



ALIGN webinar: cross-country perspectives on gender norms

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Understanding gender norms: A conceptual overview and introduction to the ALIGN platform

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Invoking the past

‘This is the way we have always done things; leave our culture alone; this is our tradition.’



20 years ago

Too complex

Not our
business

You can't
change
cultures

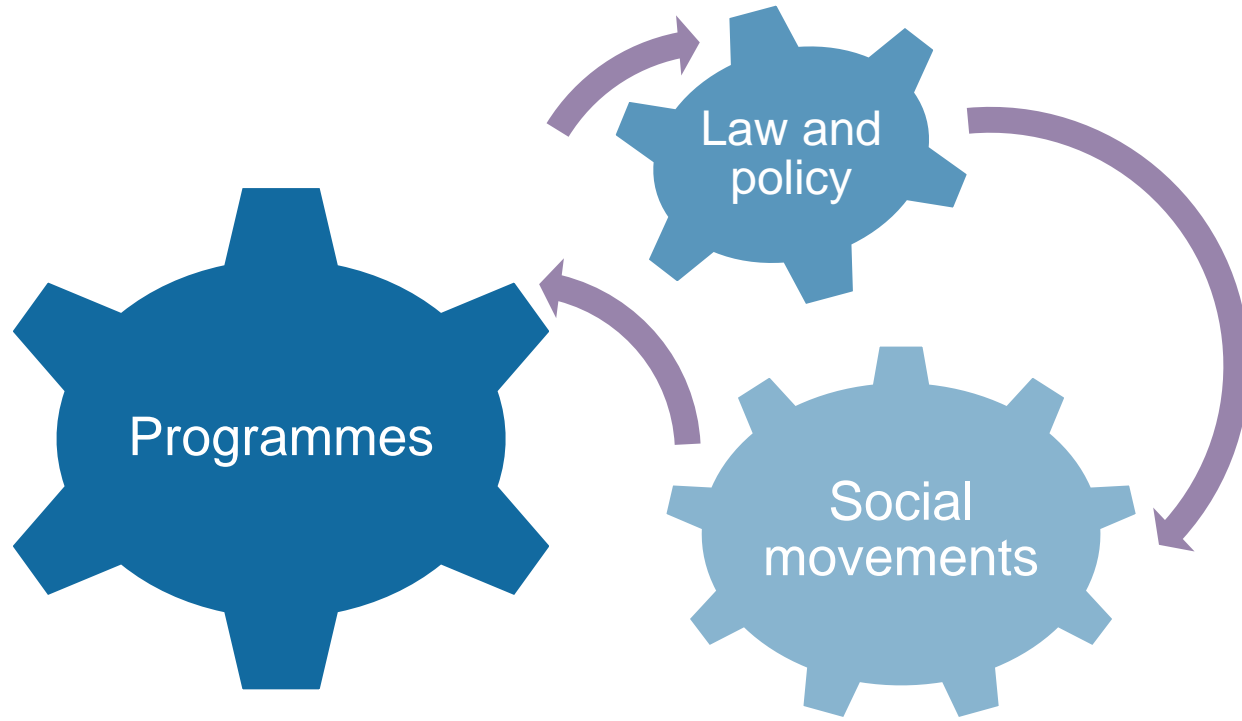
**Development is about
the economy, services
and infrastructure, not
things like child marriage**



‘Comparative indifference to the importance of the social needs remedying’

Amartya Sen, 2004

Now new momentum towards gender norm change



Some different approaches to norms

Focus	Key insights	Disciplinary tradition
Individuals and groups	Why people do/ don't conform with norms	Social psychology; game theory; behavioural economics
Society and institutions	How norms uphold social structure and inequalities; what drives change	Sociological/ anthropological and economic analysis
Gender inequalities and gendered power relations	How gender norms reproduce patriarchal power	Feminist power analysis
State and social movements	How political actors and activists can leverage opportunities to promote or encourage the adoption norms	Political analysis

Definitions

Social norms are the implicit, informal rules that most people accept and abide by.

