Learning from a review of practices in measuring social and gender norms change for Plan International

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PRESENTATION TO LINEA THIRD BIENNIAL, OCTOBER 2020
There is consensus on what to measure, but not on how to measure it.

Most current approaches are complex and better suited to large-scale outcome/impact evaluations.

A need for simpler approaches is recognised – a specific focus for the review.

There is no “one size fits all” approach, but existing tools can be adapted for new contexts.
What to measure

Consensus around core measures of social norms change:

- **Individual behaviour** – *What I do*
- **Individual attitudes** – *What I believe I should do*
- **Empirical expectations** – *What I think others do*
- **Normative expectations** – *What I think others expect me to do*
- **Rewards and sanctions** – social approval or disapproval
- **Actions taken** – by individuals to promote desired new behaviours

- Track these measures in target group and where possible, in reference groups
Identifying an appropriate approach to measuring social norms change

A programme’s approach to measuring changes in social norms needs to be informed by:

- The **centrality of social norms change** in the programme
- The **scale** of the programme
- **What you want to know** about changes in social norms and the **programme contribution** to that
- **How the data gathered will be used** e.g. for accountability to donor, or for organizational learning
Identifying an appropriate approach to measuring social norms change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norm change is central objective - comprehensive approach</th>
<th>Norm change is one of several outcomes - lighter approach</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Formative research to identify norms, using open questioning in focus groups</td>
<td>• Definition of norms through rapid appraisal or local staff knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Investigation of the dynamics and strength of norms, through vignettes and more direct questioning</td>
<td>• Adaption of existing KAP surveys or monitoring tools</td>
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<td>• Construction of bespoke survey with comparison group using scales and indices to define specific norms</td>
<td>• Inclusion of norms questions in existing tools without substantial additional resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Several waves of fieldwork to track changes over time</td>
<td>• Can be one off surveys, regular monitoring, or baseline, midline, end line</td>
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</table>
## Identifying an appropriate approach to measuring social norms change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Larger scale, longer-term programme, norm change is central objective: <strong>COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH</strong></th>
<th>Small scale programme and/or norm change is one of several outcomes: <strong>LIGHTER APPROACH</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▶ Commission specialist measurement partner</td>
<td>▶ Rapid approach to definition of norms e.g. local staff knowledge</td>
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<td>▶ Experimental or quasi-experimental survey design</td>
<td>▶ Include norm questions in existing surveys or monitoring tools</td>
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<td>▶ Quantitative and qualitative components</td>
<td>▶ Focus groups and in-depth interviews, using open questioning and vignettes</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ In-depth formative research to understand social norms in context</td>
<td>▶ To measure change over time, data collection at baseline and endline, as minimum</td>
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<td>▶ Design programme and results measurement approach in tandem: one informs the other</td>
<td>▶ Limit the number of norms tracked</td>
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<td>▶ Possible to track several norms</td>
<td>▶ Possibly use scales or indices</td>
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<td>▶ Rapid approach to definition of norms e.g. local staff knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMPONENTS OF A NORM</td>
<td>DEFINITION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empirical Expectations (EE)</td>
<td>What I think others do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Expectations (NE)</td>
<td>What I think others expect me to do (what I should do according to others)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanctions</td>
<td>Anticipated opinion or reaction of others (to the behavior) – specifically others whose opinions matter to me</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to sanctions</td>
<td>Do sanctions matter for behavior?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If there is a negative reaction from others (negative sanction), would the main character change their behavior in the future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptions</td>
<td>Under what circumstances would it be okay for the main character to break the norm (by acting positively)?</td>
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</table>
A robust approach to routine monitoring can give insights into the likelihood of social norms change:

- **Use theory of change to identify key performance indicators**
- Develop **bespoke monitoring tools** which are used at regular intervals

**Common process indicators** on social norms change programmes include:

- Number of people reached
- People’s recall of key messages
- People’s knowledge of certain issues
- People’s attitudes relating to certain issues
- Actions taken to encourage others to adopt a particular behaviour (diffusion)
- Actions taken, either individually or at the community level, to enact a particular behaviour, or prevent an undesirable behaviour
Check out the review summary here:


Thank you