Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed & Something Blue

A Review of Social Norms Change Monitoring & Evaluation for the Anti-Corruption M&E Professional

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The **Corruption, Justice and Legitimacy Program (CJL)** is a research-to-practice initiative committed to improving the effectiveness of anti-corruption programming in contexts of endemic corruption.

CJL's early work in Uganda, Central African Republic, and Democratic Republic of Congo developed and tested an alternative analytic method, analyzing corruption as a dynamic, adaptive system, that reflects the full range of influential factors, from political dynamics to social norms. One of CJL's current priorities is the nexus of social norms change and corruption.

CJL's comprehensive exploration of the role social norms play in endemic Corruption in fragile states can be found in **'Understanding Social Norms: A Reference Guide for Policy and Practice'.**

CJL also works on the nexus of corruption and peacebuilding and hosts the Corruption in Fragile States Blog. The blog challenges thinking about established practices in anti-corruption programming in fragile and conflict-affected states with a combination of in-house and guest posts.

Working Paper Feedback

This paper is the product of significant hours reflecting on how to appropriately translate materials from other fields. Yet, we recognize it is still a work-in-progress. While the CJL team continues to learn and analyze, receiving feedback on the paper would be of tremendous help. We welcome input on any aspect and especially **"How can we make this paper more useful to M&E teams in organizations?"**

We will be gathering feedback throughout the month of October, 2021. Comments can be made directly in the document by *clicking here.* Alternatively, you can *email* your reactions to **Dhaval.kothari@tufts.edu.**

Or if you just want to stay current on our work advancing the thinking and practice related to social norms that drive corrupt behaviors, *subscribe* to CJL on our **website**.

Acronyms

CJL	Corruption, Justice and Legitimacy Program
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
SNAP	Social Norms Analysis Plot
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
FGM	Female Genital Mutation
VAWG/GBV	Violence Against Women and Girls/ Gender Based Violence
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
AYSRH	Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health
UNICEF MENA	UNICEF Middle East and North Africa
UKAID	United Kingdom's Agency for International Development

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I. Executive Summary

Critical to great monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is having a strong conceptual understanding of what a program is trying to change. This is even more true for a complicated concept such as social norms that drive corruption. Social norms, as defined by the Corruption, Justice and Legitimacy Program (CJL), are the mutual expectations about the right way to behave within a group. These mutual expectations represent what is accepted as appropriate and typical behavior for that group in a particular context.[1]

This paper offers evaluators and in-house M&E specialists a multi-sectoral review of existing social norms change assessment practices. Using the lens of utility to anti-corruption programming, it offers a shortcut to the key lessons from other fields from which anti-corruption M&E staff can build on.

Why is this review needed?

International and national anti-corruption NGOs are increasingly paying attention to social norms as a driver of corrupt patterns of behavior. As this interest translates into programming, understanding if and how change in social norms is being galvanized will become progressively more important for both learning and accountability purposes. With little to no existing guidance available to M&E professionals working in the corruption, integrity or governance space, this review seeks to understand what we can learn from other fields. While not a 'how-to' guide, the paper boils down what transfers well to the anti-corruption field and what practices to avoid.

What did we learn?

There were no materials to be found on M&E of social norms change (using our definition) specific to corruption. Other fields offered us a wide variety of material. Overall, the trend is to conduct an initial assessment of the existence of social norms. Next, a thorough diagnostic is conducted to gain greater specificity on all the norm's components, which then doubles as a baseline. Evaluations tend to be measurement or research driven more so than influenced by a programmatic evaluation orientation.

While guidance on monitoring social norms change is sparse, what exists offers sufficient operational insights to get started. The paper reviews common signs of shifts in norms, adapts them to the anti-corruption context, offers tailored examples to illustrate the concepts and provides some insights to additional elements of concern.

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[1] Cheyanne Scharbatke-Church and Diana Chigas. "Understanding Social Norms: A Reference Guide for Policy and Practice." The Henry J. Leir Institute of Human Security. The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, 2019: https://www.corruptionjusticeandlegitimacy.org/items/understanding-social-norms%3A-a-reference-guide-for-policy-and-practice

Despite the abundance of material in the broad M&E lane, many questions remain unanswered. How might proxies be used to reduce the data collection needs? Is it possible use critical mass of attitudes as a proxy for social norm change? How to factor in the possible changes in a reference group through the course of a program? What elements of gender must be taken into consideration? More work on these and other critical questions would make valuable contributions to the field.

II. Introduction

Assessing social norms change is an enticing puzzle for M&E professionals. Even for those who are accustomed to the complexity of working in places of endemic corruption, programs that seek to change social norms offer distinct challenges. A social norm is an unwritten rule held by a group about the right way to behave. It is made up of beliefs about what others typically do and what they think you should do in a situation, and they are maintained through rewards and punishments.

M&E typically seeks to assess changes that are singular in dimension. For instance, a knowledge change assesses retention of new information, an attitude change looks for differences in a belief, while a behavior change assesses new actions. Social norms, on the other hand, are an amalgamation of factors. This includes beliefs about what others typically do and think is the right thing to do, and that are supplemented by beliefs about what others you care about will do if you behave differently. Further social norms are situational as they do not transcend contexts like morals or values, but rather are triggered by situations and people. M&E processes must respond to social norms' transient, multi-dimensional nature accordingly, but how exactly?

The Beginning

It is a not inconsequential challenge to develop processes to assess the unique dynamics of social norms that fit within the financial constraints and existing competencies of integrity and anti-corruption agencies. The Corruption, Justice and Legitimacy Program (CJL) experienced this firsthand when we were asked to conceptualize an evaluation that assessed the degree of social norm change catalyzed by an integrity program.

As we sat down to brainstorm an initial process, the questions piled up. Do we have to gather data on all the components of a social norm? What about the strength elements? Is there a way to confidently use behavior change data as a proxy? Are there other proxies that could be used that would be 'good-enough'? How can an average NGO with resource constraints conduct M&E for its programs which have a social norm change element to them? Does social norms evaluation work require a rethink of cultural competence as understood by the evaluation field?

As we thought through the evaluation challenges, we looked to the program's existing monitoring system and data to see what it offered and found ourselves generating even more questions. Would it be possible to monitor social norms change in a 'lite-touch' manner (i.e., one centered on respect for people and their time)? Which norm components or elements of strength could be prioritized? All of these questions were being asked through the lens of the particularities of working on endemic corruption – the abuse of power for personal gain in contexts where this abuse has been regularized.

To answer these questions, we first looked to understand how existing M&E practices for social norms change pertinent to corruption were being conducted. After extensive searches that resulted in us uncovering little to no guidance, we concluded that we would have to step outside the boundaries of the integrity and anti-corruption world and look to material from other sectors.[2]

For Whom & For What?

This paper offers evaluators and in-house M&E specialists a review of existing social norms change assessment practices filtered through the lens of utility to anti-corruption programming. It is not a 'how-to' guide; it will not tell you what to do. Instead, it offers a shortcut to the key lessons from other fields on which anti-corruption M&E staff can build.

For ease of reading, this paper uses the terms anti-corruption, integrity and accountability interchangeably when referencing types of programming. This does not, however, discount the important nuances and distinctions in practice

The paper starts with a basic introduction to social norms. What follows is broken down by what may be useful to anti-corruption M&E and what is less well suited. Within these two sections, we break out program monitoring and evaluation, related but distinct processes. The final section lays out questions and research areas that would help advance M&E of social norms that drive corruption.

What did our review entail?

Our literature review initially looked at academic sources focused on M&E of social norms change pertinent to corruption. It quickly became apparent that little existed in the academic sphere or with this sectoral focus. As a result, the team changed the search effort to focus on grey literature regardless of the sectoral focus. With this came a pivot in terms of our lens as well: we now not only sought to understand how other fields are conducting M&E of social norms change, but also sought to determine if these approaches would work for interventions seeking to change norms related to corrupt behaviors.

The grey literature search was multi-stage lasting from May 2020 – March 2021 and led to the identification of 55 publications from a range of sectors, most notably gender empowerment and public health, including female genital mutilation. The full list of sources can be found in the Bibliography; a more detailed description of our process is available in Appendix 1.