Social norms are influenced by belief systems, the economic context, and sometimes by perceived rewards and sanctions.

Norms are embedded in formal and informal institutions and produced and reproduced through social interaction.

They change when sufficient numbers of people choose to act (or are compelled to act) in a different way, thus creating a new norm.


Definitions

Gender norms are a sub-set of social norms that express how people of a particular gender (and often age) are expected to behave, in a given social context.

Gender norms often reflect and reinforce unequal gender relations, usually to the disadvantage of women and girls, and of men and boys who do not conform to the prevailing gender norms.

Gender norms are generally understood in a binary way, considering male and female, without allowing for non-binary gender identities.

How do norms operate?



Discriminatory and harmful ideas and practices are common and widely accepted

Embedded in the operation of education systems, public services, labour markets, political systems, religious institutions

Sustained through everyday social interactions and by the media, education systems, religious practice, inter and intra family relations.

Often invisible, taken for granted unless challenged

What kinds of issues do gender norms affect?

- Educational participation and outcomes
- Physical and mental health
- Job segregation and labour market experience
- Access to and control of economic assets
- Gender-based violence (including homophobic violence)
- Gender divisions of labour
- Access to information
- Safety and mobility
- Access to justice
- Political voice and representation

Norms: combination of rules, attitudes, beliefs and practices, resulting in detrimental outcomes – for women and girls

Its our custom to marry girls and boys around the age of 12

early and perilous child birth

Men make better politicians

lack of political voice

Its OK to beat a wife if she has not completed her domestic duties

violence

Girls need to do more domestic chores than boys as its their role; and boys need to study so they can support their families

