Narrowing the Social Norms "Know-Do" Gap

Research Utilization Highlights from the Passages Project

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What is the Passages Project?

- [Passages](#) (2015-2022) was an implementation research project that aims to address a broad range of social norms, at scale, to achieve sustained improvements in violence prevention, gender equality, family planning, and reproductive health.

- The project implemented—and studied—norms-shifting approaches to build the evidence base and contribute to the capacity of the global community to understand and shift norms to strengthen reproductive health environments.

- Passages has worked to design, implement, and evaluate interventions that foster an enabling environment for shifting norms and promote collective change, focusing on individuals in life course transitions.

Why do social norms matter?

- **Social norms** are the unwritten rules that define acceptable, appropriate, and obligatory actions within a given group or community. They influence what people do and are expected to do.

In my community, men are expected to earn money and to make decisions on how to use money to take care of his family.

In my community, couples are expected to have large families.

In my community, people expect that if I get married young, I should stop attending school.

- Social norms can shape behaviors related to reproductive health and family violence (as well as behaviors across sectors), and affect young people's access to the education, services, and information they need to protect their health.

- Research shows that investing in social norms change at the community and individual levels—while ensuring supportive policies and access to high-quality services—can bring about significant improvements in reproductive health and well-being.

Laying the Groundwork:

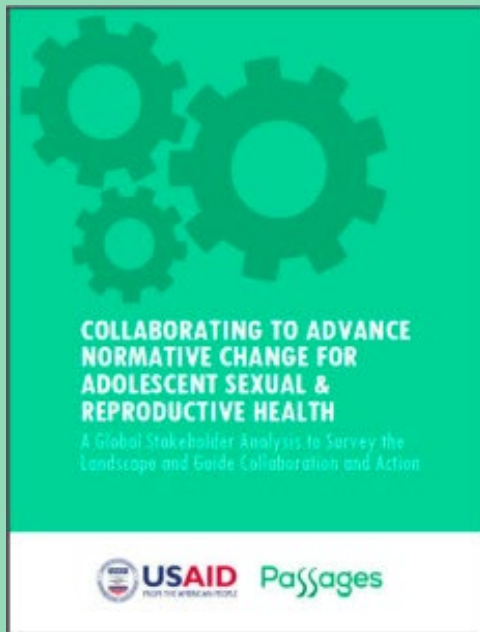Passages Research Utilization Learnings

Narrowing the Know-Do Gap in Social Norms Work

- On average, it can take up to 17 years for new research results to be put into practice. Closing this "know-do" gap is a need for programs.

- Applying research evidence leads to high-quality and cost-effective approaches for optimal health outcomes. However, moving evidence into action requires a concerted vision and strategy.

Through global leadership efforts, Passages sought to bridge the "know-do" gap—to ensure that evidence and practical resources on social norms and norms-shifting interventions were not only generated, but shared widely and with intention, so that the best-studied programmatic approaches were implemented in the field.

Baseline Stakeholder Analysis

- In 2016, Passages conducted a <u>baseline stakeholder analysis</u> to inform the project's knowledge management and research utilization strategy. We conducted 147 online surveys and 21 in-depth interviews with stakeholders in the sexual and reproductive health and adolescent health fields.

- Several key learnings emerged, from which the following recommendations stemmed:
  - **Synthesize** current evidence and disseminate through a central information source
  - **Convene** practitioners to create unified social norms behavior change theories and related concepts
  - Convene experts to **translate theory into practice** by developing research tools, protocols, and instruments
  - **Strengthen capacity** for social norms work through trainings and toolkits
  - Develop a framework for **advocacy efforts** and advocacy tools

- Passages structured its efforts based on this foundational analysis, focusing on research utilization and dissemination to address knowledge and evidence needs in the field.

- In October 2019, Passages produced a strategic communications plan to support research utilization efforts. The plan laid the groundwork to ensure Passages knowledge and approaches were packaged, shared, seen, and used effectively, with a focus on dissemination in the final two years.

- Specifically, it:
  - Clarified specific communication goals, objectives, and audiences
  - Identified four key Legacy Areas for organizing messages and tactics
  - Named strategies for communicating project findings: synthesizing project information, promoting resources through targeted dissemination, providing training and resources to support application, and demonstrating value and impact of project learnings

Leaving a Legacy: A Strategic Communications Plan

PASSAGES PROJECT

Leaving a Legacy:
A Strategic Communications Plan for the Passages Project

OCTOBER 2019

PREPARED BY POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE   Passages

Passages Research Utilization Goals

- Passages sought to facilitate greater awareness, understanding, and use of project information and resources on social norms related to adolescent and youth reproductive health, violence prevention, and gender equality. To do so, Passages contributed evidence, tools, and resources for norms-shifting approaches in four crosscutting legacy areas.

ADVANCING UNDERSTANDING

How can we better understand social norms and the role they play in our work?

IMPROVING IMPLEMENTATION

How can we improve our ability to integrate normative change into our programs?

ENHANCING EVALUATION

How can we effectively monitor and evaluate norms-shifting approaches?

STRENGTHENING SCALE-UP

How can we ethically and successfully scale normative interventions?

