

A LANDSCAPE REVIEW

Addressing Social Norms in Six USAID Sectors



USAID
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Passages

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LIST OF ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

KEY PHRASES

BCC	Behavior Change Communication
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GenDev	USAID's Office of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
KII	Key Informant Interview
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
SBC	Social and Behavior Change
SBCC	Social Behavior Change Communication
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WASH	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past several years, an exciting body of knowledge has emerged that focuses on understanding the role social norms play as both barriers and facilitators to social behavior change (SBC) as part of international development programming.¹ This work builds on theories of social learning and social cognition^{2,3} that have informed SBC interventions in fields such as health; nutrition; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); and violence against women and girls (VAWG).

The Passages Project (2015-2020), implemented by Georgetown University's Institute for Reproductive Health and partnersⁱ is focused on building an evidence base and providing technical assistance globally in changing social norms to improve the health and wellbeing of adolescents and youth. With support and leadership from USAID's Office of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GenDev), Passages seeks to understand and document USAID's cross-sectoral interventions that include strategies to change norms. The first phase of this project was a landscaping study in six USAID sectors to document programs implemented between 2012 to early 2018 that might include components to change norms.

The sectors selected for this landscaping were: **Agriculture and Food Security, Education, Energy and Infrastructure, Land and Urban Development, Technology** (as part of the US Global Development Lab), and **Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)**. Other sectors were excluded from data collection, though due to cross-sectoral policies and projects, the sector of origin was not always clear, and some case-by-case determinations were made by authors.

The methodology for the landscaping included a stakeholder meeting with GenDev and sector representatives, a literature review of 174 documents published from 2012 to 2018, and 13 key informant interviews (KIIs) with representatives from selected sectors.

Data from the landscaping is organized into four sections. **Section One** provides an overview of social norms and why they are important. **Section Two** is focused on strategies and approaches to changing social norms. **Section Three** discusses the opportunities and challenges to changing social norms, as reported by USAID stakeholders. **Section Four** provides the landscaping team's recommendations for next steps within USAID to strengthen norm-focused interventions.

ⁱ Passages Project partners are FHI 360, Johns Hopkins (Global Early Adolescent Study), Save the Children, and Tearfund.

Section One: Social Norms and Their Importance

Overall, social norms are considered important by practitioners across all sectors because they determine the roles, responsibilities, and power that drive inequalities based on sex, disability, ethnic differences, class, education, age, and other factors. Social norms are often perceived as generating barriers to results programs seek to achieve. In addition, social norms are understood to limit the ability of women, and other marginalized and disadvantaged populations (i.e. persons with disabilities, lower education, rural populations) to participate in interventions.

Across all sectors reviewed, documents and key informants emphasize the importance of gender norms to programming far more than any other kind of social norm. As part of this, the need to conduct gender analyses to identify and understand barriers to gender equality is articulated. Notably, however, the emphasis is on identifying and understanding the role of gender for program design and implementation, rather than on identifying and changing the underlying social norms that drive harmful gender-related behaviors and attitudes.

Section One: Key Points

- Across all sectors there is an understanding that social norms play a role in the ability of international development programming to be effective.
- Across all sectors, gender and gender norms are discussed more than other social norms.
- There is wide variation in the extent to which sectors, and programs within sectors, identify and describe the specific social norms that drive behaviors.

Section Two: Approaches to Changing Social Norms

Theories of change to shift social norms highlighted by the Passages Project ⁴ and the Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change for Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (“Learning Collaborative”) hypothesize that changing social norms is an important component of many behavior change interventions.⁵ While an intervention may also address other determinants of behavior – i.e. the needs for knowledge, skills, capacity, policy – social norms are considered a key influence on behavior and require clear strategies to identify and address them.

This landscaping review found that many programs reviewed across sectors identify social norms as important to consider in programming. However, for many programs reviewed there is not a clear approach to shift these norms. In some programs, the desirable change in behaviors or practices is achieved by addressing non-normative factors with the anticipation that the new practices/behaviors will ultimately achieve desired changes in social norms. In other programs it is not clear whether expected outcomes include social norm change.

The 2012 *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy* requires identifying normative factors, including gender norms and power relations that affect gender equality and women’s empowerment. Requirements from this policy have elevated attention to gender norms across USAID sectors.

Section Two: Key Points

- Many programs lack an explicit approach to normative change. Even where sector strategies or toolkits provide some guidance, and despite the cross-cutting *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy* that promotes gender norm change, only a few examples were found at the program level that articulated a clear pathway to changing social (or gender) norms.
- In keeping with the lack of explicit strategies to shift social norms, monitoring and evaluation of normative components of programs is largely absent.
- The entry point to address social norms varies across sectors. To date, the existing evidence base from the health sector on how to address social norms is largely community based. In some sectors work to shift social norms is at the institutional, corporate/company level, or through mass media.
- All programs reviewed use a combination of approaches to address multiple factors related to the changes they seek. Most engage individuals, communities, and at times, institutions.

Section Three: Challenges and Opportunities

Many stakeholders interviewed believe there is a general understanding of social norms within USAID, but most said that the lack of standardized definitions and operational guidelines relating to normative change, effective programming, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) of normative programming creates barriers to explicit work on social norms. There is consensus that improving expectations, knowledge, and accountability about work to shift social norms would be valuable.

Section Four: Recommendations for USAID

- Develop common terminology and approaches that can be used across sectors relating to social norms and normative interventions.
- Develop MEL tools and indicative indicators to measure the effectiveness of normative interventions and to support learning about the potential of both sector-specific and cross-sectoral efforts to address norms.
- Develop and support training of USAID staff and implementing partners about the role of social norms in programming, and how to design, implement, and evaluate effective normative programming.
- Strengthen existing approaches, policies, and guidance that already address behavior change and social/gender norms to incorporate new knowledge on how normative interventions can improve program results.
- Conduct more research about effective pathways to normative change, particularly in sectors outside of health, to generate a more robust evidence base for varying contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years, an exciting body of knowledge has emerged that focuses on understanding the role social norms play as both barriers and facilitators to social behavior change (SBC) as part of international development programming.⁶ This work builds on theories of social learning and social cognition^{7,8} that have informed SBC interventions in fields such as health, nutrition, WASH, and violence against women and girls (VAWG). To date, much of the published evidence base on applied SBC and social norm theory has been in the health sector; however, there is nascent work across other sectors.

The Passages Project (2015-2020), implemented by Georgetown University’s Institute for Reproductive Health and partners,² is focused on building an evidence base and providing technical assistance globally in changing social norms to improve the health and well-being of adolescents and youth. With support and leadership from USAID’s Office of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GenDev), Passages seeks to understand and document USAID’s cross-sectoral interventions that include strategies to change norms. Strategies to do this include:

- Documenting social norms approaches and programming in different sectors;
- Exploring the practice and evidence base in selected USAID sectors for these approaches;
- Sharing promising practices; and
- Providing recommendations to inform research, policy, and programming across sectors.

The first phase of this project was a landscaping study in six USAID sectors to document programs implemented between 2012 to early 2018 that might include components to change norms. The cross-sectoral definition of norms change used for this review is “change in behaviors or practices that is caused, in part or entirely, by social norms change.”

The USAID sectors listed in **Box 1** were chosen because they provide diverse perspectives and represent a range of approaches within USAID. Passages reviewed relevant literature and conducted key informant interviews with experts in the six sectors.

This report presents the findings of the landscaping study in the selected six USAID sectors.

Box 1. USAID Sectors Included in this Landscaping Study:

1. Agriculture and Food Security
2. Education
3. Energy and Infrastructure
4. Land and Urban Development
5. Technology (as part of the US Global Development Lab)
6. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

² Project partners are FHI 360, Johns Hopkins GEAS, Population Services International (PSI), Save the Children, and Tearfund.

METHODOLOGY

The landscaping of the **Agriculture and Food Security, Education, Energy and Infrastructure, Land and Urban Development, Technology**, and **WASH** sectors included a stakeholder meeting with expert representatives, a literature review and key informant interviews (KIIs). A brief overview of each approach is provided here, with additional details in **Annex I**.

Stakeholder Meeting

In December 2017, a launch meeting was held with stakeholders representing GenDev and the selected USAID sectors to provide an orientation to Passages, social norms and the objectives of the landscaping activity; to solicit information about relevant projects, initiatives, resources, and contacts; and to begin to frame questions relevant to each sector to support further landscaping.

Literature Review

The literature review included an analysis of eligible documents published from 2012 to early 2018 within targeted USAID sectors that included work related to social norms. A total of 174 documents, identified through a search and preliminary screening of literature available through USAID's Development Education Clearinghouse ("the DEC") were reviewed.³ A supplementary document search included key informant recommendations, references cited by relevant documents, and documents from USAID websites. Documents identified by these processes included project and evaluation reports, working papers, strategic plans, annual reports, and peer reviewed literature. The search strategy is detailed in **Annex I**. Documents from other sectors were excluded from data collection, though due to cross-sectoral policies and projects, the sector of origin was not always clear, and some case-by-case determinations were made by authors. Eligible resources were reviewed in full and relevant information on social norms programming was extracted into an excel spreadsheet for analysis. Information included a summary of the importance of social norms to the project/sector represented in the report, description of strategies relevant to social norms, relevant accomplishments and challenges, and any recommended follow-up based on the document review.

Key Informant Interviews with USAID Personnel

The key informant interviews complemented findings from the literature review. A sample of one to two headquarter-based individuals from each of the six targeted sectors were included in interviews. Where

³ The 174 documents by sector include: Education: 48; Land & Urban: 28; Food & Agriculture: 50; Energy & Infrastructure: 15; Technology: 17; WASH: 16

practical, interviews were held with more than one person at a time to expedite data collection. Ultimately, thirteen individuals were interviewed.

A semi-structured interview guide was used for KII. The interview facilitated data collection about the importance of social norms and normative change within each sector and what social norms are being targeted for change. Where social norms are included in program design, the interview probed the approaches and program strategies that are being used. Interviews also sought to capture stories of success, as well as challenges, and what interviewees think would support success in the future. During the interview, the interviewer(s) took notes for future analysis.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

Landscaping team members individually, and then as a group, identified key themes from both the KII and the literature review, using inductive analysis where themes emerged from interviews and the literature review. Several data analysis sessions were held with members of the team to discuss, reflect, triangulate data, and collaboratively identify key themes and to synthesize data into final findings.

LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations to this study. First, while this initiative reviewed a considerable amount of literature and conducted interviews with key stakeholders, it is a landscaping, rather than a systematic or in-depth review of work to change social norms across USAID.

Terminology and programming related to social norms and social and/or gender transformative approaches are still relatively new across USAID sectors with varying definitions and meanings. As a result, there may be relevant programs that were not revealed in the search. This gap was minimized through requests for information about all projects with normative change components as part of KIIs, however, it is likely that some relevant programs were missed.

Project documents were more sparsely represented than research reports and strategic guidance documents in the literature found. This may be a result of publication lag times, and limits on public access to project documents. Yet, while guidance documents provide important perspectives on norms-changing approaches within sectors, there may be a disconnect between guidance and work on the ground.

Finally, this landscaping study targeted six sectors within USAID. There are other sectors and divisions within USAID, and other agencies/organizations outside of USAID that could offer additional insights into topics addressed in this report.

OVERVIEW OF REPORT

The report is organized in **four sections**.

