The Passages Project: Shifting Norms, Improving Health

Linda Sussman, USAID
Passages Project Overview

Goal
Improved family planning use and reproductive health among youth, especially newly married couples, first-time parents and very young adolescents

Strategic Objective
Build and widely share the evidence base and strengthen capacity of the global RH community to develop normative environments that support RH/FP among youth
The Passages Legacy

Passages has contributed towards an understanding of social norms and their importance across sectors by building a common conceptualization of and language around social norms concepts.
Our Objectives

1. Demonstrate and clarify language around how social norms are different from other drivers of behavior and important to address.

2. Demonstrate how norms and meta-norms underlie behaviors and are important to consider.

3. Demonstrate how our work clarifies key concepts, strengthening communication and collaboration.

4. Celebrate the broad participation in this work and affirm the value of a shared social norms language.

5. Share resources that align with these objectives.
What are social norms?

Unwritten rules of behavior shared by members of a given group or society.

Social norms are what individuals believe others do, approve of, and expect.
Why reference groups matter

Social norms are context-specific and defined in relation to a reference group — those who matter to an individual in a specific situation.

PARTNER  CELEBRITY  HEALTH OFFICIAL  RELIGIOUS LEADER  FAMILY ELDER
Challenge Paper:
Assumptions flowing from our disciplines & backgrounds

Lenette Golding, Save The Children
Overview: Challenge Paper

The Challenge
How do we best apply social norms approaches and measurement to SBC programming to facilitate and achieve sustained behavior change?

Aim of this paper – and of the dialogue process
To co-create shared language, concepts, and priorities, leading to practical applications that foster consistent use of social norms measurement and programming approaches in SBC and social norms programming.
Our Process

Introductory meetings with stakeholder groups: implementors, researchers, funders

Small group of experts develops challenge paper and shares initial draft with all stakeholders

Hold challenge dialogue sessions with all stakeholder groups

Possibility of journal article and/or SBCC Summit presentation

Disseminate challenge paper (August 2021)

Circulate revised challenge paper for comments, additions (March 2021)
Outline: Challenge Paper

1. Our challenge and the dialogue process
2. The latest science: Key opportunities and challenges
   • Program application
   • Measurement
3. Case studies of SBC programs that address social norms
4. Recommendations / Next steps
Theoretical Perspectives covered in the paper

1. Anthropology
2. Behavioral Economics
3. Communication for Behavior Change
4. Psychology
5. Sociology
6. Social Psychology
Fitting norms into the social ecology of behavior change

Susan Igras, Institute for Reproductive Health
Parameter-setting Questions

In the beginning (of Passages) we needed answers to some parameter-setting questions:

1. Where do social norms that influence social and behavior change fit in the broader social ecology?
2. What distinguishes a norms-shifting intervention?
3. How do community-based norms intervention shift norms?
The Flower

Norms exist and are active across the social ecology

Addressing norms at any level can contribute to health and gender dynamic change

(Adapted an earlier conceptualization by Heise and Ciglaghi that had originally focused on gender norms)
What is a Norms-Shifting Intervention?

NSI employ activities to alter social expectations about beliefs, attitudes and/or behaviors by:

• Promoting critical reflection of existing norms in relation to new ideas and new desired behaviors

• Working with a core group of actors to shift social expectations and shared beliefs about a practice or behavior in the wider community

• Supporting collective action for change as it emerges.
## Defining Community-Based Norms-Shifting Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Individual and <strong>community</strong> as a locus of change.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| What | • Uses mix of media channels and **social spaces to foster critical reflection rooted in cultural values**.  
    • Works at **different levels of social ecology**.  
    • Based on **social norms assessment** and identification of relevant norms, **planned diffusion** of new ideas. |
| How | Behavior change strategies **address normative perceptions and expectations**; **new, alternative behaviors**. |
| Aim | Seeks to **redistribute power and social influence** that support individuals’ health behaviors and service use. |
How do norms-shifting intervention foster norms-shifting in practice?