Logic Model for Monitoring Project Legacy of Research Utilization
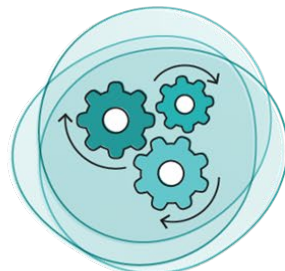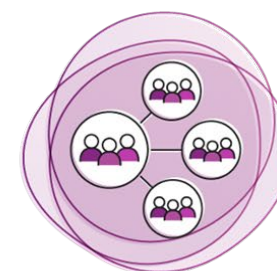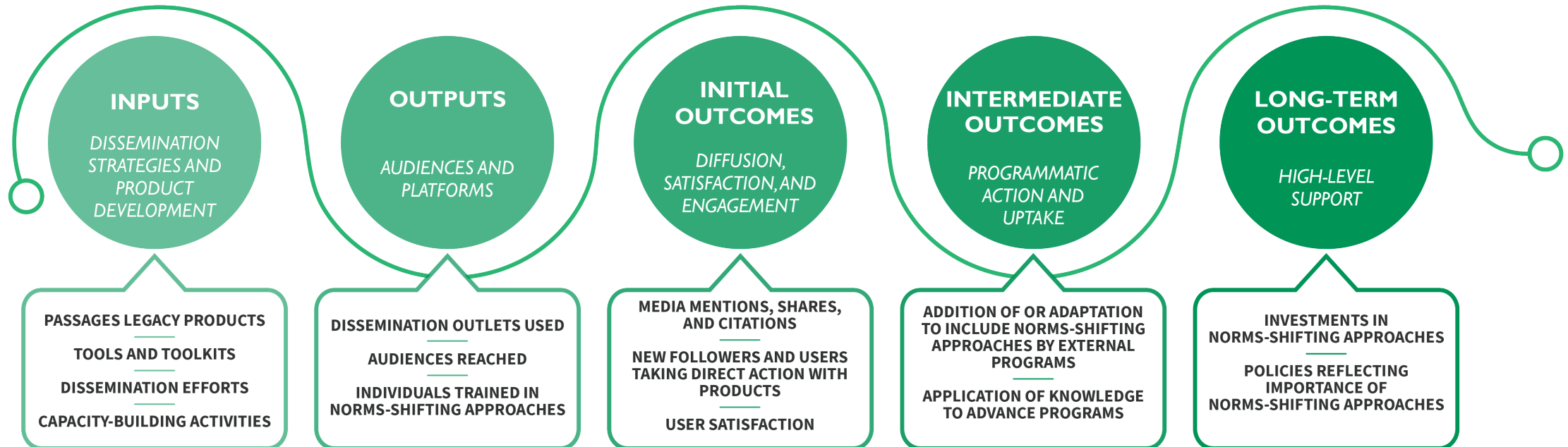
GOAL

TO FACILITATE GREATER AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING, AND USE OF PASSAGES PROJECT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES ON SOCIAL NORMS RELATED TO ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH, VIOLENCE PREVENTION, AND GENDER EQUALITY.

INPUTS
DISSEMINATION STRATEGIES AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

- PASSAGES LEGACY PRODUCTS
- TOOLS AND TOOLKITS
- DISSEMINATION EFFORTS
- CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

OUTPUTS
AUDIENCES AND PLATFORMS

- DISSEMINATION OUTLETS USED
- AUDIENCES REACHED
- INDIVIDUALS TRAINED IN NORMS-SHIFTING APPROACHES

INITIAL OUTCOMES
DIFFUSION, SATISFACTION, AND ENGAGEMENT

- MEDIA MENTIONS, SHARES, AND CITATIONS
- NEW FOLLOWERS AND USERS TAKING DIRECT ACTION WITH PRODUCTS
- USER SATISFACTION

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES
PROGRAMMATIC ACTION AND UPTAKE

- ADDITION OF OR ADAPTATION TO INCLUDE NORMS-SHIFTING APPROACHES BY EXTERNAL PROGRAMS
- APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE TO ADVANCE PROGRAMS

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
HIGH-LEVEL SUPPORT

- INVESTMENTS IN NORMS-SHIFTING APPROACHES
- POLICIES REFLECTING IMPORTANCE OF NORMS-SHIFTING APPROACHES

OBJECTIVES

OVERARCHING INCREASE HIGH-LEVEL SUPPORT FOR THE IMPORTANCE AND FEASIBILITY OF SOCIAL NORMS APPROACHES.

SUPPORTING

FACILITATE USE OF PASSAGES PROJECT RESOURCES AND BUILD CAPACITY AROUND APPLYING NORMS-SHIFTING APPROACHES.

RAISE AWARENESS OF HOW INFORMATION AND RESOURCES GENERATED BY THE PASSAGES PROJECT ARE RELEVANT TO PROGRAMS.

IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING AND ACCESSIBILITY OF NEW EVIDENCE AND INFORMATION GENERATED BY THE PASSAGES PROJECT.

