MAKING THE CASE

Addressing Social Norms in Intimate Partner Violence and Women's Economic Empowerment Programming

Evidence, Approaches, and Recommendations

PASSAGES PROJECT SOCIAL NORMS ACROSS SECTORS ACTIVITY

WHAT'S COVERED...

1 Passages Project & Social Norms Across Sectors Activity

2 What are social norms & norms-shifting strategies?

3 Why do social norms matter for WEE & IPV programming?

4 Recommendations on addressing social norms in your WEE, IPV, and integrated programs

5 Takeaways & Resources for further reading

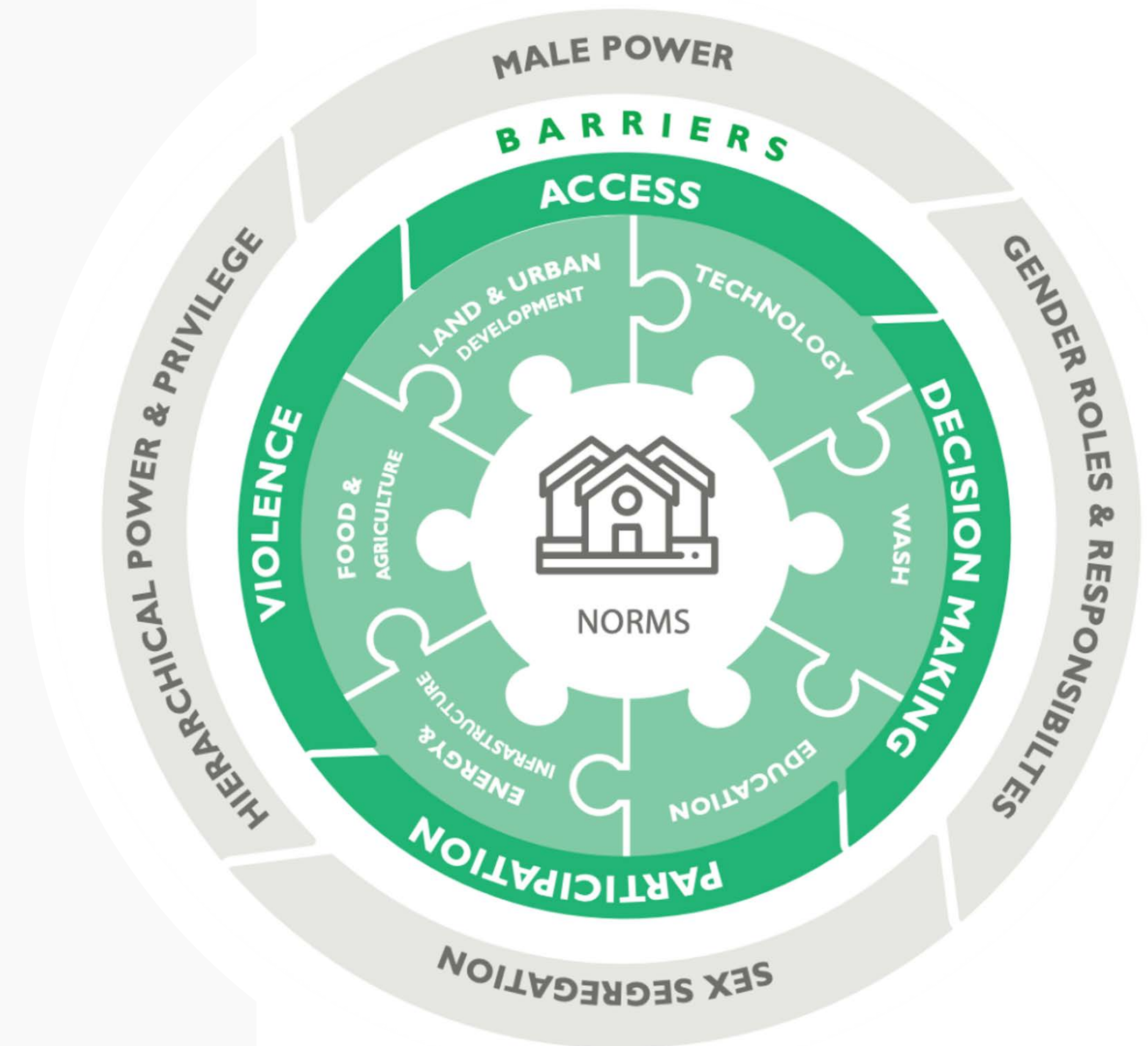# Passages Project & Social Norms Across Sectors Activity

