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SASA! "Together" Start Phase

SASA! "Together" Start Phase Training

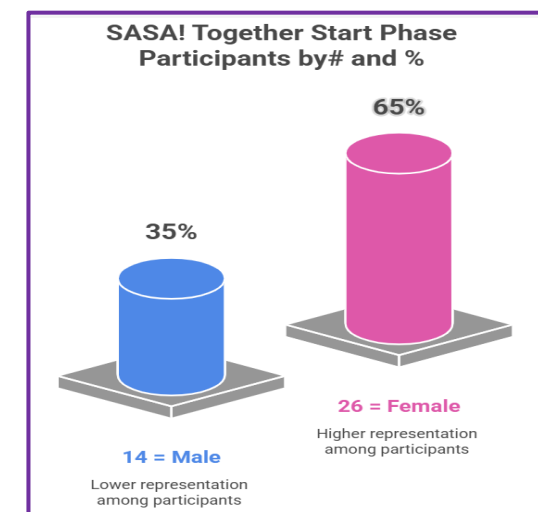
The total number of participants is 40 (14 male and 26 female)



Above: Participants pose for a group photo after the climax of the SASA! Together Start Phase Training.

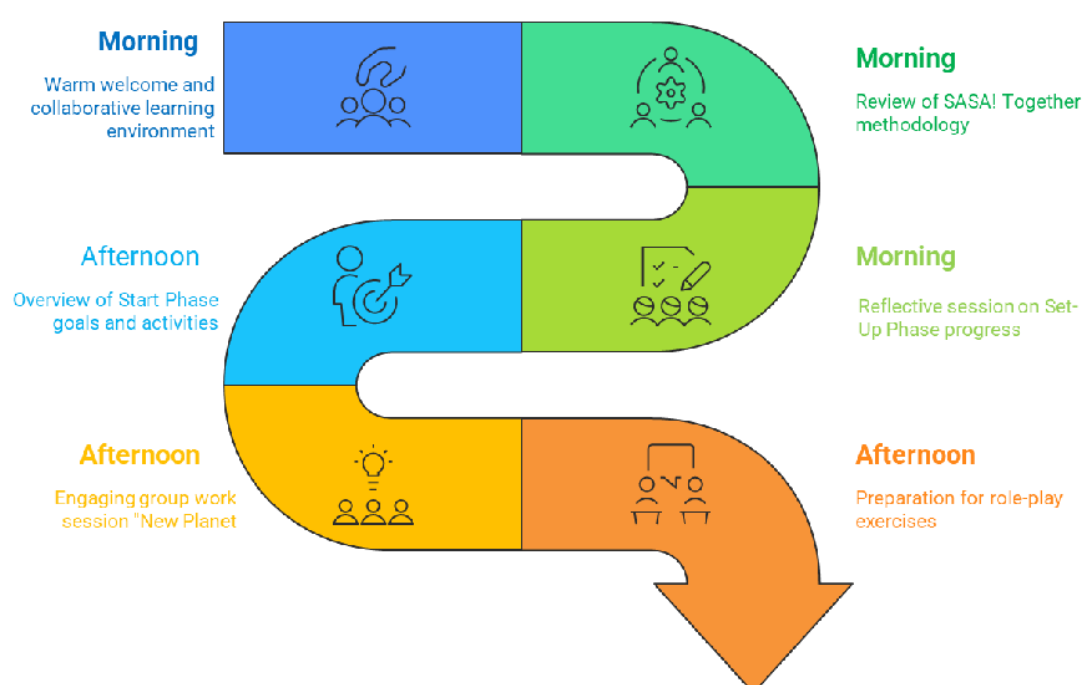
This document summarizes the successful completion of a five-day intensive SASA! Together Start Phase Training held in Monrovia, Liberia, from June 16 to 20, 2025.

Organized by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSPP) in collaboration with Plan International Liberia, DCI, and medica Liberia, with technical support from Raising Voices, the training aimed to enhance the knowledge, skills, and momentum of 40 key facilitators (26 females and 14 Males), partners, and stakeholders for the effective implementation of the Start Phase of the Liberia Women Empowerment Project (LWEP). The training covered essential elements of the SASA! Together approach, the concept of power and activism, community observation, local activism and leadership strategies, risk mitigation, and work planning for the next steps.



