

TOP THEMES FROM THE SUMMIT ON SOCIAL NORMS RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

May 22, 2019 | Washington, DC



The Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change (Learning Collaborative) brought together over 80 participants from over 30 organizations at a Summit meeting on May 22, 2019 to discuss and reflect on the collective goals, accomplishments and future opportunities for the Learning Collaborative to advance theory, measurement and scale-up of social norms practice to improve health and development outcomes globally. Over the day's meeting, participants reflected on how the field of social norms has advanced over the course of this 2.5-year (2016-2019) joint effort. Among many topics of discussion, participants focused in on ethics, a thematic area that has received relatively less attention, and yet, is and should be, a grounding principle of our work.

Here we present the top themes of the Summit, **highlighting key points participants discussed, areas of consensus and opportunities** for the Learning Collaborative moving forward.





PROGRAM DESIGN

PROGRAM DESIGN

Behavior change frameworks need to be simple, practical and should take social norms into account.

Include social norms explicitly while recognizing that they are not the sole, or most important, driver of behavior in some contexts.

Existing frameworks can be overcomplicated and impractical for program implementers to apply in every day work.

Better process documentation during implementation would help clarify what is working (and not working) and how to make mid-course corrections.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Theories of change, monitoring & evaluation and adaptive management approaches are living processes that need to be tested and revisited throughout the project life course.

Program failures should be documented, understood and respected as much as successes to maximize lessons learned.

“We need to stop brushing failures under the rug and learn from them to adapt.”

– *Chisina Kapungu,*
International Center for Research on Women

PROGRAM DESIGN



Continuous program management feedback loops can reveal signs of a project not reaching desired results and create opportunities for course correction.



Revisiting program theories of change, real-time monitoring, and developing learning agendas in key will advance our understanding of how programs work.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Moving beyond small group reflection:
Norms shifting happens everywhere!

- **Community based norms-shifting interventions** are one approach to norms change and the evidence-base on what works, and how, continues to grow.
- **We know social norms can be supported by and enforced by systems and structures** and norms often shift as a result of structural interventions; understanding how these interventions work and synchronizing them with community-based interventions is a new frontier for social norms practice.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Breaking down siloes: Norms-shifting interventions are cross-sector programs.

There is increasing interest for collaboration on social norms best practices across a range of programmatic areas such as in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Health, Workforce Development/Livelihoods, Education and more...



A significant barrier to advancing collaboration is a lack of consistent language and terminology used to discuss norms and norm change across sectors and disciplines.



Donors are well situated to leverage their role as a crosscutting norms facilitator, keeping in mind that no single program can achieve everything.



MEASUREMENT

Q) *focus on adolescents?*
Multi-sectoral approach
Link to other collaboratives
tap into what exists
improve research skills to share + analyze
sharing good examples
NORMS atlas
framework for programs (operationalize)
start with the basics
do a basic (30 min) intro training with
outline of training resources
mentorship
application for SN TA
accompaniment ; revised + 2.0
minimum standards
checklist for donors

MEASUREMENT

Formative research to identify norms is key to ethical and effective program design and implementation.

- » **Quality rapid assessments** can contribute to critical and contextual information on social norms to inform program design and prioritize integrity.
- » **Engaging a diverse range of power holders and stakeholders** is important to understanding how norms operate and influence behaviors in different contexts.
- » **Further exploration is needed on the role of meta-norms, indirect norms,** norm strength and prevalence and consequences of following or deviating from norms (benefits, sanctions) are important to behaviors, program design, and effective measurement.

MEASUREMENT

Analyzing existing data to work with what we have and standardizing approaches can provide valuable insight to your program and the field.

- » **Secondary data sources relevant** for understanding social norms exist and can be a useful starting point for programmers and researchers to design smarter programs.
- » **Linking multiple large datasets** would allow people to analyze data for collective norms relevant to their setting and behavior.
- » **Standardized and adapted measures of social norms** are rare but growing, and are being informed by formative research.

- » **Collective norms or norms that exist at the collective level** (compared to perceived norms or individual perceptions of norms at the collective level) can be measured from secondary data sources and offer an alternative measurement strategy for understanding the relationship between social norms and health behaviors.
- » **Participatory methods for data collection and analysis**, such as vignettes, build local capacity while engaging implementers and community members to generate meaningful evidence.

MEASUREMENT

Program monitoring and evaluation data contributes to a clear understanding of where programs are in their journey of change.

