

Transformative Change



Transformative Change

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Key Concepts

Role of Community Leaders in Transformative Change to Prevent GBV

Community leaders are pivotal to catalyzing transformative changes among individuals and within communities to promote gender equality and prevent GBV. This includes leaders in formal leadership positions, such as traditional, religious, administrative, and political leaders who are responsible for creating and maintaining formal rules that guide community institutions and the behavior of community members. Informal leaders, who may not hold positions within formal structures but who are influential and trusted by the community, can also catalyze change in harmful and inequitable norms, beliefs, behaviors, and practices that contribute to GBV. Some of the ways community leaders contribute to GBV prevention are outlined below.

Community leaders speak out and contribute to breaking the silence and building awareness about GBV. GBV is often a hidden issue surrounded by shame and stigma, and a vital first step in prevention is breaking this silence, generating community awareness, and finding safe ways for the community to talk about the issue. Respected and influential leaders can speak out about GBV to raise awareness and create safety for others in the community to learn about and discuss the issue and the benefits of preventing GBV.

Community leaders help build community knowledge, attitudes and skills that contribute to preventing GBV. Depending on their roles, community leaders are often key sources of information and education for community members. Leaders within community institutions, including religious institutions, schools, health services, community organizations and networks, build knowledge and shape attitudes toward GBV, the harms associated with it, and the benefits of preventing it. Some leaders can also foster development of skills among different groups in the community to promote healthy, safe and respectful relationships.

Community leaders support women and girls' economic and social empowerment. Whether by participating directly in women's and girls' empowerment activities, such as education and training, social, economic and peer support activities, or indirectly through advocacy or public support for such activities, community leaders help build gender equality through empowering women and girls. Leaders can also promote women's and girls' voice and agency in public life and their participation in household and community decision-making processes.

Community leaders influence and shape social norms, expectation and behaviors related to gender equality and GBV. Formal and informal community leaders are at the heart of efforts to transform harmful and inequitable social norms that entrench and maintain gender inequality and GBV. Community leaders can challenge harmful norms that foster discriminatory and violent attitudes and behaviors toward women and girls, impunity toward perpetrators, and inaction against GBV by the community. Beyond challenging harmful norms, community leaders can promote attitudes and norms that foster equality, non-violence, respectful relationships, and accountability of perpetrators.

Community leaders help create and implement rules, policies and laws that prevent GBV. Community leaders influence and are often the custodians of rules, policies and laws that can include accountability for perpetrators, protection of women's rights, and zero tolerance for GBV. Leaders can spearhead advocacy efforts for changes to formal laws and policies related to GBV at national and sub-national levels. At the local level, leaders are often instrumental in the development and interpretation of local and customary laws and rules that help prevent GBV. For example, leaders within formal governance positions are responsible for developing and implementing community by-laws and rules, leaders within religious institutions interpret and

apply religious laws, traditional leaders have this same responsibility under customary legal systems, and leaders of community institutions, such as schools, are responsible for creating and implementing policies and rules pertaining to GBV prevention within their institutions.

Considerations for GBV Teams Preparing to Engage Community Leaders in Transformative Change to Prevent GBV

Regardless of whether a GBV team plans to engage community leaders as part of an existing GBV prevention program, or whether a GBV team is taking first steps in prevention work, it is important to remember that transformational change is not achieved through one-off activities, trainings, or campaigns. Other important considerations when preparing to engage community leaders in GBV prevention activities are below.

The availability of good quality survivor-centered support services is a prerequisite for undertaking GBV prevention activities. Transformative change involves building awareness, dialogue, and action to address GBV in the community. It is not ethical or safe to encourage communities to take steps to raise awareness and address GBV without being ready to help survivors that come forward as a result. Therefore, it is critical to have adequate survivor-centered services in place to ensure that survivors who do seek help are able to access care, support, and protection services.

GBV prevention efforts should be based on a theory of change. No matter how large or small the intervention, change is most likely to occur when an intervention is based on a clear strategy and theory for how change happens. If the team is adapting an existing GBV prevention program, you can explore the theory or theories underpinning the program to understand the mechanism for catalyzing change. If you are designing a new intervention, make sure the intervention is underpinned by a theory of change. GBV prevention programs are increasingly using a combination of theories in recognition that different strategies are required for catalyzing change at individual, relationship, community, and wider societal levels. More information on theory-based GBV prevention programs can be found in the resources and tools section.

Awareness raising is an important component of GBV prevention, but not sufficient alone. In line with the need to use a theory-based approach to prevention, evidence shows that awareness-raising is an important first step in GBV prevention, but it is only one part of the process required to catalyze change in community beliefs, attitudes, norms, and behaviors. Individual and collective change requires moving beyond raising awareness to foster critical reflection and consciousness around power, inequality, discrimination, gender, and violence and mobilizing concrete changes in behaviors and structures that perpetuate GBV. Effective approaches offer opportunities for community members to explore their values, beliefs, and attitudes individually and collectively, and take actions to create respectful, equitable and non-violent norms, behaviors, and practices. Sustaining change at individual and community levels requires ongoing discussions, meetings, trainings, mentoring and guidance.¹

¹ UN Women (2021) *Learning from Practice: Engaging faith-based and traditional actors in preventing violence against women and girls*

Prevention programming requires careful design in line with emerging evidence. Even when a GBV program is only engaging in preliminary prevention efforts with community leaders, it is important for prevention work to be carefully designed in line with emerging evidence of effective elements of transformative change and good practice in prevention programming. These include providing opportunities for people to:²

- Develop “critical consciousness,” i.e. the ability to recognize and analyze inequality and the commitment to take action against it.
- Reflect on their own beliefs and experiences around gender, violence and power and listen to others without judgment. This moves beyond awareness-raising to deeper levels of exploration.
- Examine the norms and values of their communities, and how they align with personal beliefs.
- Build new skills and practice new behaviors.
- Develop solidarity with others who are making a change.

Staff are critical agents of change in GBV prevention programming. Transformative change starts with us, and we should reflect the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that we are trying to promote. Staff should have the opportunity to explore their own attitudes and beliefs and the social norms and expectations that have shaped them. This also is not a one-off activity – staff should have opportunities to reflect, learn, grow, and develop throughout their work in GBV prevention programming. See **Building the Team** in *Building a Foundation for Engagement* for more information and resources to help with this.

GBV prevention should seek to engage the whole community. GBV affects the entire community, and the conditions that sustain it are rooted in values, beliefs and practices of men and women of all ages. GBV prevention therefore requires engagement of the whole community. Community leaders are an important stakeholder group and engaging diverse leaders can help to reach and influence different groups, interests, and demographics across a community.

² Adapted from the *WHO RESPECT Women: Preventing violence against women framework* (2019) <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/preventing-vaw-framework-policymakers/en/>

Approaches

Three approaches to engaging community leaders in transformative change are outlined below. They include 1) Using an established program, 2) Creating a new program, and 3) Designing small-scale interventions aimed at transformative change.

The approach a GBV team adopts will depend on a variety of factors including:

- The context, and which approach is most relevant and appropriate.
- How long your organization is committed to GBV programming in a community.
- The resources required by each approach.
- The timeframe necessary for adapting or designing a comprehensive prevention program or designing prevention activities.
- The time available for implementation and follow-up.
- The technical support available to build capacity of staff and community members to implement the intervention.
- Community leader and wider community interest and readiness to implement prevention activities.

Using an Established Transformative Change Program

GBV prevention is an emerging area of practice, and programs to catalyze transformative change have been developed and implemented in various settings. To date, much of the evidence about GBV prevention comes from non-emergency contexts, however, a small number of interventions have been specifically developed for or adapted to humanitarian contexts (see below for examples). Where GBV teams have adequate time, capacity, resources, and support, they may consider adapting and implementing an existing approach to transformative change to prevent GBV. These approaches are rooted in theoretical frameworks, have been tested in different settings, and provide clear guidance to teams for planning, implementation, and monitoring interventions. When deciding whether to adapt an existing program, it may be helpful to:

- Research and learn about the program by reading all relevant materials, including program toolkit and/or implementation resources, evaluations, and research.
- Contact the organization that developed the program to ask for further information and advice on adapting the program.
- Reach out to other organizations that have adapted the program to learn from them about practical aspects of adapting and implementing the program.

Established Programs That Have Been Implemented in Humanitarian Settings

The evidence base for all GBV prevention programming in emergencies is still emerging. The following table highlights community-based transformative change programs to prevent GBV that include attention to community leaders, and that have some evidence regarding their effectiveness. The first four programs are community-wide interventions that include community leaders, while the fifth does not specifically target inclusion of community leaders, although they may be involved in the intervention. The list of programs is not exhaustive, and teams can undertake further research to identify other programs that could be considered for adaptation.

