



## COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES

**Ending violence against women through  
community action**

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for *Nabilan* Community-based Approaches Work

## What is the *Nabilan* Program's Community-based Approaches (CBA) work in Manufahi?

The Asia Foundation is implementing the *Nabilan Program* in Timor-Leste under a Grant Agreement with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The *Nabilan* Program goal is to **reduce the proportion of women who have experienced violence, and to improve the well-being of women and children affected by violence**. The program focuses on the three key areas of prevention, support, and justice.

In 2015, the *Nabilan* Program began a pilot initiative called **Community-based Approaches (CBA)**, aimed at social change on violence against women and children, implemented in Letefoho Village, Manufahi Municipality. The CBA work is directed at identifying and supporting community members to become **active change agents** in order to end violence against women and children and provide support to people who experience violence. The program recognizes the important role the community plays in responding to violence and in preventing violence by working with people at the community level. Rather than bringing information or resources from outside, the program works with community members to define problems and identify solutions. CBA relies on community participation, ensures integration into existing efforts and programs where possible, builds via repetition, and works towards saturation, as different actors are engaged across all levels of the community on an ongoing basis.

## Why did *Nabilan* work in only one village (suku)? Why hasn't *Nabilan* yet scaled up the CBA work to other places?

CBA for ending violence against women and children is a particular form of intervention for facilitating social change, that moves beyond one-off or short-term efforts and, instead, is a **long-term commitment to a single site**. It requires intensive inputs in one geographic area. As a pilot initiative, it was necessary to learn from implementation before replicating in other sites. The approach is proving successful in a number of ways and *Nabilan* is currently considering how to scale it up.

## Why did *Nabilan* select Suku Letefoho in Manufahi?

Community mobilization to end violence against women and children requires strong interest and commitment from the local community. The design for the *Nabilan* program identified Manufahi as a priority area for CBA because there were **few referrals coming from Manufahi and few available services** in the municipality. *Nabilan* visited Manufahi in October 2015 to meet with local civil society organizations, networks, and local authorities and identify a site for the work. The Program selected the village of Letefoho in Manufahi because there had been limited work done in the area on ending violence against women and children, the **community wanted to engage on the issue**, and there was **broad support from organizations and networks** that are active in Manufahi.

## Why did *Nabilan* not focus its work only on the Law Against Domestic Violence?

CBA is different to socialization in that it moves beyond sharing of information to a process of social change in which the community is supported to identify the problem and solutions, through self-reflection and behavior change. **Socialization of the law is important, but this alone does not reduce violence against women and children.** Despite considerable socialization programming efforts, violence against women by their partners remains high. *Nabilan*'s Baseline study shows that there is high awareness of the law among men in Dili (87 percent) and Manufahi (75 percent), but this has not yet resulted in a reduction of violence.<sup>1</sup> Seventy-nine percent of men in Dili and 70 percent in Manufahi believe that a man is justified in hitting his wife under some circumstances.<sup>2</sup> It is important, therefore, to also focus on primary prevention, so that violence never takes place.

## Why did *Nabilan* initially choose to directly implement the CBA, by working with individuals in the community, rather than with civil society organizations?

While the *Nabilan* program works with civil society organizations in a variety of ways, focusing work with only civil society organizations is not sufficient when rates of violence are high, tolerance of violence against women and children is high, and the reporting rates of women who experience violence are so low. Furthermore, while there is a network of highly committed local organizations in Manufahi, none were implementing prevention activities with behavior or social change approaches when CBA work began. CBA works with individuals to change social norms so that there is less tolerance of violence and so that women and children who experience violence can find people closer to them who are willing to provide support. As the CBA work is a pilot initiative, **working with individuals rather than through organizations allows the flexibility required for the approach to be iterative**, as *Nabilan* and community members learn about the most effective ways of working in the particular site. The program does, however, support *Nabilan* partner organizations, **PRADET** and **FUNDEF**, to conduct behavior-change prevention activities as part of the CBA work in Manufahi. *Nabilan* is also exploring ways to collaborate with local civil society organizations in CBA.

## Why did *Nabilan* decide to use the SASA! approach?

SASA! is a four-phase program of community action on violence against women and HIV/AIDS developed by **Raising Voices** in Uganda.<sup>3</sup> *Nabilan* drew on the SASA! methodology because **studies have found that it has been effective in changing attitudes** about gender equality and violence, reducing intimate partner violence against women, reducing sexual risk-taking, and

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<sup>1</sup> The Asia Foundation (2016). Understanding Violence against Women and Children in Timor-Leste: Findings from the *Nabilan* Baseline Study – Main Report. The Asia Foundation, Dili. p83