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[2] To be considered relevant, we required that social norms be broadly conceptualized in the same manner as CJL.

III. What are social norms?

The general thrust of what constitutes a social norm – an unwritten rule that guides behavior – is widely agreed upon. Yet due to sufficient differing perspectives on some nuances, there is value in laying out CJL's understanding of social norms. Specifying the meaning of norms is far more than an academic exercise. How we define social norms and understand their constitutive building blocks plays a central role in some of the challenges to M&E.

Social norms are mutual expectations about the right way to behave within a group. These mutual expectations represent what is accepted as appropriate and typical behavior for that group in a particular context. To be mutual, the expectations must flow both ways within a particular group — between individuals who matter to each other.[3] Mutual expectations are made up of beliefs that are often implicit and developed based on two components:
- What we believe other people do (Descriptive norms)
- What we believe other people think we should do (Injunctive norms)

For social norms, "groups" consist of people who identify with or are important to one another in some way and among whom mutual expectations about what is appropriate behavior are generated and maintained. This means the group needs to matter to the individual so far as s/he cares about the opinions or perspectives of the people in the group — regardless of whether there is a direct personal relationship. This is often called the "Reference Group"

Individuals comply with social norms because behaving in the expected manner either generates rewards (i.e., positive reinforcement like social recognition), which builds a sense of esteem and belonging, or punishment (i.e., negative sanction like disapproval, rejection or embarrassment) that they want to avoid. The influence of these rewards and punishments may be strong or weak, or only exist in the minds of individuals.

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[3] Cheyanne Scharbatke-Church and Diana Chigas. "Understanding Social Norms: A Reference Guide for Policy and Practice." The Henry J. Leir Institute of Human Security. The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, 2019:
https://www.corruptionjusticeandlegitimacy.org/items/understanding-social-norms%3A-a-reference-guide-for-policy-and-practice

Social Norm: Departmental Heads within the municipality expect each other to demand sexual favors from junior female staff for a promotion.	
Descriptive Norm: What we see or believe others typically do.	**Injunctive Norm** What we think others expect us to do.
"My male colleagues all joke about the 'price' the women in their department paid for their promotion."	"My male colleagues expect me to exchange promotions for sex. They comment on different female members of my team and what I could 'charge' them. When I do promote a woman, my peers always assume I got sex in return."

Reference Group
The leadership at the senior departmental level within the municipality.

Rewards & Punishments
"When I go along with the jokes and assumptions, my colleagues slap me on the back, laugh and nod knowingly. I am one of them. But when I suggest that this is not right, that this woman is good at her job and deserves to be promoted, they get quiet. They ask me if someone is causing me problems and tell me it is okay, I don't have to pretend that she is the most qualified."

IV. Lessons for M&E of Social Norms

Public health and gender equality are advancing the M&E of social norms agenda and making their results public, including several current literature reviews that are useful and accessible (see Table 2 for our recommended reading). Each field has developed their approaches in response to the unique dynamics of their sector (e.g., gender norms) and professional orientation of the lead authors. In the existing guidance, the academic-research community dominates the conversation which can be seen in the emphasis on data collection – largely quantitative -- with significant omissions from the program M&E perspective. While these adjacent social norms fields do not have all the answers, their work offers the anti-corruption field useful insights into how and how not to approach assessing social norms change.

Translating nuanced approaches from one field to another requires thoughtful lateral thinking to identify what is appropriate and useful. In this case, one of the most significant considerations is

understanding where social and gender norms are similar or not, given that the vast majority of work comes from fields seeking to change gender norms. While gender norms and social norms conceptually overlap, they also have a number of programmatically relevant differences that are meaningful.[4] For instance, gender norms approaches tend to assume the alignment between social norms and individual attitudes, whereas the social norms field does not.

Despite these differences, the existing material offers numerous points of value to anti-corruption programmers developing M&E frameworks for social norms change. We have laid out below— first to monitoring and then to evaluation—the insights we found most useful to apply to anti-corruption work. We also articulated where we think modifications are necessary or limitations to consider.

1. **Resources for Measuring Social Norms: Practical Guide for Program Implementers.**
    Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change Washington, DC: Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University, 2019.

    This guide for implementers offers a summary of the existing literature on social norms and actionable step-by-step guidance to measure social norms. It covers everything from initial exploration and measurement of relevant social norms to appropriate M&E approaches. Drawing from a wide range of contexts and sectors, it sets out examples of different tools that implementers have used.

2. **Monitoring Shifts in Social Norms: A Guidance Note for Program Implementers.**
    The Social Norms Learning Collaborative, April 2021.

    This note provides guidance to implementers on how to monitor initial shifts in social norms. It has three primary points: a) what to monitor while working on social norms change; b) how to monitor initial shifts in social norms; and c) how to adjust an intervention's strategy in real time.

3. **Measuring Changes in Social and Gender Norms: Practical Solutions to a Complex Problem.**
    Claire Hughes and Philly Desai, Plan International, 2020.

    This paper sets out an overview of the existing practices and methods used by various organizations to measure gender and social norms. Premised on the need to find simple and cost-effective ways to measure norms, this paper proposes several quantitative and qualitative methods that organizations with limited resources could adopt for their own programs.

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[4] Ben Cislaghi and Lori Heise, Gender norms and social norms: differences, similarities and why they matter in prevention science, Sociology of Health & Illness Vol. 42 No. 2 2020 ISSN 0141-98999, pp. 407-422. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1467-9566.13008.

V. Monitoring Social Norms Change: What the anti-corruption field can use

There is sparse guidance on the monitoring of social norms change, regardless of the sector. The extent of the publicly available wisdom is the 2021 Guidance Note on Monitoring Shifts in Social Norms and a couple of paragraphs embedded in a few longer M&E publications.[5] Yet, there are still points from which the anti-corruption community can benefit.

Program Monitoring

Monitoring is the real-time collection of data to inform programmatic decision making. It typically includes data related to implementation, progress towards results and the context. CJL's approach to monitoring is grounded in adaptive management.

Five signs of social norms change to monitor

From Social Norms Learning Collaborative's work - Guidance Note on Monitoring Shifts in Social Norms[6], we suggest five signs one could track to assess social norm shifts that have potential application for anti-corruption programming

1. "People perceive it is becoming more common to act outside of the norm. When a practice is a social norm, people believe that most other people follow the norm. If people start to believe that it has become common not to follow the norm, this change can indicate the norm is shifting."[7] In essence, this is tracking whether there is a change in one of the social norm components – the descriptive norm.

2. "People think that there has been a decrease in the social backlash for not following a norm."[8] Tracking backlash is in effect looking to see if there are changes in the reaction of group members to noncompliance with the norm. In other words, are the negative consequences for doing something different decreasing. This focus blends two of the six elements that make up norm strength related to

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[5] Claire Hughes and Philly Desai, Measuring Changes in Social and Gender Norms: Practical Solutions to a Complex Problem, Plan International, 2020:
https://plan-international.org/publications/measuring-changes-social-and-gender-norms#download-options; Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change. Resources for Measuring Social Norms: A Practical Guide for Program Implementers. Washington, DC: Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University. 2019, Page 27:
https://irh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/resources_for_measuring_social_norms_guide_final.pdf;
Rachel Marcus, Data, tools and measurement: Guide to recent resources, ALIGN, January 2021:
https://www.alignplatform.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/align_guide_-_data_tools_measurement.pdf

[6] The Social Norms Learning Collaborative. Monitoring Shifts in Social Norms: A Guidance Note for Program Implementers. April 2021. Page 4: https://irh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/LC-Monitoring-Shifts-in-Social-Norms_A-Guidance-Note_Eng.pdf

[7] Ibid

[8] Ibid

 punishments – the likelihood and consequences of the punishment. (See insert (pg 21) Not all norms are created equal, for more on the elements that make up norm strength.)

3. "People think that there has been an increase in the social support for people who do not follow the norm."[9] This looks at the perceptions of the amount of positive encouragement individuals receive when they act differently than what the norm dictates.