Programs should monitor social norms in reasonably frequent intervals to better understand whether – and how – norms are changing to adapt interventions when needed.

Mixed methods approaches to monitoring social norms in programs are an opportunity to look at trends and explore nuances of change.

Meaningfully engaging communities and participants in monitoring will help understand change, articulate failures, identify unintended consequences, and monitor diffusion.



ETHICS: FOR DONORS, FOR IMPLEMENTERS, FOR THE FIELD

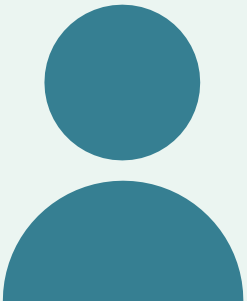
Ethics for norms-shifting interventions has received inadequate attention by donors and in programming and research, yet ethics should be the foundational principle of our work.

Engaging with inequities and vulnerability is essential in norms-shifting or norms-aware programs: by definition, there will be power shifting and with that comes ethical responsibilities on designing and managing the effects.

ETHICS

Some issues that require ethical thinking include:

Organizations should invest in their own social change processes to examine identify and address their own biases and values.



“To be neutral is to be deceptive, we need to mitigate our own biases and be held accountable.”

- Paul Bukuluki, Makerere University, Uganda

ETHICS

Some issues that require ethical thinking include:



Acknowledging and rebalancing where power lies when defining project priorities.



Seriously considering the time commitment required to work ethically in the normative space.

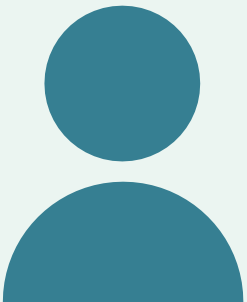


Strategic community participation needs careful thought, because power negotiations occur in community participation.

ETHICS

Some issues that require ethical thinking include:

Thinking carefully about power-shifting so that projects are not reinforcing power structures and (re)creating existing inequities, which can ultimately cause harm in a target community.



“What is good at the individual level can often conflict with what is good at the collective level.”

- Rajiv Rimal, George Washington University, USA

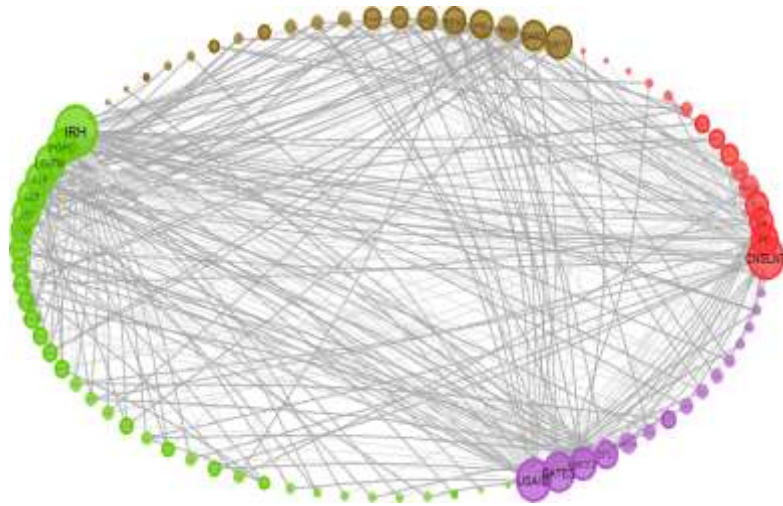


LEARNING COLLABORATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS — **WHAT'S NEW?**

WHAT'S NEW?



How are we doing as a **collaborative**?



■ Funder ■ Researcher ■ Program Implementer ■ Other

Connections between Learning Collaborative members have more than doubled over the last two years.

The number of publications about social norms have doubled and conference presentations have increased by