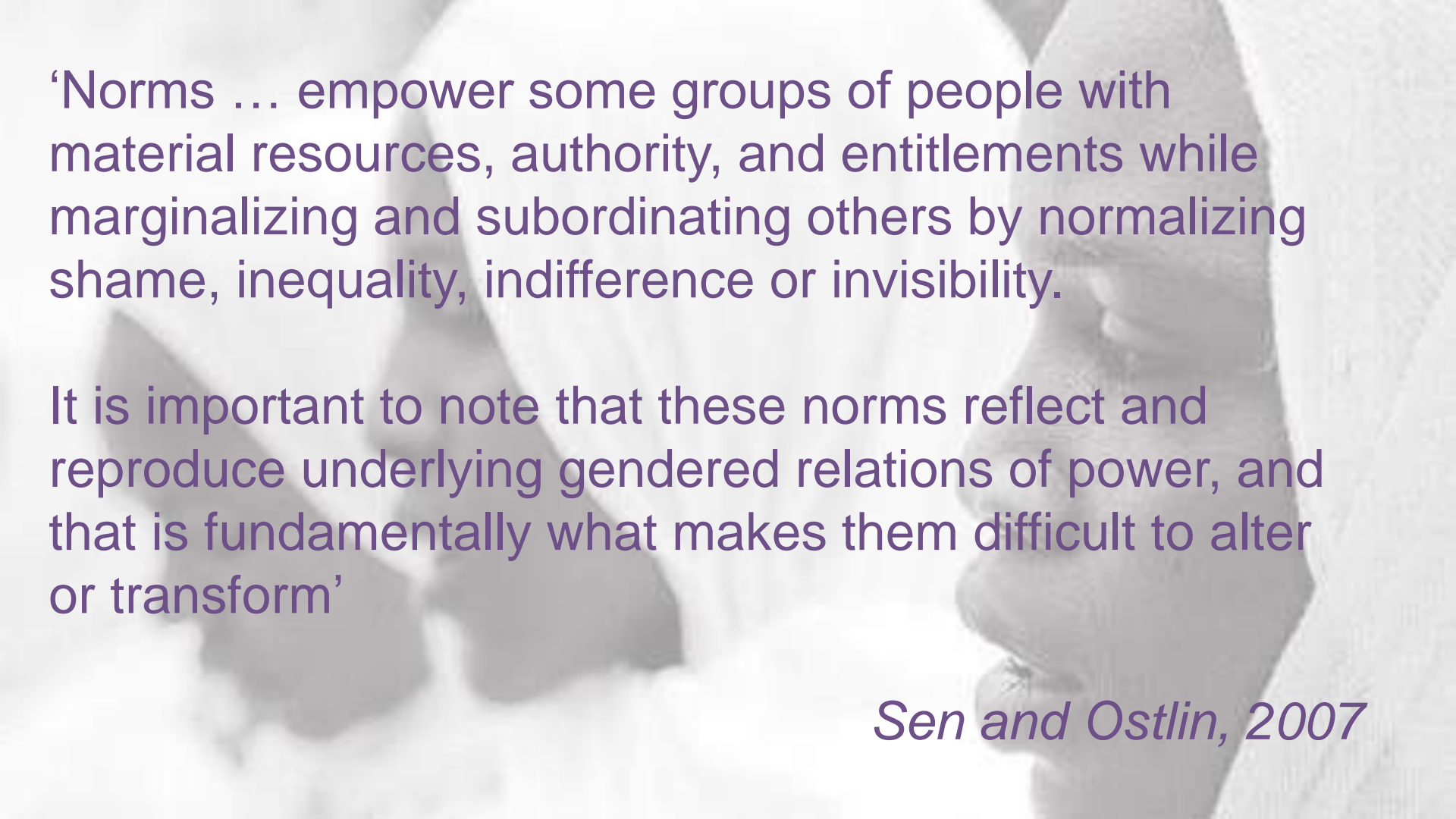
unfair distribution of domestic work

Girls can't fix tractors

low aspirations and limited opportunities

Men should manage all property

lack of female economic power and skills



‘Norms ... empower some groups of people with material resources, authority, and entitlements while marginalizing and subordinating others by normalizing shame, inequality, indifference or invisibility.

It is important to note that these norms reflect and reproduce underlying gendered relations of power, and that is fundamentally what makes them difficult to alter or transform’

Sen and Ostlin, 2007

Changing knowledge, beliefs and norms

Approach	Example/tools
New Knowledge	Info about health impacts of child marriage – helped shift towards later marriage among minorities in Vietnam
Reframe issue/bring it to national attention	Disability as a rights issue not a medical problem Social movements for women's rights
Change perceptions of what others approve/disapprove of	Public cooking competitions for boys organised by CARE Bangladesh – challenging norm that cooking is not men's work
Show that new norm or belief is common	Radio and TV dramas; public commitment ceremonies, eg Tostan in West Africa
Associate new norms with positive role models	Radio and TV dramas, eg Breakthrough India

Structural and institutional changes

Approach	Example/Tools
Mandate new practices in law	Compulsory education, equal inheritance
Change institutional policies	Equal representation of women in politics and governance
Promote new economic opportunities	Eg support development of decent work opportunities
Increase infrastructure and service provision	Eg education, family planning, communications technology

