represent the different voices in the group, not just their own opinion, or choose to have several people from each group discussing results. Be sure to go over the 'interview' carefully with participants beforehand and prepare 'talking points' to structure their discussion so that it accurately reflects the Action Research findings.

- Compile several stories that were shared in the research and use them to illustrate the problem of domestic violence. Also, include some of the 'solutions' described by community members. These stories and 'solutions' could be narrated in different voices taking on the personas of the different individuals involved. For example, stories could be from a doctor who sees patients who have been affected by family violence, a woman who has experienced abuse, an abusive man, and a neighbour of an abusive man or abused woman.
- Facilitate a general discussion of domestic violence with staff members who participated in the research interspersed with quotes from the research read in appropriate voices.

If you are unable to get a complete time slot, ask the radio station if they will run public service announcements or report some findings during a news program. You could also make several 30 second or one-minute spots explaining the research results and have them played over the course of a week. It is useful to know how you will present the information to the community before the research is conducted so participants can be informed and look forward to hearing the findings. This is important in building trust and presence in the community. Many communities also have 'local radios' which are not broadcast over airwaves but over public address systems or megaphones. Use what is available in your community.



## Media Analysis

Journalists and broadcasters are especially important groups to engage in changing community perceptions and norms. They have access to powerful channels of communication that reach large numbers of people in an entertaining and familiar style. Conduct an analysis of the various media (e.g., radio, national newspapers, local newspapers, church papers, community newsletters, television, etc.) in order to strategically plan your media campaign for the subsequent phases.

### Steps

1. List and categorize the various media institutions in your community.
2. Conduct a survey of the relevant types of media by reviewing them over a period of time. For example, read selected newspapers everyday for several weeks, listen to selected radio stations and specific programs that may be relevant, gather copies of community newsletters, etc.

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3. Analyze the content of the media, keeping your project objectives in mind. Try to imagine where the Project could fit in. Pay careful attention to how different media institutions cover women. But, remember that domestic violence is not only a woman's issue but also one that affects the whole community, so look beyond traditional forums for women. Ask yourself the following questions:
  - Are there certain TV/radio programs that deal with community issues?
  - Are there columns in the newspaper that have a regular outlet for ideas relating to women or the community?
  - Are there journalists that take special interest in human rights or social issues?
  - Does the media sensationalize stories about violence?
  - Are stories about domestic violence covered sensitively or graphically?
  - Generally, how are women portrayed in the various media?
4. Visit media institutions to get a sense of their core constituencies and target audiences.
5. Write a short report of the findings and share it with the rest of the staff.
6. Use the report to help guide your work with the media.

If you have any contacts with members of the media, start to build on those relationships. You may choose to begin meeting with selected journalists, broadcasters or editors. Talk with them about their perception of how violence and human rights issues are covered. Begin learning from them about the obstacles and social issues they encounter in their work. Be sure to invite them to various events. Continue monitoring the media to discern which journalists are reporting about women, violence, rights, and the Project. Keep track of the journalists who you feel could be good allies.



## Advocacy

This strategy works with a variety of leaders and relevant institutions in the community. Through advocacy activities, you will try to highlight the problem of domestic violence and break the silence that often surrounds it. Your challenge is to influence how people think about and act in relation to women and domestic violence, particularly within their own spheres of influence. In order to be effective, you must project credibility and be effective in articulating ideas in a persuasive, non-threatening, and engaging manner. You will need to be well informed about domestic violence and the related issues. Advocacy is most effective when it is done over a period of time. Therefore, in this phase you will begin to build relationships with influential leaders in the community, community institutions, and NGOs.

## NGO Open House

The Project is a complex undertaking and while it is feasible to have one organisation implement it in its entirety, you may want to consider working in collaboration with other NGOs. This could

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be especially appropriate if your organisation is small, if other organisations have the skills to fulfill a strategy that your organisation cannot, or if they have strong relationships with the sector(s) you want to engage. Teaming-up with other organisations can lead to much creativity, an expanded power base, and increased impact. Even if you do not choose to formally collaborate, developing relationships can be beneficial to your work in the future. In order to find out what other organisations are doing, you may want to hold an open house for other NGOs. This open house could be held on the same day as the community celebration (page 60), if the community celebration is being held at your organisation. This way, colleagues from other NGOs can participate in the event and observe your work on this project first hand.