SASA! Together

Organization	Raising Voices
Used in humanitarian context	Yes
Involves community leaders	Yes

Description

SASA! Together is a community mobilization approach to prevent intimate partner violence against women by transforming power imbalances between women and men at all levels of the community. It is a revision of the *SASA! Activist Kit*, created by *Raising Voices* in 2008. “SASA!” means “NOW!” in Kiswahili, emphasizing the urgent need to prevent violence against women. SASA! is also an acronym for its four phases: Start, Awareness, Support and Action. “Together” emphasizes that change is possible with collaboration, support, and solidarity.

SASA! Together is typically supported by an organization and led by activists, leaders, and allies – all women and men who live and work in the community – who engage individuals, couples, neighbors, other leaders, and colleagues in the *SASA! Together* process:

- In the Start phase, community activists, community leaders and institutional allies spend time exploring community norms about violence against women, begin a personal journey of deepening their power within to make changes in their own lives, and start engaging others in the community.
- In the Awareness phase, activists, leaders, and allies—through their respective strategies of Local Activism, Community Leadership, and Institutional Strengthening— use a variety of provocative and interactive activities to encourage a critical analysis of men’s power over women and the community’s silence about this.
- In the Support phase, more and more people engage with activists, leaders, and allies, who are learning new skills and joining their power with others to support women experiencing violence, couples trying to change, and activists speaking out and holding men who use violence accountable.
- In the Action phase, activists, leaders, and allies support community members’ power to take action and sustain change for years to come— solidifying new norms in which violence against women is never acceptable and women can live safe, fulfilling and dignified lives.

Summary of recommended time and resources

- 3 years
- Team lead/supervisor
- Staff dedicated to each strategy
- Technical support available through Raising Voices or an accredited Technical Assistance (TA) Provider
- Financial resources for training and other activities

Where to find further information

- Overview: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0149718921000136>
- Suitability & Readiness Assessment- <https://raisingvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/c.-Suitability-and-Readiness-Assessment.pdf>
- Insights from implementation: https://raisingvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Insights-from-SASA_interactive-2.pdf
- Toolkit: <https://raisingvoices.org/sasatogether/>
- Evaluation: <https://bmcmmedicine.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12916-014-0122-5>

SASA! Faith

Organization	Raising Voices and Trocaire
Used in humanitarian context	Yes
Involves community leaders	Yes

Description

SASA! Faith is an adaptation of the *SASA! An Activist Kit for Preventing Violence Against Women and HIV*. *SASA! Faith* takes the structure, process, and content in *SASA!* and adapts it for use by religious communities. It focuses on the Christian and Muslim faiths, as the approach was developed in Africa where these are the two major religions. However, it was created with a global focus and can be adapted to any faith in any country.

SASA! Faith includes: a guide with staff guidance and materials to be used in the faith community, a training manual for the *SASA! Faith* team and network for each phase of implementation, and assessment tools to learn from programming.

Summary of recommended time and resources

- Two to three years
- A small team of Faith Champions, including religious leadership
- Financial resources for training and other activities

Where to find further information

- Overview: <https://raisingvoices.org/sasa-faith/>
- Toolkit: <https://raisingvoices.org/sasa-faith/>

Communities Care: Transforming Lives and Preventing Violence

Organization	UNICEF
Used in humanitarian context	Yes
Involves community leaders	Yes

Description

Communities Care is a community-based model for preventing and responding to sexual violence against girls and women in conflict-affected settings. The program is premised on the idea that while armed conflict causes horrendous suffering for those affected, the disruption it causes may also present an opportunity for positive change in social norms that can contribute to gender equality and decrease GBV and discrimination. *Communities Care* emphasizes that entire communities – girls, women, boys, and men alike – benefit from healthier, safer, and more peaceful environments in which all members enjoy their right to live free from violence.

The goal of *Communities Care* is to create healthier, safer, and more peaceful communities for girls and women by working with communities to:

- Improve timely, coordinated, and compassionate care and support for survivors of sexual violence in conflict-affected settings by strengthening community-based response.
- Reduce tolerance for GBV within the community and catalyze community-led action to prevent it by transforming harmful practices and social norms that perpetuate gender inequality and related violence against girls and women into norms that promote dignity, equality, and non-violence.

Communities Care uses a ‘facilitated dialogue’ method – that is, a structured conversation led by trained community members with different groups in the community. Through this process, groups of adults and adolescents come together to:

- Build awareness and consciousness about shared values of respect for human dignity, fairness and justice;
- Connect their experiences of violence and injustice to the experiences of others; and
- Analyze how gender norms contribute to violence and injustice.

Participants are then empowered to work together to find solutions to the problems of GBV and inequality and are supported in translating these solutions into concrete action.

Summary of recommended time and resources

- 2–3 years (minimum 3 months preparation for the team; 3 months planning and customization; 18 months implementation)
- Program manager
- Senior social worker and senior community engagement worker
- Social work and community engagement team leaders
- Community discussion leaders

Where to find further information

- Overview: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13552074.2016.1195579>
- Toolkit: <https://www.unicef.org/documents/communities-care>
- Evaluations: <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/9/3/e023819.full.pdf>

Engaging Men through Accountable Practice (EMAP)

Organization	International Rescue Committee
Used in humanitarian context	Yes
Involves community leaders	Not explicitly, however leaders may be involved as community gatekeepers and program participants

Description

EMAP is an innovative evidence-based primary prevention model to reduce GBV by engaging men and boys in transformative individual behavior change in stable humanitarian contexts, guided by the input and realities of the women and girls in their communities.

The *EMAP* field-tested approach is primarily based on accountability to women and girls and provides a method and structure for honoring women's leadership and developing male engagement in a way that improves, rather than endangers, the lives of women and girls. The goals of *EMAP* are to:

- Reduce harmful behaviors and increase gender equality in the home.
- Provide program staff with the tools and skills to successfully model accountability to women and girls and promote transformational change.
- Give male participants the tools and knowledge to rethink belief systems and prevent GBV through individual behavioral change and provide them with programming guided by the voices of women in the community.
- Provide female participants with opportunities to reflect on GBV in their lives and influence programming with men within their community.

Summary of recommended time and resources

- 1 year
- EMAP Supervisor
- EMAP Trainer
- Male and female EMAP Facilitators

Where to find further information

- Overview: <https://gbvresponders.org/prevention/>
- Toolkit: <https://gbvresponders.org/prevention/emap-tools-resources/>
- Evaluation: <https://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Mens-Engagement-Research-Brief-Jan-2014-Final-2.pdf>

5. Tipping Point

Organization	CARE
Used in humanitarian context	Yes
Involves community leaders	Not explicitly, however leaders may be involved as community gatekeepers and program participants

Description

- *Tipping Point* focuses on identifying the root causes of child marriage and facilitates innovative strategies to create alternative paths for adolescent girls. The program addresses child marriage using synchronized engagement with adolescent girls and boys, parents, community, and religious leaders around key programmatic topics, and creates public spaces for all community members to be part of the dialogue. *Tipping Point*'s approach is rooted in challenging social expectations and repressive norms and promoting girl-driven movement building and activism. The project also seeks to influence the way policymakers, donors, researchers, and civil society approach the issue of child marriage,
- The *Tipping Point* intervention packages consist of 53 weekly meetings for adolescent girls and adolescent boys, 18 monthly meetings for mothers and fathers, and quarterly meetings with community leaders such as teachers, government officials, and religious leaders. *Tipping Point* focuses heavily on staff and facilitators' own personal transformation on gender and GBV to ensure program quality.

Summary of recommended time and resources

- 18 months
- Girl-led activism for social norms change component: 12 months
- Village Savings & Loan component: 12 months

Where to find further information

- Tipping Point page: <https://www.care.org/our-work/health/fighting-gender-based-violence/tipping-point/>
- Evaluation Reports: <https://www.care.org/our-work/health/fighting-gender-based-violence/tipping-point/tipping-point-meal-resources/>
- Toolkit: <https://www.care.org/our-work/health/fighting-gender-based-violence/tipping-point/tipping-point-program-resources/>

Creating a New Transformative Change Program

Depending on the context and organizational commitment and resources, it may be appropriate to create your own GBV prevention program to engage community leaders in transformative change. With adequate research, planning, time, resources, and support, GBV teams can design and implement their own approach to transformative change to prevent GBV. However, this approach will require a significant multi-year investment by the organization for research, partnerships, and technical support to design, implement and monitor an evidence-informed approach. If this approach is feasible and appropriate, the following may be helpful to prepare for the creation of a new GBV prevention program:

- Learning about community priorities for GBV prevention.
- Conducting formative research to understand GBV drivers and risk and protective factors in the community.
- Studying different theories of social and behavior change.
- Reviewing evidence about effective approaches and strategies.
- Reviewing other prevention programs to draw on lessons and avoid duplication of efforts.
- Exploring opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and coordination with others.