AN OVERVIEW

PHOTO CREDIT: JUDI AUBEL, GRANDMOTHER PROJECT TEAM

With support from USAID's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub, the Passages Social Norms Across Sectors Activity, seeks to understand the role of social norms in program design and implementation, successes, challenges, and share broad lessons learned across sectors, primarily outside of global health.

OUR LANDSCAPING FINDINGS: NORMS-SHIFTING IN USAID PROGRAMMING

- Social norms contribute to the roles, responsibilities, and power dynamics that drive inequalities based on sex, gender, religion, disability, ethnic differences, class, education, age, and other factors.

- Social norms are considered **barriers to achieving desired results from programs**.

- Across sectors, **gender norms** emerged as barriers to outcomes by all projects.

- Four common normative barriers included: **violence**, **limiting access**, **inhibiting participation** and **decision making**.

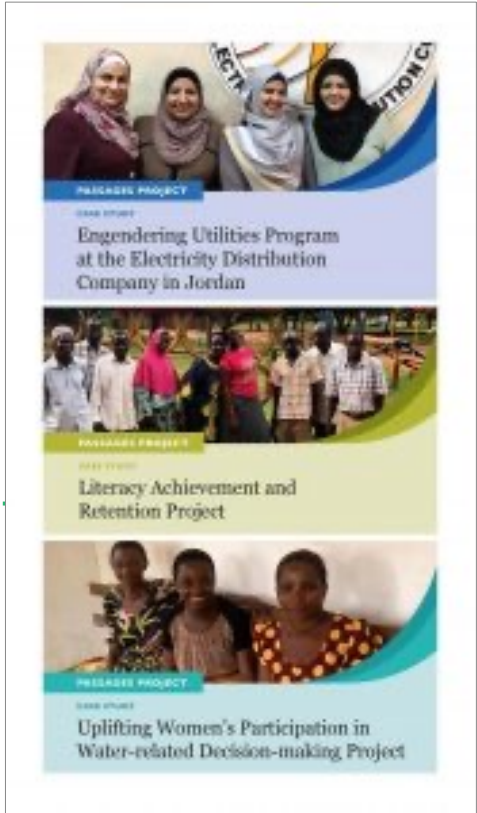# OTHER RESOURCES FROM THE PASSAGES PROJECT SOCIAL NORMS ACROSS SECTORS ACTIVITY

1

Landscaping Report:
A Landscape Review:
Addressing Social Norms
in Six USAID Sectors

2

Landscaping Brief: Social
Norms Key to Development
Programming: Landscaping
Finds Their Influence on
Behaviors Across Sectors

3

Case Studies:
Social Norms Across
Sectors: Three Case Studies

4

Rapid Desk Review:
Social Norm Approaches
in Three Health Sectors

EVIDENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO SHIFT NORMS

Building from the landscaping report and case studies, this slide doc provides a summary of evidence and recommendations on best practices for shifting norms in programming in:

Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)

&

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)*

*IPV, a subset of GBV (acts of violence directed at an individual on the basis of their gender) is the focus of this slide doc to more deeply explore it's relationship with WEE and how social norms influence outcomes

What are social norms and norms-shifting strategies?

What are social norms?
Why do they matter?

Social norms are unwritten rules of behavior shared by members of a given group or society. Social norms have influence on the behaviors and practices of communities everywhere. Some example norms include:

MALE INCOME EARNER

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

LARGE FAMILY

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

MARRIAGE

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

Gender Norms are...

- A type of social norm.