## Steps

1. Invite two or three individuals from each organisation that is doing relevant work. This could include legal advocacy groups, children's or human rights organisations, other women's organisations, etc. Ask each organisation to come prepared with a short presentation, of not more than 10 minutes, describing their organisation and programs, particularly those relevant to women, domestic violence, and human rights.
2. Open the event by explaining that the purpose of the meeting is to learn about each other's work. Start with a presentation of your organisation and a description of the Project.
3. Ask each organisation to share their presentation. Leave time after each presentation for questions. Pay close attention to the presentations and try to imagine how the work of other NGOs could complement the Project. Remember to keep a list of all organisations, their major programs, and their staff (you may want to designate a note taker).
4. After the presentations, conduct a short discussion session on how you could work collaboratively to prevent domestic violence. If others show sufficient interest, you may want to come up with a collective plan.
5. Allow time for informal discussions. One easy way to facilitate this networking is to have refreshments after the presentations so people can meet, mingle, and exchange ideas informally. Be sure to have your project pamphlet and other information (e.g., 10-Point Action Research Summary) for those interested.
6. After the NGO Open House, hold an internal staff meeting to discuss the programs of the other organisations and brainstorm ideas for possible collaboration or partnership with those who are doing similar work or who expressed interest in the Project.
7. Meet with leaders of the organisations to discuss possible collaborations (this is further discussed in Phase 2, page 101)

## Cultivating Relationships with Professionals

In the first phase, it is important to identify the key individuals and sectors you are likely to engage in the Advocacy strategy. The sector(s) may correspond to those chosen for the Strengthening



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Capacity strategy (page 43). If the organisational capacity exists, you may choose to engage other groups as well. Remember that advocacy does not have to mean working with national leaders or government. A great deal of useful and often overlooked advocacy can be done at the local level within any of the sectors or institutions found in your community (page 49).

After deciding on the sector(s) you will work with most closely, begin to meet its leaders. For example, if you are working with health care workers, meet with hospital administrators, doctors, and top-level hospital officials. Even if these individuals will not be directly involved with your project, it is important that they are aware of it and do not feel overlooked. When supportive, these individuals can wield substantial power in helping promote the Project through public endorsement or assistance in establishing structural supports for behaviour change.

When meeting with these leaders in the sector(s), follow the suggestions for Meeting Community Leaders below. Also, discuss why their particular sector(s) is important to preventing domestic violence.

Additionally, it may be useful to meet with professionals outside your chosen sector to explain the Project and encourage their participation. The broader the support you can garner, the more successful your efforts to mobilise the community. However, only cultivate relationships with individuals that you will have the capacity to truly work with. It would damage your credibility if, after meeting and discussing exciting collaborations with a wide range of people, you lack the time, capacity, or staff to follow-through on those discussions.

## Community Leaders Meetings

Community leaders, whether formal or traditional, are gatekeepers of the community. They often wield substantial influence on social issues and community norms. It is important to connect with them. Make special effort to meet with them and help them feel a part of the Project. Community leaders can facilitate entry into the community (or hinder it!), so it is important to meet them early on in the Project, even before conducting Action Research (page 29).

In order to systematize your work with community leaders, you may find it useful to create a diagram of the community leadership structure. This could be for both the larger community and the specific neighbourhoods you choose to work in. Additionally, if you are working closely with one particular sector, diagramming the hierarchy and identifying different leaders within that sector may also be useful. These diagrams will help you follow the right channels, and not overlook key individuals, and will be useful when strategizing the most effective activities to use with different groups.



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Although meeting with community leaders can be time-consuming and cumbersome, relationships with these leaders can greatly facilitate implementation of the Project. As many of the community leaders and officials are men, it is crucial to begin to cultivate productive relationships right from the beginning. For high-level officials, the director of your organisation may want to take responsibility to meet with them to relay the importance of the Project, particularly if the leadership is hierarchical and you anticipate resistance. Remember, some of these men are likely to hold sexist beliefs and may even be abusive themselves. Take care in the language you use to discuss violence against women so that the discourse does not alienate them. You may want to talk broadly of women's health, human rights, or family unity instead of domestic violence or women's rights. Try to use a non-confrontational tone of voice and language that does not put them on the defensive. It is also a good idea to have the same staff member work with a group of leaders instead of sending a new person every time. This will project consistency and will allow for the development of a richer relationship. Alternatively, you may choose to meet leaders as a group, depending on what is appropriate for your community.