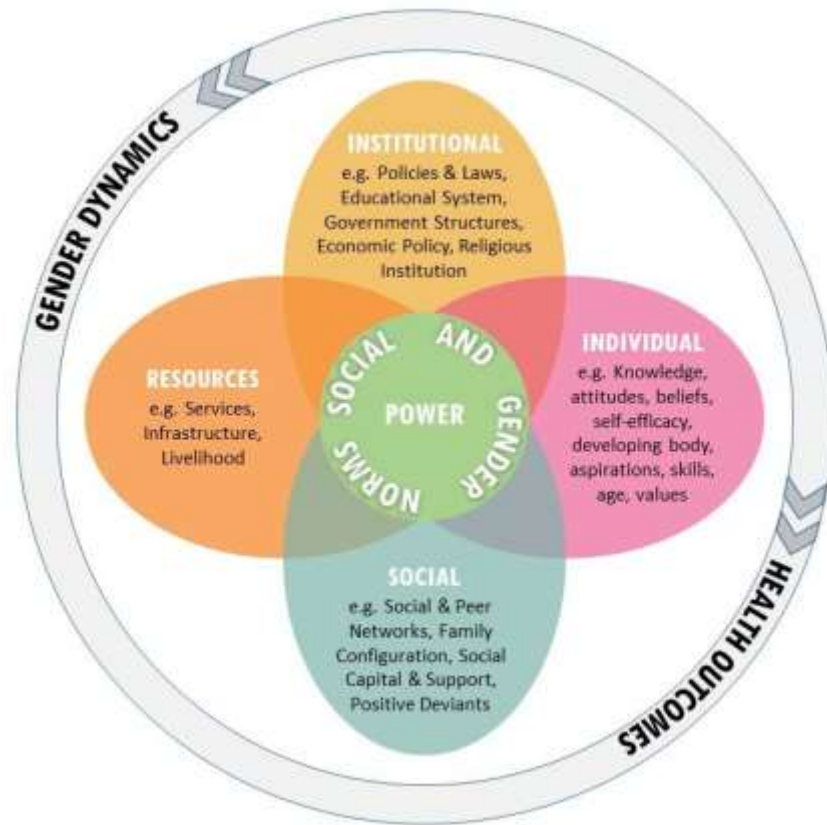
85%

We need to include and elevate, diverse voices: program implementers, researchers, and others from lower- and middle- income countries are underrepresented.

WHAT'S NEW?



Working together, Learning Collaborative members have advanced social norms practice.

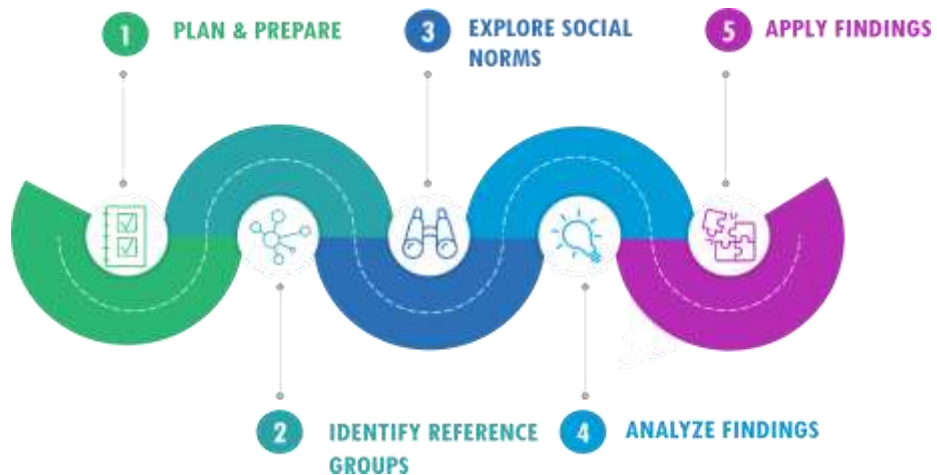


We are coalescing around a **conceptual framework** that puts power at the heart of social norms, drawing attention to the opportunities present at the intersection of individual, social, resource and institutional domains to disrupt, develop or transform norms.

WHAT'S NEW?



Working together, Learning Collaborative members have advanced social norms practice.



More tools are available to help practitioners **understand, unpack, and measure** the social norms relevant to their program outcomes.

» [Map of social norms-focused projects and measurement approaches](#)

» [Social Norms Exploration Tool](#)

WHAT'S NEW?



Working together, Learning Collaborative members have advanced social norms practice.



Not every norm is created equal. We have **increased understanding of the unique features of social norms** in order to support the design of more effective programs.

WHERE DOES THE LEARNING COLLABORATIVE GO FROM HERE?



WHERE DO WE GO?



Diverse voices and perspectives need to be brought to the forefront.

The Learning Collaborative community needs more diversity in our engagement, including more representation from...



**Lower- and Middle-
Income Countries**



**Projects working across
development sectors**



**Program
Implementers**

WHERE DO WE GO?



Diverse voices and perspectives need to be brought to the forefront.



How we communicate matters.

Materials and resources, as well as meetings or other modes of communication, should be accessible linguistically to increase and maintain robust participation.