Section One provides an overview of social norms and why they are important. This section includes an orientation to social norms based on practical social norm theory used by the Passages Project and the Learning Collaborative, data from the six sectors about the importance and relevance of social norms, and conclusions based on data presented.

Section Two is focused on strategies and approaches to normative change. The section discusses examples of approaches to normative change, including information from the Passages Project and the Learning Collaborative, information about the cross-cutting influence of the 2012 *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy*, and data about both cross-cutting and sector-specific strategies and activities focused on social norms within the six sectors highlighted in this review. The section ends with relevant key points.

Section Three discusses the opportunities and challenges to changing social norms, as reported by USAID stakeholders.

Section Four provides the landscaping team's recommendations for next steps by USAID to strengthen interventions to change social norms both within individual sectors and across USAID sectors.

SECTION ONE

SOCIAL NORMS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

Social norms are the often silent, implicit, and informal “rules” that exist in every society and influence behavior. In contrast to attitudes or beliefs, which are individually held, a social norm’s existence and the extent to which it motivates an individual to conform to social rules of behavior depends on the beliefs and behaviors of the individual, their reference group and power holders.⁹

A reference group can be defined as “everyone who matters to an individual in a certain situation.”¹⁰ Reference groups are crucial for understanding social norms. Reference groups may be different by behavior and by population groups. Thus reference groups may have varying influences on individuals and the norms that may underpin behaviors. For example, a student’s reference group for handwashing at a primary school may be peers and teachers, while the reference group for handwashing behavior at home may be older siblings and parents. **Table 1** provides definitions for some of the key terms used in social norm theory and practice.¹¹

Table 1. Key Social Norms Terms and Definitions			
MOTIVATION	TERM		DEFINITION
Individually motivated	Attitude		What I believe is good or bad and what ought to be
	Knowledge		What I believe is true
Individually and socially motivated	Behavior		What I do
Socially motivated	Social Norms	Descriptive norm	What I believe others do
		Injunctive norm	What I believe others will approve/disapprove of me doing
	Gender norm		How I expect individuals to behave based on their gender identity
	Reference Group		People whose opinions matter to me (for a particular behavior or context) People who reward or sanction me for my behavior

Social norms influence behavior, positively or negatively, because they are based on what a person believes that others do (referred to as descriptive norms); what a person believes others approve of (injunctive norms); as well as an expectation of positive or negative social consequences (rewards and sanctions) associated with performing, or not performing, the behavior.¹²

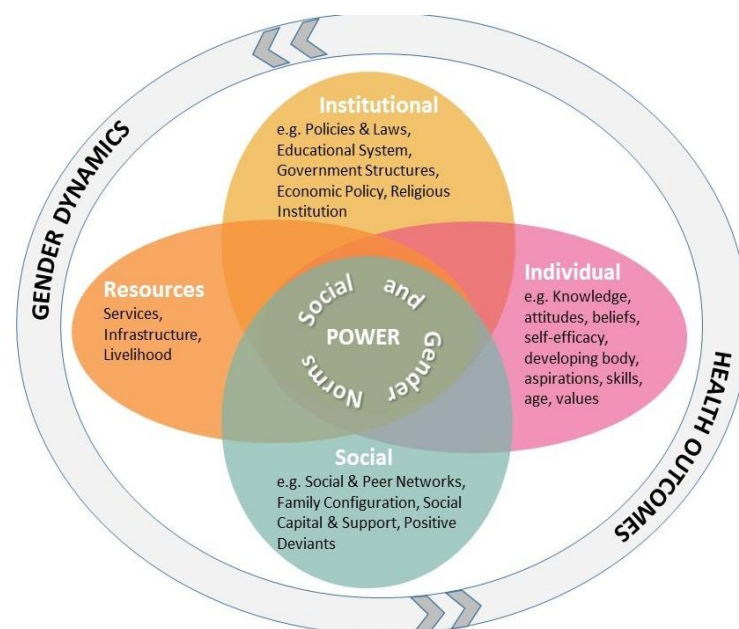
Social norms are important because they are embedded in societies and influence behavior at all levels – individuals, families, communities, and institutions. The ability to influence social norms, rather than only individual attitudes and behavior, means that the outcomes achieved by an intervention may be more sustainable both because they affect social change at a systemic level, and have the potential to achieve behavior change at scale as they spread throughout communities.¹³

Central to understanding the social norms within a context is also understanding various dimensions of power within that setting – at individual, family, community, and institutional levels. Those who have power play a role in defining norms, enforcing rewards and sanctions that maintain norms, and in breaking of older norms and establishing new norms. Power may reside with an individual, group of individuals, or within institutions or other entities, such as the State.¹⁴ It is important to note that those who do not hold positions of power also play a role in defining, reinforcing, and defying norms.

Gender norms are one type of social norm. Gender norms define and establish rules of behavior based on sex and gender differences and are cut across all facets of life. The role of power for gender norms is always central because of the influence of patriarchal norms in most cultures.

The Learning Collaborative adapted the Dynamic Framework for Social Change,¹⁵ **Figure 1**, to demonstrate how social and gender norms are embedded in the social ecology, and how other factors, portrayed on each petal, also affect behaviors, gender dynamics (i.e. gendered interactions, behaviors and outcomes) and outcomes. Power, which shapes and defines the social and structural framework portrayed, is at the center, interacting within and between each of the four domains. The placement of social and gender norms in the inner flower symbolizes the way that they interact and influence the other components.

Figure 1: Flower for Sustained Health: An Integrated Framework for Normative Influence and Social Change



To What Extent Do Social Norms Matter & Why Seek to Change Them?

Behavior is driven by multiple variables that include socially-driven factors, such as social norms as well as individually-driven factors such as attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge; resources; and structural and environmental factors. Whether an individual conforms their behavior to a social norm depends on all these factors as well as the social sanctions or rewards associated with compliance or noncompliance, individual agency and empowerment, and resources that may or may not be available to that person. Individuals frequently comply with social norms they disagree with because they do not want to be subject to the sanctions of non-compliance.

Individuals may defy norms in both positive (i.e. a man talks to his friends about helping his wife in the kitchen where this is generally not done) and negative (i.e. someone takes for themselves what is considered public or community property) ways. Generally, people who defy norms in positive ways do so if their knowledge, attitudes, self-efficacy, or personal agency are strong and they can withstand the risk of social sanctions.¹⁶

Understanding the significance of social norms, as well as other factors, to behaviors or practices that are targeted for change in an intervention is important for effective program design, implementation, and evaluation. In addition, it is important to accurately assess and identify the correct social norm(s) and other factor(s) that affect a specific behavior. As an example, an intervention with objectives to increase the enrollment of girls in school will be designed differently depending on the reasons that girls are not enrolled in school. For example, if a driving factor related to girls' enrollment in school is a shared community belief that boys' education should be prioritized, addressing the value of girls' education in society will require a different intervention than addressing girls education that is impacted by parental concerns for girls safety walk. Often there are multiple factors that must be addressed.

Approaches currently used by identified programs to change social norms are discussed in detail in **Section Two**. Normative change theory promotes identifying and changing social norm(s) that influence targeted behaviors; however, the best approach to behavior change depends on a holistic assessment of the environment and may need to address factors at individual, social, resource, and structural levels. The relative strength of social norms is one of the factors to be considered. In most cases, strategies to address social norms will overlap with strategies to address other factors.

This report explores how the six selected sectors across USAID view social norms as important and what they do to identify and address them to meet development objectives.

The Importance and Relevance of Social Norms in Six USAID Sectors

In all sectors, both the literature review and key informant interviews identified social norms as important to development programming. In addition, stakeholders who were interviewed indicated a desire to learn more about how understandings of social norms and effective practices relating to addressing norms can support their work.

Overall, social norms are considered important by practitioners across all sectors because they determine the roles, responsibilities and power that drive inequalities based on sex, disability, ethnic differences,

class, education, age, and other factors. Social norms are often perceived as generating barriers to results programs seek to achieve. In addition, social norms are understood to limit the ability of women, and other marginalized and disadvantaged populations (i.e. persons with disabilities, lower education, rural populations) to participate in interventions.

Across all sectors, documents and key informants emphasize the importance of gender norms to programming, more so than social norms that are not specifically linked to gender. Social norms that are not specifically gender-related are identified primarily in WASH (i.e. open defecation and hand washing), Education (i.e. teacher-centered pedagogy), and Food and Agriculture (i.e. agricultural techniques and dietary habits)⁴. Documents that provide programmatic guidance within sectors, for example strategies and toolkits, often refer to the 2012 USAID *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy*, either explicitly or by including aspects of the policy. The policy requires gender analyses across USAID sectors to identify normative factors that affect gender equality and women's empowerment.

Norms identified by programs in this review were compiled and sorted into four broad social norms that were identified as important across all six sectors:

- “Gender roles & responsibilities” refers to the norms that assign certain roles and responsibilities to females and others to males, typically limiting opportunities for gender equality.
- “Male power” refers to the norm that men inherently have more power, for example, in areas of decision making, ownership of property, and employment.
- “Sex segregation” refers to norms that, in some contexts, proscribe that men and women have limited or no interaction for religious or other reasons.
- “Hierarchical power and privilege” refers to norms that assign more power and privilege to those who hold positions of authority or decision making. As an example, in schools, teachers have more power than students; in families, adults have more power than children; and in workplaces managers have more power than other workers.

Across all sectors, these social norms were responsible for generating four common barriers to development of and participation in effective interventions. These are: violence (against women, youth, other vulnerable groups); limiting access (to programs, services, economic opportunity); inhibiting participation (in training, employment, education); and barriers to decision-making (i.e. at the household, community and organizational level).

The graphic, **Figure 2**, below, provides a visual representation of these norms and barriers that have cross-sectoral influence on international development programming.

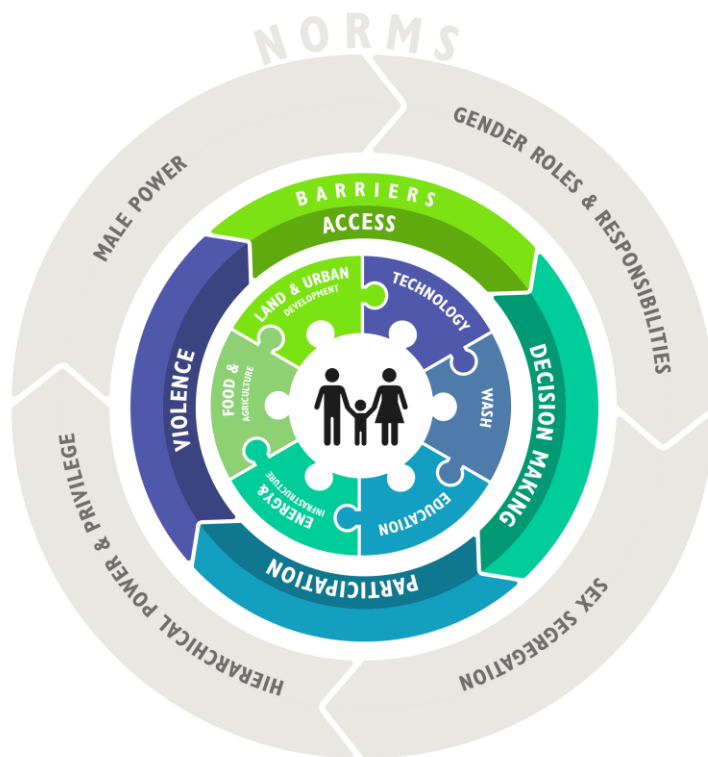
⁴ As a note, all of these norms are affected by gender but they are not specifically “gender norms.”