Be sure to contact and meet all relevant officials and leave them with some materials (i.e., project pamphlet, research summary, etc.) from your organisation. Before meeting with some leaders, you may need to send an official letter requesting a meeting and an outline of the agenda. Follow your local protocol. A typical meeting might include:

- introducing yourself
- describing your organisation
- mentioning any recent successes or recognition your organisation has received
- discussing the levels of violence against women and its impact on the community
- asking the community leader to share her/his thoughts about the issue and experiences dealing with the issue (if appropriate)
- briefly describing the Project
- asking how s/he would like to be involved or what support s/he could provide
- asking her/him to explain any relevant procedures that should be followed for the Project or any other individuals that should be contacted

## Information Pack

Create a simple packet of information for community leaders, professionals, colleagues, or journalists to raise awareness about domestic violence and human rights.



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Specific references to your community or country will bolster your premise that violence is indeed an urgent local issue.

## Possible Contents of an Information Pack

- copies of recent newspaper articles about violence against women
- photocopies of, or reference to, local or national laws regarding violence against women
- an information sheet on domestic violence (appendix L)
- statistics (national, if available) on the prevalence of violence against women
- lists of other relevant organisations or government agencies working on violence
- an information sheet on international conventions (appendix M)
- a short concept paper on key ideas on which your Project is based
- your project pamphlet



## Local Activism

The Local Activism strategy focuses on encouraging community members to participate in and lead the efforts to prevent domestic violence in their community. When neighbours, friends, and local people begin talking with each other about the domestic violence occurring in their own community, there is an increased sense of ownership and community responsibility. When community members themselves initiate and facilitate activities, they are more grounded in the reality of that community and the ideas generated within them are more likely to be sustainable. Local activism activities are limited in this phase of the Project, because it is first necessary to gather information from the community and build relationships with community members who will play an active role in the Local Activism activities.

## Recruiting Community Volunteers (CVs)

Volunteers play a crucial role in the Project. They will work closely with the Local Activism staff to develop and implement activities and be highly visible in the community during each phase. Increasingly, they will lead the community activities and efforts themselves. It is suggested that you select a core group of volunteers who you will work with throughout the course of the Project. Maintaining a consistent group of volunteers will solidify efforts within the community and result in a unified and committed group of community members skilled at domestic violence prevention. Community volunteers greatly increase the number of people reached in project activities and promote community ownership.

Selecting positive, active, and respected community members is crucial to the success of the Project. The number of volunteers you select will depend on the Project's geographic area and the number of staff members on the Local Activism team. One project staff member can usually



support 20 to 30 community volunteers. Men must be fully involved if levels of domestic violence are to be reduced and if the community is to change attitudes and practices that diminish women's status and rights. It is suggested that fairly equal numbers of women and men are selected as volunteers.

## Steps

1. Create a clear organisational policy for working with the volunteers. For example, will your organisation offer any financial or in-kind support to volunteers? A policy should be established at the outset, and potential candidates need to be fully informed of the terms of participation.
2. Brainstorm characteristics and criteria for potential volunteers. For example:
  - non-violent
  - articulate
  - strong community contacts
  - can commit time
  - reside in the community where the Project is working
  - committed to promoting women's rights and an end to domestic violence
  - respected by the community
3. How much time do you expect volunteers to give the Project each week/month? This too should be decided well in advance so potential candidates can make informed decisions about their participation (projects in Tanzania and Uganda ask for approximately 15 hours per month).
4. How will you recruit volunteers? Ideas include the following:
  - Ask for recommendations from other NGOs who work in the area and may know community members.
  - Announce during FGDs, questionnaires, or interviews that the organisation is seeking community volunteers for the Project.
  - Ask community leaders if they can recommend potential volunteers.
  - Hold a public meeting in the community to explain the Project and encourage volunteers to sign-up.
  - Place simple flyers in the areas where you will be working and ask for interested individuals to contact you or come to a pre-organized meeting.