Example from Practice

Bienvenue aux Changements dans la Communauté

To compliment a GBV program in conflict-affected communities of the Democratic Republic of Congo, International Medical Corps designed and implemented the “Bienvenue aux Changements dans la Communauté” (BCC) or “Welcome to Changes in the Community” GBV prevention program over the course of six years, beginning in 2010. The overall aim of the program was to reduce the level of GBV in targeted communities through increased community action at all social levels and the creation and sustaining of new positive behaviors.

With support from the U.S. Agency for International Development, the BCC program was implemented in partnership with Search for Common Ground (SFCG) who were responsible for delivering societal level interventions such as radio programming, and large-scale activities like participatory theater and outdoor film screenings, as well as Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/Center for Communication Programs (CCP), who led formative, population-based research and provided technical support in the design of effective behavior change communication activities.

Key recommendations from the program that can inform assessment, design, monitoring and evaluation of new GBV programs are included in the [**Transformative Change Tools and Resources**](#)

Designing Limited Interventions Aimed at Transformative Change

It is not always feasible or appropriate for GBV teams to implement comprehensive, multi-year GBV prevention programs. This might be due to organizational and/or community priorities, or capacity and readiness and available resources, including time. While a smaller-scale transformative change intervention may not be able to tackle all the changes needed, carefully selected actions to engage community leaders can contribute to building awareness, motivation, and commitment to GBV prevention in the community, as well as catalyzing changes in key areas. For example, if there are very low levels of awareness or discussion about GBV, supporting leaders to break the silence and enable people to safely talk about GBV is a critical

first step in transforming harmful beliefs, attitudes and norms that sustain GBV. While one-off interventions will not lead to sustained transformative change, GBV teams can look toward such changes even during early stages of a humanitarian response and consider smaller-scale activities that could be reinforced and built upon with increased participation, stability, and resources. Thoughtfully designed interventions, even when modest, can play an important part in GBV prevention. Whether an intervention seeks to initiate community engagement in GBV prevention, or build on efforts already underway, smaller-scale strategies can engage community leaders to support one or more of the following three approaches:

Building Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills

- Take the first steps or continue efforts to break the silence and build awareness about GBV in a community
- Build knowledge and skills to promote healthy, safe, and respectful relationships among different groups in the community

Fostering Gender Equitable, Respectful, and Non-Violent Social Norms, Attitudes, and Behaviors

- Catalyze discussion about community values, beliefs, and norms to build support for gender equitable and non-violent behaviors
- Create and implement rules to protect women and girls from GBV and hold perpetrators accountable within community systems

Promoting Women and Girls' Empowerment

- Support women's participation in community decision-making
- Increase opportunities for women and girls

Even at a small scale, engaging community leaders in transformative change requires careful planning and preparation to ensure that activities are safe and will not cause harm to women, girls, leaders, communities, and staff; relevant and appropriate to the community; and effective in creating desired changes. Teams may find the steps below helpful when creating a strategy for engaging community leaders in transformative change.

1. Analyze the specific problem to be addressed. It is important to set out the problem you are seeking to change. Clearly defining the problem will enable you to better identify desired changes and appropriate strategies to catalyze change. While gender inequality is at the heart of all GBV, there are different drivers and contributing factors. For example, in some communities, social norms may be the main driver of child marriage, whereas in others, insecurity and poverty may be key contributing factors. Similarly, the individual, family and community level risk factors contributing to different forms of sexual violence vary across communities. Doing a root cause analysis with community leaders and women and girls can be helpful to analyze a specific problem and identify actions for prevention.

2. Identify desired changes that can help address the problem. Once you have defined and broken the problem down, the next step is to identify changes required to transform underlying drivers and risks. Reflecting on the root cause of GBV as discrimination against women and girls, desired changes would include those that promote equality and respect for women and girls. Through a root cause analysis, GBV teams can support communities to consider changes needed to address specific factors linked to:

- Individual knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and skills;
- Community norms and practices in relation to GBV;
- Women and girls’ participation, agency and empowerment;
- Formal and informal rules in relation to preventing GBV and mechanisms for enforcing them within the community.

It is important to engage women and girls when identifying and prioritizing changes that would prevent GBV, and to reflect the needs, perspectives and interests of different groups of women and girls in the community, including those who have less voice and visibility.

3. Identify changes in leaders that can support desired changes in the community. At this stage, you can identify desired changes that community leaders might take to contribute to catalyzing change across the wider community. The GBV team can brainstorm ideas, engaging women and girls, women’s associations, and other partners in this process. Desired changes for the broader community and for different leaders may be the same, but teams may also identify different or more specific desired changes/actions for leaders. Depending on the community leader profile, teams may also identify different desired changes for different leaders, such as those with formal leadership positions and responsibilities. Examples of changes among leaders to address a specific problem are outlined below.

Problem	Underlying factors	Desired changes in community	Desired changes in leaders
Impunity for sexual violence against girls in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual violence against girls is hidden and shameful and people can’t speak about it. • Girl survivors are blamed by their family and the wider community. • Girl survivors are held responsible and seen as dishonoring their family. • Girls are forced to marry perpetrators to restore ‘honor’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities discuss sexual violence its harmful consequences. • Family members support, protect and do not blame girls who have been raped. • The community places responsibility and blame for sexual violence on perpetrators. • Perpetrators, not survivors, are punished for rape. • Customary justice processes protect the dignity, safety, and rights of survivors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders positively contribute to public discussion about girls’ rights to safety and dignity and about the harms of sexual violence. • Leaders uphold and promote attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that protect and support girl survivors. • Leaders condemn rape and take steps to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.

4. Identify activities in partnership with leaders. No matter the scope of the intervention, involving community leaders in the identification of activities to create changes will help to promote ownership of the problem and solutions to it. A participatory approach to identifying activities will also increase the likelihood that activities are appropriate and relevant to the context. Teams can apply their community leader mapping and profiling developed as part of **Building a Foundation for Engagement**. As discussed in more detail in Building a Foundation, when engaging leaders to promote positive change, it is important to consider the roles and influence of different leaders, and to identify leaders who share a commitment to ending GBV and promoting women and girl's safety, dignity. Some activities leaders may implement to support change include:

- Contributing to a community awareness campaign by sharing key messages about the harms of GBV and benefits of non-violent, respectful relationships with their networks.
- Participating in community discussions about GBV to facilitate collective reflection and dialogue to promote non-violent and equitable relationships.
- Holding a community meeting to discuss community priorities for creating safer more equitable relationships in the community.
- Advocating with their peers to explore appropriate community sanctions for sexual violence that promote the safety, dignity, and well-being of survivors.

5. Develop a plan and support leaders to implement and monitor activities. Leaders may require different levels of logistical, technical, practical, or other support to implement the activities. It is also important to monitor activities to ensure that they do not inadvertently reinforce harmful beliefs and attitudes or lead to unintended negative consequences. Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of activities will also help in the design and planning of future prevention strategies and programs.

- ➔ See **Ideas for Engagement** for further examples of activities for catalyzing change among leaders and within communities.
- ➔ See *Tools and Resources* for a **Sample: Root Cause Analysis**.

Ideas for Engagement

Building Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills

- GBV Root Cause Analysis
- Participatory Development of Messages and IEC Materials
- Outreach and Awareness-Raising
- Community Events and Campaigns
- Edutainment
- Group Learning and Life Skills

Fostering Gender Equitable, Respectful, and Non-Violent Social Norms, Attitudes, and Behaviors

- Group Discussions to Foster Equitable Norms, Attitudes, and Behaviors
- GBV Prevention Action Planning
- Appealing to International and National Legal Frameworks

Promoting Women and Girls' Empowerment

See **Key Area of Engagement: Supporting Women Leaders**

GBV Root Cause Analysis

A root cause analysis is an exercise that involves analyzing the different risk factors and drivers of GBV in a community. While gender-based inequalities and discrimination lie at the heart of GBV, numerous other factors contribute to it. These include factors related to individual beliefs, attitudes and behaviors, collective beliefs and norms, and rules, policies and laws that guide behavior. Identifying and addressing these factors that drive and perpetuate GBV is a core element of preventing it. Doing a root cause analysis with community members enables collective reflection, identification and learning about the different drivers of GBV in the community. In turn, this enables identification of the specific changes that can be made within the community to transform the conditions that perpetuate and sustain GBV. Involving community leaders in root cause analysis has multiple benefits including:

- Building leaders' awareness and understanding of causes and drivers of GBV in the community.
- Bringing leaders together with others in the community committed to change and exposing leaders to the perspectives of others, including women and girls.
- Helping to break the problem of GBV down and identify achievable changes to which leaders can commit and contribute.