It is notable that three of the four social norms identified are gender norms that affect girls and women. The fourth, hierarchical power and privilege, is a social norm that can generate both gendered, and gender-neutral barriers. For example, hierarchical power is responsible for teacher-centered pedagogy, an important gender-neutral issue within the education sector. This teacher-student power divide may also be gendered with its expression being different for boys and girls that challenge or adhere to the teachers' authority

Annex 2 provides details about how these norms are articulated within each sector.

Findings from each of the six sectors are discussed below to provide insights into some of the nuances within each sector relating to how social norms are viewed.

Figure 2: Social Norms Across Sectors



Education Sector

USAID's *Education Strategy 2011 – 2015, Extended to December 2017*, guided programming over the past eight years with a focus on early grade reading, increasing employment opportunities for youth and strengthening higher education systems, and increasing equitable access to education in crisis and conflict environments. In addition, cross-cutting priorities were gender equity and equality, and improved education for marginalized populations, including persons with disabilities.¹⁷ The strategy did not reference social norms and key stakeholders indicate that even when normative work is being done in the education sector, it is not typically recognized or labelled as “normative.”¹⁸

Nonetheless, schools and school communities are understood, particularly by those working to change gender norms, as environments where community norms are replicated and practiced by teachers, children and youth, as well as fertile arenas where new norms can be introduced. USAID funds the Global Learning Group to End School-Related Gender-Based Violence, a coalition of 30 leading organizations working on this issue, as a mechanism to support this work.¹⁹

Norms that concern international development programming in the Education sector include those that drive inequality (i.e. discriminating attitudes and practices based on gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, language, socio-economic status, and other factors) and that affect access to education, as well as the ability to succeed and remain in school (i.e. pedagogy and corporal punishment and other forms of school-related GBV).²⁰ Norms governing access to education and allocation of resources towards education were identified within the Education sector. These included later school enrollment and earlier attrition of girls.

Discriminatory gender norms are understood to be a cause of school-related GBV, which includes sexual harassment, sexual violence, bullying, cyber-bullying, corporal punishment, and other forms of sexual and physical violence.²¹

In addition, the education sector has worked to change pedagogy from teacher-centered to learning-centered. Stakeholders indicate that while this work is not framed either as “behavior change” or as “normative change,” in fact existing pedagogy is often based on social norms relating to hierarchical power of adults over children. Education stakeholders would like to see this work viewed as normative.²²

Box 2. Learning Symposium on School-Related GBV

November 2017, Dakar, Senegal

At a meeting of the Global Learning Group to End School-Related GBV in 2017, a group funded by USAID, the plenary discussion highlighted the role of social norms as follows:

Schools can also be a locus for change, stimulating social change within communities. Starting conversations around social norms with parents, formal and informal community leaders, community-based organizations, teachers, learners and youth groups is critical. This kind of process of dialogue and reflection on the values and beliefs that underlie social norms can influence shifts in attitudes and practice related to the use of violence both within the school and in the community.

Meeting Report, p. 4

Energy & Infrastructure Sector

Reference to social norms within the Energy & Infrastructure sector is found on USAID websites and in documents that are specific to broad initiatives. Almost all norms that are referenced in documents are gender norms. According to a key stakeholder: “To the extent that there are social norms that influence the energy sector the only ones of strong relevance are gender norms. I don’t know if there are other norms that have a really strong bearing on behavior.”

Norms that affect women as consumers of energy and infrastructure are noted as important for project design in this sector. These include norms relating to equal access to sources of energy, as well as women’s increased vulnerability to violence when construction does not consider issues such as safe passage to the site, lighting, and personal privacy for toilets and bathing. As just one example, a toolkit that supports integrating prevention and response to GBV in energy and infrastructure projects, details how the construction of community toilets or water sources need to consider community norms and practices of males and females to ensure the safety of girls and women to make these accessible and safe.²³

A considerable amount of the normative work done within USAID’s Energy and Infrastructure sector is focused on social norms that affect girls and women as potential employees and as employees within power companies, and other related professions. These include norms that channel girls and young women into traditionally female studies rather than science and technology – deterring girls and young women from choosing vocations such as engineering.²⁴

In addition, the social norms that affect the ability of women who do enter employment within the power or infrastructure sector to compete fairly in the workplace are targeted by Energy sector programs, notably by Engendering Utilities and to an extent Power Africa’s Women in African Power network. These include norms relating to what jobs are done by males and females; hiring and promotion practices, particularly for senior positions; sexual harassment and sexual violence, both on-the-job and on routes to and from work; child-care assistance and flexible work policies; and the value of women’s time and labor that generate wage disparities.²⁵

Engendering Utilities, a USAID initiative that started in five countries and has expanded to nine (Georgia, Macedonia, Jordan, Kenya, Nigeria, El Salvador, Kosovo, Malawi, and Mozambique),²⁶ began in 2013 with a comprehensive study about the roles of women in energy distribution companies in these countries, seeking to generate a needed evidence base about causes of employment inequalities based primarily on gender. Engendering Utilities’ formative findings identified norms that lead to gender-based inequities, including, for example, norms that may assign certain jobs to men and others to women; norms affecting the average level and type of education women attain; norms associated with the duties of women in a family that limit women’s employment, as well as their opportunities to participate in training programs. Based on these findings, Engendering Utilities developed a human resources best practices framework to guide gender equity “throughout the human resource lifecycle,” an executive leadership program focused on global gender best practices, and other tools to support and monitor utilities’ context-specific interventions.²⁷

Food & Agriculture Sector

In the Food & Agriculture sector⁵, social norms are identified as important in all overarching strategies and technical guidance documents reviewed,²⁸ in numerous project documents, and in interviews with key stakeholders.

Social norms are acknowledged as important to agriculture because they influence many factors relating to the ability of women, youth, and other marginalized populations to participate in the agriculture sector. Relevant social norms include those that affect land ownership and who is typically named on land-titles, access to credit, access to technology and information, how people enter agriculture value chain operations, the roles and jobs considered appropriate for particular populations and how these affect equitable time allocation, the selection to participate in capacity building and training, status as a decision-maker, and eligibility for a range of assets. Social norms affecting women and youth were those most discussed.²⁹

According to the *U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy*:

*Targeting women as beneficiaries is not enough to reduce gender inequality and empower women and girls. We will continue to promote women's access to resources and leadership in food and agricultural systems, challenging gender norms that hinder food security and women's empowerment, and intentionally involve men and communities in efforts to improve nutrition, gender equality, and empowerment for women and adolescent girls.*³⁰

Social norms can also affect women and children's access to food and good nutrition. In some contexts, norms around eating habits during pregnancy can contribute to women being underweight and giving birth to underweight babies.^{31,32}

While some relevant social norms are identified that are not gender-related, i.e. those relating to agricultural practices such as choosing which crops to plant, most of the programmatic attention is on norms that affect marginalized populations. Here, gender norms are the primary target, followed by norms affecting youth and people with disabilities.

Land and Urban Sector

The Land and Urban Office within USAID is working to strengthen land tenure and property rights – often within rural settings – as well as urban programming to improve life conditions of the urban poor with a focus on sustainable service delivery approaches. Both rural and urban programming seeks to address land tenure and property rights, integrating food security, economic growth, health, WASH, waste management, women's empowerment, climate change, resilience programming, and more. Though there is overlap, including a focus on strengthening the complex rural-urban connections, the programming is often separated into “land”³³ and “urban”³⁴.

⁵ It is important to note here that, as well as of the Food and Agriculture sector as we categorized it for this report, nutrition programs are led by a number of different bureaus and offices, including the Bureau of Food Security, Feed the Future and Food for Peace, and Global Health Bureau.

Land & Property Rights

Social norms are highlighted as significant influences in documents relating to USAID's work on land, property, and resource issues across the globe. According to USAID's 2013 *Land Tenure and Property Rights Framework*, programming must take into consideration the gendered roles and norms in families and communities relating to land and property rights, how wealth is distributed, and who makes decisions in the family.³⁵

In addition, analysis of property rights includes assessing intersections of policy and social norms. The *Land Tenure and Property Framework* states, for example:

*For many years, the assumption was that if a household had rights to land, then all members of that household would benefit equally. In fact, women often have fewer rights to land than men within a household, and their limited rights are regularly subordinate to those of men. Depending on the norms governing household decision making, women may not fully participate in the economic and social benefits of household land ownership if they do not share formal property rights with respect to land and natural resources. Only legally and socially recognized property rights (including ownership) can assure women access to control over land-based earnings.*³⁶

Also, of note is a USAID-funded study about the role of land and tenure rights interventions in preventing intimate partner violence. Existing social norms are acknowledged as important factors in determining contexts that may be supportive or not supportive of women owning property. The report supports analyses to identify and understand these norms, and suggests strategies to change attitudes, behaviors, and norms, and to promote women's safety.³⁷

Many projects focused on land and property rights have multi-sectoral components – engaging, for example, WASH, nutrition, health, and democracy and governance.

Urbanization

USAID has traditionally focused on development in rural areas, with efforts to address the complex needs of the urban poor a more recent arena.³⁸ Based on key informant interviews and the literature review, a focus on normative factors that affect urban development is too nascent for most stakeholders to be able to articulate what is important or how to apply social norm theory to their practice. However, there is interest in integrating a social norms perspective into the work.

USAID's *Sustainable Service Delivery in An Increasingly Urbanized World Policy* (2013)³⁹ references the need for attention to governance norms⁴⁰ as well as attention to gender and age disparities and other marginalized populations.

The Support of the Urban Policy (SOUP) Project (2015-2020), ("Urban Policy") implemented by Ecodit LLC, is providing services to USAID missions to support implementation of the Urban Policy. The project produced a *Gender Analysis and Strategy* to guide gender analyses across the urban development sector.⁴¹ The report provides illustrative urban gender issues to guide a gender analysis, and gender-sensitive strategies for addressing potential disparities.

Technology Sector

Digital access for all and closing the gender gap among those who do have access are paramount goals for USAID's Center for Digital Development, part of USAID's Global Development Lab

Social norms are commonly acknowledged as an important driver of barriers to mobile technology access and usage, including for women and girls, those with limited incomes, rural populations and persons with disabilities. Barriers that are identified include lack of education, literacy, and skills; inability to go to public internet sites; cost/affordability of technology; financial dependence; and power dynamics that restrict access based on gender.⁴²

The Center's *2017 Digital Download*, a document that provides the Center's strategy, indicates that "...on average, women are still 14 percent less likely than men to own a phone, resulting in a gender gap of 200 million women."⁴³ The gap is the largest in Asia, where women are 38% less likely to own a phone than men.⁴⁴

A survey in Afghanistan of women's access and use of mobile technology revealed that of the 52% of women surveyed who do not own a phone, 33% cite lack of permission from a family member as the major barrier. A project working in one of the most conservative areas in Afghanistan conducted focus groups among women about access to mobile phone. One woman shared: "In our family men have told us, 'If we see a phone in your hands we will kill you'"⁴⁵

Connected Women is a program supported in part by USAID as part of a broader initiative under Groupe Speciale Mobile (GSMA),⁴⁶ a collaborative of corporations working in the digital industry. Research conducted by Connected Women has served to deepen knowledge about the gender gap globally. A 2015 report on research states:

*Women tend to experience certain barriers more acutely than men, such as cost, security and harassment, and technical literacy and confidence, which can likely be explained by social norms. Social norms influence women's role, status, empowerment, and access to education and income in society, and consequently their relationship with mobile technology.*⁴⁷

The 2017 *Gender and Information Communication Technology (ICT) Survey Toolkit* was developed under the Mobile Solutions Technical Assistance and Research (mSTAR) project, implemented by FHI 360, to provide tools to USAID and implementing partners for collecting baseline data about women's access and usage of mobile phones and other connected devices. This data, once collected, is meant to support identifying the barriers, including social norms, which are specific to a project's context⁴⁸.