4. "There is no longer consensus within the community about the norm." Once individuals' perceptions vary from one another, a norm no longer shares consensus, perhaps signaling that the norm is changing.[10]

5. "The degree of active promotion of a new behavior by program participants." Monitoring active promotion looks to see how many members of a group are self-initiating efforts to support a new behavior within their group. The emphasis here is on the promotion, not the behavior itself. While not specified in the Guidance Note, it is our interpretation that a new behavior would include stopping a behavior as well as initiating a new one. Building on the concept of organized diffusion, tracking this is "not just about the reach or transfer of information, but rather whether people are having transformative conversations with others about norms."[11]

Table 3: Applying the five signs to a social norm that drives corrupt behavior

Consider a program which sought to change the following social norm within a government ministry: Civil servants are expected by their peers to avoid taking any action (regardless of the rules or standard operating procedures) that could get another civil servant into trouble. If a civil servant does contribute to difficulties for a colleague, then their peers will view them as untrustworthy and make subtle moves to exclude them from professional processes (e.g., meetings, lunches etc.).

No.	Tracking Options	Example
1.	"People perceive it is becoming more common to act outside of the norm."	Program participants report hearing about more instances of civil servants following due process regardless of the impacts on their colleague.

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[9] Ibid
[10] Ibid
[11] The Social Norms Learning Collaborative. Monitoring Shifts in Social Norms: A Guidance Note for Program Implementers. April 2021. Page 6: https://irh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/LC-Monitoring-Shifts-in-Social-Norms_A-Guidance-Note_Eng.pdf

No.	Tracking Options	Example
2.	"People think that there has been a decrease in the social backlash for not following a norm."	Program participants report fewer instances of civil servants being ostracized by their peers despite taking action against fellow civil servants.
3.	"People think that there has been an increase in the social support for people who do not follow the norm."	Program participants report more instances of civil servants supporting fellow colleagues who have followed due process regardless of the potential consequences on their colleague.
4.	"There is no longer consensus within the community about the norm."	Program participants have a wide range of opinions on whether other civil servants are following due process when the consequence could be negative for a colleague.
5.	"The degree of active promotion of a new behavior by program participants."	Program participants report more instances of civil servants proactively speaking up in favor of equal application of due process.

While the existing guidance does not include any direction as to how many or which of these signs of change should be included in a monitoring plan, it is our assertion that one would select based on how the program seeks to change the social norm. If the strategy is about negating the consequences or likelihood of a social sanction, then tracking any changes in the amount of backlash would appear to be essential. Conversely, if diffusion beyond the initial programmatic participant to the wider group is central to the strategy, then monitoring active promotion would be a minimum threshold.

When thinking about monitoring anti-corruption programming, this list is a solid starting point, though our sense is that a broader perspective may be useful to account for the array of possible change strategies. While it would need further exploration, tracking whether there are substantial changes in the composition of a reference group may be useful. For instance, if a new influx of members changed the degree of group cohesion (diluting or intensifying), this could impact the strength of a norm within the group. By understanding reference group composition changes, one could potentially see an early signal that shifts in norms are underway or that there is an opportunity to initiate more targeted norm change discussions.

Another possible sign to look for could be if more people are choosing to act differently despite the social backlash for not adhering to a norm. As this focuses on the behavior and not the beliefs that make up a

social norm, it may be something to monitor before tracking the perception of how common it is to act differently (see No.1 in the list above set out in the table). Finally, if the theory of change was about encouraging trendsetters to act outside the expectations of the social norm, then monitoring the resolve to behave differently might be a useful early indication of shifts. This information could suggest an increase in openness and commitment to behave differently before someone has taken action. Here again, this shifts the monitoring focus from the norm itself to an attitude that may be a precursor to norms change. Given monitoring's role of informing real time management decisions, this could be tremendously useful.

One final point on the current five signals to track: References to 'people' and 'community' in each of these statements should not be interpreted as average citizens. Instead, monitoring should focus on members of 'the group' who hold and maintain a particular norm.

B. Qualitative data collection is best for social norms monitoring

In the limited program monitoring literature available, qualitative data seems to be the go-to data collection means for monitoring. Social Norms Learning Collaborative's work titled Monitoring Shifts in Social Norms: A Guidance Note for Program Implementers states that "qualitative data provides more nuanced insights into how norms change, sticking points and what is working well."[12] Individual interviews, staff journaling, participant feedback forms and observation were all noted as useful data collection methods. With the appropriate modifications taken into account to protect participants and ensure honesty of information shared, these methods could be valuable in an anti-corruption context.

By far the most commonly referenced data collection method across several programs was structured, regularized observation of participants during program activities.[13] Where this was done effectively, staff were provided with training on identifying social norms and distinguishing them from related concepts (e.g., attitudes) as well as given structured documentation mechanisms for their observations (e.g., template). By and large, staff were instructed to look for participant reactions to activities or discussions that contradicted the dominant social norm. Negative verbal or physical reactions that suggested anger, outrage, shock or incredulity or positive ones such as affirmation, contentment or rightness could all be part of the observation checklist. In other words, they were watching for indications of social support or social backlash as discussed earlier.

Observation may be a feasible option for some types of anti-corruption programming around norm supported behaviors that are not perceived to be sensitive (i.e., illicit or illegal) or in environments where the topic is still seen as somewhat neutral. For instance, consider observing a facilitated discussion amongst an extended clan of family members around the indirect norm of looking out for one's family first.

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[12] The Social Norms Learning Collaborative. Monitoring Shifts in Social Norms: A Guidance Note for Program Implementers. April 2021. Page 10: https://irh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/LC-Monitoring-Shifts-in-Social-Norms_A-Guidance-Note_Eng.pdf

[13] Claire Hughes and Philly Desai, Measuring Changes in Social and Gender Norms: Practical Solutions to a Complex Problem, Plan International, 2020, Pages 5-6: https://plan-international.org/publications/measuring-changes-social-and-gender-norms#download-options

Observation may be possible if the discussion sought to reframe what the group deemed acceptable behaviors in the manifestation of the indirect norm so that paying for school grades was no longer acceptable practice.

Conversely, having an official observer documenting a meeting of civil servants discussing the informal pressure they experience to act "out of bounds" from superiors[14] may be experienced as 'surveillance' rather than observation and could curtail the openness of the discussion. Our sense is that observation as a data collection method should be cautiously embarked upon in most organizational settings (e.g., government ministry, private company) due to fear and a sense of peer scrutiny. Even in a community setting, this determination would need to be made based not only on the social norm, but the group, and current atmosphere on the issue.

If selecting 'observation' as the data collection method, anti-corruption practitioners would also need to be cognizant of the impacts of the context. Given the years of anti-corruption messaging as 'evil, immoral or generally bad' that has taken place in many contexts of endemic corruption, people are very savvy what they say in public, and in particular when representatives of INGOs are present. This would mean taking the identity of the observer into account so as not to impact behaviors and reactions of participants. Along the same vein, many civil servants have participated in anti-corruption trainings at work and know what is seen to be the 'right way to behave' and the 'right things to say.' In this instance, observation could collect inaccurate information.

Finally, if choosing to use observation, understanding what would constitute negative or positive nonverbal signals would need to be discussed. For instance, what does silence mean? Is it a sign of acceptance or rejection? Does speaking loudly and quickly with prominent hand gestures signal support or disappointment? Or in this culture are such conversational gestures simply how one maintains attention in a group setting?

C. Monitoring for harm is important to do

With the exception of places experiencing conflict[15], social norms are held in place by rewards and punishments that typically fall within two categories – reputation and relationships[16]. This means that a

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[14] Cheyanne Scharbatke-Church, Teddy Atim and Diana Chigas, Understanding the Underlying Values, Norms and Behaviors Constraining the Implementation of Administrative Sanction in the Ugandan Public Service: https://www.corruptionjusticeandlegitimacy.org/items/understanding-the-underlying-values%2C-norms-and-behaviors-constraining-the-implementation-of-administrative-sanction-in-the-ugandan-public-service

[15] Our research shows that in places of recent or active violent conflict punishment can extend to acts of physical violence such as burning of one's house. See CAR research – : Cheyanne Scharbatke-Church, Ladislas de Coster and Kiely Barnard-Webster, with Kessy Martine Ekomo-Soignet, Peter Woodrow, and Arsène Sende. Pity the man who is alone: Corruption in the criminal justice system in Bangui, Central African Republic. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2017: https://www.corruptionjusticeandlegitimacy.org/items/pity-the-man-who-is-alone%3A-corruption-in-the-criminal-justice-system-in-bangui%2C-central-african-republic

[16] Understanding Social Norms: A Reference Guide for Policy and Practice." Corruption Justice and Legitimacy program, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, 2019, Page 23: https://www.corruptionjusticeandlegitimacy.org/items/understanding-social-norms%3A-a-reference-guide-for-policy-and-practice

'successful' social norm change program will encourage individuals to behave differently than what is expected and possibly experience 'punishments' by the group in return. While mitigation strategies to this potential backlash should be designed into a multi-faceted program, it will remain important to monitor for "the presence of backlash [and] who it is coming from"[17] to make sure these strategies are working.