➔ See **Sample Root Cause Analysis** in *Transformative Change Tools and Resources*

Participatory Development of Messages and IEC Materials

GBV teams can engage community leaders in identifying key messages for raising awareness and building knowledge about GBV when developing information, education and communication (IEC) materials to share with the broader community. Involving community leaders in developing messages and information and awareness materials increases their engagement and commitment to sharing messages aimed at promoting gender equitable and non-violent attitudes, behaviors, and norms and promoting women and girls' safety, dignity and well-being. Women and girls should also be involved in the process, as their experiences, priorities and perspectives should always guide GBV prevention efforts. Developing messages and IEC material can take a day to several weeks, depending on the complexity of the issue and topic, the number of people working on the content and material design, how many messages and materials are needed, the communication channels that will be used and time needed to pretest messages and materials.



Example from Practice

Design Workshop with Artists

A GBV prevention program in the Democratic Republic of Congo organized a three-day workshop with 25 community leaders and other representatives, divided into five groups, with an artist assigned to each group. Participants reviewed a GBV problem analysis, the program's vision for an equal and nonviolent community, and elements of social behavior change. They then worked in groups to identify key audiences and messages. The artists helped to sketch designs during group brainstorming. On the third day, pretesting audiences were invited to join the workshop and review the groups' ideas for IEC materials.

➔ See **Steps for Developing Key Messages** and **Checklist: Communication Materials** in *Transformative Change Tools and Resources*

Outreach and Awareness-Raising

Building knowledge and awareness about GBV is a critical first step in catalyzing change and there are a wide variety of methods and communication channels to help share information and build community awareness about GBV. Common communication channels include:

- **Interpersonal communication** channels that involve person-to-person or small group interaction and exchange. Examples include peer education, parent-child, teacher-student or spousal communication, support groups.
- **Community channels** that involve information sharing within the community. Examples include community meetings, community discussions, events, and religious sermons.
- **Broadcast and print media channels** that reach a large number of people. Examples include television, radio, newspapers, movies, magazines, brochures, and posters.
- **Digital and social media** channels that share digitized content via mobile technologies and the Internet including digital video, text, images, and audio are transmitted over Internet, computer, or mobile networks. Examples include websites, vlogs, blogs, social networking sites, online games, eLearning, software, and applications.

GBV teams can include community leaders in outreach and awareness raising in two ways: firstly, as advisors when designing, implementing, and monitoring outreach and awareness-raising strategies, and secondly as facilitators of awareness activities, using their influence and platforms to build knowledge and awareness of others.

When engaging leaders as *advisors* in the design of outreach and awareness, teams can establish regular meetings with interested individual or groups of leaders to:

- Identify key audiences for awareness-raising in the community, including other leaders.
- Identify effective approaches and relevant channels of communication.
- Endorse information-sharing strategies and messages.
- Prioritize themes and topics for awareness raising.
- Use their networks and influence to maximize the reach and impact of messages.
- Review implemented activities, seeking feedback and ideas for improvement.
- Plan for upcoming activities.

When engaging leaders as *facilitators* of information sharing and awareness raising teams will need to make sure that individual leaders:

- Are committed to values and principles of equality, dignity, fairness and justice for women and girls;
- Have accurate information about GBV, including about services for survivors and how to seek help;
- Have good communication skills;
- Are clear about the messages and how to communicate them.



Example from Practice

Religious Leaders as Facilitators of GBV Information

A GBV program in Mali engages dedicated and trained community leaders, including religious leaders, in all awareness-raising activities. The leaders speak about GBV topics during campaigns, celebrations for international days, and radio programs. The religious leaders also lead GBV sensitization sessions in their mosques and churches.

➔ See **Steps for Developing Key Messages** in *Transformative Change Tools and Resources*

Community Events and Campaigns

Community events and campaigns against GBV have many potential benefits including helping create awareness and mobilizing large groups of people, influencing decision-makers, helping create policy and legal changes, building critical mass for change, and contributing to catalyzing a shift in social norms when undertaken in conjunction with other activities.³ Campaigns may center around specific international or national events, such as International Women’s Day, International Day of the Girl Child or the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, or they may be designed based on locally defined priorities and timeframes. Community leaders are often very much involved in community campaigns, often organizing and leading events and other strategies to campaign on local issues. For examples, leaders from national and local women’s organizations commonly organize events around the 16 Days of Activism and facilitate media campaigns to influence decision-makers in relation to strengthening action against GBV.

When engaging leaders in GBV campaign events and other activities, teams can:

- Invite leaders to join a campaign committee or planning meetings to assist in determining the theme or objectives, designing messaging and materials, organizing activities and logistics. Through participation of leaders from the beginning, teams will be able to hear from leaders how they understand the campaign, their priorities and how they can contribute to the campaign, and learn from leaders about how to use the campaign to influence others in the community. It will be important to ensure women leaders and representatives also participate in the campaign committee or planning meetings.
- Ensure the committee reviews and agrees the campaign purpose, timeline and key events and activities and commitments, roles and responsibilities of different leaders; leaders may play a variety role in campaigns. Some may simply endorse the campaign and mobilize their networks to participate by sharing information, while others may have a more public role, speaking at events or interviews. Make sure to discuss with leaders how to address controversial or difficult issues that may arise in response to messages, public statements or media generated by the campaign.
- If leaders will speak publicly at a campaign event, other public forum or to media, ensure they are comfortable doing this, and provide support if they do not have experience in public speaking. (See **Step 5** in *Building a Foundation for Engagement*.) Consider the following steps to support leaders:
 - Outline talking points with leaders ahead of the event. If leaders prepare their own speeches, ask to identify major points together and highlight key messages.
 - If leaders would like to practice, offer for members of the GBV team to serve as a practice audience.
 - Anticipate questions from the audience and help the leader prepare to respond. Leaders are not expected to be experts in GBV, so prepare leaders with good information in advance.
- Ensure leaders are briefed, prepared and well-supported during campaign activities and events.
- Hold follow-up meetings with leaders after events or other activities to debrief and discuss the strengths, successes, challenges, and lessons.
- Formally thank leaders for their time and commitment. Send a thank you letter highlighting the success of the campaign and recognizing their contributions is one way of doing this.

➔ See **Tip Sheet: Involving Community Leaders in Events** in *Transformative Change Tools and Resources*

³ UN Women. (2011). Campaigns to End Violence against Women and Girls

Edutainment

Education through entertainment, also known as ‘edutainment’ is a popular way of engaging different groups in the community in awareness-raising and behavior and social change. Examples include showing a film or listening to a radio show and then holding a discussion; organizing music events, song, or dance competitions; participatory theater; integrating GBV messages into sporting events or other community gatherings; mass media, such as radio plays. Community leaders can be invited to help design, endorse, plan, or participate in edutainment events relevant to GBV. Inviting leaders to present or take part in these events can help increase community interest and participation in events, particularly if they are targeting young people. Community edutainment events also present a good opportunity for GBV teams to publicly thank community leaders who are allies of the program or actively involved in addressing GBV. Think creatively about what type of format will engage and keep the interest of leaders. For example, using a radio drama to jump start dialogue and provide guided conversation.

Group Learning and Life Skills

Some group activities, with groups of girls, boys, women, or men, are focused on building individuals’ knowledge and skills related to preventing GBV. Group learning might focus on building knowledge of laws prohibiting GBV, or consequences of different forms of GBV for individuals, families, and communities. Groups of adolescent boys or girls, or groups young adults, might participate in life skills classes, with a curriculum focused on subjects related to preventing GBV (both perpetration and experiences with GBV), including self-esteem, decision-making, communication skills, healthy relationships, safety, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and goal setting. Learning opportunities should be led by knowledgeable facilitators. In some cases, GBV teams might recognize the potential of including community leaders, particularly women leaders, as participants or facilitators. Leaders’ participation as facilitators should depend on their familiarity with subject areas and their comfort and interest in leading learning groups. Whether leaders join as facilitators or participants, other group members will need to be comfortable learning with community leaders, as group learning requires a level of rapport and trust within the group. Leaders shouldn’t be incorporated into group activities without attention to related power dynamics.

Even where leaders do not participate directly in group learning activities, they can be engaged to support and endorse such activities. Leaders’ demonstrated support for life skills programming can influence parents, guardians, and spouses of married youth, which can positively impact uptake and access to such opportunities.

Group Discussions to Foster Equitable Norms, Attitudes, and Behaviors

Group discussions can be an effective method for facilitating engagement in GBV prevention and can contribute to fostering positive social norms that protect and value women and girls’ safety, dignity, and equality. Group discussions can be organized in forums and compositions that allow community members to safely and openly discuss GBV, its root causes and consequences, and to collectively develop local solutions. Discussions are participatory and interactive processes for encouraging community members to share their perspectives and views about GBV, as well as their ideas on what can be done about it. As part of a facilitated process, through a series of dialogues, community members can identify actions that can be taken to prevent GBV, as well as priorities for preventing GBV that should be addressed with other stakeholders. As well as problem-solving, enabling community members and leaders to safely and openly discuss community values, priorities and concerns in relation to GBV and exchange ideas and perspectives on preventing GBV can help promote safe, non-violent and relationships within families and the community.