WHERE DO WE GO?



Diverse voices and perspectives need to be brought to the forefront.



The Learning Collaborative structure should be regionalized, “**keeping the global, adding the regional**” with representative participation.

WHERE DO WE GO?



Diverse voices and perspectives need to be brought to the forefront.



The Learning Collaborative should encourage membership at institutional levels as much as at individual levels in order to explore depth in partnerships. Ways to engage less represented entities, such as government organizations, should be explored.

WHERE DO WE GO?



Making connections, leveraging synergies and sharing capacity should be a priority.

Build on and leverage synergies with other organizations and networks, such as:

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Working Group on Social Norms and Harmful Gender-Related Practices; Mentorship Program to support Integration of a Social Norms Perspective into Programs that Address Child Well-being; Working Group on Norms at the Intersection of VAW/VAC; The Prevention Collaborative (an initiative focused on strengthening the ability of actors to deliver cutting edge violence prevention initiatives, based on a feminist perspective); The Francophone Africa Regional Community of Practice on Scaling Social Norms for AYSRH; UNICEF Cross-regional Social Norms Initiative; The Lancet Series on Gender Equality, Norms and Health; JHU CCP: A Shared Agenda for SBC in FP; Youth Power Learning: Positive Youth Development Learning Agenda; and The Communication Initiative Network.

WHERE DO WE GO?



Making connections, leveraging synergies and sharing capacity should be a priority.



Conduct a mapping of any additional networks not already engaged in the Learning Collaborative membership (such as in the behavioral economics or human-centered design worlds) and reach out to make connections.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

WHERE DO WE GO?



Making connections, leveraging synergies and sharing capacity should be a priority.



Strengthen the capacity of program implementers and researchers at the regional and country level, tapping into the vast knowledge and experience of Learning Collaborative members.

Possible options including mentorship programs, training support, accompaniment and distance technical assistance.

WHERE DO WE GO?



Making connections, leveraging synergies and sharing capacity should be a priority.



Integrate social norms and social behavior change into pre-service training, undergraduate and graduate training, youth training and short courses with simple tools to evaluate programs and define and articulate activities for community organizations and government entities.

WHERE DO WE GO?



Measurement as a catalyst for collaboration:
a continued “hot topic” among the Learning Collaborative community

Based on the buzz at the Summit, the Learning Collaborative members should establish a working group to guide efforts to advance measurement in key areas:

Quantitative Measures

Monitoring Efforts

Qualitative Measures

Comparisons Across Tools

This group should include measurement experts who can provide technical assistance to other members.

WHERE DO WE GO?



Measurement as a catalyst for collaboration:
a continued “hot topic” among the Learning Collaborative community



Validate promising norms measurement tools and disseminate results within and outside of the Learning Collaborative.



Support improvements to program monitoring, including balancing monitoring and implementation, monitoring diffusion and unintended consequences.



THE LEARNING COLLABORATIVE AND YOU!

DISSEMINATION PRODUCTS, AVENUES & CONNECTION



**Learning
Collaborative's**
Vision for Upcoming
Products & Activities
for Sharing



Products, trainings, and tools need to be simple, practical, and accessible. Accessibility includes translating products, trainings and tools into different languages but also using different ways to spread awareness.



For a product to represent the Learning Collaborative, opportunities for members to provide input will be cultivated.



Skills-oriented training modules are on the horizon. Developing norms training materials that can be used in a variety of combinations and lengths and for a variety of audiences, is a priority.



Find Creative Ways to Disseminate

Continue to see and use global, regional and in-country meetings and conferences as a priority for sharing Learning Collaborative advancements.

Develop a social norms atlas with examples, that helps users articulate what social norms are, and how they relate to their programs.

Leverage workshops for dissemination, sharing findings, products, and tools.

Develop a donor checklist and minimum standards (including language accessibility criteria) for vetting social norms proposals and designing & monitoring norm-shifting interventions.



Always keep member connections and collaborations at the heart of the Learning Collaborative.



Develop and maintain a simple and accessible virtual shared platform for collaboration but remember that in-person meetings are essential to support distance collaboration.



Prioritize designated staff time to ensure follow through on new ideas for Learning Collaborative work and to build member support.



Refine our understanding of our own values and positionality: having a clear goal and purpose makes the Collaborative dynamic.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[HTTPS://WWW.ALIGNPLATFORM.ORG/LEARNING-COLLABORATIVE](https://www.alignplatform.org/learning-collaborative)