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Example indicators for Monitoring Project Legacy of Research Utilization

AUDIENCES AND PLATFORMS

PROGRAMMATIC ACTION AND UPTAKE

INPUTS

OUTPUTS

INITIAL OUTCOMES

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

DISSEMINATION STRATEGIES AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

DIFFUSION, SATISFACTION, AND ENGAGEMENT

HIGH-LEVEL SUPPORT
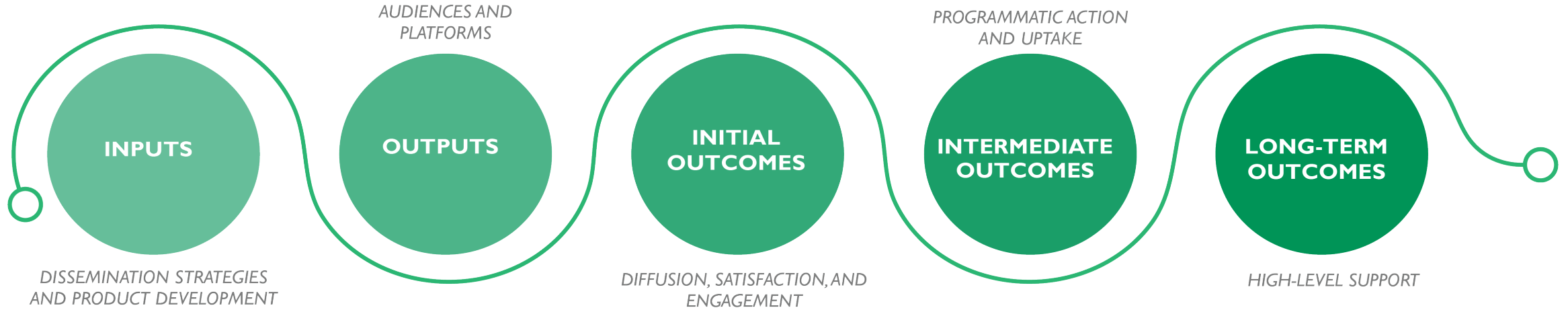
EXAMPLE INDICATORS

NUMBER OF PROMOTION AND DISSEMINATION TACTICS AND METHODS IMPLEMENTED THAT PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND USE	**NUMBER OF TIMES COMMUNICATIONS PRODUCTS AND TOOLS/TOOLKITS ARE ACCESSED ELECTRONICALLY**	**NUMBER OF MENTIONS, RETWEETS/ REPOSTS, SHARES, OR COMMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA**	**NUMBER OF TIMES THAT ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS APPLY PASSAGES PRODUCTS OR TOOLS/TOOLKITS IN PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE PRACTICE**	**NUMBER OF TIMES THAT DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION EFFORTS RESULT IN POLICY DECISIONS INCORPORATING PASSAGES PROJECT RESOURCES OR NORMS-SHIFTING APPROACHES**

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INPUTS

OUTPUTS

INITIAL OUTCOMES

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

INPUTS:

Dissemination Strategies and Product Development

Product Development & Dissemination

- Over seven years, Passages produced 108 products and tools/toolkits, each targeted towards achieving at least one of the legacy areas:
  - 35 to advance understanding
  - 60 to improve implementation
  - 12 to enhance evaluation
  - 13 to strengthen scale-up

- Passages disseminated these resources using a variety of platforms to reach a broad audience:
  - Newsletters (internal and external)
  - Communities of practice (Implementing Best Practices, IGWG, CORE Group, K-SUCCESS)
  - Ongoing submission to resource libraries (Implementing Best Practices, Communication Initiative)
  - Social media (Twitter)