When engaging community leaders in group discussions, GBV teams should consider the following:

- Use existing community structures and practices, including religious institutions, such as mosques, temples, churches, sermons, prayers, and rituals in group discussions can be effective.⁴
- Group composition matters. Think strategically about who to include in different discussions.
- Include leaders who are program allies and who share values that promote women and girls' safety, dignity, and equality as participants in group discussions with other community members.
- GBV teams can organize a process for regular group discussions, including who will participate, how many sessions will be held, objectives and topics that will be discussed, and guidance for facilitators.
- Good facilitation is vital and facilitators, whether GBV team members or community members, must be well-respected and have appropriate skills in creating safety in group processes, facilitating participatory processes, managing conflict and difficult conversations.
- Facilitators should be well-prepared before each session and have the opportunity to de-brief after each dialogue.



Example from Practice Sex-Separated Group Discussions in Pakistan

A GBV program in Pakistan engaged community leaders to establish *Gender Support Groups* that are sex-separated groups of community volunteers who assume responsibility for holding discussions with men or women about the consequences of GBV, including the harmful effects of some traditional practices. The Gender Support Groups also talk with community members about the benefits of girls' education and women's economic and social participation.

➔ See **Discussion Guide: Equitable Norms, Attitudes, and Behaviors** in *Transformative Change Tools and Resources*

GBV Prevention Action Planning

GBV teams can work across stakeholder groups to develop plans for concrete changes to prevent GBV. Relevant leaders should be involved in developing and supporting a GBV prevention action plan based on their roles and influence. For example, if the community prioritizes development of a sexual violence prevention plan for the local school, school leaders, leaders within government education authorities, and leaders with influence over parents, such as religious or traditional leaders, could all be invited to participate in development of a whole-of-school sexual violence prevention plan. Things for the GBV team to consider when supporting the community to develop a prevention plan include:

- What are the drivers and risks – for example, if developing a plan for a school, what are the individual, relationship, institutional and community level drivers and risks associated with sexual violence against girls at school?



Example from Practice Community-Led Systems Change

A GBV program in the Democratic Republic of Congo supported community protection groups that identified sexual harassment and assault in schools as a major concern. The program helped to bring community representatives and students together to agree on priority actions. They developed a Code of Conduct for schools that was first picked up by schools in the community, and then endorsed by the Ministry of Education.

⁴ UN Women (2021) *Learning from Practice: Engaging faith-based and traditional actors in preventing violence against women and girls*

- What concrete actions can be taken to address these drivers and risks?

The following are some examples of activities that may be helpful for addressing particular drivers and risks of sexual violence in a school:

- *Establish life skills clubs for boys and girls, with attention to respectful relationships*
 - *Hold parent education sessions on healthy, safe, and respectful relationships*
 - *Establish mechanisms for reporting and investigating allegations of sexual violence*
 - *Discipline actors found guilty of sexual violence*
 - *Nominate student and teacher focal points for referrals*
 - *Develop a code of conduct for teachers and staff*
 - *Develop a charter of student's rights and responsibilities*
- What resources are needed to implement the actions?
 - Which people or groups will be responsible for implementing the actions?
 - How will the plan be monitored?

➔ See **Prevention Action Planning Tool** in *Transformative Change Tools and Resources*

Appealing to International and National Legal Frameworks

Community leaders often play authoritative roles in customary legal systems and practices that can be harnessed to prevent GBV and hold perpetrators accountable.⁵ Sensitizing and training leaders on women and children's rights as set out in international and national legal frameworks can help foster leaders' knowledge and commitment to addressing GBV. As part of the training, GBV teams can:

- Organize trainings on national and legal frameworks with expert facilitators.
- Work with traditional, religious, and other community leaders to explore how to align customary laws and practices with international and national frameworks that protect women and girls' rights.
- Facilitate dialogues between leaders and women's rights advocates on promoting women and girls' safety, dignity, and protection within customary legal frameworks, in line with international and national legal frameworks.
- Produce and share simplified guides with leaders on relevant formal laws on the rights of women and girls in relation to GBV prevention.
- Offer ongoing learning sessions with peer groups of community leaders to provide space for leaders to share questions, concerns, and perspectives in a safe way they may not be able to in front of their congregations' or communities due to a fear of losing authority.

5 UN Women (2021)

Transformative Change Tools and Resources

Tools and Resources

- [Sample: Root Cause Analysis](#)
- [Steps for Developing Key Messages](#)
- [Checklist: Communication Materials](#)
- [Tip Sheet: Pretesting Communication](#)
- [Tip Sheet: Involving Community Leaders in Events](#)
- [Discussion Guide: Equitable Norms, Attitudes, and Behaviors](#)
- [Prevention Action Planning Tool](#)
- [Recommendations: Creating a New Social Behavior Change Program](#)
- [Resources for Learning about GBV Prevention Theories and Approaches](#)

Training Modules

- *Training Modules: Transformative Change*

Sample: Root Cause Analysis

A root cause analysis is essentially an exercise that involves asking why a problem exists, and then asking why again to the answer or answers generated. Each answer is questioned until no more “whys” can be asked, and the final answer is considered the root cause of the problem. GBV teams can organize these exercises with women and adolescent girls, community leaders, and other members of the community. Involving mixed groups of participants can help to build consensus, where this is possible. Below is an example of the outcome of a root cause analysis conducted by a GBV program in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The program team organized a workshop with representatives of the community, including male and female community leaders, and opened the discussion with the question: “Why does GBV happen in our community?” From there, the GBV team and participants continued to ask “Why” until the diagram was completed. Once community members agreed to the root cause of GBV, they were further engaged to identify important messages and interventions that could help to address the problem.



Steps for Developing Key Messages

- 1. Gather background information.** Review content and effectiveness of existing relevant materials used in your context as well as researching effective GBV messaging used in other parts of the world. Reach out to other organizations or groups such as the [GBV Prevention Network](#) to see what recent information has been produced.
- 2. Create a message design team.** Identify members of the GBV team, key stakeholders including community leaders, women, and girls' representatives, etc.) and other appropriate people to help design messages, talking points and communication materials. Set time aside to host a design workshop so that GBV practitioners and stakeholders can come together and participate in message development and design process. Where possible, invite graphic artists and/or media experts to the design workshop who can contribute ideas and perspective related to reaching audiences.
- 3. Determine the core content.** Using the information gathered and desired changes identified, identify content that should be included in key information, education, and communication materials.

To help determine core content, ask:

- What changes or actions are we seeking in relation to GBV prevention?
- Why should the community take this action?
- What core content and actions are most compelling or should be prioritized?
- Which messages are most appropriate for leader to communicate?
- Which should be avoided or addressed at a future date?

- 4. Draft key message.** Effective messages are clear, accurate and appealing. Each message should make one or two points. Messages should be framed in terms of the benefit. Refer to the following message design checklist to help guide message development.⁶

Keep the messages simple:

- Make it easy to understand
- Make it short (simple and to the point-less is more)
- Avoid jargon (use known language and terminology)
- Keep focused on a specific problem
- Keep it action-oriented and solution focused
- Make the message or talking points appealing and interesting

Know the audience:

- Address the audience's values, norms and beliefs.
- Address the audience's needs and priorities as they relate to GBV.
- Consider the tone that most appeals to the audience.

⁶ Adapted from Compass, How-to-Guide; How to Design SBCC Messages

Invite the audience to reach their own conclusions:

- Do not present every detail.
- Allow the audience to use their own thought processes.

Present positive alternatives or solutions:

- Keep messages focused on the benefits or positive behaviors rather than using scare tactics or dramatizing violence for greater impact.
- Provide positive alternative behaviors, attitudes, and values.

Lastly, appeal to **people's emotions**. The goal of making messages “emotional” is to make the audience care – because that is when they are most likely to take action.⁷ The best way to do that is to appeal to the things that really matter to them or motivate them.

5. Pretest messages. Share the key messages with a small group of people for their reaction and opinions. Prepare test versions of the messages. (See **Tip Sheet: Pretesting Communication**)

- Pretest messages.
The goal of pretesting is to answer the following questions:
 - Is the material/message easily and correctly understood?
 - Are the pictures and the language culturally and socially appropriate?
 - Is the message relevant to the target audience?
 - Is there too much or too little information?
 - Is the source appropriate and credible?
 - Does the target audience like the material?
 - Would the target audience take action based on the material?
 - Would they talk about it with their friends?
 - Is there anything that could vex/offend the audience or someone in their community?
- Revise the messages based on pretest results and the teams' opinions.
- Finalize messages in preparation for developing materials.

People can quickly become confused by mixed messages and saturated by multiple activities targeting an array of different issues. Coordinating with the other sectors will allow for the development of a cohesive and holistic plan that may be better accepted by community leaders.