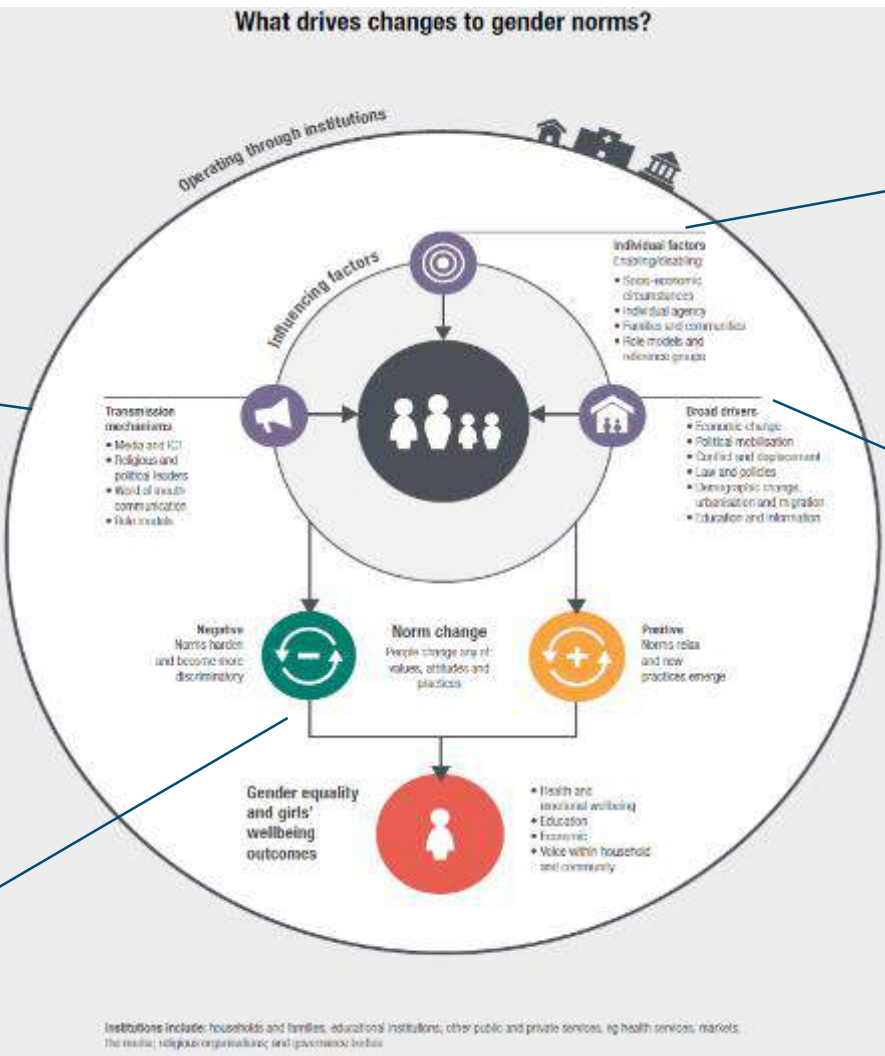
What drives changes to gender norms?

Transmission mechanisms

Individual factors

Institutions and broad drivers

Norm change (negative as well as positive)



Institutions include: households and families; educational institutions; other public and private services, eg health services, markets, the media; religious organisations; and government bodies.

Challenges

Norms intersect

- Need to tackle multiple norms at once
- Understand how norms differ among different identity groups

Norm change can take a long time

- Often over a generation for change to be embedded
- Longer project time frames needed
- Two steps forward, one step back

Gender norm change is often political

- Power-holders rarely want to give up power
- People can feel identities and values are under threat
- Backlash is serious risk

Better understanding and measurement of change processes



Project overview

What is ALIGN?

ALIGN (Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms) enables and connects a global community of researchers and thought leaders to challenge and change harmful gender norms affecting adolescents and young adults. Through developing and sharing innovations, ALIGN aims to advance understanding and ensure knowledge on norm change contributes to sustainable gender justice.

The ALIGN project involves various components, including:

- A digital platform with curated content
- A community of practice
- Thematically-focused meetings
- Funding



Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms

A digital platform and Community of Practice for sharing knowledge and innovation on gender norms, with a focus on adolescents and young adults.

Thematic guides

[Education and learning](#)[Health and well-being](#)[Girls' clubs](#)[Private sector](#)[Child marriage](#)[Social protection](#)

Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms (ALIGN)

ALIGN is a digital platform aimed at advancing understanding of gender norms by connecting a global Community of Practice committed to gender equality for adolescents and young adults. By encouraging collaboration and knowledge exchange, ALIGN aims to ensure evidence and learning on norm change informs more effective policy and practice.

Community

How can you join the ALIGN Community of Practice?