108
Passages-produced products

35
To advance understanding

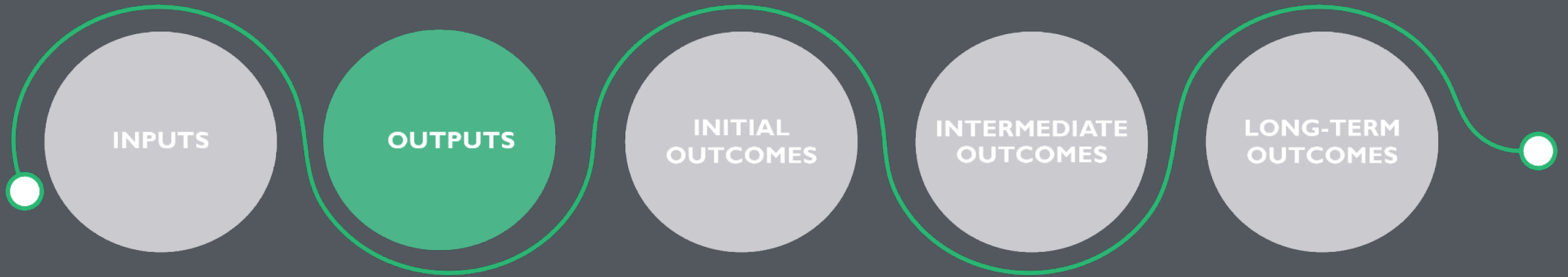**60**
To improve implementation

12
To enhance evaluation

13
To strengthen scale-up

INPUTS   OUTPUTS   INITIAL OUTCOMES   INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES   LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
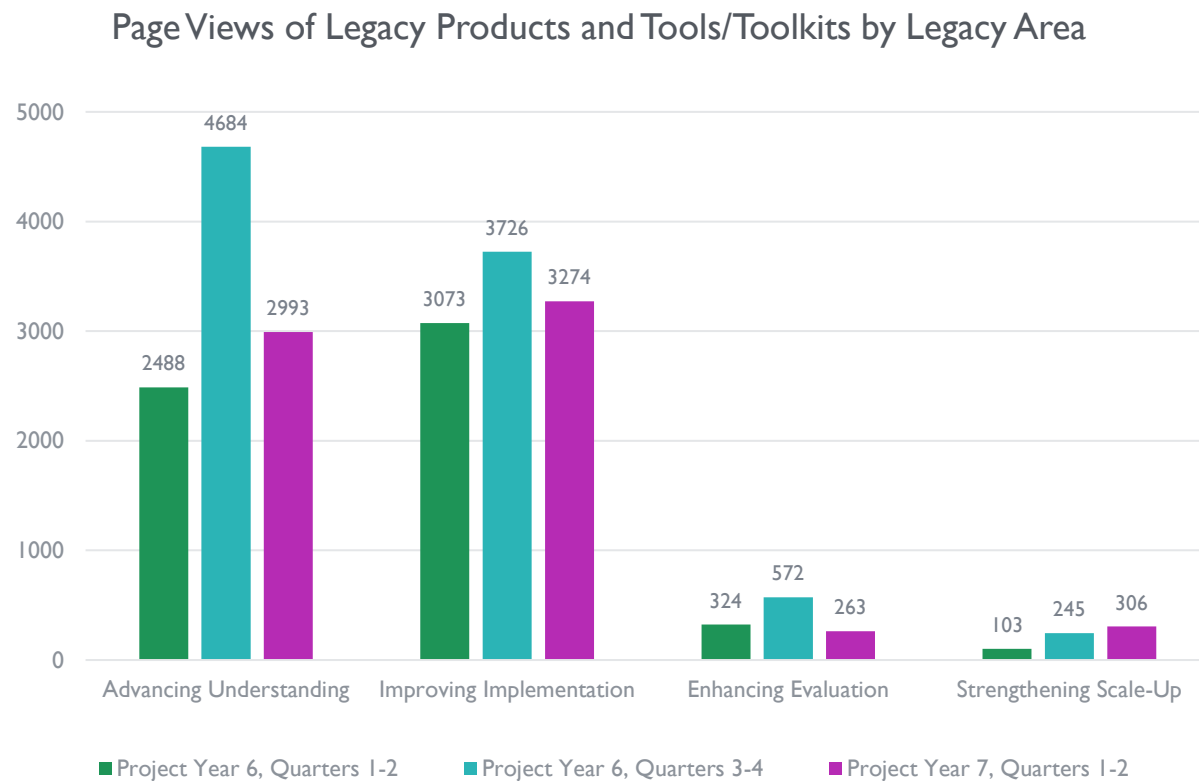
OUTPUTS:

Audiences and Platforms:
Reach, Learning, and Usefulness

Tracking Product Page Views

- Using the MEL framework, Passages tracked the number of page views by individual product and Legacy Area.

- Most products and tools/toolkits sought to advance understanding and improve implementation, so resources categorized as such had higher overall page views.

- With this information, Passages could craft success stories around specific products and dissemination tactics.

Page Views of Legacy Products and Tools/Toolkits by Legacy Area

	Advancing Understanding	Improving Implementation	Enhancing Evaluation	Strengthening Scale-Up
Project Year 6, Quarters 1-2	2488	3073	324	103
Project Year 6, Quarters 3-4	4684	3726	572	245
Project Year 7, Quarters 1-2	2993	3274	263	306

Increasing Reach With Trainings, Workshops, and Other Events

Passages events covered topics including gender equality; social norms design, measurement, and scale-up; and violence prevention.

