

Programming to Prevent Violence Against Women: **PRACTICE BRIEF**

Training and Mentoring Community Facilitators to Lead Critical Reflection Groups for Preventing Violence Against Women

OVERVIEW

In order to foster shifts in attitudes, norms and behaviors around gender and violence, many activists and practitioners working to prevent violence against women (VAW) facilitate critical reflection groups. These target particular groups of community members including men, women, couples, adolescents, religious leaders, service providers and teachers. They include more structured curriculum-based group training programs as well as more informal (but still systematic) conversations and activities with groups of community members.

The most effective interventions tend to combine opportunities for the members of the groups to: (i) develop *critical consciousness* and reflect on their own beliefs and attitudes through exploring their personal experiences of gender, violence and power as well as listening to and developing empathy for the experiences of others; (ii) build new skills and practice behaviors to improve communication, enhance negotiation, and de-escalate conflict; (iii) develop a sense of cohesiveness, solidarity and belief in their power as a group to effect change. Group-based interventions require very skilled facilitation- something that many organizations have recognized over time through experience.

This Practice Brief therefore focuses on the practicalities of recruiting, training and supporting community members to lead and facilitate critical reflection groups on gender, power and violence as part of Violence Against Women (VAW) prevention programming. It looks at why critical reflection groups are important to VAW prevention, reviews the pertinent issues for practitioners and gives examples and practical tips for those planning to train facilitators. It draws on available literature as well as the real-life experiences of activists and practitioners implementing these types of group reflection processes.

KEY ISSUES

- Why are group-based critical reflection interventions important for violence prevention?
- What issues should you consider when recruiting and training community facilitators to lead these discussions?
- Which approaches to training facilitators are most effective?
- What types of mentoring, supervision and feedback are needed for facilitators?
- What other issues do you need to think about?

WHY ARE **GROUP-BASED CRITICAL REFLECTION INTERVENTIONS** IMPORTANT FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION?

Social activists and researchers have found that when individuals achieve critical consciousness about gender, power and systematic privilege, and make a commitment to promote change towards equality in their own lives and communities, a process of *transformative learning* is possible. When a group of individuals

make this shift together, this can provide a foundation for social change in combatting discrimination and violence.ⁱⁱⁱ Much of the theory behind these processes emerged from the field of adult education, and in particular the theories of Paolo Freire,^{iii,iv} and Jack Mezirow^v (See next page).



THEORIES OF CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

Paolo Freire worked as an educator with poor and disenfranchised people in Brazil, insisting that they must both understand and confront the systems that oppress them. He argued that development of critical consciousness- an understanding of how social conditions privilege some but not others- was key to this process. For Freire, this involves: discussing and reflecting on one's own experiences; engaging in political and ideological analysis while critiquing the distribution of social power; developing a sense of solidarity with a social group; and making a commitment to making changes in one's own life and context.

Jack Mezirow was an educator in the United States. He developed the concept of transformative learning- defined as the process by which individuals change their frame of reference, their convictions and lifestyle through making meaning from their own experiences. Transformative learning can come about through a life transition or a disorienting dilemma or through discussions led by a skilled facilitator.

In the VAW prevention field, many of the more successful interventions- in terms of shifting harmful attitudes and reducing the prevalence of violence against women – have used group-based training and reflective discussions.^{vi} These include, for example, small group curriculum-based interventions such as Stepping Stones in South Africa,^{vii} Program H in Brazil^{viii} and Change Starts at Home in Nepal. Programs such as SASA! In Uganda use similar problem-posing “quick chats” and discussions as part of their overall community mobilization strategies.^{ix}

The success of such critical reflection groups relies heavily on the skills of the facilitator and the techniques used to promote shifts in perspective and insights into systems of gender, power and violence. While there is limited research about what techniques work best to optimize such skills, and help prepare and mentor community facilitators to achieve success in leading such discussions, experienced practitioners have developed some insights based on practical experience.

This practice brief includes these practical insights as well as those from research findings.