- Broad definition of what is a norms-shifting interventions sets the parameters
- Attributes provide program-level guidance
- At another level, project activities are explicit in how they influence new ways of reasoning and new ideation of participants
- Leading to a visualization of how change happens.
Common Attributes of Community Norms-Shifting Intervention

- Corrects misperceptions around harmful behavior
- Creates safe spaces for critical reflection by community members
- Roots the issue within the community’s own value systems
- Accurately assesses norms
- Uses “organized diffusion”
- Seeks community-level change
- Engages people at multiple levels
- Confronts power imbalances, particularly related to gender
- Creates positive new norms
Change Mechanisms

Mechanisms have two constituent parts (Dalkon 2015)

- Resources offered by the intervention
- NSI activities and change agents

+ 

- Ways they change the reasoning of participants
- Observed norms shifting effects due to activities & agents
## Matching Game

Across NSIS, activities employed similar norms-change mechanisms activities had explicit aims of changing reasoning of participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safe spaces</th>
<th><strong>To</strong> equalize information and reflections across community groups and create condition for solidarity among social change and other actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information provision with dialogical, experiential discussion</td>
<td><strong>For</strong> frank examination of sensitive issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role modeling-witnessing</td>
<td><strong>To</strong> maximize reach of social change mechanisms at a community level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within and cross-village meetings</td>
<td><strong>To</strong> demonstrate publicly new attitudes and behaviors and break norms on appropriate behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned diffusion</td>
<td><strong>To</strong> allow achievement of service-behavior aims, an end point of social change (HS and TM for health; GHD for education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-service linkages</td>
<td><strong>For</strong> improving the quality of critical reflection on norms and behaviors grounded in real-life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Norms-shifting Interventions

Activities to foster changes in community reasoning – social expectations around rules and shared beliefs + Social Change Agents who skillfully facilitate different activities that catalyze change

Reference groups who influence behavior(s)
How NSIs Foster Social Norm Shifts at Community Level

**NSI ACTIVITIES BEGIN**

NSI activities and Change Gents + Changes in the Reasoning of Participants

- Through change agent-led activities, individuals gain knowledge, new understandings, clearer intentions
- New change agents emerge from NSI reflections
- Reference groups become change agents – they model public actions, attitudes (as well as private) that support diffusion and others to adopt new norms

**NORMS CHANGE MECHANISMS**

- NSI activities create new ideas that are shared/diffused to those outside the direct intervention (assuming ideas resonate as socially-culturally-religiously relevant)
- Feedback loops expand to different people at different levels and reinforce and deepen new ideas, attitudes, behaviors in community
- Solidarity and collective actions emerge

**OUTCOMES**

Community adopts new norms and behaviors

**CHANGING COMMUNITY CONTEXTS**

- Norms | Social systems | Services and other resources | Debate and mediation vis-à-vis new norms and behaviors
Social Norms Lexicon

Improving precision and clarity in communication

Dr. Kathryn M. Barker, Center on Gender Equity and Health
University of California San Diego
Learning Objective

Demonstrate how the Social Norms Lexicon clarifies key social norms concepts to allow for:

• increased precision in cross-partner communication

• application of norms to programs
Word Cloud Poll

What social norms concepts do you find more challenging to define?

www.menti.com/vj7kv4qbyq

or

go to menti.com and enter code “3828 9998”
Why are these terms so hard to define?

• Study of norms occurs across multiple disciplines

• Each discipline offers its own array of social norms models and terms

• Different geographic, culture, and work positions inform what we think norms are, how they operate, and how we engage with them programmatically (Kohli)
Social Norms Lexicon

**Goal:** foster a common language to improve communication and collaboration among researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and donors.

- Aiming for better alignment, not necessarily consensus (agreement not necessarily needed)

**Scope:** provides a set of simple, clear definitions and examples for terms frequently used in social norms theory, research and practice

**Sources:** practice-oriented global health / international development literature
Example: creating the definitions

**Attitude**

What I believe think to be good or bad. How I believe think the world should or should not be.

Individual attitudes are personal beliefs ideas and emotions about how the world should be. Attitudes are often considered primarily individually motivated (as opposed to social norms). Your beliefs about a concept, person, or behavior inform your attitudes about that concept, person, or behavior.—yet that

**Belief**

What (I believe) I know.