## Volunteer Selection Meeting

In order to make an informed decision in the selection of community volunteers, you may choose to hold a meeting with potential candidates. It is important that you feel comfortable with the individuals selected, as you are about to embark on a long-term relationship with them. The volunteers, in many respects, will represent your organisation to the general public. During the

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selection process, remember that it is best to have a diverse group: young and old, women and men, and different socio-economic levels, tribes, and religions. The people they reach out to will be those in their social circles. If similar people are selected (e.g., friends or people from the same area), the kinds of people the Project is able to reach in the community will be limited. During this meeting, a facilitator, a note taker, and one or two other staff members are needed to observe the participants. Extra observers will be able to provide insight into interactions between participants that you may miss.

## Steps

1. Invite a maximum of 30 potential volunteers to the selection meeting. If you have more potential volunteers, hold additional meetings.
2. Explain the purpose of the meeting. Clarify that not everyone will be able to participate at this time as a community volunteer. Explain that there will be other opportunities to volunteer in the future, such as, by joining the community action groups (page 109), domestic violence watch groups (page 153), local theatre (page 112), etc.
3. Ask participants to sit in a circle. You may want to play a game to break the ice (appendix P).
4. Go around the circle and ask each person to briefly introduce herself/himself and to try to sum up in one sentence why they want to volunteer with the Project.
5. Give a brief overview of your organisation's work.
6. Based on the criteria you developed, clearly explain what you expect from the volunteers (e.g., time commitment, reliability, accountability, non-violent behaviour, etc.) and what they can expect from your organisation (e.g., logistical support, resource materials, financial support, training, etc.). Ensure everyone understands the responsibilities and commitments of a volunteer.
7. Ask participants to brainstorm the qualities of a good volunteer. List contributions on a flipchart and discuss.
8. After a short break, explain that you are going to discuss the issue of domestic violence. Ask the note taker to use a similar recording style to that of a FGD, but to also write participants names next to their answers.
9. Start by asking the participants: "What is domestic violence?" Record their answers on a flipchart (if appropriate).
10. Once there is a common understanding of domestic violence, ask the group: "Does it happen in our community?" Ask the participants to relate their experiences and feelings about the issue. Observe carefully who participates, how, and try to imagine how they might work in the community. The aim is not to see who speaks the most, but to get a picture of each person's capacity to advocate for women's rights in the community.
11. Divide the participants into smaller groups and ask them to brainstorm what the community can do to prevent violence.



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12. After a few minutes, ask each group to select a representative to give a summary of their discussion to the main group. Discuss each group's contributions.
13. Wrap up the meeting by thanking the participants for their interest in the work and let them know how you will communicate to the selected volunteers. Remind participants that you hope even those who are not invited for further training at this point will remain in contact, participate in future activities, and continue promoting women's rights in the community.
14. After the meeting, debrief with your colleagues to identify volunteers. Review the notes and use your instincts and judgment to assess who will make good community activists.
15. List the individuals chosen to be community volunteers. Let them know they have been selected and when and where the first volunteer meeting will be held.

## Community Contacts

There will be many individuals in the community who are unable to commit to being a volunteer but have other resources to offer, such as:

- transportation
- paint or other art supplies
- artistic talents
- billboard or signboard
- wall of their building or shop for a mural
- interest in being a distribution point for materials
- willingness to participate in radio programs or to be interviewed
- radio or television time or newspaper space
- willingness to publicly endorse the Project
- camera film or film processing
- printing or discounted printing of materials
- interest in hanging materials in their office, shop, church, kiosk, etc.
- donated space for meetings or events
- tents or plastic chairs for public events
- interest in involving their employees in awareness raising activities
- services, such as free counseling, shelter, legal support, medical care, etc., for women experiencing violence

Keep a list of these individuals complete with their contact information and their available resource(s). Continue to build on this list throughout the Project.

## Community Celebration

After writing the Action Research Report, it is important to share with community members the experiences, ideas, and beliefs of their neighbours and peers. Communicating the research results

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deepens community ownership of the information and project, encourages participation, and provides community members with an opportunity to learn from each other. Holding a community celebration is a good way to bring people together.

Although much of the information gathered may not seem like something to celebrate, it is important that the community feels hopeful at all stages in the Project, particularly at the beginning.

Starting to talk openly about domestic violence in the community is the first step toward change. From this perspective, the community can celebrate that something positive has begun. For more ideas on sharing research findings, see exhibitions (page 41), radio programs (page 51), and community meetings (page 145).