RECRUITING, TRAINING AND MENTORING FACILITATORS: KEY ISSUES TO CONSIDER

1. WHAT IS THE **GOAL OF THE GROUP** DISCUSSION TO BE FACILITATED?

Facilitator training, mentoring and supervision should explicitly clarify the long-term goals of the prevention program and how and why the facilitated group discussions are expected to make progress towards these goals.

Facilitators need to understand that ending violence against women requires a cadre of community members committed to both personal and community change.

The goal of the group discussions is to support participants to increase their ability to question and challenge traditional views of gender, learn skills and build relationships for community organizing, networking and activism. It is important for facilitators to know, understand and be aligned with these vision and goals.

EXAMPLE: ALIGNING FACILITATOR SKILLS WITH CURRICULUM GOALS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Research on the learning journey of facilitators from the Creating Futures project in South Africa found that facilitators had a different understanding of success from the program staff. The facilitators expected group participants to change their behaviors (e.g. related to condom use). They missed opportunities to facilitate debate about broader social issues and thus perhaps limited the emergence of critical consciousness of the group participants.^x They recommended making the goals of the project and each facilitated session explicit to facilitators and monitor based on these goals.

2. WHAT **TECHNIQUES WORK BEST** FOR A WELL-FACILITATED GROUP DISCUSSION?

Facilitator training should be explicit about the techniques that work best to achieve program goals. The training, mentoring and supervision should be designed to help facilitators to practice and master these skills and techniques. Practitioners with extensive experience in training facilitators cite the following key techniques:

- **Understanding who is in the room.** A facilitator needs to gain a good understanding of the profile of participants, the dimensions of diversity and difference across the group and the relationships between participants (are they strangers, members of same family, etc?). Also, the issue of whether and how participants' gender, cultural context, literacy or other factors may affect the way they learn also needs to be investigated before the start.
- **Establish a safe, open and trusting space.** This implies setting clear boundaries about confidentiality of information shared; ensuring non-hierarchical communication patterns that respect other people's life experiences, ways of knowing and communicating; and encouraging equal participation among participants. It also means the facilitator needs to be welcoming, friendly, open-minded and trustworthy.
- **Applying participatory techniques.** This is about more than using interactive methods to 'make people talk'. To promote transformative learning and critical consciousness, it is important to include interactive learning activities that encourage personal self-disclosure and the exploration of alternative personal perspectives through group-based problem-posing and debate, and to incorporate self-assessment and feedback.
- **Encouraging participants to work through emotions and feelings.** Transformative learning is not just a rational exercise. Affective learning through processing emotions is a key component of gaining critical consciousness. In practice, most existing projects do not explicitly train facilitators in techniques to proactively elicit or manage strong emotions. Researchers have found that many strong emotions such as distress, anger and elation are generated in transformative learning and facilitators can help group participants make sense of these emotions.^{xi} Some researchers call for greater attention to women's experience of transformative learning, as women's journeys and triggers for critical consciousness may be different from men's.^{xii}



- **Managing group discussions to maximise learning:** A well-facilitated session ensures that topics are explored as planned, key learning points are assimilated and all participants have chance to express their views. This requires the facilitator to apply techniques to allow discussion, but keep on track and to

encourage participation (e.g. splitting into pairs, small groups, individual reflection time, speaking one by one, gently subduing dominant voices) and to verify participant learning by reflecting back and using exercises to demonstrate learning and skills.

3. WHAT ARE THE **QUALITIES** OF A SKILLED FACILITATOR?

A skilled facilitator has confidence in the knowledge and capacities of the participants in a group, treats everyone as equals, and poses questions, rather than lecturing or teaching. A good facilitator needs to possess a range of capacities (see list opposite), some of which can be developed and practiced; others that tend to depend on their own personal characteristics.

Reputation is important. A facilitator should be considered well-respected by the community. They should be familiar and accessible to participants. Ideally, they should be from the same community and speak the same language/dialect as participants. They should not be viewed as remote from the participants' lived experiences.

In order to be a good facilitator for discussions on gender and VAW, a good facilitator also needs to role-model gender-equitable, respectful behavior and be able to handle challenging questions around gender from participants without a script.

