Monitoring and evaluating norm change

This brief summarizes the main concepts of the fourth webinar in our introductory series of social norms trainings for the Learning Collaborative to Advance Social Norms Practice in Nigeria. This series of four webinars will lay the foundation for understanding social norms, different approaches to identify them, strategies for norm change, and monitoring and evaluation for social norms programs.

Introduction

In the final session of this series, we will provide guidance on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for social norms change programs.

Just like with any intervention or program, social norm projects rely on M&E tools such as theories of change and logic models, M&E plans and indicators, and multiple sources of data—qualitative, survey, or activity. We will focus on factors that are likely to differ for social norms program monitoring and evaluation as opposed to other types of interventions, including potential differences in **what, when and how you might monitor and evaluate changes in social norms**.

What to Monitor and Evaluate

For social norms change programs, in addition to monitoring and evaluating activities and behavioral outcomes, you also need to monitor social norms indicators. Given that social norms are unwritten, invisible phenomena comprised of multiple factors, developing social norm indicators can be challenging as it requires monitoring multiple interrelated indicators. These indicators include measuring changes in the perceptions of **what others do**, perceptions of **what others approve of**, and who in a social group maintains the norms (i.e., **reference groups and powerholders**). It is also important to track what the **rewards (or penalties)** for following (or not following) social norms are, and whether they are changing.
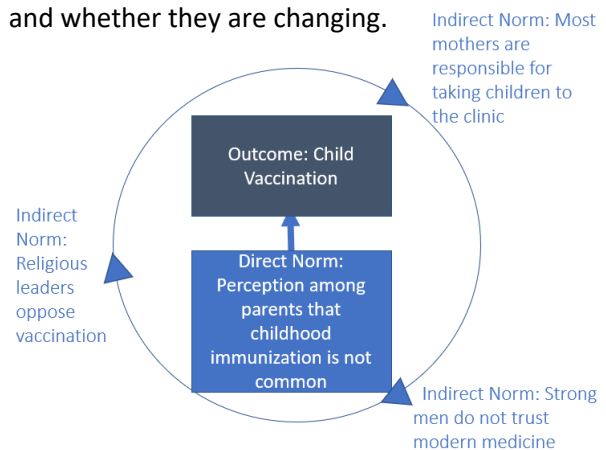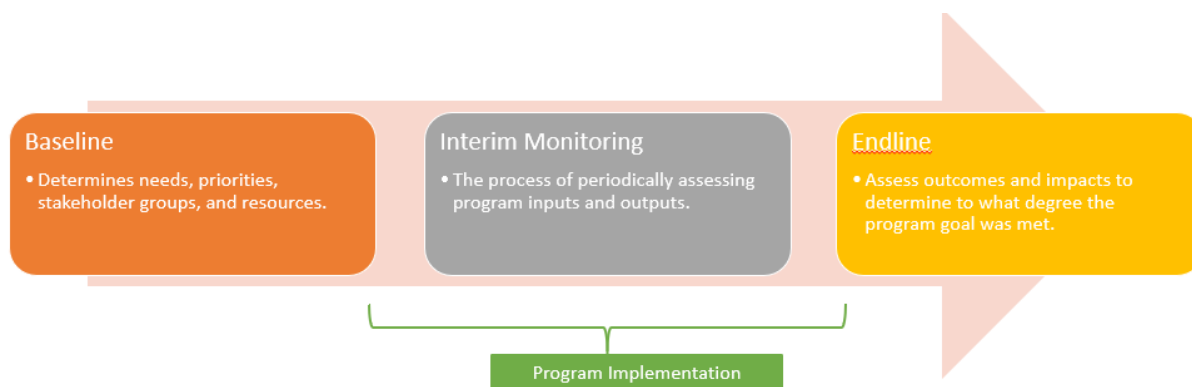

Figure 1: Illustrative Example of Direct and Indirect Norms

A critical decision you will need to make about your theory of change and logic model will be **which social norms** potentially at play will be the **most amenable to change and feasible to monitor**. For example, while on the surface it might seem like the most important social norm directly influencing whether children are vaccinated is how common parents think the behavior is, other indirect social norms may also play a role and therefore may also be important to monitor over time (see Figure 1).

We also encourage you to keep in mind that normative change doesn't happen in isolation. It is therefore necessary to monitor a variety of other factors that could be changing simultaneously such as **contextual factors, or social supports and networks** which may indicate a shift in social norms.

Baseline	Interim Monitoring	Endline
• Determines needs, priorities, stakeholder groups, and resources.	• The process of periodically assessing program inputs and outputs.	• Assess outcomes and impacts to determine to what degree the program goal was met.

Program Implementation

When to Monitor and Evaluate Social Norms

Just like with any well-designed intervention, to understand what changes have resulted, it is best to understand what the situation was before the intervention (baseline) and what the situation is at the end (endline). To attribute any changes to your intervention, you'll need to document what activities were implemented, with whom, and when—and if possible, what other types of activities or interventions were happening at the same time. However, detecting changes in social norms can be tricky, as social processes are often very slow and other factors, such as attitudes and consequences for complying with or rejecting a social norm, may have to change before normative shifts can take place. For that reason, you likely will need to:

- Monitor activities over a longer period of time than other behavior change intervention programs;
- Collect information on factors (such as attitudes and/or consequences for complying with or rejecting a social norm) that you expect might change before norms and behaviors; and
- **Compare levels of attitudes, norms and other factors determined to be relevant to your program's theory of change, at repeated points over time** to get an idea of broader patterns of change and the relationship between each piece.

How to Monitor and Evaluate Changes in Social Norms

Once you have decided on what social norm(s) and other indicators your program needs to monitor and evaluate and when, you can develop a M&E plan that is appropriate to the resources your program has available, including time, budget, and people power.

In terms of "how" to monitor and evaluate changes in normative factors, there are a number of approaches that can be taken to measuring social norms that include both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools.

In terms of quantitative tools, this session will provide examples of and a general formula for how to create **single-item questions** on **descriptive norms** *(perceptions of what others do)*, **injunctive norms** *(perceptions of what others approve or disapprove of),* and **outcome expectancies** *(perceptions of the benefits/rewards* or *sanctions/punishments*) associated with engaging in a behavior.

We will also provide some guidance on how to aggregate single-item questions in to **indices and scales**, how to translate these questions into indicators for your M&E plan, and how to specify or "bound" a **reference group**.

Finally, we will discuss the advantages and challenges to utilizing **vignettes** and how to go about constructing them. Vignettes are a guided story-telling methodology that is becoming an increasingly common approach to measure social norms. Vignettes are most commonly used in qualitative in-depth interviews or focus group discussions but can also be converted in to quantitative by creating corresponding response categories.

The Learning Collaborative to Advance Social Norms Practice in Nigeria