Water and Sanitation & Health (WASH) Sector

Within the WASH sector, "behavior change" is one of three interdependent pillars of WASH program strategies and approaches meant to promote the USAID *Water and Development Strategy 2013-2018* Strategic Objective of improved health. The other two pillars are "hardware" and "support to an enabling policy and institutional environment."⁴⁹

Social norms are not highlighted in the strategy as either major barriers or pivot points to desired behavior change. Nonetheless, they are featured in a few project-specific strategies and initiatives.

Gender analysis, meant to inform program design by “identify[ing] gender dynamics, roles, and how they impact WASH and nutrition behaviors for men, women, and children,” is mandated for all WASH— and indeed, all USAID-funded— programs.⁵⁰

A strategy document for the WASHplus initiative in Bangladesh includes mention of the role of social norms as one of the “cross-cutting factors most influential in WASH behaviors.”⁵¹ The strategy does not name the specific norms that need to be changed but indicates that “norms” are important and should be addressed by programming. Additionally, the Water Resources Integration Development Initiative (WARIDI) in Tanzania, initiated in 2017, includes a gendered social norm change intervention focused on changing norms to strengthen the ability of women and girls to engage in public decision-making relating to WASH.⁵²

One individual who works in the WASH sector said:

I don't think we necessarily use the term “gender norms” - it scares people who are not familiar with it. We talk about behavior change and BCC, but it also depends. When you talk to [individual] about handwashing [they] say “social norms.” But when you're talking about technical or engineering projects then they won't use it – it's just because they don't know.

Key informant interviews and the literature review conducted for this report indicate growing concern about the need to refine what is working within the sector to achieve targeted sanitation and hygiene results, with a growing emphasis on normative change.

SECTION ONE KEY POINTS:

THE IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE OF SOCIAL NORMS IN SIX USAID SECTORS

The data points to three conclusions about how practitioners within the six sectors view the importance and relevance of social norms within their work.

1. **Across all sectors there is an understanding that social norms play a role in the ability of international development programming to be effective.**

In the landscaping for this review, all practitioners acknowledge the importance of social norms, and documents found within all sectors referenced their significance, if at varying programmatic levels. This attention to social norms was often based on the understanding that social norms contribute to inequalities that shape international development objectives, that they limit participation in programming, and they affect the ability of programs to achieve their goals.

2. **Across all sectors, gender norms are discussed more than other social norms.**

Gender norms are understood across sectors as important because they present barriers and challenges to development objectives based on deeply rooted gender inequalities and power dynamics. The mandatory USAID gender policy, mentioned above, and discussed in more depth in **Section Two** below, appears to play a role in generating more awareness and attention to gender norms. The programming and outcome challenges resulting from gender norms are reported as similar across sectors, even when program objectives may be very different. This conclusion presents an opportunity for focusing on gender in cross-sectoral normative change planning and programming.

Social norms that may be important to development outcomes, which are not gender norms, receive comparatively little attention. For example, those that are discussed, as noted above, include open defecation and hand washing, in WASH; teacher-centered pedagogy and engagement of parents in student learning in Education; and agricultural techniques, crop selection and dietary habits in Food and Agriculture. The lack of attention in the reviewed literature may not be indicative of awareness of how other types of norms affect behaviors across sector; however, they were not identified in the literature reviewed.

3. **There is wide variation in the extent to which sectors, and programs within sectors, identify and describe the specific social norms that drive behaviors.**

Whereas sector strategies, toolkits, research, and guidance documents acknowledge the importance of social norms, even at the program level these are often discussed in very generalized terms without connecting specific norms to specific behaviors or practices.

References to social norms are sometimes conflated with behaviors and attitudes making it difficult to know from program documents whether strategies are in fact normative. On the other hand, there are also examples of sophisticated gender analyses that demonstrate insights into the social and gender norms driving inequality.

SECTION TWO

APPROACHES TO SHIFTING SOCIAL NORMS

As noted earlier, there is a growing evidence base about the role of social norms within international development programming. Much of this work is being conducted in the health sector by researchers and practitioners affiliated with a range of international actors in partnership with local organizations and initiatives around the globe. International groups include CARE, IRH, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, the Overseas Development Institute, Oxfam, UNICEF, and others.

Research includes a focus on how to identify social norms, as distinct from attitudes and beliefs; how social norms are developed and held in place; and how they can be transformed to more effectively achieve social and behavior change.

To facilitate planning norms-shifting interventions, IRH has developed a participatory guided toolkit called the *Social Norms Exploration Toolkit (SNET)*. To date the SNET has been applied in more than 12 program settings to help practitioners understand social norms concepts, engage community members to identify reference groups and explore social norms, and ultimately inform program design and research action.⁵³

An initial step in planning is to identify the relevant social norms and reference groups that influence the targeted behavior, as well as other factors that are not social norms. These might include the targeted community's and its individual members' potential need for knowledge and skills, their attitudes and beliefs, the roles and structure of institutions and policy, and available resources.

Further, determining the relative strength and importance of social norms, as well as other factors, within the project context is an important step in project design. For example, an intervention will be different if formative research determines that women are not bringing infants for newborn wellness checks primarily because the clinic is too far away (a structural factor), because they are not aware of the clinic and its benefits (a knowledge issue), or because women believe they will be judged negatively if they do so by their mothers and aunts who uphold a norm that traditional health care is preferred (a social norm). Typically, there are multiple factors affecting the targeted behavior or practice that need to be addressed simultaneously.

As described previously, behaviors are driven by multiple factors. Interventions that include normative change strategies rarely, if ever, focus on normative change alone. Instead, normative change strategies are part of a larger SBC intervention. Table 2 compares interventions that have incorporated normative change strategies with those that have not. The focus of the table is the normative component thus other change strategies may not be fully described. Interventions that include a focus on normative change have several characteristics that are provided in **Table 2, below**.

Table 2: Common characteristics of Normative and Non-Normative Interventions ⁵⁴

NON-NORMATIVE INTERVENTIONS	NORMATIVE INTERVENTIONS
The individual is the focus of change	The community and individual are focuses of change
Behavior change strategies address knowledge, attitudes, practices, and motivations	Behavior change strategies address normative perceptions and expectations; focuses on new, alternative norms, attitudes, and practices
Uses a mix of media channels and participatory methods to engage in knowledge transfer; works mostly at individual level	Uses a mix of media channels and social spaces to foster critical reflection rooted in communities' cultural value systems; works at different levels of social ecology
Seeks to persuade or motivate individuals' behavior	Seeks to redistribute power and social influence that support individuals' actions
Based on behavior-focused barriers and other assessments and identification of knowledge, attitudes, practice (KAP) gaps	Based on social norms assessment and identification of relevant norms; planned diffusion of new ideas
Monitoring and evaluation is focused on attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors at the individual level	In addition to attitudes and behaviors, monitoring and evaluation is focused on the enabling, normative environment –and changes in how the community or relevant reference groups think, believe, and behave

A literature review⁵⁵ conducted within the IRH Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change⁶ of community-based norm shifting interventions identified nine common attributes of interventions focused on shifting norms. Projects do not need to include all the attributes to be considered normative. The attributes identified are found in **Box 3** (below)⁵⁶. The evidence review is based on interventions conducted in communities with traditional structures. Most were in rural areas. Whether interventions would work in the same way if the “community” is a sprawling urban area or a corporation is not known.

⁶ The Learning Collaborative is made up of a network of experts committed to facilitating collaboration between organizations and individuals working on adolescent sexual and reproductive health norm change initiatives. More information can be found here: <http://irh.org/projects/learning-collaborative-to-advance-normative-change/>

Pathways to Normative Change

An important component of many behavior change interventions includes changing social norms.⁵⁷ While an intervention may also address other determinants of behavior – i.e. the needs for knowledge, skills, capacity, policy – social norms are considered a key influence on behavior and require clear strategies to identify and address them including documenting these strategies in the program theories of change.

This landscaping review found that many programs reviewed across sectors identify social norms as important to consider in programming. However, for many of the programs reviewed there is not a clear approach to change these norms. In some programs, the desirable change in behaviors or practices is achieved by addressing non-normative factors with the anticipation that the new practices/behaviors will ultimately achieve desired changes in social norms. In other programs it is not clear whether expected outcomes include social norm change, despite social norms being considered important.

Box 3: Common Attributes of Community-Based Norm Shifting Interventions⁵⁶

1. Seeks community-level change (clearly articulates social change outcomes beyond just individual)
2. Correct misperceptions around harmful behaviors
3. Creates or promotes positive norms
4. Engages a wide range of people at multiple levels (ecological model)
5. Creates safe space(s) for critical community reflection
6. Uses organized diffusion
7. Addresses power imbalance/inequality
8. Roots the issue within the community's own values
9. Based upon accurate assessment of social norms

Cross-Cutting Programming Influence — 2012 Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy

As mentioned above, the 2012 *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy* made sweeping changes across USAID, affecting all programming and elevating the attention to gender norms. The policy mandates gender analysis as well as the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the program cycle – from the Country Development Coordination Strategy level to the level of individual interventions. Five domains are recommended for analyses including: laws, policies, institutional practices; cultural norms and beliefs; gender roles, responsibilities and time; and access and control over assets and resources.⁵⁸

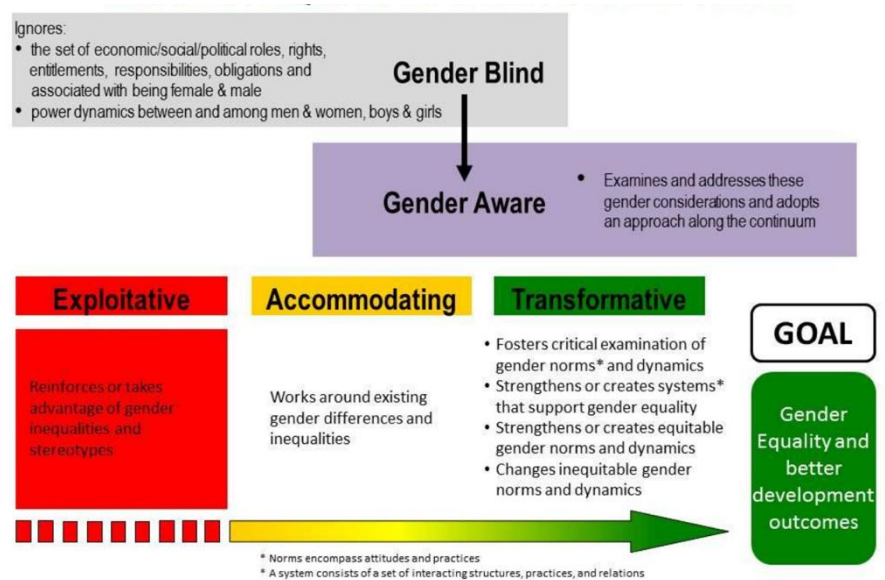
The *Automated Directives System (ADS) 205*, revised in 2017, provides details about how to implement the *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy*, including how to conduct a gender analysis and how to ensure gender is integrated throughout a project.⁵⁹ In addition to gender equality, other forms of inclusion have become increasingly important to development efforts, including a focus on people living with disabilities.