QUALITIES AND CAPACITIES OF SKILLED FACILITATORS

- Conveys authenticity and sincerity;
- Displays empathy and humility;
- Acts with emotional maturity;
- Has an interest in and openness to others and other ideas;
- Ability to think on one's feet;
- Ability to guide discussion and enable everyone to participate;
- Ability to respond constructively to challenge;
- Ability to listen actively, deeply and read body language;
- Ability to make others feel safe and comfortable discussing sensitive topics;
- Commitment to inviting feedback and ongoing reflection on own practice.

4. WHAT ARE THE **KEY CONSIDERATIONS** WHEN RECRUITING NEW FACILITATORS?

To recruit new facilitators, start by looking for people who have already undergone some self-reflection around gender and with a personal commitment to gender equality. Local feminist NGOs or groups with a progressive social agenda often have a good understanding of who has these attitudes and who already possesses some skills as a facilitator. Another option is to recruit by advertising widely in the community, citing requirements in interpersonal skills as noted above.

Other key issues to consider are summarized in the box below. A screening interview (including possible role-play of a facilitated discussion) is helpful for all candidates, even in cases of community members who are well-liked and who demonstrate a commitment to help their own community.

EXAMPLE: THE CHALLENGES OF WORKING WITH FORMER TEACHERS

Living with Dignity in Tajikistan hired 7 former teachers as facilitators (out of a total of 12).

While they were highly recommended and trusted by the community, and brought considerable skills, some of the teachers had difficulty transitioning away from traditional teaching methods. One simply lectured rather than facilitating discussion. It took considerable coaching and support to encourage a different approach.



RECRUITMENT: KEY ISSUES TO CONSIDER

1. Gender of facilitators? Female facilitators are often recruited to facilitate group sessions with women. Male facilitators are often recruited for sessions with men. Ideally, there is a male-female pair for mixed gender sessions. This is appropriate in most cultural contexts, but the decision needs to be taken according to context.

2. Age of facilitators? The Living With Dignity project in Tajikistan found that younger facilitators had a hard time facilitating discussions and offering alternative view-points with older participants because of cultural norms that reinforce respecting the views of one's elders. Older male facilitators tended to be more egalitarian in mind-set than younger male facilitators.

3. Urban versus rural? The Indashikyirwa project in Rwanda wanted to recruit facilitators for a remote, rural setting. They learned from participants that it did not work to recruit highly experienced facilitators from the capital city, as these individuals were generally viewed with suspicion by rural participants. Rural participants felt the urban individuals did

not understand their context, were not trust-worthy, and further, and did not speak the local dialect well enough to facilitate discussion of sensitive topics.

4. Volunteers or paid? Part-time or full time? Many funded projects hire full time staff for this role, while others recruit for part-time staff or volunteers. However, it is sometimes difficult for part-timers to find sufficient time to commit to the intensive periods (of up to 10 days at a time) for training and refresher training throughout the project life, given other responsibilities. Consider options for activists who work long hours without pay!

5. How many facilitators? Consider recruiting two facilitators per group reflection session, so they can support each other in the different exercises and group work. If the group reflection sessions are planned to include both men and women participants, both male and female facilitators should be recruited, ideally to be deployed in male-female pairs during facilitated sessions. Consider recruiting more candidates than are actually necessary, assuming that there will be drop-outs during the orientation and training process.

5. HOW MUCH TIME IS NEEDED TO TRAIN FACILITATORS?

New facilitators need considerable time and multiple iterative sessions to reflect on their own values, biases and understanding of gender constructs; to learn the content of the curriculum; and to learn and practice facilitation skills.

There are no published studies comparing which methods work best to train facilitators for a curriculum on gender or violence prevention, nor which time frames are ideal.

Many practitioners report that that 10 days of training time for new facilitators is not enough. Depending on skills and experience of the newly recruited facilitators, a total of 25 days, including booster sessions, will be more realistic.

Other experience from teams who have trained facilitators shows that organizing a sequence of shorter trainings over a 6 – 12 month time frame works better than a single intensive training. For example, Change Starts at Home trainings were given 2 – 3 months apart (see box).