- The expectations and perceived rules for how one should behave based on biological sex and social perceptions of gender.

Norms-shifting strategies

Often as part of social and behavior change strategies, norms-shifting strategies promote examination of existing norms in relation to new ideas and new behaviors. This can be by:

- **Addressing laws and policies**
- **Mass media** to share information
- **Personalized normative feedback**
- **Group critical reflection and dialogue** [1, 2]

Why do social norms matter for WEE and IPV programming?

What is women's economic empowerment?

Women's economic empowerment is increasing women's power over the economic choices and opportunities that shape their lives, [3] and most commonly consists of both agency and access of women in the economic sphere [4]. Initiatives to improve women's economic empowerment emerged in response to gendered gaps that impact full engagement of women in the economic sphere, mainly outside the home [5].

WHICH NORMS MATTER?

- Perceptions of appropriate and valued jobs for women and men
- Gendered division of labor or care-related work (including unpaid labor, gendered segregation of crops)
- Women's mobility and access (social and structural) to jobs and financial services
- Economic and financial decision-making, including seeking income-earning jobs outside of the home
- Access and use of (or control over) finance or financial services
- Financial stability is the responsibility of the individual and/or family

Why do norms matter?

Norms shape the barriers and opportunities for women's economic empowerment. They may determine whether a woman can work, what kind of work she can do, and what responsibilities she has aside from paid work.

What is intimate partner violence?

Gender-based violence – or acts of violence directed at an individual on the basis of gender – is complex and pervasive [6-7]. It includes many different types of violence, in this slide doc, we focus on intimate partner violence (IPV) which includes any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological, or sexual harm. There are many drivers of IPV. At the community level, social and gender norms and their interplay with power can be a key driver for IPV, creating environments where IPV is accepted by both women and men [8-9]

WHICH NORMS MATTER?

- Violence as part of manhood
- Acceptance of violence as part of womanhood
- Acceptability of discussing or seeking help for IPV
- Acceptability of men's control their partner, including through violence
- Acceptability of separation or divorce

Why do norms matter?

Unequal gender norms contribute to IPV use, social acceptance of IPV and response to IPV [10, 11]. Shifting these unequal gender norms is key to preventing and responding to IPV [12]

What does the evidence say about social norms and WEE?

What is the evidence on how social norms drive women's economic empowerment?

- Long-term and sustainable women's economic empowerment requires broad social support and an environment that allows women agency, equal rights, and safety to make the economic choices that are best for them.

- Certain gender norms (e.g., that dictate appropriate gendered roles) may inhibit social support for economic empowerment [13].

- Without considering the barriers, programs that seek to improve women's economic empowerment might fall short and even pose risks to participants.

- Supporting women's economic empowerment means engaging directly with social norms.

- Economic empowerment programs have been shown as effective in shifting these same norms [14].

Overview of approaches to shift norms in women's economic empowerment programs

Knowledge and Skills Programs to increase women's income and control over household decision making [19]

Engaging men and boys to address deep-rooted power dynamics between men and women, in households and communities [20]

Policy or structural activities to support norm change either directly or indirectly, for example, supportive policies around land rights, political representation of women in elected positions [21]

Community Engagement or Group-based Trainings

- Couples programs to share new ideas and improve relationship dynamics (e.g., Promundo's Journey of Transformation) [19]

- Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) to provide access to loans and save money. VSLA combined with couple's dialogues and group discussion on gender can shift norms, (e.g., MARS's Vision for Change program) [19]

What are best practices for shifting norms in women's economic empowerment programs?

Adopting a 'whole systems' approach

- Partner with organizations at different levels of the ecosystem, including private sector engagement
- Integrate strategies that address how norms affect individuals, couples, communities and societies [19]

Reinforcing positive or protective norms

- Encourage actions and norms you want to see rather than emphasizing harmful behaviors and norms
- Context-specific language and framing can create more accepting environments for WEE [20]

Working with policy makers and private sector actors

- Develop and implement programs that work with existing institutions
- Engage key actors working in WEE in activities and as champions for change
- Uplift women who are role models [19]

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND CARE (WE-CARE)-OXFAM
Phase 1 Final Report
August 2014-June 2016

WE-CARE
WOMEN'S
ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT
AND CARE

OXFAM

The "WE-Care" Program

The Oxfam *Women's Economic Empowerment and Care* ("WE-Care") program was developed to **strengthen women's involvement in leadership and livelihoods activities. It does this by changing gendered differences in how households allocate unpaid care work,** which includes household and childcare work for the most part done by women, preventing them from participating in economic activities.