It is important to note that the policy requires identifying normative factors, including gender norms and power relations that affect gender equality and women’s empowerment. Evaluations are expected to include a gender analysis component that addresses the “extent to which closing gender gaps has improved project outcomes and/or whether the project has transformed gendered norms, reduced gender gaps, or empowered women/girls...”⁶⁰

According to the *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy*: “Gender integration involves identifying, and then addressing, gender inequalities during strategy and project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Since the roles and power relations between men and women affect how an activity is implemented, it is essential that project managers address these issues on an ongoing basis.”⁶¹

In **Figure 3**, across, the Gender Equality Continuum Tool⁶² provides key definitions to identify the extent to which interventions are attentive to gender – ranging from those that are “gender blind” to those that are “gender transformative.” As discussed below, however, while almost all projects reviewed meet the criteria for “gender aware,” and many are “gender accommodating,” only a few are “gender transformative.”

Figure 3: Gender Equality Continuum Tool



Strategies and Program Activities Addressing Social Norms in Six USAID Sectors

Across all USAID sectors reviewed, there are examples of programming that reference normative change components.

Some of this work utilizes an explicit “behavior change” approach – including those labeled social behavior change (SBC), behavior change communication (BCC), and social behavior change communication (SBCC) approaches. Other projects incorporate normative components into a broader program strategy.

Using Behavior Change Approaches

SBC, BCC, and SBCC are approaches that use a range of strategies to generate new knowledge, and changes in attitudes, beliefs, and norms to support individuals and community members shift to healthier

behaviors – such as improved nutrition or sanitation practices.⁶³ As a note, for the purpose of this review the various behavior change approaches are referred to as SBC/C approaches except where a specific program is being discussed and in this case the term used reflects what is found in the body of literature reviewed.

Within the Food & Agriculture sector, and in cross-sectoral strategies that intersect with the WASH sector, overarching strategies and guidance documents emphasize behavior change as a central objective of initiatives.

In general, the extent to which behavior change approaches are normative is based on: 1) the degree to which the behavior is driven by social norm(s), 2) whether implementers prioritize identifying and addressing the role of social norms in driving the behavior or practice a program is seeking to change, and 3) the theory of change implementers are using.

Social norms are highlighted as significant influencers of many behaviors in strategies for Food & Agriculture, as well as for joint Nutrition and WASH programming,⁶⁴ even though the *Water and Development Strategy 2013-2018* does not mention social norms.⁶⁵ Both sectors conduct a considerable amount of cross-sectoral work, including with the Bureau for Global Health, where much of the work on shifting norms takes place, making it difficult to fully disaggregate the ‘origin’ sector of some of the policies and programs reviewed in this report. While programs administered by sectors outside the landscaping protocol, including Global Health, were excluded from this report, the *Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy (2014-2025)* (administered by Global Health), deserves mention for promoting an SBC approach that aligns it with one that is normative. This includes the use of formative research to identify norms, strong engagement at the community level, and developing positive norms to support healthy behaviors.⁶⁶

In programming related to Land & Property Rights, SBC/C approaches are named throughout wildlife conservation efforts (discussed below) and in at least one land rights initiative. The Kosovo Property Rights Program (PRP) (2014-2018) uses BCC approaches that clearly include normative components. One of four project objectives is to “enhance women’s ability to use property rights in practice.”⁶⁷ Activities include a BCC campaign focused on attitudes and behaviors relating to property rights that a recent report, presented at a World Bank Conference, concludes is affecting social change, with measured changes in community-level attitudes towards norms relating to women’s property rights.⁶⁸

Programming with Normative Components Across Sectors

Guiding strategies, and other documents that provide program design and implementation guidance within sectors or large initiatives that include mention of norms – including references to social, cultural, and/or gender norms – were reviewed to learn how sectors frame strategies to address social norms.

Education, Food & Agriculture, and WASH sectors have overarching strategy documents, as well as toolkits and other guidance documents, to support achieving specific sector outcomes. Energy & Infrastructure, Land & Urban Development, and Technology do not have overarching strategies; however, they do have

toolkits or other frameworks to guide some programs or initiatives within the sector. Within all sectors, these strategic documents include discussion of normative factors that limit equality across populations.

An example is the USAID Land Tenure and Property Rights Framework (see **Box 4**).⁶⁹

Box 4: USAID Land Tenure and Property Rights Framework (2013)

The 2013 framework was meant to provide an overarching strategy for USAID's global work on land tenure and property rights (LTPR). **Social and gender norms** are cited within the context of barriers to women's participation in economic activities: "Social norms often restrict women's participation in decision-making and engagement in certain economic activities... LTPR programs must seek to understand gender roles in a society, issues of wealth distribution within the family, and gender norms related to ownership of land and property." (p.21).

"Gender/women's vulnerability" and "ethnic and socially marginalized populations" are two of the three cross-cutting themes addressed throughout the document.

What should programs do?

- Among the highlighted strategies the following are indicated within the framework:
- Conduct a gendered analysis to understand the gender roles and gender norms that influence property rights and land ownership
- Develop strategies that are sensitive to gender differences
- Sequence interventions to promote gender equality, economic growth, food security, sustainable natural resource management, and stability
- Implement multiple strategies over the long term and at multiple levels (individual, community, policy, institutional)

Norms are explicitly mentioned as important for understanding the barriers/constraints for women and other populations whose land/property rights are compromised and they are highlighted as cross-cutting constraints to development objectives.

Programming across sectors utilizes a range of gender integration strategies to increase female access to education, programming, services, and employment - often with the clear expectation that increasing the numbers of females able to perform in a non-traditional role will ultimately lead to changes in the normative environment. Objectives include promoting changes in attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge to foster more equal opportunities among men, women, youth, and persons with disabilities through training, skill building, and behavior change strategies; as well as reducing structural barriers to participation by addressing structural issues such as needs for resources, institutional capacity, and improved policies.

In some sectors, toolkits state that they provide guidance about how to identify and address norms that are barriers or constraints to program objectives. However, information tends to be centered on how to conduct a gender analysis, and general principles of transformative approaches (i.e. "holistic," "multi-

sectoral,” “multi-level” approaches”)⁷⁰ rather than on how to identify and create targeted strategies for specific social and gender norms.

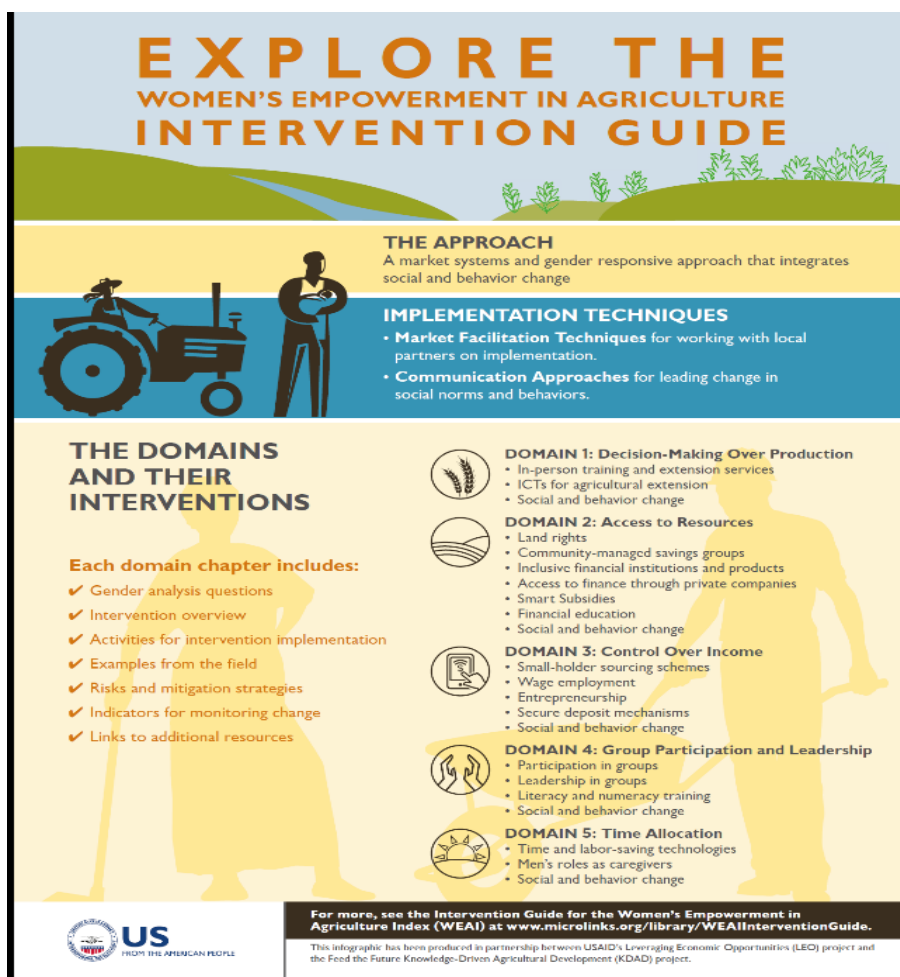
Programming in the Food & Agriculture Sector

SBC/C approaches are encouraged throughout the Food & Agriculture sector with the intention of promoting change at individual, household, and community levels. This focus is found throughout programming addressing food insecurity and malnutrition, including Feed the Future, Food for Peace (FFP) development activities, and the *Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy* mentioned above. Social norms are discussed as part of most of these strategies, along with other factors that affect behaviors, including knowledge and skills, access to resources and services, and policy. The extent to which programs include a normative component varies. Many project documents, as opposed to strategy documents, did not include extensive mention of social norms. The *Women’s Empowerment Agricultural Index* (WEAI),⁷¹ developed as part of Feed the Future, has supported

measuring women’s engagement in the agriculture sector, monitoring and evaluating interventions, and improved programming through the WEAI intervention guide.⁷² The guide incorporates SBC within interventions across five domains (**Figure 4**)⁷³ with norms-focused components that mirror the attributes of community-based norms-focused interventions referenced earlier.

The Gender in Agriculture from Policy to Practice (GAPP) project, implemented in Honduras 2013-2016 as part of Feed the Future provides an example of an intervention that included a clear normative component and utilized norms-shifting approaches such as male engagement. GAPP’s theory of change assumed that building women’s leadership skills and capacity and changing men’s attitudes would improve the ability of both men and women to advocate for institutional changes that would promote

Figure 4: Women's Empowerment Agricultural Index: Intervention Guide Overview



gender equality and women's economic development. These were considered stepping stones to changing the norms that limit women's participation in agriculture. A brief vignette highlighting key aspects of this project is featured below.⁷⁴

A 2014 Feed the Future brief, "Understanding and Applying Primary Pathways and Principles," promotes the notion that "health knowledge and norms" are an important part of the enabling environment influencing food security and nutrition. The brief advocates for gender sensitive programming, women's empowerment, and attention to equity, however, there is little evidence of addressing norms as an explicit part of programming.⁷⁵

One stakeholder commented:

Yes, I think we seek to shift [norms] but we don't always have the concrete tools to be able to shift it. ... we want our programming to be something that accounts for and changes the dynamics around women's/men's decision making, who does what in term of work, control over income, women's land access, feeding for young children...