- Sign up for the ALIGN newsletter (contact align@odi.org.uk)
- Recommend a resource for the hub
- Recommend a project, organisation or initiative on gender norms to profile for the community page
- Provide content such as a recommended reading list, case study or blog
- Engage in ALIGN's discussion forums and webinars
- Share news and information in our newsletters
- Apply for funding
- Participate in convenings
- Provide ongoing feedback to the platform development team



ALIGN at the IAAH in Delhi

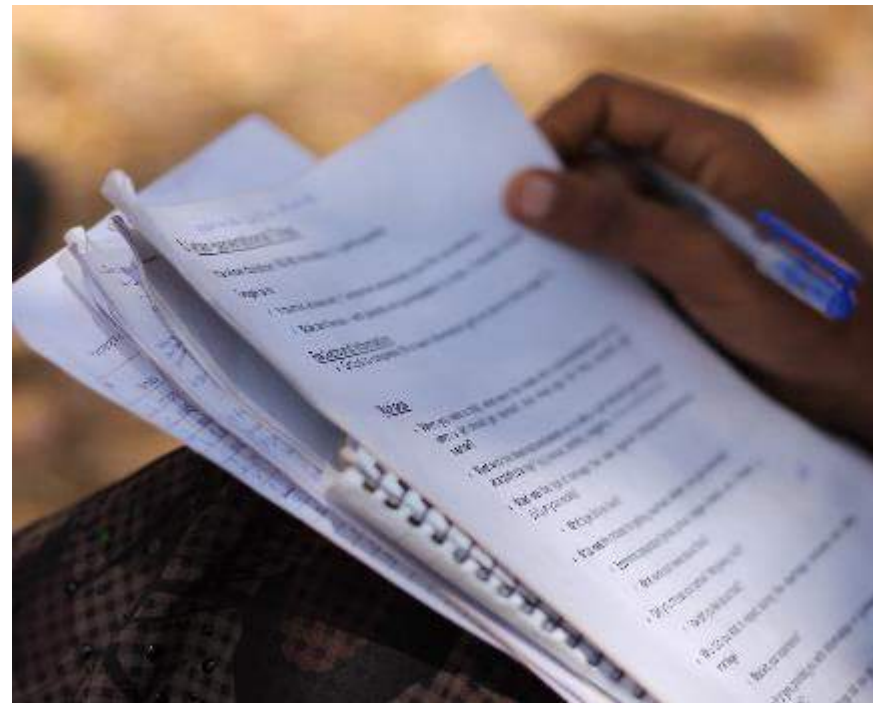
Content will include:

- Health
- Education
- Women's economic empowerment
- Violence against women and girls
- Social protection
- Community development
- Digital and mass media
- Men, boys and masculinities
- Child marriage
- Data, tools and measurement
- Theory and concepts



Funding

- ALIGN has hosted two funding calls:
- A **Research Fund** to support synthesis of learning from innovative research, interventions and knowledge
 - Recipients from Peru, Mexico, Indonesia, Somalia
 - Outputs to be viewed on the platform next year
- A **Convening Fund** to support national and regional/international convenings to communicate knowledge on gender norms and norm change
- Future funding rounds to be launched in Spring 2019



Country	Users
	3,958 % of Total: 100.00% (3,958)
1. United States	1,074 (26.39%)
2. United Kingdom	891 (21.90%)
3. India	178 (4.37%)
4. France	141 (3.47%)
5. Australia	107 (2.63%)
6. Canada	104 (2.56%)
7. Kenya	102 (2.51%)
8. Netherlands	90 (2.21%)
9. Nigeria	77 (1.89%)
10. South Africa	58 (1.43%)

The ALIGN is a global community, and the platform has been accessed by users from 133 different countries.