Key Highlights of the Training

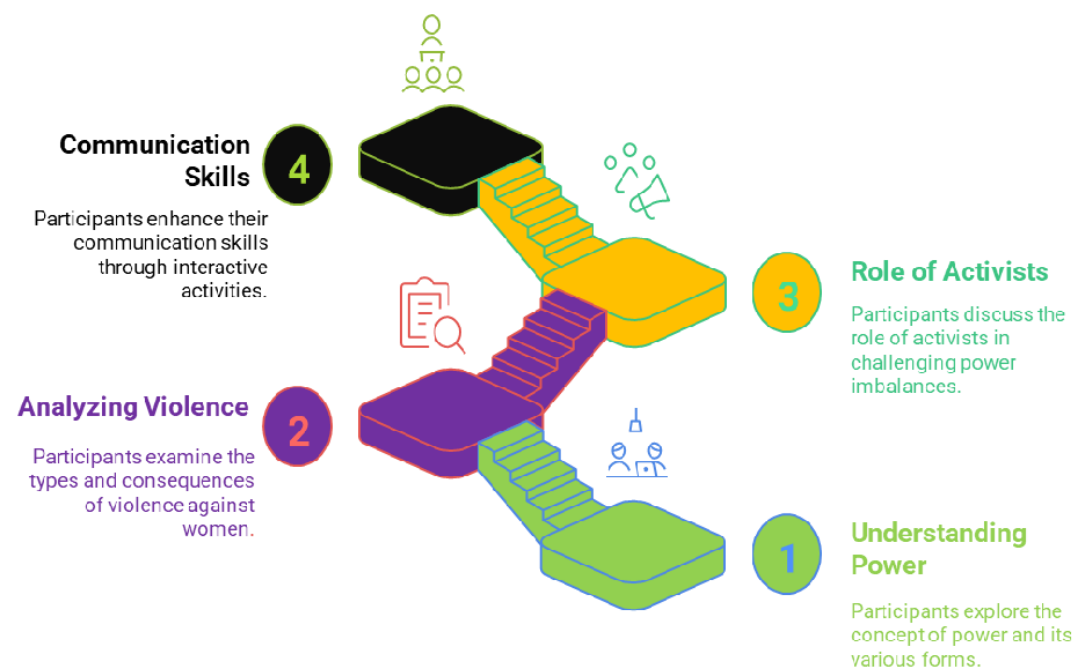
Day 1 of SASA! Together Training: Foundations and Progress



Above: Joshua from DCI, present the organizational progress done to prepare for engagement of local activists

The training commenced with a warm welcome, fostering a collaborative learning environment. Participants revisited the core elements of the SASA! Together methodology, ensuring a shared understanding of its principles and objectives. A reflective session allowed participants to assess the progress achieved during the Set-Up Phase, identifying successes and areas for improvement. A detailed overview of the Start Phase was presented, outlining its goals, activities, and expected outcomes. The day included an engaging group work session called "New Planet," designed to stimulate creative thinking and problem-solving. Participants also prepared for role-play exercises to practice applying the SASA! Together principles in simulated scenarios.

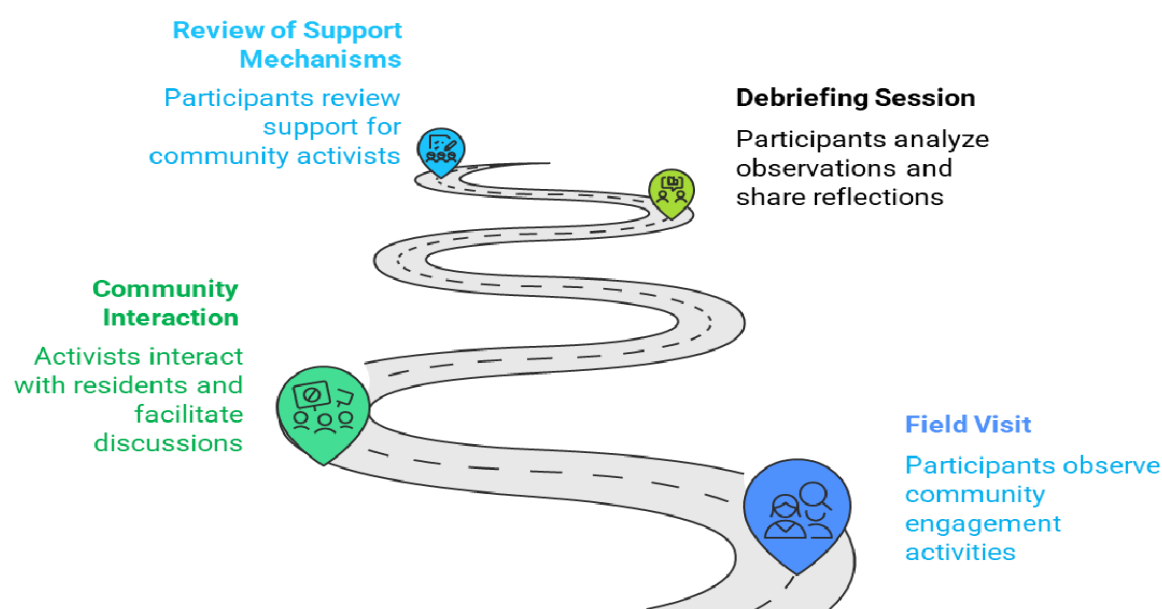
Day 2: Deepening Understanding of Power and Activism