WE-Care works with and builds the capacity of allies, such as women's rights organizations and other civil-society organizations to produce a critical level of change in the distribution of unpaid care work.

The program engages "WE-Care" champions and role model families to challenge descriptive norm that *men don't do care work* – showing that **men can and do in fact do care work**.

An assessment of WE-Care in six countries demonstrated that care work was redistributed within households, with men increasing their involvement and women reducing their time spent in care work.

Source: https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/we-care; 2016 assessment report

What does the evidence say about social norms and IPV?

What is the evidence on how social norms drive intimate partner violence?

- Social and gender norms, including community tolerance of GBV, are strongly linked with the perpetration of IPV [7].

- Norms-shifting program approaches, like community engagement and group education, can reduce IPV and support the adoption of gender equitable norms [26-27]

- Digging into the evidence complicates things: changes in IPV behavior might take place with or without changes in the social norms related to these behaviors. For example, norms about how the acceptability of violence might change while IPV stays the same [27].

- There is a lot more to learn about why some interventions shift norms and prevent IPV and others do not [28]. Understanding why behaviors continue even after norms shift, or vice-versa, is a focus for future work.

Overview of approaches to shift norms to address intimate partner violence

Economic and Livelihood Programs that include discussions to address gender inequality, gender norms, and violence [7,27]

Community-level Prevention

- Community mobilization to shift gender norms and stereotypes at the community level [27-29]

- Social marketing campaigns or edutainment using a mix and variety of channels (radio, poster, social media) to increase support for IPV prevention and reporting [27]

Group-based Training and Discussions

- Groups for women and girls to shift norms and improve women's agency through trainings and facilitated discussion. [27]

- Men and boys/male engagement to change power dynamics and gender unequal norms and attitudes [27]

- Mixed gender groups to facilitate reflection, increase understanding and skills in order to shift norms and behaviors [27]

What are best practices for shifting norms in intimate partner violence programs?

Prioritize survivor-centered, rights-based, inclusive, and 'do no harm' interventions

- Programming should be inclusive and seek to address types of violence experienced by the most vulnerable members of the community
- Seek to change power dynamics and develop a plan to respond to backlash

Take economic factors into account

- Comprehensive GBV interventions include economic empowerment components: these might include shifting traditional gender roles to improve couple communication and household decision-making [7]

Engage staff and partners

- Local partners should be involved in program design to support context-appropriate interventions
- Facilitated staff reflection on their own values and norms related to IPV [30]
- Engage with a broader range of community leadership and stakeholders [10]

Engage men and boys carefully

- Working with men and boys in GBV programming must center women to reduce violence ethically [7, 11, 32]
- Men and boys are most often the perpetrators of IPV, and there is evidence that unequal gender roles and norms around violence as part of masculinity are a root cause [33-34]