A belief is an opinion or something idea that a person holds to be true. Beliefs are internal perspectives formed from personal experiences, influence of social norms, and learning from others. Beliefs are broad and encompass factual knowledge, personal attitudes, and social norms. The first two of these are considered to be primarily individually motivated, while the third—social norms—is primarily socially motivated. Beliefs, as related to social norms, describe personal acceptance or rejection that a statement is true or that something exists (whether or not it actually does). If one believes something, they know it to be true.

**Author**

In this section, you have explained the difference between beliefs and factual knowledge and beliefs and social norms. Can you also explain the difference between Belief and Attitude?

**Author**

Agreed. This definition seems to contradict common frameworks we use to explain social norms which distinguish beliefs and attitudes.

**Author**

In the bridging theory to practice we define belief as such: Beliefs encompass knowledge, attitudes, and social norms.

**Author**

I struggle with this one—leave for X to address.
A belief is an opinion, assumption, or conviction that a person holds to be true. Beliefs are internal perspectives formed from personal experiences and preferences, the influence of social norms, and learnings from others. Beliefs describe personal acceptance or rejection of whether a statement is true or whether something exists (regardless of its actual existence). If someone believes something, they think it is true.

The difference between knowledge and beliefs is contested. Some philosophers, such as Kant, refer to beliefs as subjective information, neither correct nor incorrect, and knowledge as objective information, either correct or incorrect. A more recent definition conceives of knowledge as "encompassing all a person knows or believes to be true." In either case, we often describe our own beliefs as "knowledge."

Beliefs are a distinct but overlapping construct to attitudes (which include a personal judgement about something) and reflect a person's perspective of truth. As such, beliefs inform attitudes.
### KEY SOCIAL NORMS EXPLORATION TERMS, DEFINITIONS & EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Driver</th>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INDIVIDUALLY</strong></td>
<td><strong>Attitude</strong></td>
<td>What I believe is good or bad and what ought to be</td>
<td>I value my education and want to stay in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DRIVEN</strong></td>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>What I believe is true</td>
<td>According to the law, I cannot get married until age 18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>Descriptive Social</strong></td>
<td>What I believe others do</td>
<td>Most girls my age get married before finishing school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DRIVEN</strong></td>
<td><strong>Injunctive Social</strong></td>
<td>What I believe others will approve or disapprove of me doing.</td>
<td>My family expects me to wait to marry until I graduate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(AKA empirical</strong></td>
<td><strong>Norms</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>expectations)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(AKA normative</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>expectations)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lexicon Scavenger Hunt

1. View a copy of the Lexicon (web browser or download) – link in chat

2. Peruse the document

3. Answer the scavenger hunt questions:
   - What’s an example of an outcome expectation provided in the document?
   - What’s another term for reference groups?
   - What examples are provided to describe gender norms?

4. Provide your responses in Zoom chat
The Social Norms Atlas:
Understanding global social norms and related concepts

Rahinatu Hussaini, Save the Children
Anjlee Kohli, Institute for Reproductive Health
What is the Social Norms Atlas?

What is its purpose?
To increase awareness and ability to address a variety of social norms and thereby enhance efficacy of behavior change programs in achieving targeted outcomes.

What is it?
An online and PDF resource of behaviors, social norms and attitudes relevant to a variety of sectors.

Who is it for?
Program planners, implementers, and evaluators and researchers.
Outline of Each Sector

- Sector introduction
- Illustrative lists of related behaviors, attitudes, and influential social norms
- Case study
- Promising practices
- Featured resources
- Citations
Atlas Content Development Approach

1. Crowd-source social norms via webinar
2. Engage sector leads to coordinate a process with LC collaborators to develop content
3. Review content submitted by each sector, combine with introduction and cross-sector analysis, and design for publishing
Harmful Traditional Practices
Introduction

Includes behaviors and practices that are harmful to people’s physical and mental health but are generally defended on the basis of tradition, culture, religion, or superstition

• Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)
• Child marriage
• Corporal punishment
• Other harmful traditions—such as marrying a deceased husband’s brother

Examples primarily from Central and South Asia, East and West Africa, and the Middle East
Illustrative lists of behaviors, attitudes, and influential social norms

**BEHAVIORS**
Young girls undergo female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C).

Parents arrange marriage for daughters below the age of 18.

