

Connecting Organizations for Change in Tanzania

A case study of Amani Girls Home and a consortium approach to *SASA!*

Amani Girls Home is a local organization based in Mwanza, Tanzania that works with Tanzanian communities to enable women and girls to have happy, successful lives. When Amani took an honest look at what it would take for them to implement *SASA!* in 2015, they realized that the methodology required certain expertise beyond their current capacity. Eager to create the most transformative change possible in the community, they began to map out other organizations with the area with complementary experiences and skills. Sono Revocatus, Program Manager at Amani Girls Home explained: “We thought, if we could better structure things by working together, we could overcome any challenge.”

Ultimately, they decided that by establishing a consortium with four other organizations, they could build on each other's strengths and implement *SASA!* together. Amani had gender programming expertise, experience working with adolescent girls, and capacity to coordinate the work. One consortium partner—Mikono Yetu Center for Creativity and Innovation—had previous experience in *SASA!* and knowledge of how to use and adapt communication materials. Governance Links Tanzania had experience with media and advocacy work. MAYODEN had experience with youth, and Fadhili with community-level activism. Together they created a highly skilled team, with depth and breadth of programmatic expertise.

Initially, defining clear communication structures and managing different financial and human resources procedures was challenging. The consortium responded to these issues immediately, agreeing on preferred communication channels and defining their respective roles. They also established a unified financial system for the purposes of *SASA!*. Amani—as the consortium coordinator—established weekly meetings between partners. “It was important that every institution appoint at least two staff to be the focal points and be the same faces in the community, and the same faces in the meetings,” Sono says. “It was also important to be clear and map out who would do what and who would bring what at what level, [and] how communication and technical support would be structured. . . .”



Critically, the consortium also identified the importance of a shared, common culture and vision to achieve program coherence and sustain a meaningful partnership. Towards this end, Amani invited Mikono Yetu to facilitate the [Get Moving!](#) process created by the GBV Prevention Network. “Get Moving! helped us build a single team,” Sono reports. “Even if you go in the communities where we are implementing SASA!, it is like a single team that is working in that particular community.”

From the beginning, all four consortium partners participated in each SASA! training and technical assistance visits in Mwanza. For trainings outside of Mwanza (when resources limit full participation), Amani staff may take the training. However they subsequently ensure partners have access to new knowledge and capacities through five or six-hour long practical sessions, three times per month. In addition, there is one session a month to work together on reports, so the consortium essentially meets weekly. This intensity of engagement is reflected at the community level as well:

“The greatest success of the consortium approach to SASA! is our availability to the community. . . Even on Sunday, at least one of the partner staff members is in the community. This has created a great connection between community activists, girls in girls’ groups, community action group leaders, and throughout the network. We are evolving into one family. Whether there is a funeral or an event in the community, the community communicates directly with staff of the consortium. Local community leaders . . . even invite community activists during their normal community meetings when they are gathering, to give talks or facilitate dialogues.”

Another advantage of the consortium approach is their larger reach given a relatively modest budget. They are currently working with over 100 community activists in four wards of Mwanza. Sono says, “Looking at the workload with monthly meetings with community activists, girls’ groups, community action groups, it wouldn’t be easy if it was just us. But with the consortium, it works wonderfully.”

Reflecting on overall lessons to implementing SASA! through a consortium approach, Sono emphasizes three main considerations: 1. explicitly establishing unique roles based on each organization’s expertise, 2. agreeing on communication styles and frequency early on, and 3. nurturing shared organizational values.

SASA! in action!

Achieving Cohesive Change Using a Consortium Approach to SASA!

In an ideal consortium approach, the community is unaware of the internal coordination required between consortium member, instead experiencing a cohesive, streamlined change process. Below are two examples of community change from Amani's SASA! Awareness phase.

Soon after participating in the SASA! training for community activists, Edina* began educating members of the community through choir groups and community meetings. Her husband participated (a bit reluctantly) and at first he did not like to listen to the discussions about Violence Against Women (VAW) at the community meetings, but as Edina kept discussing the matters with him, he started to see the importance of the topic. Edina's husband has come a long way from those initial meetings, becoming a community activist himself and talking with anyone and everyone he finds about these issues!

John*, a village chairman, learned about how to respond more effectively to cases of intimate partner violence during the SASA! Awareness phase training. Even in complicated cases, he is able to give referrals to other services for women experiencing violence. He has even begun to influence other village chairmen to become more aware of VAW, using opportunities at public meetings and during informal evening gatherings (when people come together to play games) as opportunities to create debate.

** While these are stories of real activists, pseudonyms have been used to maintain confidentiality*



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