Transforming Masculinities

TRANSFORMING
MASCULINITIES

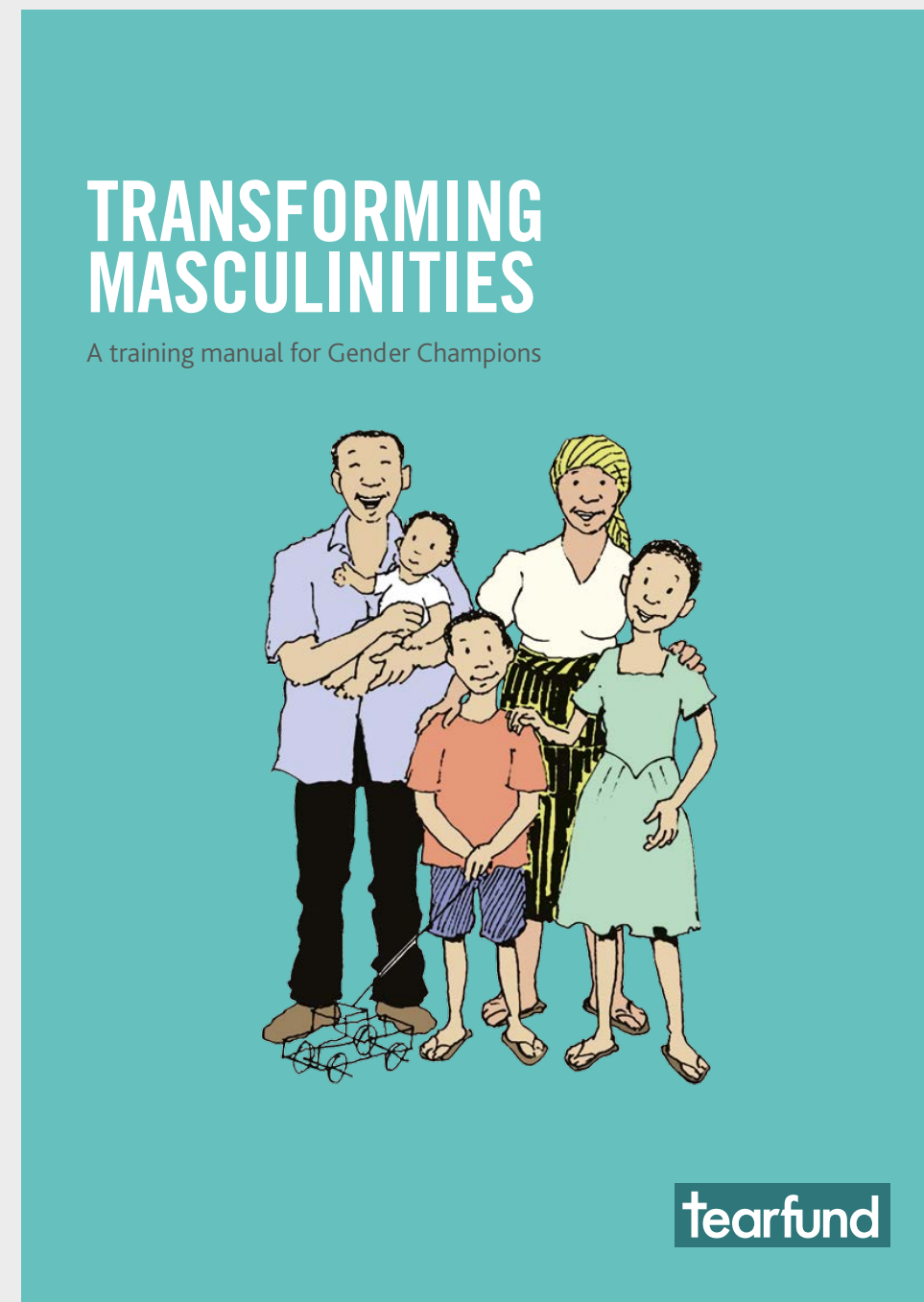A training manual for Gender Champions

tearfund

The Transforming Masculinities intervention was implemented by Tearfund and HEAL Africa, between 2015-2017 in Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

It aimed to prevent intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence by shifting the social norms through three components: selecting faith leaders to act as change agents; working with female and male 'Gender Champions' to engage men and women in dialogues; and setting up local Community Action Groups committed to a safe environment for survivors of violence.

The intervention reduced both men's use of IPV and non-partner sexual violence including that men are superior to women and that women should not refuse sex to their partner.

Stigma against survivors of sexual violence was reduced, more survivors sought support from faith leaders at endline, and survivors felt their faith communities supported them [11, 32].

Source: Engaging with faith groups to prevent VAWG in conflict-affected communities: results from two community surveys in the DRC

The intersection of WEE and IPV:
What do we know?