For instance, in our Kuleta Haki anti-corruption program with the justice sector in the DRC, participants stated that the more they spoke out against corruption or in favor of following the rules with their colleagues, the more their peers actively mocked them. [18] Using a mocking tone, the peers would respond, "Do you want to die poor and alone?" In exploring the significance of this backlash, participants in the program indicated that as long as this comment came from peers, it was not a threatening statement and did not impact their conviction.

To gather backlash information, other fields are using "observation, case stories, and feedback from communities, government structures and project staff."[19] All of which are options pending the type of anti-corruption programming underway. Given the power and resources that may be involved in the corruption being targeted, greater sensitivity may be needed to be given to confidentiality and individuals' willingness to be seen as 'reporting' on the behavior of others.

VI. Evaluating Social Norms Change: What the anti-corruption field can use

Substantially more work has been done on the measurement of social norms change than programmatic monitoring. Sometimes, this material is explicitly framed for evaluation, but more often than not, it is presented as a measurement approach in the context of conducting research. This is useful because evaluation and research use very similar data collection instruments and means of analysis; however, it does not cover all the necessary bases for evaluation because the two endeavors often differ in terms of purpose, audience, and process.

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[17] The Social Norms Learning Collaborative. Monitoring Shifts in Social Norms: A Guidance Note for Program Implementers. Page 5, April 2021. Washington, D.C.:
https://irh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/LC-Monitoring-Shifts-in-Social-Norms_A-Guidance-Note_Eng.pdf

[18] Kuleta Haki was an anti-corruption effort in Lubumbashi, DRC implemented in partnership with RCN that sought to generate strength in numbers of those within the judiciary who were committed to integrity. For more information on the results of Kuleta Haki, see Cheyanne Scharbatke-Church, Kiely Barnard-Webster and Peter Woodrow. Collective Action Against Corruption in the Criminal Justice System; Innovative Practice Brief. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2017:
https://www.corruptionjusticeandlegitimacy.org/items/collective-action-against-corruption-in-the-criminal-justice-system

[19] The Social Norms Learning Collaborative. Monitoring Shifts in Social Norms: A Guidance Note for Program Implementers. April 2021. Page 6 Washington, D.C.:
https://irh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/LC-Monitoring-Shifts-in-Social-Norms_A-Guidance-Note_Eng.pdf

A. *Broad assessment followed by a diagnostic that doubles as a baseline*

Practitioners engaging with social norms generally break up the needs assessment or context analysis phase of the classic project cycle into two steps. The initial review, referred to as the formative research phase, is a preliminary assessment of whether there are social norms present that are pertinent to the behavior under review.[20] When this assessment is affirmative, the second step does a deeper dive diagnostic which is used in two ways:

- to nuance their program design
- and as a baseline measure.

The obvious benefit for anti-corruption programs to adopt the diagnostic as a baseline approach is that combining the diagnostic with the baselines saves resources – funds, staff time – and decreases the amount of data collection time demanded of possible future participants. This aligns well with Respect for People, a key guiding principle of several national evaluation associations.[21]

There is, however, an important caveat to note. While social norms that drive corrupt patterns of behavior are held within specific reference groups, most of the work to date does not seek to determine the reference group in the initial review step. Baseline data needs to be specific to the group that holds the norm. A program cannot gather data from a wide cross section of people which may be the right choice for the diagnostic and then equate that data to a baseline for a specific group.

Program Evaluation

"The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, program or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision–making process of both recipients and donors.

Evaluation also refers to the process of determining the worth or significance of an activity, policy, or program. An assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of a planned, on-going, or completed development intervention."

Glossary Of Key Terms In Evaluation And Results Based Management, OECD, 2010

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[20] See the Worksheet in - Scharbatke-Church, Cheyanne, and Diana Chigas. "Understanding Social Norms: A Reference Guide for Policy and Practice." Corruption Justice and Legitimacy program, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, 2019, Page 67: https://www.corruptionjusticeandlegitimacy.org/items/understanding-social-norms%3A-a-reference-guide-for-policy-and-practice how to do a preliminary assessment;

[21] For instance, component one of the five primary principles of evaluation prescribed by the American Evaluation Association: Respect for People: Evaluators honor the dignity, well-being, and self-worth of individuals and acknowledge the influence of culture within and across groups. AEA's Guiding Principles for Evaluators: https://www.eval.org/About/Guiding-Principles#:~:text=The%20five%20Principles%20address%20systematic,even%20conflict%20with%20one%20another.

The potential solution, which may not be possible for all programs or contexts, is to ensure a sufficient determination of the reference group in the formative research (i.e., initial review) to create confidence in who is included in the baseline. This, however, increases the resources necessary before the program is even sure they will need to engage with social norms. Alternatively, for those with the capacity, it may be feasible to break this into three steps: initial review, reference group determination, and finally a social norms baseline.

B. *Assessing social norms change requires data on all social norm components*

There is broad consensus that the diagnostic measures, at minimum, the specific states of each of the social norm components including:

- injunctive norms,
- descriptive norms, and
- rewards and punishments.

A few programs go further and also explore such things as the relative strength of the norm, individual attitudes, prevalence of actual behaviors amongst other points.

One of the most commonly used tools in the diagnosis and evaluation of social norms change related to gender is CARE's Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP) framework.[22] It clearly segregates the different components of a social norm and adds two norm strength elements (i.e., degree of the influence of the norm on behaviors): sensitivity to sanctions and exceptions. The SNAP framework has been applied to a corruption example, in Table 4 below.

Social Norms Components:

Descriptive Norms:
beliefs about what others in a given group do.

Injunctive Norms:
beliefs about what others in a given group approve and disapprove of.

Rewards and Punishments:
Social approval or disapproval for one's actions (SNAP Definition).

[22]   Leigh Stefanik and Theresa Hwang, Applying Theory To Practice: CARE's Journey Piloting Social Norms Measures for Gender Programming, Care USA, 2017, Page 2:
https://prevention-collaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/applying_social_norms_theory_to_practice_cares_journey.pdf

Table 4: Modified SNAP Framework

CARE's SNAP Framework applied to interventions addressing traffic police demanding bribes		
Components of social Norm	**Definition**	**Example Response**
Descriptive Norm	Beliefs about what others do[23]	"If you ever catch a citizen running the red light, you ask for a bribe to let him get away without a ticket. All traffic police officers in my duty station do it."
Injunctive Norm	Beliefs about what others think one should do[24]	"All of my fellow traffic police officers are expected to ask for a bribe… when on duty… whenever they get a chance."
Social Sanctions	Social approval or disapproval for one's actions[25]	"If a traffic police officer refuses to ask for a bribe when the opportunity comes up on duty, he is ostracized by his fellow officers… he is no longer considered one of us…"
Sensitivity to Sanctions	Do sanctions matter for behavior?	"Most of us would give in and do what is expected of us – we will seek bribes like everyone else – no one wants to be working in a hostile environment"
Exceptions	"Under what circumstances would it be okay for the main character to break the norm (by acting positively)?"[26]	"Not sure…maybe in cases where we are being observed by someone or someone has their camera out and is video shooting us"

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[23] Ibid

[24] Ibid

[25] Ibid

[26] Ibid

The SNAP framework offers an accessible means of explaining social norms components; yet it shares a challenge many of the existing tools have in that it offers limited insights into how to identify the specific reference groups pertinent to the norm. SNAP's reference group approach relies predominately on mapping who rewards and punishes to determine the group. This is an important start; however, not all group members participate in enforcing the norm. There are other members who may not actively enforce but still influence an individual. Solely looking at enforcers will inaccurately represent membership in the group. For an anti-corruption program, understanding the reference group is critical in order to appropriately target programming. This tailoring to a specific population would need to be reflected in the M&E work.