⁷ People in Need. (May 2017). *The Behavior Change Toolkit for International Development Practitioners*.

Checklist: Communication Materials⁸

GBV teams can use the checklist below to review posters, flyers, and other communication materials before they are pretested with communities.

Content

Does your communication material:

- raise a controversial or thought-provoking issue?
- avoid telling people what to think and encourage people to think differently?
- encourage viewers to think for themselves?
- avoid stereotyping?
- maintain the dignity of the characters?
- show women and men as reasonable and thoughtful characters who are able to make positive decisions?
- avoid showing women as powerless victims?
- avoid showing men being highly aggressive or violent?
- show how non-violent resolution of conflict and non-violent relationships are positive?
- reinforce the concept of human/ women's rights?
- encourage personal reflection?
- use characters and situations that viewers can identify with?
- use characters that represent the range of people in your community?

Language

Does your communication material:

- avoid blaming or accusations?
- use language that is informal and familiar to the community?
- have a design that is accessible to low-literacy viewers?
- use language and images that are thought-provoking but not confrontational?
- use language that is simple and straightforward?
- make provocative statements or ask provocative questions to the viewer?
- keep language as non-technical as possible?
- respond to the reading level of the group you are reaching?
- use an attention-grabbing caption, slogan, or question?

⁸ Adapted from: *Mobilizing Communities to Prevent Domestic Violence: A Resource Guide for Organizations in East and South Africa*. Raising Voices 2003

Illustrations

Does your communication material:

- use pictures of a scene and characters that community members can and want to identify with?
- show characters being active and thoughtful?
- use diagrams and pictures to enhance the information?
- use images to help low-literate viewers understand the ideas?

Design

Does your communication material:

- have organized information so that it looks appealing on the page (not too crowded or wordy)?
- have large enough writing to be read at a distance?
- Use an attention-grabbing caption, slogan, or question in a prominent place to help viewers get the main idea?
- use creative and easy to read fonts?
- avoid using all capital letters and underline?
- use bright and vibrant colors?
- use a consistent style?
- identify your organization's contact information and logo?

Tip Sheet: Pretesting Communication⁹

Before means of communication are shared widely, it is important to pretest messages focused on GBV prevention. Communication that is misinterpreted or considered offensive can prove counterproductive and even lead to backlash against the GBV program or individuals.

When pretesting with sample audiences, please keep the following in mind:

- Plan (budget and time) for pretesting, including follow-up pretesting after revisions.
- Do not include artists or others involved with developing IEC materials in pretesting (they are too familiar with content and cannot offer an objective perspective).
- Make sure you pretest IEC materials with diverse groups of intended audiences.
- Do not ask leading questions.
- Do not explain the materials/ messaging during pretesting.
- Do not correct or disagree with participants.
- Demonstrate interest and respect for participants' feedback.

The questions below offer some guidance for pretesting common communications materials.

Poster/Leaflet/Flyer

- First please look at the picture in the poster/flyer and tell us what you see.
- Now please look at the whole poster/flyer. What do you think it's 'saying'?
- Do you think the poster/flyer is asking you to do something? If yes, what?
- Who do you think this is intended for?
- Is there anything that might offend you or someone in your community? If so, what?
- Is there anything that you don't believe to be true?
- What, specifically, do you like about this poster/flyer?
- What don't you like about this poster/flyer?
- What can be done to improve this poster/flyer?

Radio spot/ Drama sketch

- Please listen to the radio spot/observe the drama sketch.
- Please summarize the message of the radio spot/sketch.
- Did you feel the spot was asking you to do something? If so, what?
- Did it include anything you don't think is true?
- Who do you think this is intended for? Is it someone like you or someone else?
- Was there anything that could offend you or someone in your community? If so, what?
- Was there something about this that you liked? If so, what?
- Was there something about this that you didn't like? If so, what?
- What can be done to make this a better spot?

⁹ Adapted from Johns Hopkins University / Center for Communication Program

Tip Sheet: Involving Community Leaders in Events

Inviting Leaders

- Invite leaders to join a campaign committee or planning meetings to assist in determining the theme or objectives, designing messaging and materials, organizing activities and logistics.
- Ensure women leaders and representatives also participate.

Preparation for an Event

- Discuss the goal of the event with leaders.
- Listen to leaders' ideas, priorities, and preferences for contributing.
- Learn from leaders about how to use the event to influence others in the community.
- Match leaders' strengths and interests with their roles.¹⁰
- Clearly define, and write down, leaders' roles and responsibilities to minimize confusion.
- Consider offering training on issues covered during the event to help leaders participate with confidence.
- Discuss how to address controversial or difficult issues that may arise.
- Check on leaders' comfort with public speaking and offer support where desired:
 - Outline talking points ahead of the event. If leaders prepare their own speeches, ask to identify major points together and highlight key messages.
 - If leaders would like to practice, offer for members of the GBV team to serve as a practice audience.
 - Anticipate questions from the audience and help the leader prepare to respond.
- Provide detailed information and directions for the event, so that leaders are comfortable and clear on plans and expectations.

During an Event

- Respect leaders time and keep a strict agenda.
- Be sure to introduce leaders with appropriate titles and in appropriate order.
- Rely on careful planning; remember you can't control others' speeches or all outcomes.

After the Event

- Hold follow-up meetings with leaders after the event to debrief and discuss the strengths, successes, challenges, and lessons.
- Give thanks and recognition¹¹ for traditional leader's efforts. This can be done individually, or through a more formal process, such as recognition of their efforts in the local newspaper, radio program or a public presentation.

¹⁰ Raising Voices. Start. *SASA! Tips Booklet*. In *The SASA ! Activist Kit for Preventing Violence against Women and HIV*, 2008

¹¹ Raising Voices. Start. *SASA! Tips Booklet*. In *The SASA ! Activist Kit for Preventing Violence against Women and HIV*, 2008.

Discussion Guide: Equitable Norms, Attitudes, and Behaviors

Group discussions with community leaders about equitable norms, attitudes, and behaviors can help leaders explore their own beliefs and practices, as well as those common within the community. This discussion guide includes suggestions for arranging and leading any group discussion, followed by sample questions and important ideas for discussing norms, attitudes, and behaviors relevant to prevention of GBV.

Arranging Discussion Groups (ahead of discussion)

- Identify a comfortable and quiet locations for discussions.
- Limit groups to 15 participants
- Complete discussions within 1.5 hours.
- Ensure lead facilitator has experience and/or training in facilitation. The facilitator must be able to ask probing and clarifying questions, demonstrate comfort and patience when talking about sensitive issues, positively manage negative or harmful comments, and respond appropriately to disclosures of GBV.
- Have a referral list of available services in case of GBV disclosure.
- Where possible, arrange same-sex facilitators for all male or all female discussion groups.

Introduction (5-10 minutes)

- Greet everyone, share introductions, pleasantries, and gratitude for any recent positive actions.
- Share general information about your organization and program (with any new participants).
- Present the purpose of the discussion.
- Agree to not share stories that identify individuals.

Discussion (30-45 minutes)

- Introduce topic of discussion and begin with a question or other prompts.
- Be sure to review questions/prompts and adapt them for context.
- Avoid “teaching”, talking too much, or arguing. Use prompts to keep conversation going and remember the discussion is also a learning opportunity for you.
- Do not feel pressure to use all questions/prompts.

Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

- Summarize key takeaways or ideas from discussion.
- Agree on any points for further discussion and make plans as appropriate.
- Thank all participants.

Prompts/Questions

GBV teams can explore a range of issues related to norms attitudes and practices. Discussions might focus on how norms, attitudes, and practices relate to specific forms of GBV, such as early/forced marriage, or discussions might focus more generally on power dynamics and the benefits of equal partnerships and nonviolence. Each sample cluster of questions below could be adapted for a single group discussion.

- Why are women vulnerable to violence? (When the question is answered probe further—keep asking why this is true.)
- People often talk about the man as head of the household. Do you know any situations where a man and a woman share responsibilities as heads of household? What do you think about this? Are there any benefits to sharing household responsibilities and decision-making?
- What does a happy marriage look like? Is the couple the same age or different ages? How did they meet? How did they decide to marry? Can you describe the roles of the husband and wife at home and in the community? Is he working? Is she working? Who is taking care of the children? Who is cooking? Who is making decisions? Are there children going to school? What are their children learning at home?
- Some families experience violence within the home. Children who witness their father beating their mother are more likely to perpetrate or experience the same kind of violence themselves. How do we break this cycle? What is required for women to be safe in their homes? What could lead a man who beats his wife to change his behavior?
- I'm concerned that some girls in the community are marrying before they are adults. Are you also concerned about this? For what reasons would a family want their daughter to marry young? Are you familiar with the health consequences of girls having children young? What are other consequences of early marriage? How do girls feel when they are forced to marry? Are girls who marry young likely to stay in those marriages? Will they be happy marriages? Will they raise happy children? If a girl's husband begins to beat her, could the girl find help anywhere? Would she be able to move out on her own? Would her family take her in?
- Can you think of a time when you felt powerless? How does it feel when someone else has power over you? Who do you have power over? Is power a good or a bad thing, or does it depend? Can you describe a good use of power? Does the community give more power to men than women? Is that fair? How are some men abusing that power? What changes would have to happen for women to have the same power as men?
- Share a brief fact related to a form of GBV (See **Fact Sheets** in *GBV Response Tools and Resources*). Focus on a global statistic, or a consequence. Ask what the group thinks about this. Is it a problem for this community? Why does this problem exist? Is anyone benefiting? Who is being hurt? What could be done to stop this from happening?

