SOCIAL NORMS, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CHILD MARRIAGE – WHAT DO WE KNOW?

GIRLS NOT BRIDES 2018 LEARNING SERIES
Social norms, community engagement and child marriage – what do we know?

Why is understanding social norms so important?

Webinar objectives:
• Define and describe social norms, including how they may influence the practice of child marriage.
• Discuss challenges in measuring social norms and provide advice on how to do so
• Put forward some lessons learned and best practices from the literature.
Speakers

Moderators:
• Alessandra Tranquilli, Girls Not Brides secretariat
• Suzanne Petroni, Principal and Owner at Gender Equality Solutions

Panellists:
• Caroline Harper, Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms (ALIGN) project, Overseas Development Institute
• Anjalee Kohli, Deputy Director of the Passages project, Georgetown University Institute of Reproductive Health
ODI is the UK’s leading independent think tank on international development and humanitarian issues. We aim to inspire and inform policy and practice to reduce poverty by locking together high-quality applied research and practical policy advice.

The views presented here are those of the speaker, and do not necessarily represent the views of ODI or our partners.
Gender norms and child marriage: insights from ODI research
Definitions and theory – social and gender norms

Gender norms as drivers of child marriage

Norm change processes and impacts on child marriage
Definitions

**Social norms:** the often implicit and informal rules that most people accept and abide by. They are influenced by belief systems, perceptions of what others expect and do, and sometimes by perceived rewards and sanctions. Norms are embedded in formal and informal institutions and produced and reproduced through social interaction. They change when sufficient people choose or are compelled to act in a different way.

**Gender norms** are social norms of masculinity or femininity that express the expected behaviour of people of a particular gender, and often age, in a given social context. They often reflect and cement inequitable gender relations.
Norms and other drivers of child marriage

Child marriage

Economic drivers

Social and gender norms

Individual, religious and cultural beliefs and values

Legal context

Institutional context – education, media, etc
**Norm- and value-based drivers of child marriage**

- Puberty signals readiness for marriage
- Marriage and motherhood as essential aspects of womanhood
- Religious/cosmological factors
- Safeguarding girls’ own and families’ honour
- Fear of girls being ‘left on the shelf’
- Obedience to elders

Gender norms & beliefs
Intersection of norms and drivers of child marriage

**Absence of sanctions**
Law perceived to be easily circumvented

**School-related**
Quality, cost and value of schooling for girls and boys
Beliefs about girls’ and boys’ capacity to benefit from schooling
Other deterrent factors from schooling eg violence/harassment
Perceptions about realistic work options for women

**Girls’ own agency**
Girls’ own agency – wanting social recognition related to marriage and motherhood
Curiosity; sexual desire

**Economic**
Reduce number of mouths to feed (especially those perceived as contributing less to household)
Bring in brideprice/ avoid large dowry costs
Key Drivers of Change in Fieldwork Sites

- Stipends for secondary school attendance
- Education – new information about health risks of child marriage and pregnancy
- Expanded schooling – increased opportunities for boys and girls to meet
- Government and NGO awareness campaigns
- Legal sanctions (in some places)
- Mobile phones facilitating courtship
- Media – raising awareness of law and of ‘non-traditional’ futures for girls
Social Norms and Child Marriage:
Community-based interventions to shift social norms

Anjalee Kohli, Senior Research Officer
Institute for Reproductive Health,
Georgetown University
COMMUNITY-BASED NORMATIVE CHANGE INTERVENTIONS:
STRATEGIES DESIGNED TO PROMOTE COLLECTIVE CHANGE, BY ENCOURAGING COMMUNITIES TO REFLECT ON, AND QUESTION, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS.
Elements of a community-based normative change intervention

Core Components

• Identify social norm(s) holding up the behavior of interest
• Be intentional
• Engage communities from the beginning
• Emphasize positive norms
• Multi-level, multi component interventions

Capitalize on the collective

• Promote critical reflection
• Engage trusted, credible individuals to facilitate dialogue
• Positive role models
• Use of safe spaces
Social Norms and Power

“Norms are vital determinants of social stratification as they reflect and reproduce relations that empower some groups of people with material resources, authority, and entitlements while marginalizing and subordinating others by normalizing shame, inequality, indifference or invisibility.

It is important to note that these norms reflect and reproduce underlying gendered relations of power, and that is fundamentally what makes them difficult to alter or transform.”