What does the evidence say about the intersection of IPV and WEE?

- Similar meta norms related to power or decision-making and authority influence IPV and WEE. For example, when women become more economically empowered they may face social sanctions, and their experiences of gender-based violence may increase [34].

- The broader economic experience of individuals and households is important. Certain norms are linked to both poverty and IPV [7, 27, 31]: social norms underpinning wealth control can make IPV more likely, and IPV might have an effect on household income [27].

- Women who reported equal power - including economic power - in their relationship were less likely to report IPV than women who reported unequal power [35, 7].

- Given the body of research that shows the linkages between IPV and WEE, practitioners should seek opportunities to leverage this connection in their programming.

The Economic and Social Empowerment (EA$E) Initiative

The EA$E Initiative from the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Côte d'Ivoire consisted of three components:

- **Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA)** run by women, which allow members to save money, access affordable loans, and build a social and business support network.
- **The EA$E Discussion Group**, where couples build skills to achieve their household goals. Discussions touch on gender roles and violence within and beyond the household.
- **A Business Skills Training** to build skills for entrepreneurship.

Women were either assigned to a VSLA-only group or a VSLA with a EA$E Discussion Group.

Women who attended 75% or more of the VLSA plus EA$E Discussion Group reported significantly less physical IPV and were significantly less likely to believe that there are situations that justify IPV use.

All women who participated in the EA$E Discussion Group were significantly less likely to report economic abuse than women in the control group [35, 36].

This case study provides a snapshot of evidence that empowering women economically alone might not hold the solution to preventing IPV, but that addressing gender roles surrounding both economic empowerment and GBV may be effective.

Image credit: International Rescue Committee, 2012

Social norms, WEE, IPV, and where to go…

- Given the powerful influence of social norms and social factors on IPV or WEE outcomes, programs need to know how to take action.

- In order to effectively address social norms in your program, you need to know:
    - *The social norms that may be impacting your program outcomes—either as facilitating or constraining factors.*
    - *Where you are in your program's life cycle and what opportunities there might be to include norms-shifting approaches.*
    - *How you can assess whether norms-shifting approaches are working to help you reach programs outcomes.*

- The next section provides a roadmap, suggestions and resources of how best to include norms-shifting approaches in your programs on IPV or WEE, or in integrated IPV-WEE programming.

PHOTO CREDIT: BRIANÁN KIERNAN

Recommendations on addressing social norms in your WEE, IPV, and integrated programs
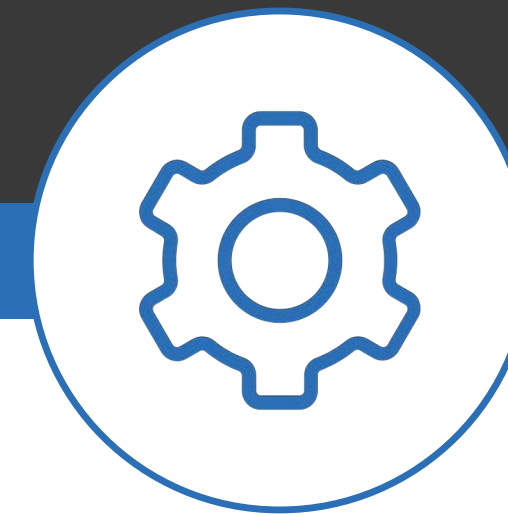
OPPORTUNITIES TO ADDRESS SOCIAL NORMS AT EACH PROGRAM CYCLE PHASE

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

DESIGN

IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

EVALUATION & MEASUREMENT

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Purpose: Identify social norms and reference groups that will influence program outcomes in a particular context.
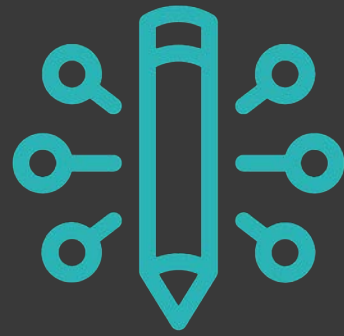
Approach:
- Participatory activities with communities and/or secondary literature reviews of existing evidence.
- Whichever method is used, by focusing on the key behaviors and outcomes your program seeks to shift, and the key reference groups, programs can understand how norms constrain or enable behaviors.