← Top 10 countries – June 2018



Concentration of sessions by country users

A black and white photograph of three young people sitting on a ledge against a wall. The person on the left is a young man in a white shirt, looking to the left. The person in the middle is a young woman in a white shirt, looking forward. The person on the right is a young woman in a dark sweater, looking to the right with her hand near her face. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Addressing inequitable gender norms is a proven way of advancing gender justice.

We increasingly have the knowledge and means to make this difference.

www.alignplatform.org

Please visit the webinar follow-up discussion forum at <https://www.alignplatform.org/forum>

To sign up for ALIGN's newsletter and find information on future webinars, please email:

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Gender roles and norms: rethinking what works in preventing intimate partner violence

Lori Michau, Co-Director



Gender norms in Uganda

- ❑ Wide acceptability of women's inferiority to men
- ❑ Acceptability of IPV, men's decision-making
- ❑ Sexuality and sexual violence sensitive to discuss both publicly and privately
- ❑ Male infidelity common and expected
- ❑ Negative consequences for women and men who divert from traditional gender roles



SASA!

Community mobilization approach to prevent violence against women and HIV by working with communities for social norm change.





Impact

RCT with London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Center for Domestic Violence Prevention, Makerere University, Raising Voices generated evidence of **community-level** impact

▫ Attitudes:

- 📌 76% of community members in SASA! communities say physical IPV not acceptable compared to 26% in control
- 📌 In SASA! communities, **28%** more women and men believe it is acceptable for a woman to refuse sex than in control communities

▫ Behaviors:

- 📌 52% reduction in physical IPV, all women
- 📌 54% reduction in physical IPV, women with history of IPV
- 📌 42% reduction in sexual concurrency among men



Changing gender norms

Initially *SASA!* attempted to directly challenge this normative structure by promoting equality at the household level

Approach didn't work for 3 main reasons:

1. Triggered resistance
2. Increased tensions/adversarial relationships at home
3. Hijacked deeper conversations and unpacking of power



“

... I used to see some men who would come out and boast saying, ‘Look, my relationship is okay because I help out’— and so men felt like now they are role modeling [good behavior], much as there were other things their wives were still uncomfortable with. And even then, men’s support was very conditional—‘if I wash the dishes, she must pay half of the school fees.’ CEDOVIP staff



Re-thinking household gender roles

In KLA, promoting more equal HH roles was not effective as an entry point. However some softening/blurring of normative expectations *did* occur in *SASA!* communities as couples experimented with ways to demonstrate their core relationship values. But:

- Emerged organically
- Motivation: genuine desire to support one another and strengthen the partnership
- Promoted a feeling of collaboration (rather than competition)

... where people can understand each other, where there is respect, love and joint decision making, then the gender roles will automatically be addressed. CEDOVIP staff



SASA!'s response: core relationship values

Monitoring and frequent observation/feedback led to new focus: *core relationship values*: love, respect, trust, shared decision making, and safety

Over time, experienced positive response:

- Minimized resistance (compared to discussions gender roles)
- Led to more ownership, conviction and credibility among CAs (more able to personalize values and apply in their own lives)
- Opened space for broader discussions about power (beyond shared housework—e.g., respecting partner's work, communicating honestly; collaborating to pursue joint-aspirations, etc)
- Created a positive vision for change, reinforced as couples experienced tangible benefits in their own relationships

Evidence of effectiveness?

Evaluation indicates *SASA!* improved relationship dynamics in fundamental ways; couples in *SASA!* communities statistically significantly more likely to have:

- discussed “worries” with their partners
- discussed what they both like during sex
- appreciated partners work around the house
- Engaged in joint-decision making

Similar trends observed in qualitative findings: *SASA!* improved trust, collaboration and communication





“

She listens to me, and I also listen to her... The communication is also good, she can tell me that this is not good and I also tell her that I have not liked this. You solve the issue peacefully, without a tug of war.
Male community member

... where people can understand each other, where there is respect, love and joint decision making, then the gender roles will naturally be addressed.
CEDOVIP staff

Emerging Implications

SASA! effectively reduced IPV and acceptability of violence, without fundamentally dismantling household gender roles. Experience demonstrates the salience of core relationship values within violence prevention efforts.