Since October 2020, Passages has

- Hosted more than **48 events** including dissemination events, trainings, workshops, and consultations
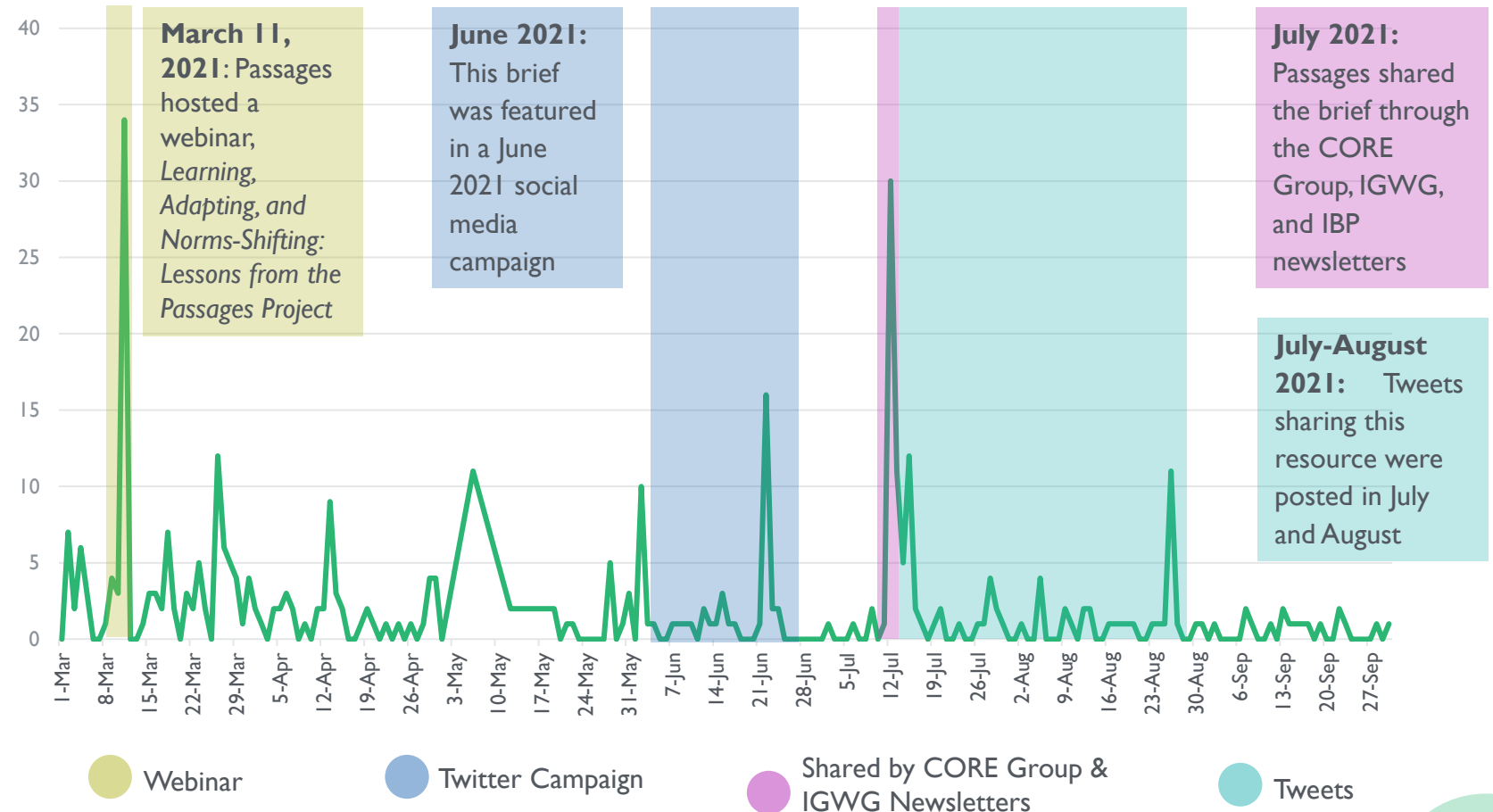- Presented as a guest at **12 events**

Passages events were attended by:

- **2,894** non-unique donors, in-country partners, practitioners, and researchers (**1,989** of whom received training)

2,894
Passages event participants

1,989
Participants trained by Passages

48
Passages-hosted events

12
Passages guest-events

Success Story: Adaptive Management: Learning and Action Approaches to Implementing Norms-Shifting Interventions

- Using charts like this, Passages tracked how its dissemination tactics aligned with page views of its communications products over time.

- The brief, *Adaptive Management: Learning and Action Approaches to Implementing Norms-Shifting Interventions* launched in March 2021. Spikes in page views align with key moments of dissemination.

March 11, 2021: Passages hosted a webinar, *Learning, Adapting, and Norms-Shifting: Lessons from the Passages Project*

June 2021: This brief was featured in a June 2021 social media campaign

July 2021: Passages shared the brief through the CORE Group, IGWG, and IBP newsletters

July-August 2021: Tweets sharing this resource were posted in July and August

Legend:
- Webinar
- Twitter Campaign
- Shared by CORE Group & IGWG Newsletters
- Tweets

INPUTS · OUTPUTS · INITIAL OUTCOMES · INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES · LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

INITIAL OUTCOMES:

Diffusion, Satisfaction, and Engagement

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Measuring Initial Outcomes

- Passages used several processes to measure initial outcomes, representing short-term results of project dissemination, including:

Responses to short feedback surveys:
- Initial feedback surveys on products and tools/toolkits
- Post-event surveys

Regular tracking of online metrics:
- Citations and unplanned shares of resources and events
- Social media engagement

Tracking Usage: Citations, Shares, and Social Media

METHODS

- Tracked citations and unplanned shares of products and events using Meltwater media tracking software and Google searches
- Collected social media engagement data each quarter:
    - Number of mentions, retweets/reposts, shares, and comments
    - Number of followers or subscribers

RESULT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Social Norms Atlas was cited in the following:
    - Journal article: "Assessing Factors That Support the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation in Ethiopia" (2022)
    - Journal article: "Multidimensional Measures Are Key to Understanding Child, Early, and Forced Marriages and Unions" (February 2022)
    - Save the Children's Gender & Power Analysis Guidance (2021)
    - UNICEF's Defining Social Norms and Related Concepts (November 2021)

Product Feedback Surveys

METHODS

- Short feedback surveys on the **landing page** of resources and links to a general feedback survey in **Passages newsletters**.