For **WEE**, programs can explore how norms impact access to resources, use of financial services, expectations around women as financial actors, ownership of new technology, and perceptions around women's decision-making.

For **IPV**, programs can examine norms including the acceptability of IPV within communities and institutions, the acceptability of discussing and intervening in IPV, gender roles within households, and perceptions of alcohol consumption as a part of masculinity. Assessments might also search out norms that are protective against IPV.

RESOURCES TO REFER TO:

- **Social Norms Exploration Tool** (Social Norms Learning Collaborative)
- **Social Norms Diagnostic Tool** (Oxfam)
- **Overview of Experiences Diagnosing Norms** (Social Norms Learning Collaborative)

DESIGN

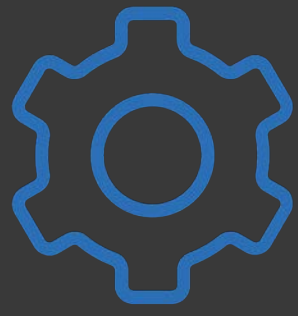**Purpose:**   Use information from formative assessments on how social norms impact outcomes.

Approach:
- Use an existing or develop a theory of change to clarify how norms relate to behaviors and how program activities seek to shift norms to change behavior.
- Develop or adapt norms-shifting strategies, including by considering the nine attributes of community-based norms-shifting interventions.

For **WEE programs**, evidence points to norms-shifting strategies like peer-group influence, community engagement, engaging reference groups - in particular male partners - in program activities, and finding ways to make sure programs address norms at institutional levels.

For **IPV** programs, there is evidence for norms-shifting approaches including community mobilization efforts for prevention and response to mixed-sex groups, group-based discussion and reflection on gender roles and norms for women, men, and both-sex groups, adding an economic empowerment component to programs, and examining and shifting norms for institutions (such as legal, policy, or informal institutions) that respond to IPV.

RESOURCES TO REFER TO:

- **'Getting Practical': Integrating Social Norms into Social and Behavior Change Programs** (Social Norms Learning Collaborative & Breakthrough ACTION)

- **Identifying and Describing Approaches and Attributes of Norms-shifting Interventions** (Social Norms Learning Collaborative)

- **Social Norms and AYSRH: Building a Bridge from Theory to Program Design** (Social Norms Learning Collaborative)

IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

Purpose: Develop monitoring systems to track incremental and longer-term shifts in norms to assess impact.

Approach:
- Monitor for signs of shifts to assess the norms change process, and to identify inhibitors or barriers to this change.
- Prepare for, monitor, mitigate and respond to pushback or negative consequences.
- Use adaptive management approaches to monitor and manage norms-shifting programming in complex community environments.

For **WEE**, programs may want to focus on how the strategies to improve women's economic conditions are affecting existing power dynamics or access to resources to determine if any pushback is observed, and plan to address it. Programs may also look at how norms may shift within program contexts, but still not align with norms in the broader society, or at institutions, which could continue to impact women's resource or financial access.

For **IPV**, programs that seek to shift norms should understand how interventions impact power dynamics, and carefully monitor and have plans to address pushback, especially for the safety of participants. Programs may also consider and monitor access to support services; including an investigation of the norms that influence survivors of violence to seek these services.

RESOURCES TO REFER TO:

- **Monitoring Shifts in Social Norms: A Guidance Note for Program Implementers** (Social Norms Learning Collaborative)

- **Adaptive Management: Learning and Action Approaches to Implementing Norms-shifting Interventions** (Passages Project)

- **Social Norms and AYSRH: Building a Bridge from Theory to Program Design** (Social Norms Learning Collaborative)

EVALUATION & MEASUREMENT

Purpose: Measure social norms and behaviors over time to understand whether and how norms shift and how they lead to reaching program outcomes.