It's helpful to recruit during the project inception phase to give new facilitators time to absorb and debate the issues, and support any formative research of local gender norms as part of their own orientation process. If the curriculum needs to be translated into local language, the facilitators should be a part of that translation process to give them further opportunities to both absorb the material and shape it (See box).

EXAMPLE: CHANGE STARTS AT HOME CURRICULUM FOR COMMUNITY FACILITATORS, NEPAL

Training 1 Training Facilitation Skills, Understanding Gender & Norms (5 days)

Training 2 Refresher Training on Facilitation Skills, Gender Equality & Intimate Partner Violence (3 days)

Training 3 Life Skills Training (3 days)

Training 4 Refresher Training on Life Skills (3 days)

Training 5 Training on Community Mobilization (2 days)

Training 6 Reflection workshop (1 day)

EXAMPLE: INVOLVING FACILITATORS IN THE CURRICULUM DESIGN

The *Indashyikirwa* project in Rwanda had a one year inception period and was able to include facilitators in the process of honing the content of the curricula with couples, women's safe space facilitators and opinion leaders.

The facilitators spent weeks going through each session themselves in support of the curricula design and during the two week formal training. Through these heated debates it became clear that the facilitators themselves did not all agree on all the points, which was a useful insight for them. It gave them the opportunity to absorb the material and concepts

and understand through firsthand experience how exploring personal perspectives through debate with others is more important than everyone getting the 'answer right.'

The curriculum was adjusted again during pre-testing with community members, which included interviews with facilitators after facilitating each session, and finalized before the formal training of community members began. The inclusion of facilitators in the curriculum design was clearly a worthwhile investment both for the quality of the curriculum and for developing the skills of the facilitators.



6. WHAT IS IT **IMPORTANT** TO COVER IN THE TRAINING?

The training of facilitators should be aligned with feminist principles. Designing programs that ask activists to focus on technical solutions without engaging them in the core goals of overcoming social injustice weakens activists and social movements.

Community mobilization and collective action is critical to VAW prevention, so training facilitators in social change tactics can't be ignored or short-changed.

For sustained confidence to act, community facilitators and participants need a sense of collective identity and solidarity outside of their immediate social circle, and to feel comfortable with a range of tactics to influence attitudes, policies and norms.

There are many existing resources that will be useful for training facilitators in activism and social change (see resources listed at the end of this brief).

Facilitator training ideally includes the following content:

- Personal reflection on gender as a social construct, and opportunity for trainee facilitators to examine their own experiences, values and assumptions about gender, power and VAW;
- Understanding, learning and practicing delivery of the curriculum content;
- Developing and improving facilitation skills through practice, reflection and feedback;
- How to deal with participant requests for help, and managing discussion or recollection of trauma, including where and how to refer participants for further support;
- Self-care and wellbeing;
- How to help the group gain a sense of cohesion, solidarity and group efficacy;
- Activism skills in mobilizing change processes.

7. WHICH **APPROACHES TO TRAINING** FACILITATORS ARE MOST EFFECTIVE?

Most facilitators are trained through an iterative process of first being a participant in a session, then having a go as facilitator of the session with feedback from others. Practitioners stress that this process of facilitating mock sessions for peers is the most critical training component for new facilitators and ample time needs to be allocated for it.

Learning to facilitate is usually accomplished through observation and mimicking experienced facilitators, and then learning by doing, with feedback to ensure hands-on mastery. Some projects have gone further: the mock sessions are used to compare different options for how to facilitate that session and the team debates and chooses which is most effective for the goals of that session.

Project timelines often under-estimate the time needed for facilitators to practice and receive feedback.

Cascade training: The efficacy of a cascade training model, where community facilitators are trained to train others in facilitation, is doubtful. The training investment needed for community facilitators to gain new levels of perspectives on gender and power and to utilize complex interpersonal skills in order to facilitate discussions and manage group debates on sensitive topics, is considerable and many practitioners say that that cascade training cannot deliver this.