<sup>2</sup> *Nabilan* Baseline Study, p83

<sup>3</sup> For further information about the SASA! approach, see: <http://raisingvoices.org/sasa/>

increasing help-seeking behaviors and community activism in response to violence.<sup>4</sup> The SASA! approach also uses evidence to design program methodologies – a key feature of the *Nabilan* Program – and has been successfully implemented in a number of countries.<sup>5</sup>

## Did *Nabilan* directly follow all steps of the SASA! approach in Suku Letefoho? Why or why not?

No. The program drew extensively on SASA! but is using only part of the methodology for reasons of both time and context. *Nabilan* is a two phase program that is drawing to the end of its first phase. *Nabilan* also wanted to ensure that **activities were contextually appropriate by adapting the methodology and materials**. Another key point of difference is that SASA! focused on prevention whereas the *Nabilan* CBA work aims to also increase women's access to supports, thereby integrating prevention and services work.

## What technical support did *Nabilan* provide to people in the community?

*Nabilan* has provided technical support on ending violence against women to community members and stakeholders in Manufahi. The program has provided **five trainings to Community Mobilizers on gender and power and violence against women** and is providing **ongoing quarterly training** and **monthly monitoring visits** by the Municipal Officer based in Manufahi. The program has facilitated **community meetings** to provide a space for discussions on violence against women, and conducted **workshops**, including two on developing positive messages for violence prevention. The Municipal Officer and the Community Mobilizers are providing referral information to key stakeholders as well as directly to women who are experiencing violence. The program has also provided information about available services to the Village Council, IT equipment to the Village Chief, and plans to provide more information about legal issues related to marriage and custody because local leaders have requested this as they face many challenges in this area.

## Why did *Nabilan* use foreign, instead of local, trainers for the first stages of the CBA work?

The **methodologies of the CBA work are new to Timor-Leste**. They require different knowledge, skills, and approaches to other work undertaken on ending violence against women, including ongoing reflection by team members on their own beliefs and lives. The *Nabilan* team needs ongoing support and opportunities to adapt to this new approach. To enable this opportunity for staff, *Nabilan* collaborated with a colleague who is familiar with the SASA! process, experienced in Timor-Leste, and who is fluent in Tetum. This combination of international and local skills and context has been invaluable.

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<sup>4</sup> Raising Voices, LSHTM and CEDOVIP. 2015. Is Violence Against Women Preventable? Findings from the SASA! Study summarized for general audiences. Kampala, Uganda: Raising Voices. Available at: <http://raisingvoices.org/resources/>

<sup>5</sup> See also Revising the Script: Taking Community Mobilization to Scale for Gender Equality, International Centre for Research on Women and Raising Voices, September 2016.

## How did *Nabilan* identify the people to be Community Mobilizers?

Because **we believe that individuals who want to make change will have the most impact**, we wanted to find people who were interested in thinking about violence, gender, and power in different ways. Our team also felt it was important, for securing long-term community support for the program, to involve the sub-village chiefs in the process of selecting the Mobilizers. We therefore asked sub-village chiefs to suggest people to participate in our community discussions at the sub-village level and prevention activities conducted by national *Nabilan* partners. We then observed the community discussions and prevention partner activities and identified participants who met our criteria of actively participating, having leadership and facilitation skills, and having some knowledge of, and interest in, promoting gender equality and preventing violence against women and children. The *Nabilan* team then made the final decisions about who to invite to be Mobilizers and met with each of these selected people to determine their interest and explain the role.

## Why did *Nabilan* decide to have 14 Community Mobilizers?

Letefoho Village is comprised of seven sub-villages. Our aim was to have two mobilizers for each of the seven sub-villages, one man and one woman, who will be able to support each other.

## What support does *Nabilan* give to the Community Mobilizers?

At the core of CBA is the belief that **activism has to come from an affinity with program objectives and not from paid inducements**. If the Community Mobilizer positions were salaried, the CBA work would likely end when funding from *Nabilan* finishes. For the sustainability and success of this approach, therefore, it is crucial that Mobilizers participate voluntarily because they recognize the positive impact their involvement will have on their families and the community. When the Mobilizers are gathered together for trainings and meetings, the program provides a meal and funds for transport. Mobilizers are given a small amount of monthly phone credit, as a key part of their role is to connect with people.

## How is *Nabilan* working to keep Community Mobilizers engaged?

Careful selection of the Community Mobilizers has resulted in a group of highly motivated individuals. One way of encouraging people to participate in the program has been to help Community Mobilizers feel that changes in power and levels of violence will benefit them as individuals, families, and communities. This involves **creating the conditions for people to imagine a different kind of community** where they are able to live without the risk or experience of violence. *Nabilan* has also **engaged with local authorities to legitimize the work of the Mobilizers** and has provided the Mobilizers with unique hats, t-shirts, and bags to make them recognizable to their community, and to signify that they have been selected for this role and have received training.

