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.