SASA! Together: Cohorts for Technical Assistance

About SASA! Together
SASA! Together is a community mobilization approach to prevent violence against women (VAW) by transforming power imbalances between women and men at all levels of the community. SASA! Together is a revised version of the SASA! Activist Kit (read more here), an evidence-based approach (read more here) scaled to over 30 countries. SASA! Together is the result of over 10 years of practice-based learning with SASA!, including intensive feedback from partners worldwide, as well as integration of new knowledge based on the changing landscape of VAW prevention.

A Cohort Approach to Technical Assistance
The Violence Prevention Learning Center at Raising Voices provides opportunities for organizations and agencies to learn and build skills to prevent violence against women and children together. Experience has shown that organizations implementing SASA! Together do best with consistent, practical technical assistance (TA). This is best done through a cohort approach, that brings together multiple partners who are trained, mentored and move through SASA! Together programing together with support from Raising Voices. Each individual organization enters a formal partnership with Raising Voices by signing a Memorandum of Understanding for TA, designed to strengthen their implementation of SASA! Together. There are multiple benefits to this including: peer support, sharing experiences, sharing of adapted materials, cost effectiveness and learning.

Types of Cohorts
Over the past 10 years, Raising Voices has partnered with a wide variety of organizations for technical assistance including international organizations (INGOs), UN agencies, national NGOs, Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). Implementing SASA! in diverse contexts including development and humanitarian, urban and rural on four continents has taught us the need for TA tailored to each organization’s needs, as well as the added benefit of grouping similar organizations together to promote cross-learning and cost-effective TA.

As a result, Raising Voices is channeling SASA! Together TA through two cohorts:

1. Cohort for Activist Organizations: Designed to support quality implementation of SASA! Together in organizations that plan to directly implement the approach in their communities. This may include international, national, community and faith-based organizations.

2. Cohort for Organizations Providing Technical Assistance (In-House TA cohort): Designed for institutions (typically multilaterals and international organizations) that have existing technical assistance units for VAW prevention programming, to increase their capacity to provide in-house TA and oversight to their own programs and partners on SASA! Together.

The duration of both cohorts is expected to be between three to four years, to allow for completion of SASA! Together. Exact timeframes depend on the types of adaptation needed and other factors (such as humanitarian contexts, evolving COVID-19 realities and restrictions, funding gaps, etc.).

Because everyone wants to benefit from SASA! Together, it may be tempting to start implementation in many countries and sites at once. Raising Voices experience has been that managing implementation can require new skill sets and intensive effort for an organization. When determining the size of implementation communities, please refer to the Capacity Grid in the SASA! Together Setup guide, page 67 (see link here) and consider the infrastructure of your organization to provide ongoing support.
Cohort Program:
Once accepted into a cohort and upon signature of MOU, each organization will be assigned technical support staff from Raising Voices that will provide ongoing support throughout the implementation of SASA! Together. Raising Voices will offer members of both cohorts:

- Distance support prior to the first phase training, with assistance with Setup Phase and Adaptation preparations.
- Four, multi-day phase trainings (Two trainings in Year One, and then estimate one in Years Two and Three respectively, depending on implementation progress. Between three and four of these may be in-person, depending on travel restrictions.)
- Annual site visits to two SASA! Together implementation sites (if possible due to COVID-19 restrictions; otherwise, alternative mechanisms will be agreed). Note: For In-House TA Cohort, these visits would be accompanied by select focal points from the TA Provision Organization, who would then be able to conduct other site visits.)
- Review adapted materials throughout the process.
- Support development and review of work plans.
- Support for responsible transition from communities at end of implementation.

For In-House TA Cohort only
- Quarterly TA provider webinars for exchange and sharing throughout process.
- Monthly zoom sessions that include all institutional TA providers (note: calls optional on the months of quarterly webinars).

Criteria for cohort participation
Interested organizations and institutions who wish to apply for either cohort will be selected based on their ability to meet the following criteria:

1. Clearly articulates the interest in and rationale for using SASA! Together in their programing.
2. Demonstrates commitment to quality VAW prevention programming.
3. Demonstrates organizational-level commitment to principles of partnership.
4. Demonstrates capacity to adapt programming to fit changing realities (such as COVID-19 and accompanying restrictions).
5. Demonstrates understanding and commitment for a multi-year partnership by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Raising Voices, in Raising Voices-recommended format.
6. Has sufficient funding to cover SASA! Together programming for at least 1.5 years and commitment to securing funding for the remainder of adaptation / implementation time.
7. Has sufficient staffing (Refer to Capacity Grid [here](#) to undertake quality implementation).
8. Commitment from organizational leadership to provide ongoing support and guidance.
9. Demonstrates commitment to be part of a cohort including keeping the pace of implementation, collective learning and sharing of experiences.
10. Commitment to ensuring continuity of staff to the Violence Prevention Learning Center courses, onsite visits, and distance support and ongoing learning and exchange opportunities. **Note: The Activist Organization cohort requires at least two identified focal points. The In-House TA cohort requires at least three focal points from each organization; in special cases, for organizations with small TA units, two focal points will be considered. Focal points should be expected to remain stable in their positions in the coming three to five years.**
11. Commitment to avail organizational time for focal points in the Violence Prevention Learning Center courses and remote TA, and to cascade the training and assistance to leadership and all staff implementing SASA! Together.