> **_Reference Group_**
> A reference group is a group of people who identify with each other or are important to each other in some way, among whom mutual expectations about what is appropriate behavior (i.e., social norms) are generated, maintained, and applied. The approval or disapproval from people in a group, as enacted through social rewards and punishments, helps ensure. compliance with social norms.

Regardless of the specific tool used, gathering information against all three component areas is standard practice as it is the interaction of these components that come together to create a norm.[27] This is a significant data collection requirement, and it presents a feasibility red flag for smaller organizations thinking of embarking on social norms change programming or for short-term projects. Does the organization have the resources, time, and skillset to gather the necessary information to diagnose and then track shifts of social norms? If not, working in other key areas related to corruption or partnering may be a more strategic choice.

C. **_Determining changes in the strength of the norm is a promising approach to ascertain progress_**

Within the lifecycle of a typical anti-corruption project, the expectation of total elimination of the mutual expectations of what is common and appropriate within a group is unrealistic.[28] Social norms change requires multiple shifts in perceptions and reinforcing loops to support and coalesce those shifts in a way that is cohesive amongst a group. This is complicated by the fact that the work will also have to consider individuals who will be resistant to change as the status quo meets their needs.

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[27] It is important to stress that this applies to programs seeking to change a complete social norm. There are many programs that may be only targeting one of the components e.g., descriptive norms and in these cases gathering all the data is not likely necessary.

[28] The Social Norms Learning Collaborative. Monitoring Shifts in Social Norms: A Guidance Note for Program Implementers. April 2021. Washington, D.C.:
https://irh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/LC-Monitoring-Shifts-in-Social-Norms_A-Guidance-Note_Eng.pdf

In response, evaluations have opted to assess changes in the strength of a social norm. While there are numerous elements to norm strength, two in particular are being used in evaluations: reductions in the frequency of negative sanctions and consequences of punishments.

Focusing on norm strength is also found in the program monitoring guidance; what differs is the preference within evaluation towards quantitative methods. Surveys appear to be the primary means used to assess these elements, whereby lists of potential punishments are listed with response scales to codify answers. For instance, in a gender equality program in India evaluated by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the evaluation assessed the strength of the norm by measuring the likelihood of a predefined set of consequences that adolescent girls may face for moving around in public and playing a sport. The predefined set of consequences included, among others, options such as "you will be teased and harassed by local boys or men"; "you may find it more difficult to get married."[29] Respondents were asked to select from a 1-3 scale with Very Likely (1), Somewhat Likely (2), and Not Likely (3) for each punishment.[30]

CARE has also used a similar approach in a domestic violence program. Here, it asked respondents to indicate if a punishment (e.g., husbands beating their wives, husbands scolding their wives, etc.) was Very Prevalent, Sometime Observable, Rarely Observable or Do Not Know.

Strength of Social Norms: not all norms are created equal

Social norms do not all exert the same degree of influence on behavior. Understanding the strength of a norm can influence a programmer's decision to attempt to target a norm or not, as well as provide important nuance to strategy decisions once a team has elected to integrate social norms change.

CJL uses six elements that collectively determine the amount of influence the norm has within a group:

a. Importance of norm compliance for groups to obtain a collective outcome;

b. Detectability of behavior or immediate outcome;

c. Perception of the likelihood of the sanction;

d. Perception of the consequences of the sanction;

e. Type of social norm: direct or indirect;

f. Degree of group cohesion.

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[29] The program, called the Parivartan project was implemented by the International Center for Research on Women.
[30] Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change. Resources for Measuring Social Norms: A Practical Guide for Program Implementers. Washington, DC: Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University. 2019, Page 33: https://irh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/resources_for_measuring_social_norms_guide_final.pdf. While conducting the evaluation of the International Center for Research on Women's Parivartan project (focusing on promoting gender equality) in India, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine assessed the strength of a norm by measuring what people expect the consequences will be for deviating from the norm in question.
[31] Leigh Stefanik and Theresa Hwang, Applying Theory To Practice: CARE's Journey Piloting Social Norms Measures for Gender Programming, Care USA, 2017, Page 21: https://prevention-collaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/applying_social_norms_theory_to_practice_cares_journey.pdf

Table 5: Assessing Negative Sanctions

Consider a program which sought to change the following social norm within a court of law: Court clerks are expected by their peers to require a bribe from citizens who want their cases listed and heard before a judge. If a court clerk does not solicit bribes from citizens, they may be ridiculed by their fellow court clerks.

Determining Negative Sanctions For Departing From A Norm Supporting Bribery

If you do not solicit a bribe from citizens to list their case before a judge, how likely is it that the following consequences might occur? There is no right or wrong answer:	Very likely......................................1 Somewhat likely.......................2 Not likely.......................................3
a. You will be verbally ridiculed by your fellow clerks	
b. You may be not considered as part of the "group" of court clerks in that particular court of law	
c. You may be considered as someone who doesn't value his professional connections	
d. You may not be helped by your fellow court clerks in times of need	

The evaluation reports found through our literature review process, all focus on assessing the decrease in strength of a perceived negative norm. In theory, this approach could also apply to the increase in strength of a new or previously weak positive norm that is being promoted; however, we did not find any examples of this being used. Equally, this approach could be used to assess the likelihood of receiving positive reinforcement (i.e., rewards). Table 6 below mocks up an illustrative example of how it might be used in data collection related to strengthening the positive reinforcement around a norm that does not promote corrupt practices. This could be used in a situation where a program was trying to strengthen a weak, but positive, norm.

Table 6: Data Collection Tool for Information on Strengthening Positive Reinforcement

Consider a program which sought to promote the following weak, but existent, social norm within a court of law: 'Court clerks are expected by colleagues in the court to follow official procedure when listing cases before a judge as per the prescribed rules and regulations. If a court clerk does carry out their duties with integrity and as per prescribed rules and regulations, their colleagues view them as trustworthy.

Positive Reinforcement for a Norm Supporting Integrity

If you do not seek a bribe to list cases before a judge, how likely is it that the following consequences might occur? There is no right or wrong answer:	Very likely......................................1 Somewhat likely......................2 Not likely.......................................3
a. Colleagues comment approvingly about your behavior	
b. You hear colleagues having conversations with each other about whether they could behave like you when carrying out their duties as per the rules	
c. You are sought out as a trusted advisor when colleagues are faced with difficulties in following the rules	
d. You are officially acknowledged in the court as someone who is known for their upstanding behavior	

D. *Methods-centric evaluation does measure social norms change but misses out on valuable program evaluation contributions.*

The vast majority of large-scale social norms change programs used "experimental and quasi-experimental designs with some form of comparison group offering the potential to robustly quantify the changes in social norms that a particular program has contributed to. Amongst these, longitudinal surveys conducted at baseline, possibly midline and endline, were the most common instruments."[32]

Methods-Branch of Evaluation
The Alkin and Christie theory tree breaks evaluation approaches into three branches – Use, Methods and Values. The Methods branch seeks to contribute to knowledge and places primacy on the rigour and validity of the methodologies. It puts emphasis on scientific inquiry and on the adoption of comprehensively designed experimental studies and quasi-experimental studies to be able to make generalizable statements about programs and their effects.

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[32] Claire Hughes and Philly Desai, Measuring Changes in Social and Gender Norms: Practical Solutions to a Complex Problem, Plan International, 2020, Page 4:
https://plan-international.org/publications/measuring-changes-social-and-gender-norms#download-options

True to the methods-branch of evaluation, emphasis is largely focused on the robustness of the survey tool or data collection instrument that one would use to measure the social norm.[33]

This form of baseline-endline comparison is useful for large-scale programs that have significant numbers of participants. From the perspective of understanding if an intervention has generated expected results, and the associated donor accountability obligations, this is a potentially fruitful practice for anti-corruption programmers to adopt. Putting it into OECD DAC evaluation terms[34], this measurement-centric approach would provide valuable information related to the criteria of effectiveness for programs that have a specific social norms change objective as well as some aspects of impact.

