

NOVEMBER 2017

Identifying and Describing Approaches and Attributes of Norms-Shifting Interventions

BACKGROUND PAPER

Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change

© 2017 Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University

Recommended Citation:

The Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change. 2017. *Identifying and Describing Approaches and Attributes of Norms-Shifting Interventions*. Washington, DC: Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University.

This document was prepared on behalf of the Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change by the Institute for Reproductive Health at Georgetown University (IRH). The Learning Collaborative is made possible by the generous support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The contents of this document are the responsibility of IRH and do not necessarily reflect the views of Georgetown University or the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Robyn Yaker, who wrote the background paper based on her systematic culling through the reviewed articles to identify attributes of norms-shifting interventions, and by drawing from her own program experience working in gender-based violence.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- INTRODUCTION 2
- METHODOLOGY 2
 - TALLYING AND WEIGHTING 2
 - ANALYSIS 2
- FINDINGS 3
 - DEFINITION OF SOCIAL NORMS 3
 - PARAMETERS/ATTRIBUTES OF NORMS-SHIFTING INTERVENTIONS 3
 - Seeks Community-Level Change 4
 - Presents the Actual Behavior Norm (In the Case of Pluralistic Ignorance)..... 5
 - Emphasizes Creation of Positive New Norms 5
 - Engages Wide Range of People at Multiple Levels (Ecological Model) 5
 - Creates Safe Space for Critical Community Reflection 6
 - Is Community Led..... 6
 - Roots the Issue within Community/Groups’ Own Value Systems 6
 - Is Based upon Accurate Assessment of Social Norms Propping the Specific Behavior 7
 - Addresses Power Imbalance/Inequality 7
 - Deploys Organized Diffusion..... 7
- NORMS-SHIFTING INTERVENTIONS VERSUS COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMMING..... 8
- PROGRAM DESIGN FOR NORMS-SHIFTING INTERVENTIONS 9
- OTHER FACTORS FOR CHANGE 9
- CONCLUSIONS 10
 - TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF A NORMS-SHIFTING INTERVENTION..... 10
 - CALL TO ACTION 10
- APPENDIX 11

INTRODUCTION

Recent years have seen an upsurge in interest in social norms and their application in solving complex public health problems. While the number of theories, papers, and programs related to social norms is burgeoning, there is not yet a consensus or common standard about what actually constitutes a norms-shifting intervention and how this differs from other related forms of community-based programming. **This background paper reviews available literature on social norm change theory and programming, with a focus on public health, in an effort to answer critical questions about what constitutes a “norms-shifting intervention.”** This review supports the work of the Scale-Up Learning Community within the Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change.¹

METHODOLOGY

This paper is based upon a desk review of articles collected primarily from members of the Scale-Up Learning Community as well as additional sources. Over thirty documents were considered for review. They were not subject to specific criteria for inclusion, however, those that were determined to be irrelevant to the review were discarded. A total of 29 documents were included in the final review. 28 of those documents were input into a matrix (see Appendix) tracking references to attributes of norms-shifting interventions. The 29th document was published after the findings were tallied, but did contribute significantly to the writing of the paper.

TALLYING AND WEIGHTING

Upon review, articles were divided into two groups: those that were considered to be most directly relevant (13) and those that were considered less directly relevant (16). Articles were input into the matrix accordingly, with the most relevant in the top half of the table, in grey highlight, and the less directly relevant in the bottom half of the table. After completing the matrix for all articles, categories of attributes were aggregated and refined and results tallied, weighted and compared. Each attribute was tallied according to the total number of articles in which the attribute was mentioned, and for how many of those mentions were from the group of most directly relevant articles (Table 1). Those that had the highest number of total tallies were input into a second table (found in the Appendix), and clustered according to which of those had the highest totals. The Appendix table compared the two tallies for each attribute, as an initial indication of the weight of the findings.

ANALYSIS

The results from the matrix were used to objectively determine the base findings. Final analysis further drew upon conversations with professionals in the field, prior experience, and critical reflection. For the purposes of this paper, the terms “norms-shifting approach” and “norms-shifting intervention” are used interchangeably.

