

SASA!



Mobilizing Communities to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls

Experiences from Tanzania



A World Without Violence against Women and Girls is Possible

Violence against Women and Girls is one of the most widespread human rights violations of our time. A staggering one in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime (WHO 2013).

Gender inequality is both the cause and the enabling context of violence against women and girls and we need to address its structural drivers to prevent the violence from occurring in the first place.

What is SASA!?

The SASA! approach is a community intervention developed by the Ugandan NGO Raising Voices, which addresses the imbalance of power between women and men, girls and boys. Communities are mobilized to rethink and change gender discriminatory attitudes, behavior and social norms that result in gender inequality and violence against women and girls.

SASA! is an acronym for Start – Awareness – Support – Action, the four phases of the programme, as well as a Kiswahili word for «now». The active engagement and training of local Community Activists – both women and men – lies at the core of SASA!. Key activities include: Community dialogues, media and advocacy work, dramas, films, public events and training of service providers.

SASA! in Tanzania

In Tanzania, as many as 50% of all ever-married women have experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime (Tanzania Demographic Health Survey 2015/16). In 2015, Kivulini Women's Rights Organization and Women's Promotion Centre launched a SASA! programme in the regions of Mwanza and Kigoma in partnership with the Norwegian NGO FOKUS – Forum for Women and Development, reaching a population of more than 65,000 people.

After three years, the prevalence of intimate partner violence against women in the intervention communities has been significantly reduced.

«We no longer turn a blind eye to injustice. If we see a woman being mistreated, we get together to help her. There is now a strong support network between women in the community.»

Monica Mapesa

SASA! Community Activist



What is the Impact?

In 2014, a rigorous baseline study was conducted by the Tanzania Women Research Foundation before launching the programme, and the study was replicated in 2018 to evaluate the impact. Some of the key results include:

- **Reduction in the prevalence of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence against women** in the past year from 36.5% in 2014 to 23.2% in 2018.

- **Increased knowledge and reduced acceptance of violence against women and girls** among both women and men. 92.2% of men and 76.5% of women agree that a married woman can refuse to have sex with her husband if she does not feel like it, thus supporting that sex between intimate partners should be consensual. In comparison, 62.9% of men and 42.9% of women supported this statement before the programme was launched.

- **Increased capacity to respond to violence against women and girls.** Community members and village leaders know what to do and where to go if a woman is subjected to violence. The referral network between service providers has also been strengthened.

- Women and men report that **the value of girls and their education has increased** in the community as a result of the SASA! intervention.

- **Wives and husbands increasingly work together as partners** for the benefit of their families and communities.



«I am not afraid to speak out on violence against women anymore and I am very proud of my husband for being willing to listen and change.»

Suzana Anthony

SASA! Community Activist

«Together, Let's Act NOW to End Violence against Women and Girls!»

For more information, please contact:

FOKUS – Forum for Women and Development, Oslo, Norway

Website: www.fokusvinner.no - E-mail: fokus@fokusvinner.no - Twitter: [@fokusvinner](https://twitter.com/fokusvinner)

Or visit the website of Raising Voices: <http://raisingvoices.org>