- Respondents rated how strongly they agreed or disagreed with statements around **usability**; **relevance**; new **knowledge, approaches, or skills** gained; and **plans to use the resource** in their work.

- Respondents could be anonymous, or if comfortable, provided contact information and were asked if they were **willing to be contacted for follow up.**

RESULTS

- In a survey on the *Social Norms Lexicon*, a respondent from The Challenge Initiative in Uganda indicated that the resource was easy to use and relevant to their work, and that they will incorporate learnings in their gender transformative programming.

- Surveys did not gain as much traction as hoped. Despite surveys on over 70 product landing pages, *only 13 responses received across five resources* (from October 2020 to May 2022).

  - Only eight respondents willing to be contacted for follow up.

Initial Post-Event Surveys

METHODS

- After events, Passages distributed a short post-event survey asking participants to rate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with statements about the event; new knowledge, approaches, or skills gained; relevance of the event; plans to use knowledge, approaches, or skills from the event in their own work.

- Respondents asked if willing to be contacted for follow-up.

RESULTS

- Response rates were lower than desired. Of 21 surveys, 3 had rates above 50%, 17 had rates below 30%, and 10 were below 10%.

- However, more than 70 respondents were willing to be contacted for follow-up about the project.

"I have gained knowledge on how to identify types of social norms, how to identify people who can be used as change agents [and] also the assessment of norms…"

- Survey Respondent

Results From Post-Event Surveys

METHODS

Across **21 events**, Passages learned through **post-event surveys**:

- **88%** of participants reported being satisfied with training sessions, workshops, or events.
- **81%** of participants reported the event provided new knowledge.
- The user rating of content and relevance for the following:
    - Training: **93%**
    - Webinar: **87%**
    - Consultation 74%
    - All: 89%
- **109** participants intended to use or incorporate Passages resources or information and knowledge gained

RESULTS HIGHLIGHT:
Learning from post-event surveys

After attending the Passages Social Norms 101 workshop with World Vision, 14 of the 50 participants completed a post-event survey. 100% were satisfied with the training, liking both content (e.g., distinguishing norms from attitudes) and format (e.g., the quizzes and activities). 93% reported the training provided new knowledge, citing topics like definitions, reference groups, and the framework for understanding the influence of norms.

One participant noted they gained an "ability to start to unpack the significance in a particular programming example." Survey respondents provided an overall content rating of 89% and several noted they will use information from this training in program design.

INPUTS OUTPUTS INITIAL OUTCOMES INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES:

Programmatic Action and Uptake

Monitoring Intermediate Outcomes

- Intermediate outcomes include how individuals, organizations, and projects **utilize Passages resources and event learnings on their own.**

- Passages sought to monitor intermediate outcomes of disseminating products and hosting events via:
  - Follow-up surveys
  - Stakeholder survey
  - Stakeholder Interviews
  - Targeted emails

Follow-Up Event & Resource Surveys

METHODS

- **Follow up event surveys**: Three months post-event, Passages sent a **survey** asking participants how they had applied any learnings from the event; how their projects had applied any learnings; and about any donor or policy changes tied to event learnings.

- **Follow up resource surveys**: After filling out product feedback surveys, Passages sent respondents willing to be contacted a follow-up **resource survey** three months later asking how they had applied the resource to their work and if they had shared the resource with others.

RESULTS

- Follow-up event surveys received fewer responses than post-event surveys, but often provided fruitful information on how respondents used event learnings and enabled follow-up with respondents via email or interview.

"We've been using a vignette tool and reference groups as one way of exploring social norms. For instance, in Malawi recently we had a study on social norms, specifically on women and youth inclusion in financial services, whereby these approaches were applied"

- CARE staff member

Other Mechanisms: Stakeholder Survey and Interviews

METHODS

- Passages used two other methods to learn how efforts facilitated greater awareness, understanding, and use of project learnings and products:
  - A stakeholder survey conducted between May 2021 and August 2021.
  - Interviews with individuals based on their responses to the stakeholder survey.

- Twenty-four people responded to the stakeholder survey and six interviews were conducted.

RESULTS

- While post-event and product surveys captured planned or immediate use of Passages information, stakeholder surveys captured longer-term outcomes.

- Surveys and interviews asked about the utility of resources and events; how stakeholders used them to incorporate or improve norms-shifting approaches in their work; and, more broadly, how Passages may have contributed to program, policy, and donor changes around social norms.

"Passages has helped produce a critical mass of high-quality and compelling evidence on [norms-shifting interventions] for FP, through both research and practice work streams, as well as providing a simple, standard language for such programs. It has also ensured that social norms continue to receive attention."