¹ The Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change is a two-year initiative funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

FINDINGS

DEFINITION OF SOCIAL NORMS

There are many variations of definitions of social norms being used by different sectors and fields. However, in the broadest terms, there is agreement that social norms are “beliefs about which behaviors are appropriate within a given group.” There is also agreement that norms play an important role in shaping behavior, that they are meaningful in the context of groups/group identity, and that whether a person complies with a norm depends on multiple internal and external factors. Social norms refer to the rules governing a behavior, not the behavior itself.²

In international development programming, the recent emphasis on norms-shifting interventions has largely centered on two theories: that our decisions are influenced by “empirical” and “normative” expectations,³ or relatedly, from “descriptive” and “injunctive” norms.⁴ These two theories have subtle differences, but essentially share the same idea: that social norms derive from: 1) Expectations about what people *do* (empirical expectations/descriptive norms) and 2) Expectations about what people *should do* (normative expectations/injunctive norms). This distinction is critical. These expectations are defined in relation to a “reference group” of people whose opinion matters to the person performing the behavior (for a particular behavior or context).

These theories have been fundamental to the field’s understanding of social norms, and how social norms analysis can be used to shape distinctly different approaches to behavior change. However, recently, there appears to be a shift towards simplifying the way that we understand social norms in order to more effectively translate theory into practice. It is easy to get lost in the web of definitions, and in some cases, trying to stay within the frame of complex language can overcomplicate the process of program design and/or evaluation.⁵ At the same time, it is important to understand the nuanced distinctions of social norms and what makes people adhere to them, in order to truly innovate the way we approach behavior change.

PARAMETERS/ATTRIBUTES OF NORMS-SHIFTING INTERVENTIONS

Much of the earlier work on public health and social norms used a narrow definition of a norms-shifting intervention - one that assumes that people have mistaken perceptions about the attitudes and behaviors of others. These perceptions influence individuals’ behaviors, even when they are inaccurate and/or contradict the individual’s own personal attitudes/beliefs (a situation known as “pluralistic ignorance”).⁶ One of the most famous examples of this type of norms-shifting intervention, was the work to reduce binge drinking at US universities.⁷ In these cases, the defining attribute of a norms-shifting intervention was to make visible the actual behavior norm,

² Bapu Vaitla, Alice Taylor, Julie Van Horn, and Ben Cislaghi. *Social Norms and Girls’ Well-Being: Linking Theory and Practice*. (2017) Washington, D.C.: Data2X, 28.

³ Cristina Bicchieri. *Norms in the wild: How to diagnose, measure, and change social norms*. (2016) Oxford University Press.

⁴ Ben Cislaghi and Lori Heise. “Measuring Gender-related Social Norms, Learning Report 1.” (Meeting Report of Learning Group on Social Norms and Gender-based Violence of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Baltimore Maryland, June 14-15, 2016); Robert Cialdini, Raymond Reno, and Carl Kallgren. “A focus theory of normative conduct: recycling the concept of norms to reduce littering in public places.” *Journal of personality and social psychology* 58.6 (1990): 1015.

⁵ A recent UN program tried to adhere strictly to the definition of social norms in a program to prevent intimate partner violence. When they conducted a baseline survey, they used separate questions to ask about respondents’ own behaviors, as well as their empirical and normative expectations of others. Respondents were so confused by the questioning that the baseline did not reveal accurate information.

⁶ “Pluralistic ignorance” refers to inconsistency between the actual behavior norm and what one perceives others to do or believe.

⁷ H Wesley Perkins. “College student misperceptions of alcohol and other drug norms among peers: Exploring causes, consequences, and implications for prevention programs.” *Designing alcohol and other drug prevention programs in higher education: Bringing theory into practice* (1997): 177-206.

i.e. to correct the misperception. However, not all norms-shifting is connected to misperceptions or pluralistic ignorance. Therefore, there are other attributes that are needed define a norms-shifting intervention.

Table 1. Tally and Weighting of Attributes Identified in Review of 29 Articles

NB: Of the articles reviewed, some were more directly relevant than others and had greater salience in relation to the issue. Therefore, there was not a 1:1 correlation between the number of articles and number of mentions of

Attribute	Total Article Mentions	# of mentions in most- directly relevant articles
Seeks Community-level Change (<i>Clearly articulates social change outcomes beyond just individual</i>)	17	7
Presents the Actual Behavior Norm (<i>When there is a discrepancy between the actual norm and what people think others expect of them</i>)	14	4
Emphasizes Creation of Positive New Norms	12	7
Engages Wide Range of People at Multiple Levels (Ecological Model)	10	7
Creates Safe Space for Critical Community Reflection	8	4
Community-led	8	5
Roots the Issue within Community's Own Values	5	2
Based Upon Accurate Assessment of Social Norms	5	4
Addresses Power Imbalance/ Inequality	6	5
Organized Diffusion (<i>Begins with a core group, who then engage others</i>)	5	4