This measurement focus, however, leaves much potential value from evaluation untouched. As the OECD's definition lays out, evaluation should assess design and implementation along with efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance, coherence and sustainability. Other designs and methods may be more useful when assessing the other criteria such as relevance and coherence. Moreover, rather than mere measurement, it is through the assessment of the worth of an activity or program where an evaluation can bring together a more multi-faceted, and nuanced assessment that contributes value to the program. Given the relatively new emphasis on integrating a social norms component into anti-corruption programming, evaluation will need to offer more than simply measurement for implementers to adapt and improve. Evaluation approaches that enable rapid adaptation and learning will be essential.

Finally, an experimental or quasi-experimental quantitative approach comes with a number of resource-intensive expectations. This approach assumes that the program has had sufficient time to reasonably achieve results in shifting descriptive and injunctive norms. It also requires advanced statistical skills and resources which may not always be at the disposal of smaller-scale anti-corruption organizations.

E. *Different Types of Survey Questions Useful to Assessing Corruption Norms*

"Specialists have found that respondents can often struggle to understand questions about social norms. Keeping them simple and clear is therefore important."[35] Two approaches were particularly noteworthy: single item measures and estimating accuracy.

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[33] According to Marvin Alkin & Christina Christie, the methods branch of the evaluation theory tree places academic research rigor at the heart of evaluation design decisions.

[34] OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation, Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use, 2019: https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf

[35] Claire Hughes and Philly Desai, Measuring Changes in Social and Gender Norms: Practical Solutions to a Complex Problem, Plan International, 2020, Page 4
https://plan-international.org/publications/measuring-changes-social-and-gender-norms#download-options

Single Item Measure: "The simplest and most common measures of perceived norms are survey items that ask about one [component of a]... norm in relation to one's assumed reference group at a time." [36] For instance, 'how many of your (male) friends in positions of power have demanded sex for professional favors,' asks about the perceived descriptive norm. Used extensively in the sexual reproductive health and family planning field, single item measures are essentially used to quantify the prevalence of the descriptive and injunctive norms in a reference group rather than attempting to inquire about the norm as whole. We offer an application of this to bribery and sextortion in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Examples of single-item questions

Behavior	Descriptive Norm Question	Injunctive Norm Question
Bribery: Police demanding a bribe in exchange for performing a basic service (e.g., register a complaint).	How many police officers in your station demand a bribe in exchange for performing a basic service? Options could be: a) all; b) more than half; c) half; d) less than half	Police officers deputed at the same police station as me, expect all police officers to demand a bribe in exchange for performing a basic service. Options could be: a) Strongly Agree; b) Agree; c) Neutral; d) Disagree; e) Strongly Disagree
Sextortion: Leadership within senior bureaucratic levels of public administration require sexual favors from female staff in exchange for a promotion.	How many senior officers within your institution expect sexual favors in return for a promotion from a female staff member? Options could be: a) all; b) more than half; c) half; d) less than half	Male leaders in my institution expect sexual favors from female staff members in return for a promotion. Options could be: a) Strongly Agree; b) Agree; c) Neutral; d) Disagree; e) Strongly Disagree

One of the benefits of the single item measure approach is that it is simple to integrate other important variables such as individual attitudes and behaviors into the data collection instrument in a manner that is clear to most audiences. For instance, after inquiring about how many of your (male) friends in positions of power have demanded sex for professional favors, one could follow up with an individual attitude question (e.g., Do you approve or disapprove of exchanging sex for professional advancement?). This would allow for a comparison between what the individuals perceive as occurring in their environment versus their personal attitude about what is right or wrong.

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[36] Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change. Resources for Measuring Social Norms: A Practical Guide for Program Implementers. Washington, DC: Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University. 2019, Page 26: https://irh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/resources_for_measuring_social_norms_guide_final.pdf.

Building in additional accuracy checks: For some, being asked to hypothesize about others' behaviors or beliefs is not an easy task. In an attempt to assess respondents' level of confidence in their own answers, additional questions can be included as "estimation exercises". For instance, in the World Bank's evaluation of MTV's 'Shuga Series' in Nigeria, the survey sought respondents'

perceptions of the prevalence of a descriptive norm in their community.[37]   This was followed up by a question where the respondent was asked to self-assess their confidence in their answer.

Additional accuracy checks can easily be built into surveys while inquiring about descriptive or injunctive norms relating to a corrupt behavior. We have developed an illustrative example in Table 8 below using the following inquiry: when asking a police officer for their perception of the prevalence of a descriptive norm in his/her police station.

Table 8: Incorporating Estimation of Accuracy

Additional Accuracy Checks	
When asking a police officer for their perception of the prevalence of a descriptive norm in his/her police station.	
If you consider the other police officers in your police station, how many solicit bribes when they are approached by citizens to lodge a complaint arising out of a just cause?	Many......Some......Very Few......None ...1.............2...............3......................4.....
Out of the 10 police officers deputed at the same police station as you, how many solicit bribes when they are approached by citizens to lodge a complaint arising out of a just cause?	
How sure or unsure are you about this answer?	Many......Some......Very Few......None ...1.............2...............3......................4.....
Solicitation of bribe to not take action over a complaint	
If you consider the other police officers in your police station, how many solicit bribes to not take action against the accused after a complaint has been filed?	Many......Some......Very Few......None ...1.............2...............3......................4.....

[37] Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change. Resources for Measuring Social Norms: A Practical Guide for Program Implementers. Washington, DC: Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University. 2019, Page 28: https://irh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/resources_for_measuring_social_norms_guide_final.pdf

Out of the 10 police officers deputed at the same police station as you, how many solicit bribes to not take action against the accused after a complaint has been filed?	
How sure or unsure are you about this answer?	Many......Some......Very Few......None ...1.............2...............3.......................4.....

These estimation questions would offer the evaluator greater nuance in interpreting the data and possibly more accurate conclusions. However, this does increase the number of questions asked, which increases both collection and analysis time and, therefore, may or may not be feasible for organizations to implement.

F. *Vignettes are useful for qualitative data collection amongst citizens*

"Focus group discussions, using vignettes or semi-structured questions, and in-depth interviews are the most commonly used qualitative data collection methods"[38] adopted in evaluations of social norms change. Vignettes are hypothetical stories that illustrate a classic example of the behavior under review. They have imaginary characters that represent typical actors who would be taking the targeted action (i.e., behavior) involved in that context. These short stories are followed by guiding questions that explore the various components of a social norm and its strength.

Vignettes can be communicated to respondents in many ways from stories to videos or even songs.[39] Vignettes are increasingly becoming one of the most used tools for understanding the strength of a social norm and identifying specific situations under which a particular norm is more or less influential.[40] Our experience is that vignettes within focus groups are a fruitful methodology to identify social norms in the diagnostic stage with citizens. When crafted well, participants quickly grasp the context and can engage easily. It would be simple to repeat the focus group at a later stage in the program to assess for shifts. The approach has been less successful with civil servants due to a reluctance to speak openly – even hypothetically – in front of colleagues.[41]

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[38] Claire Hughes and Philly Desai, Measuring Changes in Social and Gender Norms: Practical Solutions to a Complex Problem, Plan International, 2020, Page 5:
https://plan-international.org/publications/measuring-changes-social-and-gender-norms#download-options

[39] Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change. Resources for Measuring Social Norms: A Practical Guide for Program Implementers. Washington, DC : Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University. 2019, Page 31:
https://irh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/resources_for_measuring_social_norms_guide_final.pdf

[40] Rachel Marcus, Data, tools and measurement: Guide to recent resources, ALIGN, January 2021:
https://www.alignplatform.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/align_guide_-_data_tools_measurement.pdf

[41] Cheyanne Scharbatke-Church, Research Methodology for Identifying Social Norms that Catalyze Corruption, Corruption in Fragile States Blog, September 12, 2017:
https://www.corruptionjusticeandlegitimacy.org/post/research-methodology-for-identifying-social-norms-that-catalyze-corruption

What follows is a modified example of a vignette used by CJL with citizens in Bangui, Central African Republic in 2017. This vignette was looking at whether there was a social norm driving citizen behavior in their interaction with the judicial system.[42] The formative research (i.e., initial review) flagged a potential norm commonly expressed through the saying "to put a stone on it," which is used to talk about how a file gets stuck and doesn't move through the judicial process. This vignette seeks to understand if the citizen's action of proactively offering a bribe is simply driven by a convention or driven by a norm.