- Stakeholder Survey Respondent

Success Story:
Reaching intermediate outcomes with ILRG/CEL
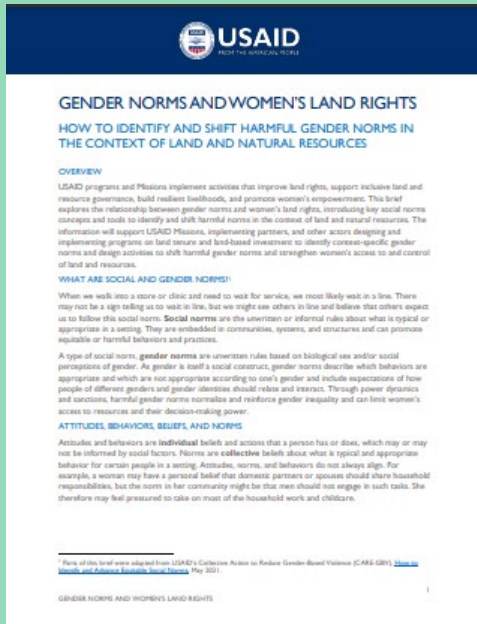
ILRG produced 'Gender Norms and Women's Land Rights' based in part on learnings from Passages trainings & with Passages technical review.

Integrated Land and Resource Governance (ILRG)/ Communications, Evidence and Learning (CEL) Social Norms Workshop Series

In a survey about four months after the workshop, **all four respondents indicated they had applied knowledge, approaches, or skills from the workshop in their work.** This application included:

- Mapping norms that support or hinder program goals when developing trainings for implementing partners
- Improving question choice in data collection
- Drafting gender and social norms tasks for country activities
- Changing content for training on women's leadership skills development

"We redesigned our approaches to social norms change; documented the change required, targeted additional influential groups and now looking at how best to monitor impact."

- Follow-up survey respondent

INPUTS

OUTPUTS

INITIAL OUTCOMES

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES:

High-Level Support

Uncovering Long-Term Outcomes: Process

METHODS

- Through its outreach efforts, Passages learned about not only intermediate outcomes but also long-term outcomes of the project, such as:
    - Evidence indicating that dissemination and communication efforts related to social norms informed donor investments
    - Number of times that dissemination and communication efforts of Passages resulted in policy decisions
    - Number of specific language updates in policy or donor documents demonstrating importance and feasibility of norms-shifting approaches

REFLECTIONS

- Soliciting this feedback takes time and resources and may not elicit many responses in a project timeframe; realizing increased high-level support for the importance and feasibility of social norms interventions could take years.

- However, it was important to assess long-term outcomes to indicate the project's ultimate goals and inform future work.

Uncovering Long-Term Outcomes: Results

Passages found that using a combination of complementary follow-up methods—rather than focusing on one method—was most effective at revealing results, including:

- A former **USAID Senior Gender Adviser recommended to YouthPower2LE** that they incorporate Passages resources into their activities on women's global development.
- Passages information and resources were shared during workshops to develop the **DRC National Strategic Plan on Family Planning (2021-2025)** and the **National Communication Strategy for the Promotion of Family Planning.**
- Passages information contributed to the discussion of social norms that formed the background of **USAID's 2020 gender policy update.**
- Influenced by Passages work, **USAID issued an Annual Program Statement (APS) on social and behavior change (SBC) research** that addresses social norms as part of understanding the pathway to SBC.

Through its outreach efforts, Passages learned how the *Social Norms Exploration Tool (SNET)* was being used across sectors:

Health (General)
- A USAID technical adviser: shared the SNET with mission staff to help them identify norms in a specific community.
- The Child Protection Team at Save the Children (Indonesia): included findings from the SNET in a proposal.

Nutrition
- Transform Nutrition in Mozambique: for questions to include in women's group work to support shifting food-based norms.
- Advancing Nutrition: to enhance formative research in Kyrgyz Republic buy-in work to include expanded reference groups in implementation.

Success Story:
Social Norms Exploration Tool (SNET)
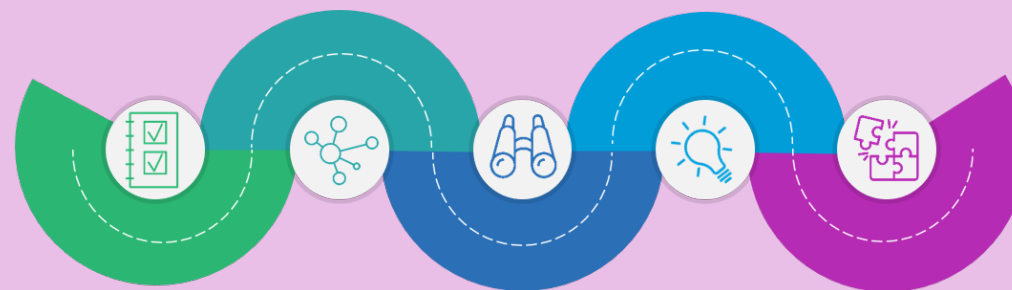
The SNET was consistently the most viewed and cited Passages product.