No single consensus on the attributes of a norms-shifting intervention emerged from this review. However, convergence was observed around several key attributes, listed in Table 1, above, and discussed below. (The table in the Appendix shows the tally and weight for each of these results, listed in order of the most frequent mention, unless it was necessary to re-order for conceptual clarity. When weighted, results are more evenly distributed, but still closely reflect the initial tally.) According to the review, the 10 key attributes of a norms-shifting intervention are:

Seeks Community-Level Change

The attribute that emerged most strongly as a defining characteristic of a norms-shifting intervention is that it seeks to achieve change at community, rather than individual, level. While this may seem obvious, in practice, programs sometimes conflate individual outcomes with community-level outcomes, fail to articulate or measure the community-level outcomes they seek, or use individual-level approaches to seek community-level change. In many cases, purported norms-shifting interventions may be deemed “successful” because they get positive results in changing individual attitudes and perceptions, but it is not clear whether the related community-level norms and behaviors change as a result. A recent review of 625 articles related to health-related social and behavior change programs found that, “Generally speaking, interventions focused on changing social norms or reducing stigma produced positive effects on attitudes and perceptions, but these changes were not always linked to changes in health outcomes.”⁸

⁸ Douglas Storey, Katherine Lee, Caitlin Blake, Peggy Lee, Hsin-Yi Lee, and Nicole Depasquale. *Social & Behavior Change Interventions*

Presents the Actual Behavior Norm (In the Case of Pluralistic Ignorance)

Much of the earlier work and literature on social norms involves situations where there is a difference between the perceived norm (what we think others believe/do), and the actual norm (what others actually believe/do), and the actual norm is more positive than perceived. In these cases, the defining characteristic of a norms-shifting intervention, therefore, is to increase the visibility of the actual behavior norm. The most popular examples of this are programs to address college drinking, bullying in schools, energy consumption, and other situations where pluralistic ignorance (a situation in which a majority of group members privately reject a norm, but incorrectly assume that most others accept it, and therefore go along with it) is evident.⁹ This attribute has had strong practical relevance because of the way in which it fundamentally changed approaches to behavior change. Programs have often been designed to change individuals' own attitudes or beliefs, based on the assumption that this is what drives their behavior. However, **the understanding that social norms can powerfully influence our behavior, even when they do not align with our own attitudes, has led to a shift in approaching certain problems. In cases where pluralistic ignorance is clear, programs that focus on correcting the misperception of others' behaviors and highlighting the actual behavior norm, rather than focusing on changing individual attitudes about drinking, have seen more effective results.**

Emphasizes Creation of Positive New Norms

This attribute is critical to understanding norms-shifting programming. For a long time, programs have been designed based on the simple assumption that in order to change a problem, you have to highlight what the problem is and try to work through it. While it is certainly important to explore the consequences of negative behaviors, social norms theory shows us that focusing on the negative behavior can actually *reinforce* that behavior by increasing its visibility and making it appear to community members that the negative behavior is widely practiced by others. This, in fact, can strengthen the very norm you want to change. Therefore, in order **to shift social norms, it is necessary for communities to discuss and explore the new norms that they would like to work towards and highlight the positive practices that are already taking place in the community.**¹⁰ This is in line with the principle of effective behavior change communication that calls for focus on positive change. It also links directly to two other attributes, which are essential to creating and maintaining new norms (discussed below): creating safe space for critical reflection; and rooting the issue within communities' own value systems.

Evidence also shows that **new ideas need to be presented or encouraged from a trusted, credible source in order to effectively create change.** When programming, it is important to recognize that who is considered a trusted, credible source might vary according to the reference group (e.g. might be different for adolescent girls than religious leaders).¹¹ This does not mean that the trusted source simply tells people what to do or tries to "educate" them, but helps to promote critical reflection, as discussed below. This may not be an inherent characteristic of all norms-shifting interventions (e.g. energy consumption programs in California), however, it appears to be important to effective community-based norms-shifting interventions within the field of sexual and reproductive health, and international development more broadly.