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## **The community celebration will allow your organisation to do the following:**

- Appreciate the contribution of community members who participated in the Action Research.
- Share information learned from the Action Research.
- Provide a forum for community members to 'present' their ideas to their peers.
- Raise awareness on the issue of domestic violence.
- Continue learning from the community.
- Begin to discuss the Project with others.
- Recruit supporters and volunteers.

You may choose to hold the celebration at your office, if there is sufficient space. This will increase visibility of your organisation, get people familiar with your location, and allow community members to get a sense of your work environment. Alternatively, you may choose to hold the celebration at a prominent place in the community. This way, the Project will be seen as more rooted in the community and attendance may be higher as people will not have far to travel. Either way, make sure the site you choose can accommodate the celebration. Considerations include having sufficient space for large numbers of people, a space protected from the weather, adequate equipment, and space to hang exhibitions.

Work with other staff members, research participants, or other community members to design creative ways of sharing the Action Research information during the celebration. These could include exhibitions, songs, dances, storytelling, drama, or facilitated forum discussions about the

issues raised in the Action Research. Be creative in how you present the information. Remember that speeches and lectures are less effective than activities that allow people to participate and share their own ideas.

## Steps

1. Find an appropriate location for the community celebration.
2. Publicize the event (e.g., flyers, word of mouth, radio, banners, etc.).
3. Invite relevant community leaders/officials and other professionals who participated in the Action Research. Also invite other NGOs so they can learn more about your work.
4. Work with community members to prepare the exhibitions, games, dramas, discussions, songs, etc.
5. Divide responsibility for all the different activities between staff members.
6. Contact journalists about the event and send out a press release describing the event.
7. Celebrate!

## Review

Congratulations, you have come to the end of Phase 1 of the Project! To help you assess if the community and your organisation are prepared to enter the Raising Awareness phase, you may want to use the following table and review questions. These tools were designed to help structure your reflection about the phase and to assess if your organisation met your objectives. It is useful to hold a staff meeting so all members can contribute their thoughts and opinions.

The following table will allow you to record all the activities you were able to complete within each strategy. In the spaces provided under each strategy, write the activities that were completed and the approximate number of community members reached with each activity. The table can also help you recognize the different groups of community members reached. If you have engaged a broad cross-section of the community with varied activities and feel those activities were successful, this is one indication that the community will be prepared for the next phase.

As a group, review your SMART objectives from the Action Plans to assess whether you have met your Phase 1 objectives. Reflect on and discuss what was learned in the community, the current level of staff capacity, and if staff members feel prepared to move forward with their strategies. It may be helpful for each staff member to present her/his Strategy Summary Report (appendix I) in the meeting. Review your expected outcomes and indicators, asking critical questions about the progress made. Ask yourselves questions specific to your unique implementation and vision of the Project. You may choose to revisit some of the strategies and activities to strengthen the Project before moving on.



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## Suggested Review Questions

1. Does the project staff have a solid understanding of the different phases of the Project and feel excited and inspired to commit time and energy to it?
2. Does the project staff have a solid conceptual understanding of domestic violence and human rights? Has a gender-based analysis of why domestic violence occurs been internalized and understood by staff?
3. As a result of the Action Research, does the project staff have a solid understanding of how the community understands domestic violence?
4. Based on the Action Research, does the community feel that domestic violence is a significant issue that needs attention?
5. Does the project staff feel domestic violence is a significant enough problem in the community to devote considerable time, energy, and resources to it?
6. Did you creatively share the information gathered in the research through a variety of ways with the community?
7. Does the project staff have a sense of how the general community, various sectors, and other NGO's are responding to domestic violence?
8. Has the Project selected a sector(s) to work with in the ToRP course? Are resource persons within the sector(s) interested and committed to working with you?
9. How has your organisation begun to reach out to community leaders? What are some of the concrete ways you are involving and planning to involve them?
10. Have community members shown interest in being involved in the Project and participated in project planning?
11. Have women and men come forward to participate in the Project? Have you selected a good group of community volunteers?



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# review

	You and other NGOs	General Community Members	Community Volunteers	Community Leaders/ Officials
<b>Learning Materials</b>				
<b>Strengthening Capacity</b>				
<b>Media and Events</b>				
<b>Advocacy</b>				
<b>Local Activism</b>				

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