Above: Participants do Awareness raising role plays in preparation of SASA community engagement visit

The second day focused on deepening participants' understanding of power dynamics and their impact on violence against women, girls, men, boys and other vulnerable groups. Participants critically examined the concept of power, exploring its various forms and manifestations. They analyzed the types and consequences of violence against recognizing the systemic nature of gender-based violence. The role of activists in challenging power imbalances and promoting gender equality was explored, emphasizing the importance of their advocacy and mobilization efforts. Interactive sessions facilitated dialogue and knowledge sharing among participants. Communication skills were sharpened through the "Instruct, Inform, Question" activity, equipping participants with effective strategies for engaging with community members and stakeholders.

Day 3: Community Observation and Reflection



Above: Medica SASA Together Drama raise awareness of Gender Based Violence during the SASA

A key component of the training was a field visit to observe real-time community engagement activities implemented by medica Liberia. This provided participants with practical insights into the application of the SASA! Together approach in a community setting. Participants observed how community activists interacted with residents, facilitated discussions, and promoted positive social norms. A debriefing session followed the field visit, allowing participants to analyze their observations and share their reflections. The session also included a review of support mechanisms for community activists and leaders, ensuring they have the resources and guidance needed to effectively implement the SASA! Together program.



Above: SASA Team perform drama aimed to conscientize the community of some of the harmful social gender norms that affect women and girls development in the society.

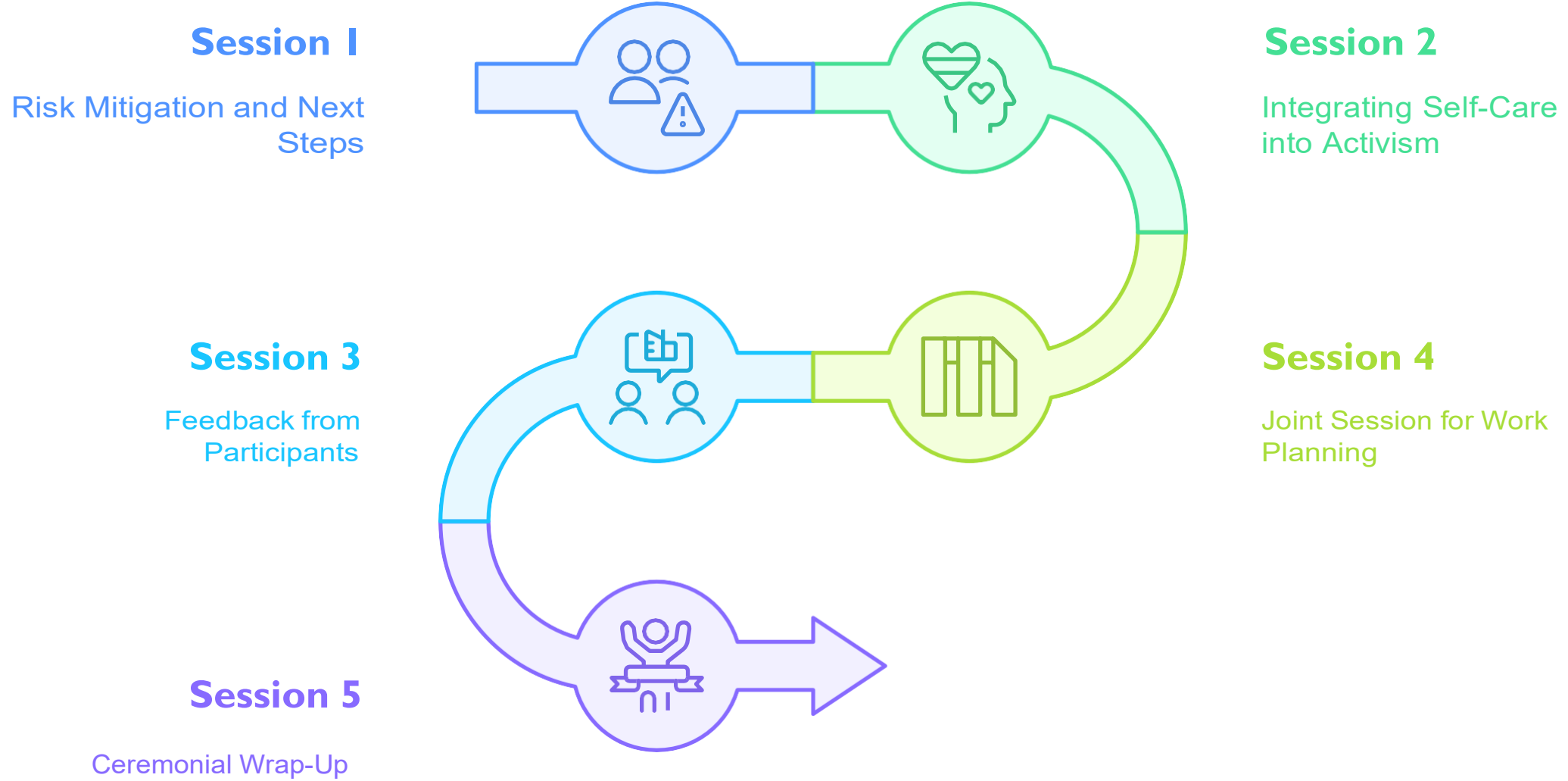
Day 4: Local Activism and Leadership Strategies