Engages Wide Range of People at Multiple Levels (Ecological Model)

The most effective norms-shifting interventions work with multiple types of people at different levels of the ecological system. They use multiple strategies for engaging different groups in critical reflection. Conversely,

Landscaping Study: A Global Review. (2011) Baltimore, Maryland: Department of Health, Behavior & Society, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

⁹ Conclusion based upon review of articles.

¹⁰ Michaeljon Alexander-Scott, Emma Bell and Jenny Holden. *DFID Guidance Note: Shifting Social Norms to Tackle Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG).* (2016). London: VAWG Helpdesk.

¹¹ Innocenti Research Centre. *The Dynamics of Social Change Towards the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in Five African Countries.* (2011) Florence, Italy: UNICEF.

programs that work at only one level — particularly policy or legal reform — without engaging others, have been shown to be ineffective in creating social norm shifts. In fact, there is mounting evidence that harmful behaviors such as violence against women persist even when legal and political action has been taken to address the issue.¹²

It is interesting to note here that working at multiple levels of the ecological model relates in some ways to reference groups and the need to engage beyond the individual. **While reference groups came out strongly as part of the definition of social norms in the review, they were not referenced frequently as an attribute of a norms-shifting intervention.** However, when they were mentioned, it was in highly relevant articles that flagged proper identification of reference groups as critical. Working with different types of people at different levels of the ecological system was mentioned frequently as an attribute of norms-shifting interventions. Further exploration of the connection between these concepts would be beneficial to understanding the parameters of a norms-shifting intervention and how explicitly the definition of a social norm correlates to the intervention design (e.g. is it possible to account for reference groups, empirical and normative expectations without expressly naming them). *See more about reference groups under the attribute “based upon accurate assessment of social norms.”*

Creates Safe Space for Critical Community Reflection

It is essential that community/group members have space to think critically about their own ideas and behaviors, and to reflect upon both old and new norms. This goes beyond trainings, one-off campaigns, or ad hoc outreach work. **Community spaces, even when informal, that deliberately and skillfully promote reflection in creative, dynamic, and engaging ways, are important to dismantling old norms and creating new ones.**¹³ **Doing so ensures that change comes from within the community/group, as a means of creating more meaningful, lasting change.**

Is Community Led

This is a general term that speaks to a community’s active participation in norms-shifting activities, versus community as a static recipient of project-led activities, such as building health knowledge about disease transmission and prevention. Depending on the specific norms-shifting intervention, it may underpin activities to create positive new norms and safe spaces for critical community reflection; it may be an overarching attribute of community-level change.

Roots the Issue within Community/Groups’ Own Value Systems

There is sometimes a misconception that dismantling norms and creating new ones means transferring someone else’s beliefs onto a community, labeling a community/group’s practices as “bad” or dishonoring their culture. In fact, initial discussion of new ideas may prompt some resistance at first. However, **it is possible, and in fact, essential for communities to root new norms within their own value systems, particularly if critical reflection is led by those who are trusted, credible sources. Reflection helps people to identify which values their norms and behaviors are serving and which they are not, as well as how they might better live their values if things changed.** For example, a community where intimate partner violence is prevalent may believe that they are supporting their value of strong families. Critical reflection can help to dismantle norms around intimate partner violence, by rooting the exploration of new norms within the community values of healthy, strong families.

¹² Michaeljon Alexander-Scott, Emma Bell and Jenny Holden. *DFID Guidance Note*. (2016); C Watson and C Harper. *How communications can change social norms around adolescent girls: Lessons learned from year 3 of a multi-country field study*. (2016) London: ODI; Emma Fulu, Alice Kerr-Wilson, and James Lang. “What works to prevent violence against women and girls? Evidence Review of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls.” (2014). *What Works to Prevent Violence*. London: UK Independent Commission for Aid Impact.

¹³ Maria Elena Figueroa, et al. “Communication for Social Change: An Integrated Model for Measuring the Process and Its Outcomes.” (2002). *Communication for Social Change Working Paper Series*. New York, New York: The Rockefeller Foundation and Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs; Innocenti Research Centre. *The Dynamics of Social Change Towards the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in Five African Countries*. (2011).