Implications for programmers

- Find an entry point that connects and inspires
- Re-orient programming towards “softer”/ messier relationship qualities like love, trust, and respect
- Listen, monitor & be responsive to direct and indirect consequences

For researchers

- Innovate with methods: Experiment with indicators of relationship dynamics (love, intimacy, emotional attunement, collaboration, etc.)



Acknowledgements: Sophie Namy, Tina Musuya, Janet Nakuti, Nambusi Kyegombe, Elizabeth Starmann



Thank you!

www.raisingvoices.org





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Addressing Gender Norms among Adolescents and Young Men

Ravi K Verma

ICRW's PROGRAM STRATEGIES

GEMS (2008-2017)

Help boys and girls (12-14) in school settings challenge inequitable gender-norms and practices

Parivartan (2009-2016)

Sports-based mentoring program for boys and girls to promote gender equality, and increase self-esteem and aspirations among girls and reduce violence in public spaces

PAnKH (2014-2017)

Engages with young men and boys as allies to promote education among girls and delay marriages

Sexual & reproductive health/rights through education and access to services
GBV prevention

Plan-It Girls (2015-contd.)

Combines gender norm changing programs with employability programs for girls and engages with adolescent boys and young men as agents of change

- ✓ Utilize **multiple approaches**
- ✓ Start **early**,
- ✓ Recognize and question **gender roles, privileges and entitlements**
- ✓ Acknowledge **intersectionality and other drivers of inequality**
- ✓ Promote **critical thinking and collective voices**

KEY LEARNINGS

While some norms change, others are difficult to change especially that are deeply embedded

◆ **The ones that changed**

- ◆ A wife should always obey her husband
- ◆ Violence against girls are perpetrated by strangers
- ◆ If a girl says no, she means yes

◆ **The ones that were difficult to change**

- ◆ A woman's primary role is home making and child care.
- ◆ A girl should have reasons to go in public places

Boys and young men negotiate learnings about norm change in their specific realities

- ◆ For instance – **anxieties around compromised masculinity** 'what will my peers say, what will my neighbors think'. Brothers for example didn't want to be

seen as supporting their sisters in sports involving public open spaces. They were passive supporters.

Boys and young men often wrestle with women's and girls' mobility. They identified various security and safety considerations for justifying men's control over their behavior. This is an area that needs greater attention. (Parivartan)

There is an Increased recognition and improved articulation on violence and its consequences but adolescent boys and young men weigh the conditions and risks before by-stander intervention.

- ◆ Will they accompany sisters or daughters to participate in public sports? Or
- ◆ Will they intervene in schools when witness discrimination

KEY LEARNINGS

Engage with adolescents as agent of change

"I discuss the topics that are in the module with my mother... but not everything together. I give her small doses. This will help her understand what I am working toward and also know where my thinking is coming from.... if I talk everything to her at the same time and it becomes an overdose then she can ask me to shut up." (An adolescent boy participant from Parivartan Plus)

Target informal spaces not just formal spaces: Find opportunities for deliberate, reflective dialogue with adolescent boys in the informal spaces within school, family and community. *(Campaigns in PAnKH, Parivartan, GEMS and Plan-It Girls)*