Widows marry their deceased husbands’ brothers.¹

**ATTITUDES**
“I think that girls who are cut are pure and chaste.”

“I believe that girls should get married when they reach puberty to protect the family honor.”

“In my opinion, a woman should marry her deceased husband’s brother because she will be financially protected.”

**INFLUENTIAL SOCIAL NORMS**
In my community, people expect girls to be cut to be suitable for marriage.¹

Uganda, Senegal, South Sudan, Yemen, Kenya

Most people in my community think that a girl should be married as soon as she reaches puberty to prevent premarital sex.²

Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America

In my community, people expect a widow to marry her deceased husband’s brother.³

Pakistan, India, South Africa
Case Study

PROJECT: CARE TIPPING POINT
LOCATION: BANGLADESH AND NEPAL

• Evaluation of intervention to address the root causes of child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM)
• Promotes the rights of adolescent girls through community level programming, and multi-level advocacy and learning initiatives
• Initiative theory of change proposes that expanding girls’ agency, transforming their relationships, and shifting gender norms are all needed to end CEFM
• Found increased girls’ reproductive health and mobility and shifting of norms to justify delay of CEFM
Promising practices for addressing social norms in education programming

**FOCUS ON GRANDMOTHERS** as the entry point to preventing FGM/C

Include child marriage in **SCHOOL CURRICULUM** for adolescents

**COMBINE** a public health information approach with a theological/scriptural approach and engagement of faith leaders

RESOURCE: Gender and Development Networks: Harmful Traditional Practices: Your Questions, Our Answers
Cross-sector Analysis

Meta-norms
Connect with deeply rooted determinants, operate at a more profound level of society, and influence multiple behaviors.

Proximal Norms
Act directly or close to directly on a behavior or outcome.
Meta norms identified across the 10 sectors

**Authority**
Norms that allow for the use of individual or group power and authority over another.

**Control & Violence**
Norms that relate to the individual and social acceptance or use of control and violence.

**Gender Ideology**
Gender ideology and gender role ideology refers to the norms regarding the appropriate roles, rights, and responsibilities of women and men in society (i.e., masculinities and femininities).

**Privacy**
Norms related to what information should be shared with other individuals or groups.

**Protection**
Encourage protection of people for a range of reasons (e.g., from abuse, poor health outcomes).

**Social Status**
Norms that give or remove social status (e.g., respect) from a person, couple, or family.

**Other**
Anything that does not fit into the above categories.
Proximal and meta norms identified for harmful traditional practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harmful Traditional Practices</th>
<th>Norms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In my community, people expect girls to be cut to be suitable for marriage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people in my community think that a girl should be married as soon as she reaches puberty to prevent premarital pregnancy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my community, people expect a widow to marry her deceased husband’s brother.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my community, parents who have sons have a better social status than parents with daughters.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people in my community think that men who have multiple wives receive more respect than men who do not.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proximal and meta norms identified in the education sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Norms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People in my community expect that parents will prioritize their sons’ education over their daughters’.</td>
<td>![Norms Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost all of the teachers in my school use physical punishment to discipline students.</td>
<td>![Norms Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in my school think it is acceptable to ignore students with disabilities or to pay them minimal attention.</td>
<td>![Norms Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most students who identify as LGBTQI+ in my school are bullied.</td>
<td>![Norms Icon]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in my school expect boys to participate and excel more than girls in subjects of math and science.</td>
<td>![Norms Icon]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Audience Engagement on Meta Norms
Advancing Social Norms Language and Theory:
Where are we now? What next?

Rebecka Lundgren, UCSD
Community Reflections

Laurie Krieger, USAID Clean Cities, Blue Ocean, The Manoff Group
Rebecka Lundgren, Center on Gender Equality and Health, University of California San Diego
Questions
THANK YOU!
CONTACT

TWITTER
@PassagesProject

RESOURCES
https://irh.org/projects/passages/
www.alignplatform.org/learning-collaborative

LEGACY WEBSITE
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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
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