> **What is a convention?**
> Conventions are common patterns of behavior people engage in. People conform to a behavior because it meets their needs, or because it is convenient. It is not because of social expectations, nor solely because they see others doing it.

Let's consider a story: imagine a man called Albert from Bangui. Imagine that his brother has been badly assaulted and the man who hit him has not yet been arrested. Albert goes to see the Prosecutor, Taavi, and offers Taavi 10,000 CAF to accelerate the procedure.

Questions:

1. What would most men in Albert's position do in this situation? [assesses descriptive norm]

2.What would Albert's friends and family expect him to do in this situation? [assesses injunctive norm]
*   a. Who would be the most influential on Albert's decision? [explores aspects of reference group and influencers in Albert's life]*

3. Now what if Albert did not want to give the prosecutor money to speed up the procedure because he had other plans for that money. How would Albert's [add reference group here] react to Albert not offering a bribe? [assess if there is a punishment for not doing what is expected]

4. Would their opinions and reactions make Albert change his mind about offering the bribe? [assesses strength of the norm]

5. [if there is a sanction to Albert:] Are there any times where it would be okay for Albert to not bribe a judiciary member to move a process forward? [assesses strength of the norm by looking at exceptions]

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[42] Cheyanne Scharbatke-Church, Ladislas de Coster and Kiely Barnard-Webster, with Kessy Martine Ekomo-Soignet, Peter Woodrow, and Arsène Sende. Pity the man who is alone: Corruption in the criminal justice system in Bangui, Central African Republic. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2017: https://www.corruptionjusticeandlegitimacy.org/items/pity-the-man-who-is-alone%³A-corruption-in-the-criminal-justice-system-in-bangui%²C-central-african-republic

It is also possible to assess differences in norm applications by gender, by changing the main character in a vignette from male to female or vice versa. CJL has done this by having two different vignettes and comparing the responses as well as by adding a twist to the scenario whereby a new character is introduced of a different gender.

While mostly used in a qualitative manner, vignettes can also be part of quantitative measures such as surveys. The value of this approach is the ability to develop "different versions …of the vignette in order to test the effect of these variation on respondent's answers to a uniform set of questions."[43]

For instance, when researchers from American University were exploring gender norms associated with transactional sex, they used vignettes to test whether social approval for men's "sexual decision-making power and authority in relationships" was stronger in different versions of vignettes where the man was able to offer more or less money.[44] The respondents were randomly assigned to respond to different versions of the stories where each story entailed the man offering a different amount to his partner.

VII. What is not useful? M&E that is unsuitable for social norms that drive corrupt practices

We thought several M&E practices were less suited to social norms that drive corrupt practices on average. While there is potential in all approaches, what is found here are those where we felt so much modification would be necessary that starting from scratch may be better.

Less Suitable Monitoring Practices

A. *There is insufficient evidence of effectiveness to use activity tracking*

"Monitoring program activities to ensure they take place as intended"[45] has been identified as a common form of monitoring social and gender norms change in other fields. Given the paucity of anti-corruption programming that has programmatically integrated social norms change, there is insufficient evidence to say that specific actions done well, regularly result in specific changes (i.e., shifts in social norms). At this time, it is not possible to extrapolate effective implementation as synonymous with achieving results. Running the dialogue session, for instance, does not automatically equate to how a participant thinks about their peers' perceptions of approval around a corrupt practice. At this time, monitoring of implementation may be necessary from a program management or accountability perspective, but should not be confused with useful assessments of shifts in social norms that drive corrupt behaviors.

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[43] Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change. Resources for Measuring Social Norms: A Practical Guide for Program Implementers. Washington, DC: Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University. 2019, Page 32: https://irh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/resources_for_measuring_social_norms_guide_final.pdf
[44] Ibid
[45] Claire Hughes and Philly Desai, Measuring Changes in Social and Gender Norms: Practical Solutions to a Complex Problem, Plan International, 2020, Page 6: https://plan-international.org/publications/measuring-changes-social-and-gender-norms#download-options

B. *Several 'key indicators' being used are not representative of social norms change*

In Plan International's 2020 review of social and gender norms M&E, it found several "key performance indicators" being used that were derived from a program's results chain. These ranged from "reach of programme interventions and communications activities" to "people's retention of key messages" to "shifts in people's knowledge and attitudes."[46] While these may be accurate signals of change of objectives within those programs to track well with the theory of change, they should not be confused with signals of a shift in a social norm. For instance, just because one can recall a jingle or a key message from a training, does not mean that this has changed what one thinks others do or thinks that one should do. Individual knowledge and attitudes are not the same as the perceptions of others that make up mutual expectations.

C. *Most of the data collection processes used are not conducive to monitoring*

While M&E is on the masthead of many of the publications reviewed, the majority of the literature is really only useful from an evaluation point of view. The heavy reliance on larger scale quantitative measures in the current approaches to assessment is not conducive for programmatic monitoring that seeks to deliver real-time data to improve programming. It would overburden the program participants and be extremely difficult to turn findings around quickly enough to enable adaptation.

Evaluation Practices of Less Use

A. *Singular focus on norms change measurement instead of as an integrated part of a theory of change*

The majority of tools reviewed were dedicated to assessing shifts in social or gender norms, rather than assessing a social norm change as one change pathway within a multi-faceted theory of action. While absolutely appropriate for a program with a goal of gender norms transformation, it does raise several questions around feasibility and weighting if an evaluation had several other objectives to assess. At CJL, we feel that social norms are not the magic bullet to stopping corruption, but rather a key component that will need to be programmed into a multi-faceted theory of change.[47] As such, any evaluation effort would need to reflect the different change pathways sought and ideally seek to explore how they relate to each other.

B. *Complexity and scale of data collection beyond the capacity of many anti-corruption NGOs*

Many of the methods reviewed require specialist quantitative research competencies and financial resources that are beyond the reach of many anti-corruption NGOs.[48] The propensity to err towards

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[46] Claire Hughes and Philly Desai, Measuring Changes in Social and Gender Norms: Practical Solutions to a Complex Problem, Plan International, 2020 : https://plan-international.org/publications/measuring-changes-social-and-gender-norms#download-options

[47] Scharbatke-Church, Cheyanne, and Diana Chigas, Taking the Blinders Off. Questioning How Development Assistance is Used to Combat Corruption. Corruption Justice and Legitimacy program, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, 2016: https://www.corruptionjusticeandlegitimacy.org/items/taking-the-blinders-off%3A-questioning-how-development-assistance-is-used-to-combat-corruption

[48] Claire Hughes and Philly Desai, Measuring Changes in Social and Gender Norms: Practical Solutions to a Complex Problem, Plan International, 2020 : https://plan-international.org/publications/measuring-changes-social-and-gender-norms#download-options

larger scale research efforts could be due to the desire to build the evidence base around gender and social norm change, along with the dominance of researchers and academics in the discussion instead of more practice-centric program evaluators. There is limited guidance available as to how to streamline existing approaches to be sufficiently 'light-touch' for smaller scale operations.

C. Most approaches use generalized groups instead of mapping reference groups

The majority of the projects and associated evaluation methods in the literature review resort to a very generalized identification of reference groups such as the village or 'men' etc. This approach may work for interventions targeting a change in a specific gender norm such as domestic violence because gender norms are often perceived to exist at the societal level.[49] However, it is less useful for social norms that drive corruption because it is a specific 'group' that holds the norm in place.

Even for social norms that appear to be widespread across society (e.g., people are expected to use wasta in order to secure a job, and if they do not, their family members will scold them), these broad group categories are typically too generic to enable effective targeting and program design. It is important to identify, if possible, subgroups within which the norm is "maintained" in order to gain greater specificity about how to catalyze a change. This is essential for accurate participant selection in initiatives, advocacy and messaging design, identifying role models, and other program activities. As a social norm change program would try to influence a specific group of individuals, the M&E should also be bounded to the same group.