Additional criteria for the Organizations Providing TA Cohort only:
12. Existence of internal structure/team dedicated to providing TA on VAW prevention.
13. Existence of TA providers with ability to allocate time specific to SASA! Together TA provision to their country programs/partners (% time determined by size and quantity of implementation sites).

Costs
Costs vary by type of organization.
1. Participating National NGOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) will be expected to cover all of their own costs of SASA! Together implementation and adaptation. Raising Voices will provide TA to these organizations free of charge.

2. Participating International NGOs and Multi-Lateral organizations in both cohorts will be expected to cover all costs of SASA! Together implementation and adaptation, as well as Raising Voices TA costs.

TA Costs include:

- $20,000 / year for each of the 3-4 years of the cohort. *(Note: This includes Raising Voices TA services, as well as course fees and accommodation Kampala for participants for the organization at Phase trainings. If more staff are participating, the TA fee will be adjusted accordingly)*
- *Participant airfare to Kampala for up to four phase courses, and any per diem, visa or other travel costs for participants.*
- *Raising Voices TA provider airfare and costs for two site visits per year (six visits total) to organization-determined sites (accommodation, visa). *(Note: For In-House TA Cohort, also budget for participation of TA focal points to be present on those visits.)*
- All costs related to implementation and adaptation of SASA! Together, including printing of materials (posters, etc.) for community use.

*Note: If activities are held at a distance due to realities and restrictions related to COVID-19, these costs will not apply but organizational technology must allow for effective distance mobilization and TA.*

Steps for applying to join a cohort
If you wish to apply for a SASA! Together cohort, please carefully review descriptions, criteria and costs and determine for which cohort to apply. You will then be required to complete the Application Form. Shortlisted organizations will be invited for a selection interview. The application process is expected to be complete by end October 2020 and the cohorts are expected to begin in November 2020.

Given the fluid situation of travel restrictions and COVID-19, Raising Voices is prepared to offer intensive distance support around the Setup and guidance around adaptations, and is currently exploring options for other TA activities at a distance. Organizations applying for partnership should be ready to adapt and brainstorm with TA on ways to effectively implement SASA! Together in innovative ways while restrictions apply.
Technical Assistance Partnerships for SASA! Together

Partnership lies at the core of Raising Voices’ work and we aspire to make sustained and significant positive impact towards violence against women prevention, through collective effort. Over the years, Raising Voices has been privileged to partner with a diverse organization including CBO, NGO, INGO, FBO, UN agencies and funders from across the globe and remains committed to expanding and collaboratively working with likeminded organizations to prevent violence against women.

Our understanding of Partnership

Raising Voices understands partnerships as a value driven process to accelerate VAW prevention. It is mutually empowering relationships which are based on balanced power and are focused on mutual growth, organizational development, institutional strengthening and above all, achieving positive impact. Our belief is that programs implemented in partnership increase the collective knowledge, skills, reach and experience; and create an enabling environment for meaningfully participation of all involved in the change process. We also recognize that while partnerships may at times present challenges, together, we can strive to mutually learn and grow stronger.

Partnership Objectives

Through partnerships, Raising Voices works to achieve the following objectives:

- Strengthen collaboration between Raising Voices and partners towards effective VAW prevention programming.
- Provide longer-term technical support partnerships with organizations implementing and supporting programs at community level.
- Facilitate the creation of mutually beneficial and sustainable structures and partnerships to improve access and quality to SASA! Together technical assistance.
- Increase the availability to knowledge resources and materials to support programming in diverse settings.
- Test new ideas, learn, advance innovations, and/or recommendations for VAW prevention programming.
- Promote South-to-South collaborations.

Our Partnership Principles

Based on our understanding of partnership, we are guided by core partnership principles that underpin all our work across the broad spectrum of the stakeholders we engage. We recognize the differences in contexts in which our partners are implementing but we strive to ensure that all our partnerships are guided by these principles.

1. Shared Vision and Values

Raising Voices prides itself in being a value-based organization. We envision partnership built on a shared vision of a fair world free from violence and injustice. While we recognize and respect differences in opinion and perspective, we aspire to partner with organizations that share our belief and commitment to gender equality and respect for diverse identities.
2. **Transparency and Accountability**
   
   We are committed to high standards of accountability, including to donors, partners and communities in which we work; and most importantly to women, who form the core of our work. Raising Voices strives to demonstrate impact and recognizes the critical importance to address any accountability issues that could arise in the course of partnership.

3. **Respect and Independence**

   We strive for mutual respect, integrity and autonomy. We recognize that power imbalance may undermine this autonomy and independence ultimately impacting the work that we do. We strive to create an environment that enables honest dialogue and debate, and where we respect views that may be different from our own.

4. **Commitment to learning**

   As a learning organization, we are committed to continuous and systematic learning as an organization and jointly with our partners, with the aim of generating knowledge to inform the broader goal of creating positive impact through our work.

If you need any further information, please reach out to Raising Voices on learningcenter@raisingvoices.org