TRAINING TIP:

One of the most common struggles for new facilitators is mastering the skill of facilitating a discussion for the purpose of transformative learning, versus a didactic approach of conveying 'correct' information. Ideally the training of new facilitators anticipates this and is structured to address it. For example, through role plays comparing didactic style versus debate and probing questions, and practicing how a facilitator draws out different ideas and solutions from the group.



Experience shows us that facilitators must go through the program as participants and begin the process of their own critical reflection before they begin to lead as facilitators."

**Lori Heise, Technical Director,
The Prevention Collaborative** ”

8. WHAT TYPES OF MENTORING, SUPERVISION AND FEEDBACK ARE NEEDED FOR FACILITATORS?

Mentoring, supervision, feedback and evaluation are all critical to support both new and more experienced facilitators to improve their practice. From the onset, it is important to establish a culture of iterative learning and to introduce supportive, respectful systems of routine feedback.

An effective system usually combines self-reflection, peer feedback and mentoring/supervisory support. It is common for teams to under-estimate the level of support needed by facilitators and it is

essential to include sufficient budget for both regular one-to-one mentoring by field supervisors and well as group reflection, problem solving and refresher sessions.

There are three key ways to gather data about how a facilitator is doing: (1) Self-reflection and reporting; (2) External direct observation by peers and supervisors; and (3) Triangulation of input from participants and community members. Key areas for reflection and feedback and practical tips are shown in the boxes below.

QUESTIONS FOR MONITORING THE FACILITATION OF GROUP DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION SESSIONS:

1. Group process and facilitation tactics

- Did you follow the procedures (exercises, probe questions, role plays) of the session as trained? What did you change and why? How much was lecture-style and how much was drawn from the group?
- What would you change or improve in how you facilitate this next time?

2. Content of topics

- Which topics seemed to resonate most with participants in this session?
- Which topics or content generated strong emotions such as disbelief, anger, disagreement? How did you handle this?
- In this session, how many people shared relevant personal stories about their own lives and how did the group respond?
- What would you change in terms of topic/ content next time?

3. Responsiveness of facilitation and content to participant needs

- What are the things that participants are struggling with the most (for example: logistics of meeting time or place, strong emotions, particular topic, language, literacy, cultural relevance, peer pressure, personal circumstances, resistance)? How did you help the group adjust to those struggles?

- How are the power dynamics of the group helping achieve insights, or keeping people from achieving insights?
- For those who are particularly quiet, what worked to draw them out?
- How are men and women (boys and girls) responding differently?
- What adjustments would you make for the next time you facilitate this?

4. Monitoring the effectiveness of approaches and techniques

- What evidence of trust, respect and empathy among participants did you see (or not)?
- What evidence of inclusiveness of participation did you see (or not)?
- Are participants voicing insights about their own “aha” insights about new ideas? Do you see evidence of a perspective shift about gender, power and fairness?
- Do you see evidence of an understanding of the larger structures and social systems that perpetuate shame, blame and unfairness related to VAW?
- What evidence do you see of solidarity and commitment to behaviour change or contributing to community activism to prevent VAW?



MENTORING AND SUPERVISION: PRACTICAL TIPS

1. Ensure a safe supervisory environment that promotes trust. Program staff need to model a process of soliciting feedback for themselves, checking with each other as peers and the team for opportunities for improvement. Ensure both program staff and facilitators practice giving and getting respectful feedback, including issues to work on and what is going well.

2. Encourage each member of the facilitation team to get into the habit of reflecting personally and taking notes on what is going well and what is not working. Design a written checklist for facilitators to self-complete after each session and for supervisors to complete for observations (see box above). Use these in meetings for group reflection and discussion.

3. Ensure regular observation of curriculum sessions by field supervisors, then follow this up with one-on-one mentoring and feedback to individual facilitators. Also build in peer observation, support and problem solving. Encourage facilitator pairs to give each other feedback after each session.

4. Build in regular (e.g. weekly, monthly) group meetings between supervisors and facilitators. Focus these sessions on common challenges and group problem solving. For example, the project Change Starts at Home requests four facilitators per week to audio-record their session and then uses this for group feedback and learning.