The fourth day focused on strengthening participants' ability to utilize Learning & Assessment tools, which are crucial for monitoring progress and evaluating the impact of the SASA!

Together program. Attendees were introduced to strategies for local activism and community leadership, empowering them to mobilize community members and advocate for change. Participants practiced key activities and facilitation techniques essential for community-level engagement, such as leading group discussions, conducting awareness campaigns, and organizing community events. The emphasis was on building participants' confidence and competence in facilitating community-led initiatives.

Day 5: Risk Mitigation and Next Steps



The final day addressed the importance of mitigating risks in programming, ensuring the safety and well-being of participants and community members. Participants identified potential risks associated with implementing the SASA! Together program and developed strategies to address them. The training emphasized the importance of integrating self-care into activist work, recognizing the emotional and psychological toll that activism can take. A joint session was held to map out work planning and next steps, ensuring a coordinated and strategic approach to implementing the Start Phase. The training concluded with feedback from participants, allowing them to share their experiences and suggestions for improvement. A ceremonial wrap-up marked the successful completion of the training and celebrated the participants' commitment to advancing the SASA! Together approach in Liberia.

This training represents a significant step forward in promoting the SASA! Together approach across Liberia. Participants are now equipped with practical tools and renewed enthusiasm to mentor community leaders, support local activism, and contribute meaningfully to the empowerment of women and girls.

Participants and Facilitators Voices	
<p>The Gender Coordinator for Rivercess County, Madam Maima T. Gweh, emphasized that the training was not just informative it was transformational. "I'm leaving here with new skills and renewed motivation. Our women will now be able to speak out, manage grants, and play active roles in their communities. And because the project includes both women and men, the change will be sustainable," she said.</p>	<p>"This phase is not just about learning," I shared during one of the sessions. "It's about shifting how we see power, not as control or dominance, but as something we can share, build, and use to uplift others" Gabriella Pinto, Rising Voices - Facilitator.</p>
<p>We are going back to our communities not with answers, but with tools to ask the right questions," said Joshua, a staff member from Defense for Children International. "This week has shown me how small conversations can lead to big change." He concluded</p>	<p>The Project Manager at Medica Liberia, Madam Veronica Renne Marshall, described the experience as powerful. "SASA! is about understanding the power we all carry and using it positively. But awareness alone is not enough. I recommend that as we roll out SASA, we also strengthen response systems, because when awareness increases, disclosures of abuse often follow," she said.</p>
<p>The Assistant Director at the Ministry of Gender, Stephen Yekeh, described the training as hands-on real-life activity. "This training was not theoretical, it was practical. I saw real-life demonstrations that our officers can take back to their communities and use to foster change," he said.</p>	<p>Marjorie Wright of ActionAid Liberia described SASA training as a peace-building tool; "SASA! is about changing behavior. It's about changing the mindset of people in rural areas, helping them understand how to manage disputes peacefully, and building communities where women feel safe and empowered," she explained.</p>
<p>Francina Pearl Jackson from Plan International Liberia described the SASA! Together Start Phase as a transformative process for the lives of women, girls, and vulnerable populations in the communities. "With time and consistent engagement, the social behaviors that negatively impact the lives of women, girls, and other vulnerable groups will gradually disappear, making way for new, healthy behaviors," she explained.</p>	<p>https://web.facebook.com/share/v/1FuWhbRPe2/</p> 
<p>https://inquirernewspaper.com/amp/gender-others-conclude-violence-against-women-girls-preventive-training/ https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Aregfrn8/</p>	



Above: Message well delivered, group photo and smiles from SASA Drama Team, SASA Facilitators, and community dwellers after the educational message has been successful delivered.

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