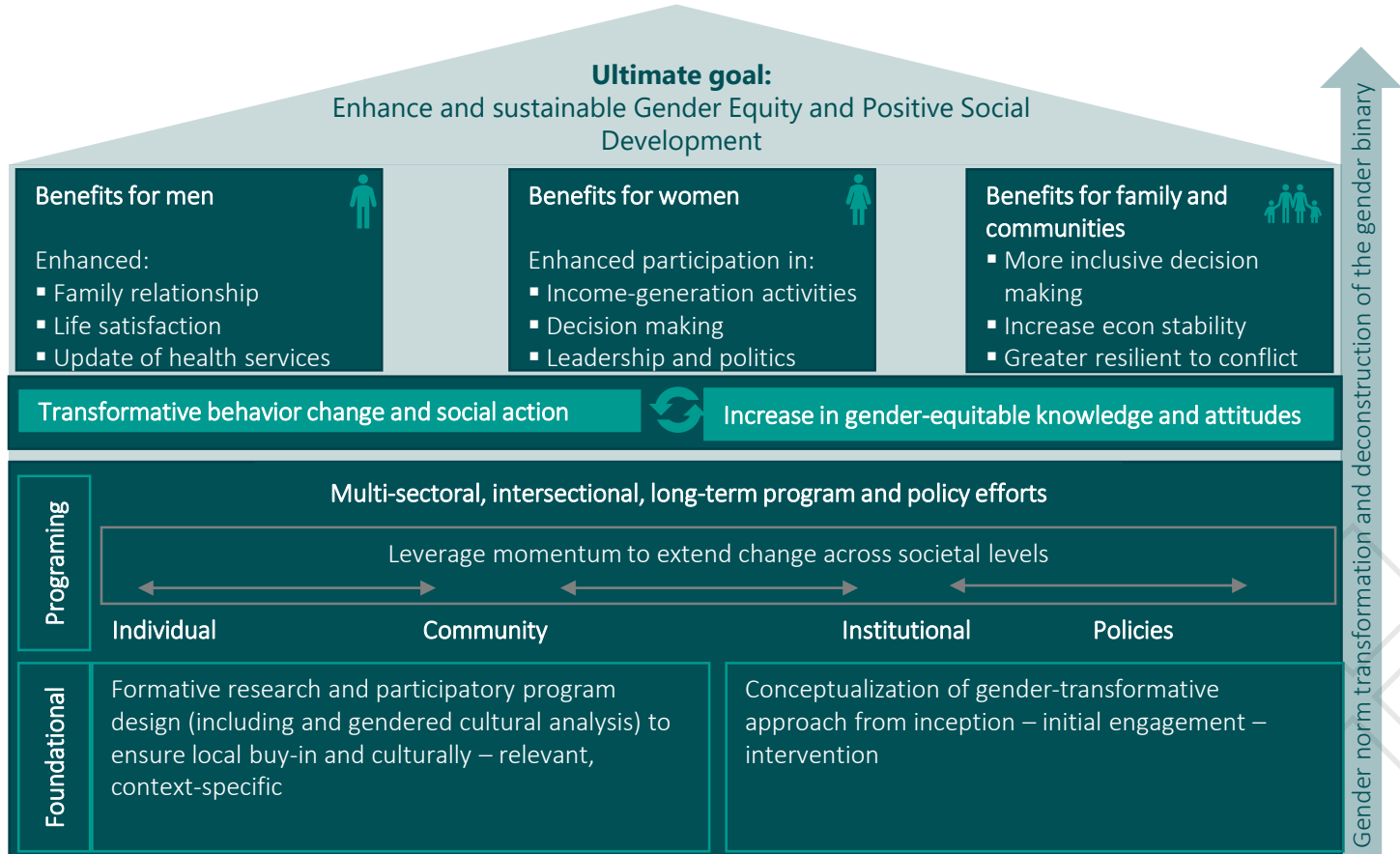
Proactive family engagement and positive spin is what works - Aspirations for better relationships, communication, sharing and a happy

environment for children find resonance

Our data suggests that elevated levels of aspirations on the part of mentors and their mothers was a strong driver of the bargaining in favor of mobility within and beyond the family

Build collective agency and negotiation spaces and skills — It is critical to present a reference group (a strong social support group) that can help to navigate what is 'acceptable', collective agency as a first step to individual agency. Nurture careful, strategic and gradual negotiation in daily interactions thus opening scope for dialogue.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: GENDER NORM TRANSFORMATION FOR GENDER EQUITY



THANK YOU



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