5. Build in regular opportunities for participant feedback to facilitators and supervisors through:

- Informal supervisor chats with participants when on site;
- Ask participants to write, draw or record their quick feedback at the end of each session e.g. their key learning for the session, what they like best, what could be improved;
- Anonymous suggestions box for written or drawn feedback and suggestions;
- Ask the participants to meet in pairs or groups of three after the session, and briefly discuss what they learned, what they liked best and what could be done better. Invite them to share feedback in plenary.

EXAMPLE: ADAPTIVE MONITORING AND SUPERVISION SYSTEM SET UP IN NEPAL

Change Starts at Home in Nepal explored alternative options for supportive monitoring and supervision of facilitators in rural Nepal. Their system included a daily report on the results of the facilitated session. However, the facilitators found the written report format too time consuming and the reports were not being submitted in a timely way. Project staff developed an alternative method for the facilitators to verbally call in their reports using cell phones to an automated telephone line that recorded their verbal reports. Voice recognition software generated transcribed reports for the supervisors to review (supported by Dimagi/CommCare). Another solution to overcome challenges of supervising a large number of facilitators (more than 70) in a remote geographic context was to institute random checks through phone interviews and review of audio-recordings of a random selection of group sessions.

WHICH OTHER ISSUES DO YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT?

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION (LANGUAGE, LITERACY)

In the planning stage, programmers should anticipate needs for translation and varied literacy levels of participants and facilitators. Facilitators do not need high levels of literacy. Low-level literacy can be accommodated through training processes and verbal, audio and visual curriculum materials. Digital and mobile technology can be used to record sessions for practice, review and feedback by supervisors and trainee facilitators. Mobile phones can be used by facilitators to call in their reports or questions.

A curriculum will often need to be translated into a local language. In this case, it is essential for the content to be pre-tested for comprehension and contextual accuracy, adapting language and visuals to incorporate local concepts, idioms, images, proverbs and slang. Facilitators must be included in the translation and testing. Someone adept at both languages must monitor for fidelity.

PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING AND REFERRALS

Program planners should budget for psychosocial and emotional health support mechanisms for participants, community facilitators and their supervisors.

The discussion of violence and abuse in the content might trigger (vicarious) trauma and/or generate a desire for counseling.

Working referral pathways to professional health, legal, and psychosocial professionals should also be in place for participants, facilitators and staff who wish to seek these services.

In the training, discuss setting boundaries. Remind facilitators that they don't need to have all the answers and they should not attempt to counsel people, but should call on others to help resolve the issues. Try out scenarios and brainstorm different responses.

EXAMPLES: SUPPORTING THE WELLBEING OF PARTICIPANTS AND FACILITATORS IN RWANDA, NEPAL AND BANGLADESH

The *Indashyikirwa* project in Rwanda found that participants grew emotionally close to the facilitators and began to ask for one-to-one or couples counselling. The program had anticipated requests for counseling and had identified professional referrals (health or professional counsellors) but the participants preferred the facilitators, whom they already knew.

The facilitators had worked hard to build trusting relationships and wanted to respond, but had not been trained in counselling and were worried about their own capacity, ability to cope, and time and safety issues. Program staff organized a problem-solving workshop with the facilitators to explore options, and

one concrete outcome was a request for vicarious trauma counseling for the facilitators themselves, which was offered.

Tipping Point, in Nepal and Bangladesh, finding high levels of stress in their facilitation teams, began to incorporate fun, team-building exercises into the project timeline, to allow facilitators to let off steam and laugh together.

The *Change Starts at Home* project invited family members to participate in special sessions 3 – 4 times a year, knowing that families play a key support role for activists and change agents, and need to be a part of the learning journey. They also had counselors available for facilitators at all times.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- 1. Invest in local expertise and knowledge.** Social change programs that rely on facilitated processes are only as good as the facilitators. Don't underestimate the time or resources needed to recruit, train and support community facilitators as integral team members. Seek out and listen to facilitators in the process of finalizing the curriculum, translating it into local language and pre-testing it with participants, before training of facilitation skills even starts.
- 2. Not everyone is suited to facilitate transformative learning processes.** Sometimes this becomes obvious during or after training. Be prepared for people to leave for one reason or another or to let people go after the training if you don't have confidence that they can do the work effectively. Train more community facilitators than may be needed and plan for sensitive ways to transition the facilitation of the groups to other team members, if necessary.