Family Planning and Reproductive Health

- Bien Grandir Plus: to explore norms related to adolescent sexual and reproductive health in Kinshasa, DRC.
- Protect (funded by Save the Children): to review health provider norms related to providing sexual and reproductive health information and services to adolescents in Nairobi, Kenya.
- Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs: by social and behavior change staff because of SNET's scaled approach and informed research.
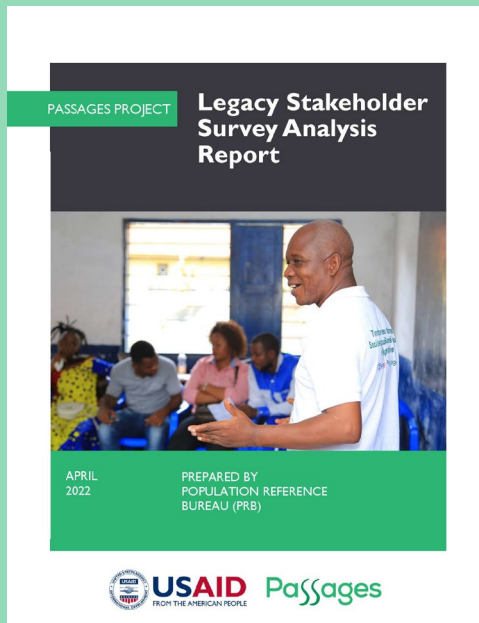
Gender

- CARE: to conduct a gendered social norms diagnostic study in Malawi.
- MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership: to explore social norms in Nigeria driving child, early and forced marriage; intimate partner violence; and early adolescent pregnancy.
- ALiGN: to design research, focus on methods, and responsiveness to demand.

Environment

- Integrated Land and Resource Governance: to identify norms in their field that they want to change.

Success Story: Putting Social Norms on the Map

PASSAGES PROJECT
Legacy Stakeholder Survey Analysis Report

APRIL 2022

PREPARED BY POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU (PRB)

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE Passages

- In a stakeholder survey in July 2021, USAID senior staff said that the Passages Project put social norms "on the map" as a programming issue.

- From a follow-up interview in September 2021, Passages learned that:
  - The project had contributed to the increased recognition of the importance of social norms by USAID.
  - In April 2021, USAID issued an Annual Program Statement for a Social and Behavior Change (SBC) Research Award that specifically addresses social norms in the pathway to SBC.
  - USAID now recognizes the importance of social norms and their role in behavior change, a shift that would not have been possible without Passages' contributions.

❝ 👤 ❞

"This [2021 Annual Program Statement] is now saying, 'Yes, we know social norms are very important, but we want to delve further into why, how they influence behavior change and how we can leverage social norms for behavior change.' I don't think that would have been possible, at all, without the contributions of Passages and… the technical leadership Passages has had over the last years."

- Respondent from USAID *(Washington)*

What We've Learned

Passages Research Utilization Learnings

Our learnings about knowledge sharing on social norms

- Developing a framework and plan for measuring strategic communications efforts allowed Passages to systematically track outputs and outcomes. However, collecting this information was not without its challenges, including:

Survey response rates:

It can be difficult to incentivize people to complete surveys, but those who do submit them often share insightful information. Following up with these individuals via email or interview can reveal further information.

Tracking page views and dissemination tactics:

While Passages could roughly describe associations between when tactics were implemented and when page views increased for specific products, the project lacked information on who was viewing the pages and could not always attribute traffic spikes to specific events.

Our recommendations for research utilization

- As future projects seek to track stakeholders' engagement with and application of project resources, they should consider:
  - Provide multiple mechanisms for stakeholder feedback, including surveys, targeted emails, and interviews.
  - Build in strategies to encourage responses to surveys. Examples include shortening surveys, adding in more skip logic, reserving time at the end of events for participants to complete surveys, and collecting users' emails when they view product webpages to send them surveys later.
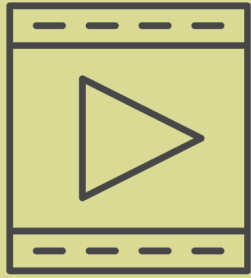
Additional Passages Resources

Passages Web Feature

- Legacy Area Landing Pages:
  - Advancing Understanding
  - Improving Implementation
  - Enhancing Evaluation
  - Strengthening Scale-up

Social Norms Learning Collaborative

Passages Event Recordings

Advancing Understanding
- September 2021 Legacy Webinar | **Situating Social Norms within Behavior Change Initiatives: Advancing Understanding**

Improving Implementation
- March 2021 Webinar | **Learning, Adapting and Norms-shifting: Lessons from the Passages Project**
- November 2021 Legacy Webinar | **The 'How-To' of Norms-Shifting Interventions: Improving Implementation with the Passages Project**

Enhancing Evaluation
- February 2022 Legacy Webinar | **Past, Present, and Future: Reflections on Social Norms Measurement from the Passages Project**
- May 2018 Webinar | **Costing of Norms-Shifting Interventions: Five Insights for Program Implementers**

Strengthening Scale-up
- March 2022 Legacy Webinar | **The Ups and Downs of Scaling Up: Advice on Scaling Norms-Shifting Interventions**

CONTACT US!

LEGACY WEBSITE

www.passagesproject.org

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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TWITTER

@PassagesProject

RESOURCES

www.irh.org/projects/passages/

www.alignplatform.org/learning-collaborative