Important Ideas for Discussion

- Be familiar with consequences of GBV, including important points of global evidence. Information can be useful to open a conversation, to explain your concern and reason for raising issues, or to answer direct questions. Group discussions should not focus, though, on memorizing information but rather exploring topics. Make sure you listen more than you speak, and don't silence discussion with your knowledge of the topic.
- Remember not to be alarmed if someone raises a problematic point of view. This is likely a positive sign that you've created a safe space to air ideas, and exposing ideas is an important part of the process of behavior change. You can note your concern or disagreement without silencing discussion. Probe further. Ask others about their views.

Prevention Action Planning Tool

This simple action planning tool can be adapted, as appropriate, to plan prevention strategies with community leaders.

Problem to Address:					
Drivers/Risks	Action Required	Resources	Responsibilities	Timeframe	Monitoring Plans

Problem to Address:					
Drivers/Risks	Action Required	Resources	Responsibilities	Timeframe	Monitoring Plans

Recommendations: Creating a New Social Behavior Change Program

The following recommendations are adapted from a lessons learned report that was prepared by the first program manager of International Medical Corps' "Bienvenue aux Changements dans la Communauté" program in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Recommendations for future programming are divided into four categories: 1. Assessment, 2. Program Design, 3. Program Implementation, and 4. Monitoring & Evaluation.

1. Assessment

Carry out a contextual analysis.

An assessment of the realities on the ground concerning the topic in question and the practical and logistical challenges of program implementation is necessary for the development of a well-targeted and realistic intervention.

Gain knowledge of local organizations and civil society working in the area of interest and how the system is structured.

Having an awareness of how civil society and local organizations working in the area of interest are structured in country can help with program development and implementation. It can help to understand how the new project's activities can contribute to existing systems, identify gaps, propose activities based on need and select potential partners.

Explore different ways of working with potential partners.

View local organizations and partnerships as a means of extending the reach of a program even when providing grants cannot be part of a program. Assessing the potential of local partnerships and exploring ways of working with them to increase the geographical reach of the program and harmonize and reinforce messages across the board.

2. Program Design

Involve specialist at the program development phase.

Specialists in the topic of interest, in behavior change approaches and in monitoring and evaluation should all be involved from the initial phases of program design through to implementation. This will allow for the proposal and subsequent intervention to be viable and technically sound.

Ensure clear program objectives are defined at the developmental stage.

Every project should have specific program objectives that contribute to an overall result. Focused activities can then be planned to achieve the desired change.

Embed BCC interventions in a theoretical framework.

Theories can be longwinded and confusing; however, they provide essential guidance to program development. At the developmental stages, it is very helpful to assess the situation and identify the most suitable theoretical frameworks to achieve the desired outcomes. Theories need to be selected according to the nature of the problem and the contextual realities. Basing an intervention on theoretical groundings can help identify which elements to focus on and guide program activities.

Less is more.

In social behavior change interventions, focus is very important, and this requires sacrificing some activities to improve the impact of the essential ones. A good way of identifying a single focus for all activities is to do a root-cause analysis. The root cause then informs all aspects of programming.

Ensure that the roles and objectives of partners well defined from the start.

Each member of a consortium should have clear roles and a scope of work with clear objectives for program implementation. Constant, open communication throughout program implementation is important to ensure that all consortium partners are aware of their function and how their input contributes to the realization of an overall shared goal.

3. Program Implementation

Have well-defined job descriptions and invest time in staff recruitment and continuous formal and on-the-job training.

Project staff have an important role in ensuring that activities are implemented correctly and will have the desired effect. Spending time of understanding exactly the qualities and competencies required to carry out the job is very helpful in selecting the most appropriate candidates. An awareness of what qualities are necessary for the job is also helpful in identifying training needs. Investing time in building staff capacity through training as well as on-the-job coaching will contribute to sustainability and the realization of a technically sound intervention.

When different programs co-exist in one site, set up regular meetings and open communication lines to harmonize planning and program implementation.

Regular meetings between the different programs operating in the same site are essential to ensure smooth and coordinated implementation of activities. At the field level meetings may be organized on a weekly basis. Organizations with management offices outside the community should also meet, less frequently, at relevant levels. Sharing information can help guide efficient programming and increase a sense of unity within communities.

When conducting large-scale activities, make sure you have key messages prepared that will be disseminated in a predetermined way during the event.

Large-scale, edutainment events are effective ways of attracting crowds and raising awareness. To make the most of such occasions, it is important to know in advance the key messages that needs to be passed onto the community through the event. The event will then need to be planned in ways that allows the sharing of that key message, it can be through the distribution of eye-catching, easy to read leaflets, through the introduction of a quiz competition during the breaks, through information stands, or simply by portraying the key message through the event, be it a sketch, a dance, or a song.

Train the GBV SBC Mobilizers in basic GBV response and referrals

SBC Mobilizers work to sensitize communities. It is important that they have knowledge of basic elements of GBV response so that they are able to provide basic support and referrals to survivors they might encounter through their work. They can also convey information on basic response to their network of facilitators.

Have an adapted and tested curriculum for training.

Where training occurs, a contextually adapted and tested curriculum ought to be in place. In cases where the training can be delivered by different programs, roles and topics which need to be covered by each program must be defined.

Develop a single name, logo, and jingle for the project.

When several partners are in one consortium, there is always the risk that each tries to promote its own organization. To avoid this, and to limit confusion on the part of the community, it helps to create a single name for the project, accompanied by a logo and a jingle if possible. This allows for communities to quickly identify the program and associate it with key messages while also ensuring unity between the different consortium partners.

Develop a message compendium to be shared with volunteer facilitators, peer educators and other partners.

Developing key messages for social behavior change can help focus interventions and communications. Gathering these messages into a compendium and sharing it with partners both internally and externally, can be an effective way of harmonizing messages and ensuring that all players speak with one voice.

When entering a new community, use existing groups and associations as a platform for sensitization sessions.

In every community there generally are groups that meet on a regular basis, including religious groups, groups of young people, or groups that are held together by a common profession. These groups constitute a ready-made platform for message delivery and sensitization sessions. Working with existing groups will not only prove less labor intensive and more cost efficient; it will also increase acceptance of the project as it is seen as working with the community rather than changing established structures.

Ensure that men-led activities do not exclude women.

In recent years there has been a call to involve men more actively in the fight against violence against women. Working only with men, however, perpetuates the status quo of norms around male superiority and risks disempowering women. When supporting men in GBV prevention, it is important that women are actively involved and leading interventions.

Ensure that community performances portray positive, aspirational behaviors.

Evidence suggests that promotion of desired behaviors is more effective than the promotion of negative practices. All elements of the intervention should therefore focus on promoting positive behaviors. This is particularly important in activities which have a visual element, such as theater, films or puppetry. As people attending these types of activities will see and witness the behavior portrayed, there is a greater risk that the event could have an undesired effect of perpetuating the negative behaviors.

When working with communities, emphasize the value on non-monetary incentives.

The benefits of becoming involved in a SBC program can be numerous, ranging from greater recognition in the community to improved skills that can be transferred to other areas. Commitment from community members is essential for the success of a program, and there is a risk that monetary remuneration may attract people who are not sufficiently committed. Programs should carefully consider appropriate remuneration for different levels of program participation and be sure to apply a compensation scheme consistently, where staff receive fair wages, and volunteers don't bear costs of participation, but money is also not an incentive for participation in trainings and other community activities.

4. Monitoring & Evaluation

Review available, analyzed service data to inform programming.

Staff leading SBC interventions within a broader GBV program should not have access to sensitive data related to individuals receiving GBV response services. Where possible, though, staff involved with GBV response can share anonymized analyses of service data with SBC staff, such as GBVIMS reports, to inform programming, including tailored activities related to trends of violence. Tracking analyzed service data over time can also provide an indication of SBC program progress.

Ensure regular, open, and effective communication between M&E and programs.

From program design and through implementation, M&E and programs need to communicate openly and regularly to ensure that means of monitoring activities are effective, to track indicators, and to inform adaptations in programming.

Develop ways of assessing whether messages are heard during large-scale events.