(Sen et al., 2007: 2008)
CAUTION!

- Not every thing is a norm and not every norm matters for a behavior.

- Social norms are often important, but other factors can drive behavior; rarely does a single factor drive behavior and influences can act at different levels.

- Social norms operate in complex social systems, thus are situational, contextual, fluid.
CRITICAL QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. WHO ARE THE SOCIAL REFERENCE GROUPS THAT INFLUENCE THE HEALTH BEHAVIOR?

2. WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL NORMS THAT INFLUENCE THIS BEHAVIOR?

3. WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL NORMS THAT INFLUENCE THIS BEHAVIOR THE MOST?
# SOCIAL NORM MEASUREMENT TECHNIQUES

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<th>PROGRAM PHASE</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>METHODS</th>
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<td>Phase 1: Social Norms Diagnosis</td>
<td>Identify what social norms are at play and how they are enforced.</td>
<td>• Qualitative (IDIs, FGDs), community-level, participatory, social network mapping</td>
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<td>• Literature Reviews, community mapping</td>
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LESSONS LEARNED
FROM COMMUNITY SOCIAL NORMS PROGRAMS

- Shifts in norms do not guarantee shifts in behavior
- Monitor for unintended negative consequences
- Some norms are sticky
- Norms are not static
THANK YOU! FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, CONTACT AK1684@GEORGETOWN.EDU
Questions?
Please type into the chat box
The ALIGN Platform

Project ALIGN enables and connects a global community of researchers and thought leaders to challenge and change harmful gender norms affecting adolescents and young adults. Through developing and sharing innovations, ALIGN aims to advance understanding and ensure knowledge on norm change contributes to sustainable gender justice.

The ALIGN project involves various components, including:

- A digital platform
- Content curation
- Convening
- Funding
Enabling researchers and thought leaders to challenge and change harmful gender norms affecting adolescents and young adults through developing and sharing innovations and new knowledge.

Welcome to the new ALIGN Platform! This platform will evolve and grow over time and we welcome your feedback to help us to make this a useful source of knowledge and innovation for those working on gender norms, adolescence and young adults.
ALIGN’s upcoming content on child marriage

Content to develop across 2018-2019 to present the key evidence, learnings, tools, resources and knowledge gaps for those interested in gender norm change and child marriage

Content may include:
• Curated guide to resources
• Project spotlights
• Blogs
• Recommended readings
• Webinars and other audio-visual material

To recommend content or be in touch about collaboration, please contact ALIGN coordinator, Rachel George at r.george@odi.org.uk
Key Links and Resources

Transforming the Lives of Adolescent Girls web-pages

Unhappily ever after (2014 policy paper on child marriage)

ALIGN (Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms)
www.alignplatform.org
Advancing Research and Practice on Normative Change for Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Well-being

2-year initiative funded by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
our mission

To facilitate collaboration between organizations working on adolescent sexual and reproductive health norm change initiatives, enhancing collective efforts, building knowledge, and developing shared tools to promote and guide effective social norm theory, measurement and practice at scale.
Steering Committee

THEORY Learning Community (IRH, LSHTM, CARE) 47 members

MEASUREMENT Learning Community (IRH & FHI360) 69 members

SCALE-UP & COSTING Learning Community (IRH & FHI360) 60 members

SUPPORT: IRH/Secretariat, FHI360

229 members from 78 organizations
(Not all members are part of a learning community)
Learning Collaborative Resources

AVAILABLE NOW

• Social Norms: A Background Reader
• Guiding Social Norms Conceptual Framework: Working Paper
• Top 20 Resources on Social Norms
• Attributes of Normative Change Interventions: Background Paper
• Costing of Social Norms Interventions Primer
• Social Norms Diagnosis: A Background Reader

COMING SOON

• Social Norms Exploration: A Guide & Toolkit
• Landscaping of AYSRH Normative Interventions (ALIGN)
• Online Compendium of State-of-the-Art Normative Change Diagnostic and Measurement Methodologies (ALIGN)
• Journal of Adolescent Health Special Supplement
• Considerations for Scale-Up of Normative Interventions
• Normative Program Theories of Change

FIND THEM ON ONLINE: HTTP://IRH.ORG/PROJECTS/LEARNING-COLLABORATIVE-TO-ADVANCE-NORMATIVE-CHANGE
Join us!

Contact Lea Satta to become a member.

Lea.Satta@georgetown.edu