## How does *Nabilan* monitor what the Community Mobilizers are saying to the community?

The Community Mobilizers have been given **intensive training on gender, power, and violence against women and children** over a four-month period. The approach emphasizes the Mobilizers facilitating informal discussions and helping people to reflect on their own lives, rather than emphasizing inputs of information. *Nabilan* will also provide **training every three months**. The Municipal Officer conducts **monthly monitoring visits** to each sub-village and once a month *Nabilan* hosts a meeting to bring all the Mobilizers together to share experiences and learnings.

## What do the Community Mobilizers do if a community member tells them they are experiencing violence?

Community Mobilizers can assist community members experiencing violence by **referring them to relevant services**, such as the police. The program has developed basic tools to document when the Mobilizers are giving help to people experiencing violence or other problems, recognizing that one of the objectives of work at a community level is to increase the help provided to people who experience violence, both through informal support and referrals to formal services.

## Is a Community Based Approach more cost effective than providing supports through formal services?

Formal services offer critical support to women and children. Without them, many women and children would not be able to leave violent situations. The reach of formal services, however, is relatively small in any country, as shame and fear result in women not seeking help. In Timor-Leste, women face additional restrictions on their mobility, including living far away from formal services and lacking access to transport. **CBA work is cost effective** as it allows for a greater number of women to be reached by services and informal support in their community. By identifying Community Mobilizers, training them in gender, power, and violence against women, and equipping them to be able to refer women in the community to support services, CBA offers a **pathway to reach many more people** as well as to create more meaningful impact at the individual level.

## How will the CBA work be sustainable?

CBA aims to bring about **social norms change in a sustainable way** by building a network of local actors who become change agents. By not offering paid inducements, the Program has succeeded in identifying and training Community Mobilizers who are willing to participate voluntarily because they recognize the positive impact their involvement will have on their families and the community. The Mobilizers are equipped with the skills and knowledge to support change in their own communities.

## How did *Nabilan* involve local leaders in this approach?

*Nabilan* held discussions with local leaders to identify and confirm the location of the CBA work. *Nabilan* also sought help from local leaders to identify community participants for discussions, out of whom Community Mobilizers were selected. *Nabilan* also regularly consults with local leaders regarding program activities. This has helped further legitimize the work of the Community Mobilizers.

## How does *Nabilan* know whether this approach is being successful?

Community mobilization is a **long-term commitment**. The *Nabilan* CBA work has been underway for less than two years, but there are **strong indications that the work is successful and could be scaled up**. The program has secured the trust of the local leadership and has managed to engage 14 motivated men and women as volunteer Community Mobilizers, demonstrating that working with volunteers is both entirely feasible and sustainable. The program has also identified ways to create safe spaces for men and women to talk about violence against women. The program has already identified ways that Mobilizers are making changes in their own lives and attitudes. This is a critical step on the pathway to identifying problems and solutions, and undertaking self-reflection.

## Where can I find further information?

The *Nabilan* Program has developed a **report**, **discussion papers**, and **toolkit** to document program learnings and support continual improvement of work in the future. All of the documents are available from The Asia Foundation in English and Tetum.

The *Nabilan* report **A Reflection on Practice, Ethics and Research** documents what has been learnt to date through the CBA programming about both key research questions on violence against women and program practice. It reflects on *Nabilan's* processes, covering what has been learnt so far as well as the practical reasons why particular decisions have been made.

To support ongoing implementation and scaling up of the CBA work, the *Nabilan* Program has also produced a **Community-based Approaches Toolkit** which is a step-by-step guide to the development of the work. It is aimed at documenting and reflecting on how the program implemented the work. It is also aimed at assisting others who are working on social change at the community level. As the CBA work continues to evolve, the Tool Kit is expected to go through changes and adaptations over time. The Tool Kit is broken into various elements, which are key to the overall approach: building relations and consent within the community, building teams, asset mapping, selecting community mobilizers, implementing community workshops and partner activities, as well as research. Each of these topics is covered with check lists and other guiding documents that can assist with implementing programs in a similar way in other sites.

*Nabilan* has also produced the ***Nabilan* Discussion Series**, which is targeted at the Manufahi community, partners, and funders. Each discussion paper is distributed to the community and discussed there before being distributed more broadly. The aim of the series is to provide updates of activities, and to reflect on ethics, methods, and lessons learned. The program has produced three discussion papers to date; Discussion Series No 1 '*Nabilan* Community Engagement in

Manufahi, Timor-Leste'; Discussion Series No 2 'Nabilan Community Engagement in Manufahi – Community Mobilizers'; and Discussion Series No 3 'Nabilan Community Engagement in Manufahi – Prevention Messaging.'



*Xefe Suku (Village Chief) launching the CBA work in Manufahi, 6 March 2017*