The first step towards behavior change is awareness. It is important for an SBC intervention to assess whether key messages are heard. Program and M&E staff should work together to find ways of determining if and which messages are heard, particularly in large scale events or radio programming where little or no interaction occurs with the audience.

Make sure there is a monitoring system in place when working with a network of community facilitators /peer educators.

Community facilitators and peer educators are helpful in extending the reach of SBC activities. Quality control of what they are doing and saying however is important, as is the provision of ongoing technical support to strengthen skills. Program staff can work with M&E to devise a quality control system to be managed through self-reporting by volunteers, regular meetings, or monitored sessions.

Pre and post tests for trainings ought to require yes/no answers or multiple choice.

Pre and post tests used with open questions present challenges for objective marking and comparison of results. When trainings are delivered at a large scale, and M&E staff will lead the measurement of results, it is preferable to include easily quantifiable response options.

Devise ways of assessing outcome.

A plan for assessing outcomes should be designed at the start of a program and can rely on a range of creative strategies, including the use of qualitative information gathered through focus group discussions or in-depth interviews, the development of proxy indicators, or the identification of comparison communities. Assessing the effects of an SBC intervention is important for both process and outcome evaluations.

Resources for Learning about GBV Prevention Theories and Approaches

GBV is a complex social issue and there are many factors that contribute to this violence. Careful reflection on these factors can help teams develop appropriate programs and interventions aimed at preventing GBV.

There are a variety of theories to explain why people behave as they do and how to catalyze changes in behaviors that are harmful. Models and theories that are proving useful and effective for prevention of GBV include:

- The ecological model
- Behavior change theories
- Social norms theories

The Ecological Model

The ecological model for understanding violence against women¹² presents the context for how violence against women occurs. It recognizes that no one factor causes violence against women, but that rather it is caused by the interplay between individual, interpersonal, community, and socio-cultural factors. In this way, the ecological model helps us gain a deeper understanding of the issue of violence against women. For example, by using the ecological model, we can see why just telling an individual man not to use violence against women will not put an end to this behavior if his family and friends continue to support the use of violence, if the social norms that justify men's dominance over women are not changed, and if the laws to punish violence against women are not properly implemented. In addition to helping us understand the problem of GBV, the model helps us identify the most effective solutions, illustrating that we need to work with different institutions, groups, and individuals across all levels to drive and enable positive change because if we do not, we will not succeed in changing the norms that sustain GBV.

Theories of Behavior Change

Multiple theories of human behavior exist that can help to better understand why some individuals perpetrate GBV, as well as the needs and motivations of individuals and groups to make positive changes in behaviors. GBV programs that are guided by a theory, or multiple theories of behavior change, can more effectively engender desired changes in communities.

Across several theories, there is consensus that the following eight factors account for most of the variation in health-related behaviors relevant to GBV prevention:^{13, 14}

1. The person forms a strong positive intention or makes a commitment to perform the behavior.
2. There are no environmental barriers that make it impossible to perform the behavior.
3. The person possesses the skills necessary to perform the behavior.
4. The person believes that the advantages of performing the behavior outweigh the disadvantages.

¹² Heise, L. *Violence Against Women: An Integrated, Ecological Framework*, 1998.

¹³ Five theories include: The Health Belief Model, the Social Cognitive Theory, the Theory of Reasoned Action, the Theory of Self-Regulation and Self-Control, and the Theory of Subjective Culture and Interpersonal Relations.

¹⁴ Gielen and Sleet. *Application of Behavior-Change Theories and Methods to Injury Prevention*. *Epidemiol Rev*, 76-65 :(1) 25 .2003. <http://www.epirev.oxfordjournals.org/content/65/1/25.full.pdf+html>

5. The person perceives more normative pressure to perform the behavior than to not perform it.
6. The person perceives that performance of the behavior is consistent with his or her self-image or values.
7. The person's emotional reaction to performing the behavior is more positive than negative.
8. The person perceives that he or she has the capabilities to perform the behavior under different circumstances.

The behavior change theory that is most applied to GBV prevention work in humanitarian settings is the transtheoretical model, or *Stages of Change*¹⁵. The Stages of Change Model identifies phases of change people go through as they work towards changing their behaviors and practice. This model can be applied individual and collective transformational change:

- Stage 1: Pre-contemplation: an individual is unaware of the problems and its consequences in her/his life.
- Stage 2: Contemplation: an individual begins to think about whether the problem related to her/his life.
- Stage 3: Preparation for action: an individual obtains more information and develops an intention to act.
- Stage 4: Action: an individual begins to try new and different ways of thinking and behaving.
- Stage 5: Maintenance: an individual recognizes the benefits of the behavior change and maintains this change.

Learn more about applying the Stages of Change Model to address GBV:

- Michau, L. (2007) *Approaching Old Problems in New Ways: Community Mobilisation as a Primary Prevention Strategy to Combat Violence against Women*: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20461184>

Social Norms

Social norms are increasingly recognized as a key driver of GBV. Social norms are unspoken standards of behavior or rules governing what is and is not acceptable behavior; they guide the way people interact and behave. Social norms can be very powerful influences on behavior, even more so than personal opinions and understanding how norms influence behavior is an important development in GBV prevention. The desire to conform to social expectations means that social norms can be very persuasive and can be stronger than other factors influencing behavior. For example, many men still use violence against women, even when there are laws against it. It is important for violence prevention initiatives to encourage communities to focus on a positive vision for change. To make real and sustained change programs need to shift harmful unspoken group rules about gender, discrimination and violence that perpetuate GBV and replace them with norms that promote gender equitable and non-violent beliefs and behaviors.

Learn more about social norms and GBV:

- Jewkes, R. (2017) *Social Norms Evidence Brief*: <https://www.whatworks.co.za/documents/publications/165-social-norms-evidence-brief-website/file>
- UK Department for International Development (2016) *Shifting Social Norms to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls*: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/507845/Shifting-Social-Norms-tackle-Violence-against-Women-Girls3.pdf
- GSDRC and University of Birmingham (2016) *Social Norms Professional Development Pack*: www.gsdrc.org/professional-dev/social-norms/

¹⁵ The Transtheoretical Model was developed by Prochaska and DiClemente in the late 1970s.

Additional theories and frameworks have informed how these theories and models have been applied to understand GBV. In particular, feminist theories and principles and human rights frameworks and principles have significantly influenced how different theories are interpreted and applied to GBV prevention programs and interventions.

Further, a range of other theories are used to inform particular elements of programs. For example, in addition social norms theory, a program seeking to engage and empower community leaders may apply theories of adult learning, empowerment or collective action to the program. What matters is that programs are based on relevant theories that explain the problem of GBV and provide a clear framework for how desired changes will be created. Doing further research and looking at different interventions and program designs will help identify the various ways that theories are used to inform GBV prevention.

Effective Approaches to GBV Prevention

The evidence base about effective approaches to preventing GBV is growing and evolving as new programs and interventions are developed and studied. Through global efforts such as What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls— an initiative which works across 13 countries to build the evidence base on effective approaches to preventing GBV in low-middle income settings— learning is emerging about characteristics of effective GBV prevention programs. Findings from this and other research offer valuable learning about the types of GBV programs that have shown promising results in creating a transformative change to prevent GBV. Reviewing evidence about different approaches to GBV prevention is helpful when designing GBV prevention programming— including with community leaders. While the majority of initiatives have not been implemented in humanitarian settings, the information about more effective approaches will be a helpful starting point for considering which types of initiatives might be appropriate in your context.

Resources for learning more about GBV prevention design and approaches

- Murphy, M. et al (2019) *What works to prevent violence against women and girls in conflict and humanitarian crisis: Synthesis Brief*: <https://www.whatworks.co.za/documents/publications/355-p868-irc-synthesis-brief-report-lr-26092019/file>
- Gibbs, A. and Bishop, K. (2019) *Combined economic empowerment and gender-transformative interventions*: <https://www.whatworks.co.za/resources/evidence-reviews/item/652-combined-economic-empowerment-and-gender-transformative-interventions>
- Jewkes, R., Stern, E., and Ramsoomar, L. (2019) *Community activism approaches to shift harmful gender attitudes, roles and social norms*: <https://www.whatworks.co.za/documents/publications/357-social-norms-briefweb-28092019/file>
- Kerr-Wilson A. et al (2020) *A rigorous global evidence review of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls*: <https://www.whatworks.co.za/documents/publications/374-evidence-reviewfweb/file>
- Jewkes, R. et al (2020) *Effective design and implementation elements in interventions to prevent violence against women and girls*: <https://www.whatworks.co.za/documents/publications/373-intervention-report19-02-20/file>
- Women's Refugee Commission (2014) *Empowered and Safe: Economic strengthening for adolescent girls in emergencies*: www.womensrefugeecommission.org/images/zdocs/Econ-Strength-for-Girls-Empowered-and-Safe.pdf