- 3. Respect the timeline, resources and personal process of mastering complex skills.** Mastering the complex art of facilitation takes months and years, not days. Facilitator training is not just a matter of mastering a task but also an internal process of self-reflection and deconstruction of one's own beliefs, which takes time. Ideally, the training process will build in this self-reflective process prior to and along with learning the curriculum content and the skills in managing group discussion and debate.

Shorter bursts of training over months, interspersed with practice, 'homework' (self-study or discussions) and group discussion works better than a condensed intense training session of a few days. Do not ask newly trained facilitators to train others. Mastering complex facilitation skills do not lend themselves to cascade training. Facilitators must go through the program as participants before they have to lead facilitation!



4. The learning process can be an intense personal learning journey; individuals undertaking this journey need family support. Ask the facilitators how they are managing this learning journey with their family members. Consider inviting family members to a group retreat designed to include the whole family.

5. Align project goals and facilitator training, monitoring and supervision. Carefully align the goals and approaches of the project with the way that facilitators are trained, supported and evaluated. Goals about solidarity, activism, structural or social change beyond individual behaviours, must be discussed and included in the training curriculum and as part of ongoing problem-solving with facilitators. They must be built into the monitoring tools.

6. Test and apply lessons and evidence from transformative learning and critical consciousness research. These stress the importance of facilitating debate to enable perspective shift - which has not always been explicit as an expected outcome for participants in the facilitator training. Community facilitators need specific skills in fostering conditions for transformative learning beyond facts. For example, working through strong emotions and feelings is an important step towards critical consciousness. Other

skills include fostering internal debate about world view, and dealing with dissonance and debate in the group about norms and values, and building a sense of collective identity and voice.

7. Organize manageable workloads for both facilitators and supervisors. Don't over-estimate how much any one person can do. During design, pre-test your assumptions about what is possible for facilitators (size of group, duration of session, number of groups) and supervisors (number of facilitators to oversee, number and timing of observational visits, expectations for monitoring of data points throughout).

8. Anticipate and budget for emotional and psychosocial support systems. Budget for psychosocial counselling for participants, facilitators and supervisors. Anticipate and discuss how to set boundaries when cases of violence come up and ensure robust referral systems for participants who seek help. Consider including pressure-relieving fun activities as team-building exercises for additional emotional bonding and support.

9. Don't forget feminist activism and social change principles and tactics. These are critical to sustain community mobilization!

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: WHERE TO GO FOR MORE SUPPORT AND ADVICE

Resources on **transformative learning and critical consciousness**:

- Diemer, M. A., McWhirter, E. H., Ozer, E. J., & Rapa, L. J. (2015). Advances in the conceptualization and measurement of critical consciousness. *The Urban Review*, 47(5), 809-823.
- Jemal, A. (2017). Critical consciousness: A critique and critical analysis of the literature. *The Urban Review*, 49(4), 602-626.
- Taylor, E. W. (2007). An update of transformative learning theory: A critical review of the empirical research (1999–2005). *International journal of lifelong education*, 26(2), 173-191.

- Watts, R. J., & Hipolito-Delgado, C. P. (2015). Thinking ourselves to liberation?: Advancing sociopolitical action in critical consciousness. *The Urban Review*, 47(5), 847-867.

Resources for **activism training**:

- SASA! <http://raisingvoices.org/sasa/>
- Sen, R. (2003). *Stir it up: Lessons in community organizing and advocacy* (Vol. 16). John Wiley & Sons.
- We-Rise, Movement Building Toolkit: <https://werise-toolkit.org/>

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THE PREVENTION COLLABORATIVE

The Prevention Collaborative works to strengthen the ability of key actors to deliver cutting edge violence prevention interventions informed by research-based evidence, practice-based learning and feminist principles. For more information go to www.prevention-collaborative.org

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