Is Based upon Accurate Assessment of Social Norms Propping the Specific Behavior

We often make assumptions about the norms that drive certain behaviors, or assume that the behaviors themselves are the norms. In fact, not all behaviors that programs seek to change are social norms. **Social norms refer to the behavioral *rules*, not the behavior itself. It is thus important to diagnose which norms are propping up a given behavior. Multiple norms might be causing a behavior pattern.** Therefore, it is important for programs to understand clearly the norms they are trying to address in order to determine the most effective way to create change. Social norms assessment also involves identifying whose behaviors a program intends to shift, and who represents the relevant reference groups.

Social norms may be upheld by different groups- it could be a geographical community, groups with a common interest, age or other characteristic.¹³

Addresses Power Imbalance/Inequality

Addressing power imbalance/inequality, particularly related to gender and marginalized groups, has been found to be fundamental to creating long-term social change, particularly for women and girls.¹⁴ Therefore, in the case of sexual and reproductive health, this is an important attribute of norms-shifting programming. By strict definition, it may not be inherent to all norms-shifting interventions (e.g. you may be able to reduce drinking without addressing power imbalances), however, it should not be overlooked when working towards improved and equitable health access and outcomes.

The last two attributes discussed (power imbalance/inequality and organized diffusion) emerged less frequently than the eight others in the review. However, when weighted, their results were high according to directly relevant mentions, and closely on par with the other results. When considered alongside program experience, consultation, and widely accepted foundations of practice, the results emerge as significant.

Deploys Organized Diffusion

Organized diffusion is a popular technique for sparking social norm shifts. It means that change begins with a core group, who then engage others. This approach features strongly in successful norms-shifting interventions, such as Tostan's Community Empowerment Program and related female genital mutilation (FGM) work and the SASA! approach to preventing violence against women and HIV (Raising Voices). **However, it is not clear whether organized diffusion is fundamental to social norm shifts, or simply a technique that has helped to bring success (a distinction that may not be important in trying to reach behavior change goals). In addition, it is not yet clear what is the most effective means of organized diffusion, such as formalized groups or broad community-based activism.** This also appears to be the aspect of programming that drops off most easily in terms of program design, funding and structure. It is worth exploring this further.

The attributes listed above are all interconnected; a norms-shifting intervention weaves them together, rather than relying on one or the other. For example, an intervention may seek community-level change, or work at multiple levels and not be a norms-shifting intervention. There is room for further discussion about whether some of the attributes listed may be more accurately described as parameters of an *effective* norms-shifting intervention, rather than qualities that are inherent to it. For the purposes of this paper, both have been included.

¹³ Dale Miller and Deborah Prentice. "Changing Norms to Change Behavior." (2016). *Annual Review of Psychology*: 67:339–61.

¹⁴ Michaeljon Alexander-Scott, Emma Bell and Jenny Holden. *DFID Guidance Note*. (2016); Ben Cislighi and Lori Heise. "Measuring Gender-related Social Norms, Learning Report 1." (2016)

NORMS-SHIFTING INTERVENTIONS VERSUS COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMMING

With these attributes in mind, it becomes easier to see that not all community-based programming or programs that involve community participation are norms-shifting interventions.

- Programs may work with a large number of community members and have high degrees of participation, but still be working at the *individual level*. Individual-level programs focus on changing individual knowledge, attitudes and behaviors, but don't necessarily generate critical mass, reflection on community values and norms, and collective action to create new norms. These programs are often training or workshop-based and work with the same specific individuals over time.
- Community-based health programs that involve community participation may achieve individual-level change, structural change, or even behavior change, but not necessarily social norm shifts. For example, a program may increase couples' testing for HIV, but not shift the norm that men have the power to decide about HIV testing.
- At the same time, interventions that shift social norms might not necessarily change health-related behaviors or outcomes. For example, Voices for Change in Nigeria found an increase in gender-equitable attitudes and actions amongst men in their intervention areas, but not a decrease in intimate partner violence.¹⁵
- Norms-shifting can also be a part of a larger social change process that includes other components, such as behavior and structural change, as described in the model presented by Johns Hopkins University's Center for Communication Programs.¹⁴

DISTINGUISHING COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTIONS AND NORMS-SHIFTING INTERVENTIONS: PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

In the 2014 comprehensive review of the evidence base for what works to prevent violence against women and girls, there is a specific section on programs aimed at shifting social norms to prevent violence. The section highlights evaluation results that help to clarify distinctions between social norm shifts and other community health-related results.¹⁵