Sometimes these are things that we intentionally bring into our programs but sometimes it's not.



Project Highlight

Gender in Agriculture: From Policy to Practice (GAPP) Project

October 2013 - March 2016

Project Summary

The Gender in Agriculture from Policy to Practice (GAPP) project was implemented in western Honduras from 2013-2016 by Lutheran World Relief and local partners. To increase women's access to resources for agricultural production, the project tested a model of building women's leadership, while also working with men to change the social norms that prevent women's full participation in agriculture. The theory of change was that building women's leadership and changing men's attitudes would improve the ability of both men and women to advocate for institutional changes that would promote gender equality and women's economic development. A GAPP toolkit was developed at the end of the project to document its approaches, successes and challenges.

GAPP's Normative Approach

GAPP had three primary project components including: 1) building women's leadership capacities, 2) addressing social norms that limit women's participation and leadership in agricultural associations, and 3) engaging with institutions to reshape both informal and formal rules and policies to advance gender equality.

GAPP's Normative Approach (cont.)

GAPP had three primary project components including: 1) building women's leadership capacities, 2) addressing social norms that limit women's participation and leadership in agricultural associations, and 3) engaging with institutions to reshape both informal and formal rules and policies to advance gender equality.

The GAPP toolkit included support for conducting a gender analysis as a formative step in project design. A normative approach was part of all three project components, but was most explicitly described as part of project activities to address the norms that affect men's and women's participation in associations, civic activities and decision-making processes. These include norms that traditionally, in Honduras, place the burden of responsibility for household chores on women, and the responsibility for economic support to the household on men, affecting the ability of women and girls to access resources and to participate in activities that could contribute to their food security.

GAPP used the gender analysis conducted prior to project planning to identify groups of men with influence on defining, enforcing, or shaping "constraints" to the project's agenda for gender equality. Workshops were used to engage men in individual and group reflections to confront their own ideals and lived experiences of masculinity with the objective of building more positive images of the ideal man. Other awareness raising activities and forums promoted models of positive behavior change and evidence of community engagement and support for these. Models for men's activities came from organizations that have contributed to the evidence-base on working with men.

Successes and Challenges

An evaluation of GAPP provided insights into the challenges inherent in a norms-focused approach. The project reported successes in many of the project components – including women's leadership, and capacities to advocate for their interests both individually and through women's networks. However, while able to "plant seeds of change" for men who participated in trainings, it was challenging to attract men into the program and the GAPP evaluation concluded that interventions did not affect changes in the wider "dominant patriarchal culture." Lessons reported by GAPP include the need for better male engagement strategies, including improved ways to target those groups that were identified as important and to measure behavior change.

Programming in the WASH Sector

The most extensively utilized behavior change approach used within WASH is Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), which seeks to end open defecation and improve basic hygiene practices in communities. The approach relies on community mobilization and is considered by most a form of SBC.

CLTS is community-led and implemented in three phases with the goal of an open defecation free community. Phase I is “pre-triggering” when local leaders are engaged; Phase II is “triggering,” when community members are engaged in disgust at open defecation and interest is triggered for everyone to build latrines (notably using shame for those who are resistant); and Phase III is “post-triggering” where some follow up and support is provided.⁷⁶ The central role of shame in classic implementation of CLTS is controversial, with some shunning the approach as inconsistent with community and/or public health values and with psychosocial theory about behavior change.⁷⁷

According to a 2018 literature review of CLTS interventions around the globe for USAID, “CLTS is unquestionably an intervention designed to bring about a change in social norms, even if it was not initially couched in the language of social norms at its inception.”⁷⁸ The review notes that CLTS has been shown effective in affecting “short-and medium-term” health benefits, even if there is less evidence that change is sustained over the long-term.⁷⁹

Despite questions about sustainability of behavior changes using CLTS, or its ethics, there are examples of success, and one project that appears to demonstrate normative change using this approach is the IWASH program, implemented from 2010-2015 in Liberia.⁸⁰ CLTS was a central part of the IWASH strategy in Liberia, which used several effective approaches to generate normative change around open defecation, as well as other sanitation and hygiene behaviors. After the Ebola epidemic in 2014, it was noted that in communities that ended open defecation through IWASH, zero cases of Ebola emerged during the epidemic. In all CLTS communities, whether they had achieved open defecation free status or not, there was a 17% less likelihood of Ebola.⁸¹ This finding suggests that new sanitation and hygiene behaviors, which in Liberia are driven by a number of social norms, had been adopted at the community-level.

Another project that holds promise as an example of shifting norms is the USAID/Tanzania Water Resources Integration Development Initiative (WARIDI) project (2016-2020), a cross-sectoral project that includes a WASH component, being implemented by Tetra Tech and partners.⁸² As part of the five-year project, an 18-month social norm change intervention focused on several domains of women’s access and participation in water resource management and development is being implemented and is featured in the vignette below.⁸³



Project Highlight

Tanzania Water Resources Integration Development Initiative (WARIDI) 2016 - 2020

Project Summary

The aim of WARIDI is to improve health, water resources management, agriculture practices, and climate change adaptation in two river basins in Tanzania. WARIDI implements Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) as well as an explicit social norm change intervention focused on several domains of women's access and participation in water resource management and development.

WARIDI's Normative Approach

A gender assessment, conducted in the first year of the program, highlighted women's limited active participation in settings and institutions where decisions affecting their lives were being made, as well as the role of men in shaping the social norms affecting women.

IRIS Group, responsible for the analysis and integration of gender and youth issues in WARIDI, used CARE USA's social norms analysis plot (SNAP) framework to frame their approach. They began with formative research to further explore norms identified in the gender assessment and to inform the design of an 18-month social norms intervention. Research explored questions about community decision making, with a focus on how women do and do not participate, and why.

Social norms were deconstructed to determine the types of norms responsible for the practices the project wanted to influence, sanctions that hold the norms in place, the strength of the norm, and information about when the norms did not function to limit women's participation. Reference groups were identified. In addition, monitoring and evaluation tools and processes were designed. Based on these findings, WARIDI activities fall into three components, each with the goal of improved water resources through the promotion integrated water resources management and service delivery. Component 1 increases access to sustainable WASH services; Component 2 "strengthens governance for sustainable and resilient management of water resources and services under a changing climate"; and Component 3 engages the private sector to increase livelihood opportunities in WASH and related services.

The intervention included three major components targeting multiple levels of the community. These include advocacy and planning with key stakeholders to gain needed support for the initiative, capacity building for women's groups, and community dialogue to generate normative change.

Successes and Challenges

Implementers are currently conducting an end-line evaluation that will be completed by June 2019.

Programming in the Education Sector

Normative programming within USAID's education sector has focused primarily around efforts to create "safe" schools based on a theory of change that a safe classroom can lead to better educational outcomes.⁸⁴ Several initiatives, curricula, and toolkits are being used across the globe in support of this theory.⁸⁵

The Let Girls Learn initiative, a multi-agency US government initiative from 2015-2016, created by President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, promoted a comprehensive approach to changing gender norms that devalue girls' education. While Let Girls Learn has ended, many of the programs created under it continue.⁸⁶

USAID's *Data for Educational Research and Planning (DERP) in Africa*, Education Data for Decision Making (EdData II) program and the Opportunities for Achievement and Safety in Schools (OASIS) programs developed several publications in 2015-2016 to provide definition, evidence, strategic direction, and coordination to addressing gender equality and inclusiveness in schools and school-related GBV, including attention to the gender norms that drive inequality and GBV.⁸⁷

Under USAID's Advancing the Agenda of Gender Equality mechanism, a comprehensive toolkit was developed to provide detailed information for integrating GBV prevention and response into education programming. The toolkit includes "six fundamental principles for integrating GBV prevention and response," including "addressing harmful gender norms." The toolkit suggests programming considerations for each of the six principles. These are consistent with several of the attributes of norm-shifting interventions discussed above, including: gender analyses to assess norms, engaging the community beyond the school, emphasizing positive new norms, and engaging men and boys in safe spaces for critical reflection. The toolkit also promotes the need to incorporate program suggestions into all aspects of program design – including MEL activities.⁸⁸

Corporal punishment and bullying are being widely addressed in schools and communities, primarily from a teacher training perspective to build knowledge and positive nonviolent discipline skills.⁸⁹ USAID's Safe Schools Program (2003-2008) produced the Doorways Training Manuals⁹⁰ for teachers, students, and volunteer community counselors that is being used in many programs.

Waache Wasome ("Let Them Learn") is a five-year activity implemented by Bantwana World Education Initiative that aims to increase adolescent girls' participation and retention in secondary school. Among the strategies it uses to address the social and gender norms that constrain girls' ability to remain in school are community dialogues that utilize materials developed for use in northern Tanzania to address norms in the *Pamoja Tuwalee* program. Materials are based on extensive research by developers on work to "address gender norms."

Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA), implemented by RTI International, has been collecting data to strengthen the evidence base relating to the link between reducing school-related GBV and learner performance. This program explicitly addresses social norms, and includes measures of norm changes, as part of efforts to achieve outcomes. A vignette on the program is found below.⁹¹



Project Highlight

Uganda Literacy Achievement Retention Activity

2015 - 2020

“Ensuring a positive and supportive school climate and zero-tolerance for School-Related GBV”

Project Summary

The Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA) is a five-year intervention (2015-2020), implemented by RTI International, with intended results to 1) improve the capacity of education stakeholders to deliver early grade reading skills, and 2) improve retention in the early grades. To achieve its second result a SBCC initiative is being implemented to strengthen policy implementation and to create awareness and positive action about “gender power relations” that drive school-related GBV.

The Role of Normative Change

Ensuring a “positive and supportive school climate” and zero tolerance for school-related GBV are the center of LARA’s theory of change. Normative change in the school environment is one component of a comprehensive approach to both literacy and retention in primary schools. According to LARA’s Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan,² targeted norms include those affecting discipline and corporal punishment of children, gender and power relations, child rights and responsibilities, and parent/child reading practices. Normative approaches include engaging parents and community as reflective partners in the project, in addition to targeting pupils, teachers, school and Ministry officials. Policy development and enforcement are among LARA’s key strategies. Performance reporting indicators include concrete measures for attitudes, beliefs and norms with units of measure at individual, community, and school levels.

Successes and Challenges

A report for year two of LARA notes the challenges with changing deeply held norms such as those relating to corporal punishment. However, despite delays with some activities and processes, LARA was able to report, for example, that the Community Change Agents have engaged communities in reflection and dialogue about gender norms and power relations.

Programming in the Energy & Infrastructure Sector

Among the initiatives at USAID's Energy Sector is Power Africa, a U.S. government-wide, large-scale, multi-country alliance that describes its approach as "gender integration" that promotes both gender equality and economic development. Within this alliance is multi-country initiative, Engendering Utilities, currently scaling up from five to nine countries in its second phase. Engendering Utilities aims to change norms to promote and increase energy-sector employment for women.