Approach:
- Measure norms with single-item questions, scales, vignettes, or with qualitative methods.
- Measures can be indirect (looking at as attitudes, behavior or practice) or direct (using statements about expectations of others).
- Focus on the positive or negative sanctions related to a norm, reference groups important for that norm, and when you can, the strength or prevalence of the norm.

For **WEE**, integrate indicators on norms into project surveys that measure individual attitudes, perceptions of prevalence of both descriptive and injunctive norms, and use vignettes (qualitative or quantitative) in program evaluation.

For example, the WE-Care Oxfam program, presented earlier, used vignettes in five areas relating to women and the economy to identify norms and sanctions: the "value" and "skills" people allocated to different work; the division of paid and unpaid labor between men and women in households; men's childhood experience of care work; community expectations; and acceptability of GBV related to care work (sanctions).

For **IPV**, consider key norms that have direct and indirect impacts on IPV. For example, the norms that are directly related to violence in relationships are relevant, but so are norms related to the division of household labor, which are also associated with violence.

RESOURCES TO REFER TO:

- **Resources for Measuring Social Norms: A Practical Guide for Program Implementers** (Social Norms Learning Collaborative)

- **Social Norms Analysis Plot** (CARE)

Takeaways & Resources
for further reading

TAKEAWAYS

- Social and gender norms underpin WEE and IPV outcomes.

- By addressing social and gender norms, WEE and IPV programs have the potential to achieve longer-lasting program effects.

- Identifying norms and including them in program design and monitoring plans is important to achieving change.

- Gender transformative approaches are at the heart of programs seeking to shift norms and achieve WEE and IPV prevention.

- Programs that seek both WEE and IPV outcomes apply multi-component approaches, often including economic activities along with small group discussions and community-level activities that address social and gender norms.

1. Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms (AliGN)'s <u>landing page for Women's Economic Empowerment and Gender Norms</u> houses background information and a plethora of resources.

2. The SEEP Network and Oxfam published a report titled, '<u>Shifting Social Norms in the Economy for Women's Economic Empowerment</u>', which provides a broad brush of background information and strategies for shifting norms within the economy.

3. The International Development Research Center's short policy brief '<u>Social norms and women's economic empowerment</u>' provides quick overview of evidence and persistent knowledge gaps for policy in this nexus. Their longer report, titled '<u>The Norms Factor: Recent Research on Gender, Social Norms, and Women's Economic Empowerment</u>' shares insights from the Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women program in over 50 countries.

4. In the BEAM Exchange's report on '<u>The social norms factor: How gendered social norms influence how we empower women in market systems development</u>', authors share how social norms influence WEE in market systems development, and what practical lessons might be learned.

TOP RESOURCES ON SOCIAL NORMS & IPV

1. The Prevention Collaborative Knowledge Platform provides evidence and practice resources on violence against women and children. Their search filters are customizable and user-friendly, and include a topic filter for "social norms"

2. "Piecing Together The Evidence On Social Norms And Violence Against Women," developed by the Equality Institute, provides an overview of the evidence on the drivers and contributing factors of violence against women and girls, as well as an introduction to social norms and their role in violence.

3. This Promundo report, "Masculine Norms and Violence: Making the Connections," takes a nuanced look at the links between masculine norms and men's perpetuation and experience of violence, and the implications this has for prevention.

4. This DFID guidance note, "Shifting Social Norms to Tackle Violence Against Womena and Girls," provides program-focused evidence, relevant examples and practical guidance on how to address harmful social norms to prevent violence against women and girls.

5. "What Works Evidence Review: Social norms and violence against women and girls" provides a brief but rich overview of social norms and GBV, including evidence and program examples. The What Works to Prevent Violence website also allows for their many resources to be filtered by "VAWG and social norms."

PASSAGES PROJECT

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RESOURCES

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

LEGACY WEBSITE

www.passagesproject.org

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CITATION

Making the Case: Addressing Social Norms in Intimate Partner Violence and Women's Economic Empowerment Programming. Evidence, Approaches, and Recommendations. Passages Project. May 2021. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

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