- An evaluation of Soul City in South Africa found positive changes in support-seeking and support-giving behavior. However, there was mixed evidence of the impact on norms and attitudes related to domestic violence, and there was no influence found on norms regarding the appropriateness of sexual harassment or the cultural acceptability of violence.¹⁶
- There is evidence that community mobilization campaigns can positively change attitudes and beliefs that condone violence. However, there is not a clear linear relationship between attitudes and behavior. Accordingly, an evaluation of the "One Man Can" campaign (Hughes, 2012) found that whilst changes in attitudes were limited, changes in perpetration of violence against women and girls (VAWG) were actually quite substantial.
- SASA! reduced the social acceptance of intimate partner violence more significantly for women than men, as well as perpetration of intimate partner violence (IPV).

¹⁵ Voices for Change. 2017, (Presentation at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Windsor, UK, October 2017).

¹⁴ Maria Elena Figueroa, et al. "Communication for Social Change..." (2002).

PROGRAM DESIGN FOR NORMS-SHIFTING INTERVENTIONS

Many of the programs included in the review seek to shift social norms, but were not designed using an explicit social norms analysis. According to DFID, in a recent review of norms-shifting programs (Alexander-Scott, M. Bell, E. and Holden, J. (2016),¹⁵ “Most programmes were not explicitly designed with social norms theory in mind, and have not measured changes in social norms as distinct from changes in individual attitudes and behaviours. Further, interventions tend to be small scale, have not compared and measured value for money and we know very little about whether they brought about sustained change over time.” For example, *SASA!* utilized a thorough baseline assessment that offered understanding of social norms, but did not base its intervention strategy on a specific method of social norms analysis. It fused many different levels of understanding of the issue of violence against women and HIV, to create change, including social norm change. DFID and others have created guidance on how best to develop a norms-shifting intervention, however, this is an area worth further review.

OTHER FACTORS FOR CHANGE

It has been noted that social norm shifts are often just one component of broader social change. Several documents in this review highlighted that lasting social change involves a combination of individual, material, structural, and social norm change. The early interventions that garnered great attention — those that emphasized pluralistic ignorance and focused on specific behaviors — offer the temptation to see social norms shifts as a magic bullet. In reality, when addressing complex social problems, it is necessary to consider social norms within the context of other change.¹⁶

¹⁵ Michaeljon Alexander-Scott, Emma Bell and Jenny Holden. *DFID Guidance Note*. (2016).

¹⁶ Ibid; Ben Cislighi and Lori Heise. “Measuring Gender-related Social Norms, Learning Report 1.” (2016).

CONCLUSIONS

TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF A NORMS-SHIFTING INTERVENTION

Based on this review, it can be suggested that a **community-based norms-shifting intervention to improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes is one that seeks to improve the sexual and reproductive health of women and girls at least, in part, by transforming the social norms that prop up harmful health-related behaviors. Such interventions utilize an analysis of social norms, including whether there are any that are salient in driving that behavior, and are led by communities through a process of critical reflection, resulting in positive new norms rooted within the values of that group.**

This definition recognizes that social norm shifts are just one part of an intervention to create behavior change, which may require additional efforts to transform individual attitudes and/or material and structural conditions. The definition of a norms-shifting intervention warrants further review and discussion, including whether a program needs to be designed based on an explicit analysis of social norms.

CALL TO ACTION

Social norms have gained increasing attention in international development and, specifically, the field of health behavior change. Social norm shifts have shown potential for positive impact on health-related behaviors, though there is less clarity on the direct impact on health outcomes. In order to advance understanding and practice in implementing norms-shifting interventions, we may consider the following:

- Review select interventions with clear evidence of success in shifting social norms, e.g., have explicitly measured normative shifts. Identify key questions about program design and implementation to create social norm shifts, and compare and contrast the programs according to specific domains.
- Hold workshops on designing effective norms-shifting interventions, and a pool of technical advisors who can support organizations through this process.
- Review the steps for designing norms-shifting interventions with practitioners involved in successful programming and come to agreement on guidelines.
- Advocate with donors to fund longer inception periods for designing new program interventions. Inception periods should bring together practitioners and specialists (including academics) in social norm shifts to review evidence, theory and experience to inform new programming.
- Improve measurement of social norm shifts to establish what really works in shifting social norms and sexual and reproductive health behaviors and outcomes.
- Invest in measuring whether shifting social norms actually translates into improved sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

APPENDIX: DESK REVIEW MATRIX