Power Africa is a coalition of more than 100 public and private governmental and non-governmental partners, coordinated by USAID, which seeks to double Africa's access to power by 2030. An important component of Power Africa is "Women in African Power," a network of women who promote, mentor, and support the integration of women throughout the energy value chain.

The Engendering Utilities initiative is based on a development hypothesis that engaging women at all levels of power distribution companies will serve the industry by making it more efficient with women at senior levels, and promote gender equality through changing norms.⁹² This theory of change is based on several research studies conducted by McKinsey & Company about how gender diversity at the highest levels of corporate management structures improves operational efficiency.⁹³ More information about the work of Engendering Utilities, now in its second phase, is included in the project vignette, below.⁹⁴

The *Building a Safer World: Toolkit for Integrating GBV Prevention and Response into USAID Energy and Infrastructure Projects* provides references and information to support project planning that anticipates and mitigates the risks for women who are consumers as well as workers in these male-dominated contexts. The toolkit is meant to provide resources to support the development of project-specific strategies.⁹⁵ As a result, while normative approaches are included in resources there are no in-depth explanations about how to target specific norms.

A new resource within USAID's Office of Energy, *Practical Guide to Women in Energy Regulation*, captures barriers, challenges, and successes of programming from around the globe focused on the inclusion of women in energy with three main sections focusing on employment, energy regulatory policy, and energy infrastructure projects. Social norms, as barriers to employment, are featured with strategies detailed that include: gender-sensitive policies and benefits, education and training for both skills and gender awareness, gender-disaggregated employment data, and hiring systems to reduce gender bias.⁹⁶



Project Highlight

The Engendering Utilities Project

2015 – 2018/2018-2020

“Strengthening the power sector through gender equity”

Project Summary

The Engendering Utilities initiative (2015-present) began by conducting a comprehensive study about the roles of women in energy distribution companies. Data was used to develop and implement customized interventions aligned with each company’s context. Later, a global Best Practices Framework for Human Resources was instituted along with an executive leadership course on gender equity for utility human resource professionals.

From 2015-2018 the initiative engaged seven partner utility companies in five countries (Georgia, Macedonia, Jordan, Kenya, and Nigeria). Engendering Utilities 2.0 (2018-2020) has expanded to include 11 utility companies, including those in El Salvador, Kosovo, Malawi, and Mozambique. The hypothesis grounding this policy work suggests that mitigating gender disparities can increase operational efficiencies that will ultimately bring greater value to utility companies. This has the potential to result in a positive feedback loop, where improvements in gender equality help change norms and expectations on gender, which ultimately allows women to participate in all aspects of the energy sector.

The Role of Normative Change

The project has worked to change norms and expectations on gender roles within power companies through changes in company policy, practice, and culture. Strategies include engaging company leadership and employees, sensitizing key stakeholders on gender, training and mentoring, revamping of human resource practices and policy to promote and ensure gender equity, and institutionalizing practices within human resource departments that promote and track women’s engagement. Women leaders in the energy sector are also highlighted as positive role models and mentors, while younger girls are encouraged to become engineers through activities that include ““Bring Your Daughter to Work Day” and outreach programs to technical schools and universities. In the last phase of the initial Engendering Utilities project, changes were institutionalized by developing a Best Practices Framework for Human Resources with training and coaching through an executive leadership course delivered by Georgetown University.

Successes and Challenges

While final evaluation data is not yet available, early successes were already demonstrating increases in the number of women entering training programs, working within utility companies, and moving into leadership positions. The Engendering Utilities project’s monitoring and evaluation has been tracking the effectiveness of the intervention in reducing gender disparities through quantitative measures of company finances, percentages of women employed and in senior management; as well as attitudes within the organizational culture. Of note is the measurement of attitudes beyond the individual level as one indicator that the intervention includes a focus on community-level norms.

Programming in the Land & Property Rights Sector

USAID program strategies and guidance documents focused on a broad range of topics relating to land and property rights demonstrate an understanding of the importance of promoting changes in both legal structures and social norms, which are often embodied within customary law relating to land rights. Program frameworks include an emphasis on improving legal frameworks in coordination with engaging communities in shifting attitudes, behaviors, and norms.⁹⁷ Many strategies include multi-sectoral components in coordination with WASH, Food and Agriculture, Climate Change, Global Health, and others.⁹⁸

A study relating to intersections between land and property rights and intimate partner violence provides recommendations for USAID programming to include social norms, including the following:

*Recognizing that shifting social norms can be very difficult, include a behavior change component to influence the attitudes and practices of women and men around women's land and property rights and GBV or IPV [intimate partner violence] and build awareness of strategies to reduce acceptance of, and toleration for, GBV or IPV related to the use and control of land. Create spaces for discussion and dialogue that are accessible, safe, and comfortable for both women and men.*⁹⁹

Notwithstanding the strong normative focus of strategies, only a few program-specific documents available for this landscape review discuss how social norms are addressed.

The Kosovo Property Rights Program, discussed above, is among the initiatives that do demonstrate a normative component. Another example is the Liberia Land Governance Support Activity (2015-2020). This initiative is designed to support the government's land rights reform process. A gender strategy provides the framework to drive a gender-sensitive approach that is integrated throughout. Among the approaches supportive of normative change include use of various channels for promoting information, use of evidence in communication, framing change in positive ways, "audience-mapping" that includes identifying the right messengers for change, and engaging whole communities.¹⁰⁰

To accomplish this objective SBCC is a priority approach and social norms are referenced as affecting demand, with efforts focused on generating new social norms to reduce consumer demand.¹⁰¹ However, signaling a lack of clarity among program staff about what constitutes a social norm, some documents reviewed identify the drivers of demand as "norms" and others as "beliefs" and "attitudes."¹⁰²

Programming in the Technology Sector

While social norms affect the digital divide for women, youth, people with disabilities, and those who are low-income, strategies to address access to mobile technology found within USAID focus primarily on the "gender gap."

The *Gender and ICT Survey Toolkit*, mentioned earlier, provides both information about normative barriers to access and use of technology, and strategic input about how to address these barriers. Two approaches are supported in the toolkit – working to "design around" norms or working to "reduce norms" that present barriers to technology use. Both are considered "normative" within the sector. The toolkit states:

*The data from the survey can tell you about what sort of barriers your female clients or target group face around mobile and mobile Internet access and use. You can use this information in your program design, either by thinking strategically about how to systematically address the barriers and reduce them, or by thinking of ways to design around them.*¹⁰³

Notably, there is more emphasis on how to “design around” norms rather than how to change norms. This approach meets the need to ensure gender equality in the initiative and provides women access to technology more immediately. In some cases there is an explicit expectation that the changes achieved will contribute to normative change over the long term; in others, it is not clear whether shifting norms is an anticipated outcome.

As an example, through a 2014 GSMA Connected Women Innovation Fund grant in India, funded in part by USAID, the cellular network company Uninor offered a “combo-SIM plan” so that when men (or women) purchase one SIM card the other card goes to their spouse. In addition, air time purchased carries a bonus for the second SIM. This is meant to incentivize men in rural India to buy and/or allow their wives to use mobile technology. Uninor also hired women “promoters” to work in communities to improve women’s access to mobile phone products¹⁰⁴. Ultimately, the company navigated around the social norms that prevent women from purchasing and using mobile technology.

A company report indicates the following:

*Early evidence suggests that the SIM combo and marketing and distribution approach can be a powerful way to challenge the social norms preventing women from using a mobile phone, and provides an incentive for men to see the value of female household members having a SIM of their own*¹⁰⁵

In 2018, the Center for Digital Development launched the WomenConnect Challenge, a new initiative that invited innovative proposals “to address economic and social barriers to women’s technology access and use.” Proposals were required to include a normative component. USAID planned to select twenty proposals. Plans included inviting the 20 selected organizations to a three-day training on SBCC specific to WomenConnect. There are nine awardees in 13 countries, all with projects focused on understanding and addressing the social norms that limit women’s and girls’ technology access and use.

SECTION TWO KEY POINTS:

APPROACHES TO ADDRESS SOCIAL NORMS

As noted, data relating to how programs address social norms across the selected sectors may not fully reflect sector strategies, however, the data has been sufficient to provide an overview of how normative change is being approached. The data collected on approaches to address social norms point to the following several key messages.

Many programs lack an explicit approach to normative change. Even where sector strategies or toolkits provide some guidance, and despite the cross-cutting Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy that promotes gender norm change, only a few examples were found at the program level that articulated a clear pathway to shifting social (or gender) norms.

As discussed throughout **Section Two**, the landscaping review found that social norms, particularly gender norms, are identified as important to consider in program design. However, despite some examples of strategic guidance relating to normative change, most of the program documents reviewed do not articulate whether or not that guidance is put into practice. A few exceptions were highlighted in this section.

In keeping with the lack of explicit strategies to shift social norms, monitoring and evaluation of normative components of programs is largely absent.

With a couple of exceptions, including the LARA Education sector initiative, programming identified as norm-focused does not provide evidence to demonstrate how programming affects norms. Even where a specific behavior change is measured, there is little that points to the exact mechanisms of change.

The entry point to address social norms varies across sectors. In some sectors work to shift social norms is at the institutional or corporate/company level.

While most of the evidence from the health sector on how to effectively identify and address social norms is drawn from community-based approaches, primarily in rural settings, in some sectors, the entry point to normative change is at the institutional or corporate/company level. For example, within the Energy and Infrastructure sector, change is happening within the space of the utility company, and within the education sector, change may happen within a school “community.” More research is needed to identify successful strategies and pathways to normative change within these different contexts.

All programs reviewed use a combination of approaches to address multiple factors related to the changes they seek. Most engage individuals, communities, and at times, institutions.

All of the programs and interventions reviewed address multiple factors that drive targeted behaviors or practices and use a combination of approaches to accomplish this. This includes addressing policy, institutional changes, resource needs, capacity building, and sharing knowledge and skills – acknowledging the multiple drivers of behavior.

SECTION THREE

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Key informant interviews provided insights into some of the challenges and opportunities practitioners face in their work to address social norms.



Knowledge and Skills

Many of the stakeholders interviewed believe there is a general understanding of social norms within USAID, but most said that the lack of standardized definitions and operational guidelines relating to normative change, effective programming, and MEL of normative programming creates barriers to explicit work on social norms.

In addition, terminology used reflects a strong health focus where “behavior change” is prominent. In some sectors, for example, Energy & Infrastructure, desired outcomes relate more to human resource “practices,” rather than behavior.

“We don’t have the tools to measure social norms change so we don’t know if we are doing it right.”



Requirements to Address and Report on Social Norms

Some sector experts suggested that there should be explicit expectations relating to normative programming, as well as systems of reporting and accountability. At the same time, there is agreement that finding the right way to frame requirements and to generate measures for a field that is still nascent would be challenging.



Talking Points and Ethics

In the absence of agency-wide requirements to address social norms, some sector experts indicated the need for talking points to help them advocate for programming with stronger normative components. Some indicated resistance to efforts to promote programming that includes normative change because of the assumption that the work is complex and that it requires a lengthy project period beyond the three to five years of funding most projects are given.

In addition, there was some concern that norms programs are unethical because they seek to shift community tradition and norms. One person said: “How do I talk to my colleagues, especially mission colleagues who come up against this wall of ‘this is culture and you shouldn’t change that’ or ‘people will never change that’... What are good ways to have that conversation?”



Generating Integrated Programming Across Sectors

Finally, some sector experts in KII talked about the value of programming to facilitate normative change that is integrated within and across sectors. For example, unequal gender norms are highlighted by all projects in every sector. Generating programming that communicates similar themes within schools, farmer’s co-ops and agricultural extension programs, health clinics, water and sanitation programming – to name a few – can enhance results. However, integrated programming requires work across sectors, which can be challenging. According to one individual:

Everyone wants to do it, but it’s a nightmare, the logistical and procurement systems that are in place are a disaster. It’s never a technical issue, it’s the structural part of it. ... I hope that you don’t come up with a recommendation that says, ‘sectors should work together more’ because we already know that, I want to hear what structures need to be in place for us to work together better.”

SECTION FOUR

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USAID

1

Develop common terminology and approaches that can be used across sectors relating to social norms and social norms change interventions.

This includes definitions of social norms and terminology related to norms-changing interventions, as well as models of normative change strategies that can be demonstrated as effective in all sectors. The health focus of current social norm terminology should be broadened to respond to the point that “behavior change” may not fully resonate in all sectors. For example, using terminology that refers to the outcome of “practices,” as used in some parts of this report, may be more appropriate.

2

Develop MEL tools and indicative indicators to measure the effectiveness of normative interventions and to support learning about the potential of both sector-specific and cross-sectoral efforts to address norms.

Measurement tools and indicators that can be utilized across USAID sectors should be developed to support learning about what effect normative interventions have on USAID’s mission and goals, what causal pathways are effective across sectors, and what are sector-specific pathways. The ability to integrate MEL findings across sectors for the same norm will support learning about the power of cross-sectoral efforts to address norms.

3

Conduct more research about effective pathways to normative change, particularly in sectors outside of health, to generate a more robust evidence base for varying contexts.

Current research relating to what works to change social norms is primarily related to health and gender. Many of these studies focus on projects that are explicitly focused on normative approaches and they are implemented in primarily rural communities. More is needed to understand what is effective in different sectors and contexts.

4

Develop and support training of USAID staff and implementing partners about the role of social norms in programming, and how to design, implement, and evaluate effective normative programming.

Training is needed to provide USAID staff and implementers with common language, as well as the skills and knowledge to design, implement, and evaluate normative programs. Concepts that should be covered in required training include:

- The role of social norms in social behavior change and other programming that could benefit from a normative change component.
- How to identify social norms and reference groups relevant to an intervention.
- How to integrate normative components into programming.
- How to measure change in social norms.
- How to advocate within one's sector for normative change interventions.

Formats for training and sharing knowledge about social norms and norms-shifting interventions should include a range of in-person and remote options to meet the varied needs of USAID staff and implementers at headquarters, missions, and in the field. Mechanisms include in-person training, webinars, podcasts, blogs, case studies, and practice-based knowledge briefs. A certificate course might be comprised of a combination of in-person and on-line training.

5

Strengthen existing approaches, policies, and guidance that already address behavior change and social/gender norms to incorporate new knowledge on how norms-shifting interventions can improve program results.

This would include incorporating capacity building on social norms and norms-shifting interventions into existing SBC guidelines and into the next version of the USAID Gender Policy and ADS guidance documents. Knowledge and skill building would promote distinct analyses relating to identifying what norms drive what behaviors, what reference groups support what norms, and provide updated guidance about what is known about effective strategies for addressing norms. As needed, rapid assessment tools to support identifying relevant social norms and their reference groups should be developed, or existing tools such as the SNET, mentioned above, used. Findings from such assessments can be incorporated into existing program design strategies. A normative analysis should be a mandatory aspect of program design – in the same way that a gender analysis is required.

LOOKING FORWARD

This landscaping was meant to be an initial exploratory activity to support a broad understanding of what is being done across USAID sectors to address social norms and to provide recommendations to begin to strengthen USAID's social norms programming both within and across sectors.

Next steps will include dissemination of this report and opportunities for feedback that might clarify our insights and support the next phase of deeper exploration and documentation of promising practices within USAID to shift social norms.

The next level of exploration will produce case studies of three projects, in three different sectors, to support in-depth understandings of how these select programs are conceptualizing social norms change, including their specific approaches and theories of change, their successes, and their needs to generate more positive outcomes.

The case studies, in combination with the research conducted for this review, will be used to generate further recommendations that will inform USAID practice, policy and further research into normative change across sectors.

ANNEX ONE:

METHODOLOGY

Initial Search

Our initial search was conducted in December 2017, during which we searched the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) for resources (e.g., project and evaluation reports, working papers, strategic plans, annual reports) relating to social and gender norms within each selected sector. We found using Google Search to search within the DEC (specifying site as usaid.gov) yielded more documents and the same ones that arose from a direct search of the DEC. We limited our search to documents available in pdf format uploaded to the DEC.

Table 3 of our specific search terms is included below.

Table 3: List of Search Terms			
Sector	SEARCH TERMS	Number of Documents	
		Initial Search	Included in Review
Education	Education + Social Norm(s)* Education + Normative Change Education + Gender Norm(s)	55	48
Energy And Infrastructure	Energy and Infrastructure + Social Norm(s) Energy and Infrastructure+ Normative Change Energy and Infrastructure+ Gender Norm(s)	10	15
Food And Agriculture	Food and Agriculture + Social Norm(s) Food and Agriculture + Normative Change Food and Agriculture + Gender Norm(s)	63	50
Land And Urbanization	Land and Urbanization + Social Norm(s) Land and Urbanization + Normative Change Land and Urbanization + Gender Norm(s)	28	28
Learning Lab (Technology)	Global Development Lab (OR Technology) + Social Norms Global Development Lab (OR Technology) + Normative Change	18	17

	Global Development Lab (OR Technology) + Gender Norm(s)		
Water, Sanitation, And Hygiene	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (OR WASH) + Social Norm(s)	16	16
	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (OR WASH) + Normative Change		
	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (OR WASH) + Gender Norm(s)		
Miscellaneous**	Gender Norm(s) OR Norm(s) OR Normative Change	392	N/A
Total			174

For example, when using the first set of terms, our exact search would be: “education + ‘social norm’ + site:usaid.gov + filetype:pdf”.

**In order to account for documents which did not explicitly name the sector, we conducted a broader search for terms related to social norms among all USAID publications: we then manually filtered the relevant results by sector.

Secondary Search

An ongoing secondary search was then conducted throughout the literature review process, during which additional resources were added to the review from three sources:

1. Key Informant Interview recommendations of projects and specific documentation to be included, which was requested at the end of each interview;
2. A review of the references of all of the relevant documents found in the initial search; and
3. Subsequent searches of the DEC for additional documentation related to projects found in the initial search which fit the criteria (e.g. new end line or evaluation reports published after the initial search was conducted).
4. Finally, as needed, additional searches were done on the USAID website for supporting materials.

Eligibility Review

Documents identified during the initial search then underwent an initial review for eligibility and inclusion in the full review. This review was applied at two points: (1) when reviewing the title/abstract during the initial search, and, if the document passed the first criteria, (2) when reviewing the full text during the full literature review. During this second step, the eligibility criteria consisted of the following:

1. Publication of the resource during or after the year 2012 and before or during 2018. This time period is selected to reflect more recent and advanced work on social norms programming,
2. Represents one of the six sectors included in this landscaping (see above), and
3. The resource addresses normative change OR there is a clear programmatic effort to address social norms in some way.

The eligibility criteria detailed above are designed to focus the literature search on the most relevant programs working on social norms. This time period represents a time when discussions on norms became more widespread across development sectors. The criteria also addressed gender norms, given that gender norms are a part of social norms and normative change interventions. These criteria served to limit the inclusion of documents that simply use gender-disaggregated data or discuss social norms in general terms.

ANNEX TWO:

SUMMARY OF SOCIAL NORMS HIGHLIGHTED WITHIN PROGRAMS

Table 4: Summary of Social Norms Highlighted Within Programs by Sector

SECTOR	PROJECT	SUMMARY OF SOCIAL NORMS HIGHLIGHTED WITHIN PROGRAMS
Education	Afghan Children Read Program,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal/inequitable gender norms that devalue the role of education for girls
	Empowering Adolescent Girls to Lead through Education (EAGLE) Project DRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal/inequitable gender norms that devalue the role of education for girls • Unequal power relations that drive school-related GBV
	Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA) Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal/inequitable gender and power relations that drive school-related GBV • Power relations that devalue children's rights • Norms that dictate the types of interactions parents and children have that affect parents • A normative framework relegating local languages as inferior to English
Energy & Infrastructure	Engendering Utilities Jordan, Macedonia, Nigeria, Georgia, and Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal/inequitable gender norms affecting women's education and training in technical fields, and ability to hold jobs in fields related to energy/infrastructure • The expectation that women should prioritize family responsibilities over their jobs
	Power Africa Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal/inequitable gender norms affecting women's employment in the energy sector and their ability to advance to positions of leadership
	Jordan Energy Sector Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal/ inequitable gender norms affecting women's employment in the energy sector based on their gendered roles (e.g., as mothers, notion that field work is inappropriate for women because it is dirty or labor-intensive) • The norm that women being alone with men implies sexual contact. This norm prevents travel with male colleagues, and interaction with male consumers during field visits.
Land & Urbanization	Kosovo Property Rights Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal, patriarchal norms that prevent women and girls from exercising their inheritance and other rights

	Liberia Land Governance Support Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender inequality that promotes women's lack of access, use, and control of land.
Food & Agriculture	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unequal gender norms and expectations of women's roles that limit the acceptability of women playing management roles in the fisheries industry.
	Feed the Future Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unequal gender norms that limit women's access/ownership of land, credit, technology and information Norms that determine whether women can enter agriculture value chain operations, what roles and jobs women are perceived as able to perform, women's access to capacity building and training opportunities, women's access to decision-making roles, and the assets women are eligible for.
	Gender in Agriculture: From Policy to Practice Project Honduras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unequal/inequitable gender norms that dictate roles and responsibilities for women and men affecting the ability of women and girls to access resources and to participate in activities that could contribute to their food security.
Technology	GSMA Connected Women Colombia, Mexico, Niger, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, India, China, and Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unequal/inequitable gender norms that limit girls' access to education, limit decision making, and force them into roles (i.e. early marriage) and responsibilities that limit their income generating activities, affecting access to technology and other resources
	Gender and ICT Survey Toolkit Global resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unequal/inequitable gender norms and power relations that limit women's access and use of technology
	Uninor Initiative (in part USAID supported) India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unequal/inequitable gender norms that limit women's access to technology, especially mobile phones, and limit women's decision making.
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH)	USAID/Tanzania Water Resources Integration Development Initiative (WARIDI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unequal/inequitable gender norms that limit the meaningful participation of women and girls in public decision-making relating to WASH and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)
	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (iWASH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The norm that open defecation is common and acceptable The norm of not washing hands with soap after defecation
	WASHplus Bangladesh	<p>Specific norms are not identified, however there is reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural norms relating to child care Social norms relating to hygiene

Endnotes

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- ¹¹ Institute for Reproductive Health. (2019). "Social Norms and AYSRH— Building a Bridge from Theory to Program Design: Working Paper." Learning Collaborative to Advance Research and Practice on Normative Change on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University
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