Of the few examples that did attempt to identify a more specific group, some were deemed inappropriate for social norms that drive corruption due to the difference between episodic and ongoing events. These were approaches specifically from the female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage sector, which seek to understand who influences decisions around a once-in-a-lifetime event for an individual such as a marriage. As a significant juncture in a person's life, there can be tremendous influence exerted by those close to the individuals. As such, the reference group mapping techniques based on inquiring whom you ask for advice to help inform your decision related to this significant event is less applicable to corruption since most corrupt behaviors are ongoing and constantly evolving to adapt to different situations.

Of the remaining few mapping techniques identified in the review[50], all raised the same challenge for the corruption application: What questions should be used to identify who is in a reference group? Take Egocentric Enumeration, the method the Institute of Reproductive Health employed in a

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[49] Ben Cislaghi and Lori Heise, Gender norms and social norms: differences, similarities and why they matter in prevention science, Sociology of Health & Illness Vol. 42 No. 2 2020 ISSN 0141-98999, pp. 407-422.
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1467-9566.13008

[50] The Social Norms Exploration Tool (SNET), originally developed for sexual reproductive health and family planning, also suggests doing a rapid listing of "which people are influential by providing guidance, information, advice or support on a specific issue." Pg. 13 Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change. Resources for Measuring Social Norms: A Practical Guide for Program Implementers. Washington, DC: Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University. 2019, Page 13:
https://irh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/resources_for_measuring_social_norms_guide_final.pdf

project evaluation focused on increasing family planning use in Benin. Respondents were asked to name the people in their social network whom they could rely on for either material or practical assistance.[51] These two categories of people were deemed to be the reference group that were most likely to have an influence on an individual's behavior or belief.

While it is possible that those who provide material and practical assistance are also the ones important to social norms that drive corrupt practices, it may be that there are other more important characteristics that define the group that are more context specific. For example, what one would ask of a citizen when exploring the use of bribery to obtain a faster government service, may be different than what one would ask someone inside an institution who is demanding those payments. Consider a newly hired civil servant in a government ministry. Possibly a more useful framing for this group would be to ask whom they approach to ask questions related to their job performance (i.e,. How do I do X?) and whom they approach for career advice (i.e., How do I get a promotion?). Much more testing would be needed to understand which defining features are appropriate in what context.

Finally, this approach, like all of the others reviewed, assumes that individuals are only influenced by people they know or speak to. Yet individuals can be influenced by or may idolize someone they do not speak with or know. They may want to emulate the influencer's actions or align with their influencer's thoughts. Modifications to reference group identification would also need to take this into account.

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[51] The Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH), Tekponon Jikuagou Project – Network Census Survey (men): https://www.alignplatform.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/tj_network_censuseng_men_final.doc.pdf

VIII. What needs to be done?

M&E tools to assess a change in social norms are currently in a state of rapid development. To contribute to this effort, we have put forth a number of questions and research areas that we hope will advance the M&E of social norms change agenda in the anti-corruption space.

Our Questions

1. ***Are there proxies that can be used to assess social norm change related to corrupt practices?***
Given the relative complexity and volume of data required to ascertain social norm change as currently conducted, proxies offer a more time- and cost-effective means of tracking shifts – at least in the context of program monitoring. As Rachel Marcus points out, proxies (though called by varying names) have been found in a number of different assessment means focusing on[52]:

- *Knowledge*
- *Attitudes*
- *Self-efficacy*
- *Behavior*

None of these types of proxies come without challenges. Consider the most obvious proxy - behavior change. To use it in the context of assessing effectiveness in an evaluation, how regular or for how long must behavior have consistently shifted that a team could assume social norms are changing? Alternatively, it is possible that a very non-linear change pathway could result in perception changes that have not yet translated into behavioral change. Finally, for anti-corruption programming, many of the behaviors themselves are very difficult to gain accurate measures and self-reporting or perceptions-based assessment are rife with problems. Consequently, M&E practitioners might simply trade one set of challenges for another.

Bigger picture, the use of proxies implies that there is some evidence that the proxy actually represents a shift in the particular change one is interested in. Given the nascent state of programmatic efforts to shift social norms that drive corrupt patterns of behavior, there is no evidence to use to connect the proxy shift with a norm shift. For instance, we cannot state with certainty the relationship between a knowledge change and its related social norm. This leaves us with the question of whether other proxies are available that could be used in anti-corruption programming.

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[52] Rachel Marcus, Data, tools and measurement: Guide to recent resources, ALIGN, January 2021: https://www.alignplatform.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/align_guide_-_data_tools_measurement.pdf

2. *How to 'add-up' the component assessment into a statement about social norms?*

There was no guidance found that explained what to do with the results of the individual (descriptive and injunctive) norm components produced through quantitative measurement in order to ascertain if a norm exists or not. In other words, when using quantitative instruments to determine the state of the descriptive and injunctive norms, how much of each perception is needed to constitute a social norm? If the findings are extreme (e.g., 80%+) then the inferences are reasonably clear. However, let's say 43% of small business owners in a town feel that other business owners offer kickbacks for a contract (descriptive norm). While 39% feel that other business owners think that they should be offering kickbacks as an appropriate business transaction (injunctive norm), then do these figures collectively constitute a social norm? Is this actually an unwritten rule, or just something that less than half of people do?

And then how does one add in the notion of sanction? Is there a minimum threshold for each of the components or some form of weighted equation we can use to assess the existence of a norm? And would the process for doing this apply equally across licit and illicit types of activities?

3. *What value will greater engagement with the program evaluation discipline bring?*

a. Evaluation Approaches: The literature does not offer any guidance or commentary on which evaluation approach is best suited to social norms change. As it stands today, the measurement focus of the majority of material means that most efforts focus on the data collection method or tool. Greater inquiry is needed into whether there are evaluation approaches more attuned to the nuances of social norms change and, therefore, would offer more value for money to anti-corruption implementers? For instance, would empowerment evaluation align well with positive deviance or trendsetter type programming (whereby support was given to the positive deviants to assess the changes that had been achieved)? Alternatively, might stepping away from traditional evaluation approaches where there is an initial plan, baseline and then endline, be useful. For instance, would Goal-Free evaluation[53] or Most Significant Change[54] allow for a more organic identification of norms versus behavior change?

> ### *Evaluation Approach*
>
> An evaluation approach is the philosophy and resulting process behind an evaluation. Sometimes called a model or theory, the evaluation approach can drastically alter the way an evaluation is conducted.

b. Culture & Evaluation: Given social norms' deep embeddedness in culture, there are also reasonable questions to ask about the role of culture in norms evaluation. Does an evaluator need a more anthropological sense of cultural competence to accurately and ethically conduct a quality evaluation?

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[53] Youker, B. W., & Ingraham, A. (2014). Goal-Free Evaluation: An Orientation for Foundations' Evaluations. The Foundation Review, 5(4): https://doi.org/10.9707/1944-5660.1182

[54] Rick Davies and Jess Dart, The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique – A Guide to its Use, April, 2005: https://www.mande.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2005/MSCGuide.pdf

And related to evaluation approaches, are some of the social justice approaches that highlight culture, possibly more appropriate such as culturally responsive evaluation?[55] Alternatively, might some of the new thinking on African Relational Evaluation Approaches, as part of the decolonizing evaluation effort, offer more useful or accurate insights? This approach situates individuals within the context of relationships. Social norms and corruption also occur within the context of relationships which could make this approach uniquely framed to generate value for practitioners.

4. *What alterations need to be made to the M&E processes for indirect norms?*

To our knowledge, the M&E work to date almost entirely ignores the direct vs indirect norm difference. With little distinction being made, our impression is that the processes are predominately intended for direct norms. Thinking through our questions from the indirect norm perspective complicates matters significantly. Take, for instance, the use of behaviors as proxies. As indirect norms have multiple types of behavior that meet the expectations of the norms (e.g., look out for your family first), one would have to track multiple different behaviors to determine if the norm was shifting. Further attention would need to be given to a 'do no harm' lens as many indirect norms have socially positive behaviors connected to them. The norm 'look out for your family,' for instance, is often connected to the payment of a relative's school fees across many countries in Africa.

> *Direct and Indirect Social Norms:*
>
> **Direct social norms dictate** a specific behavior.
>
> **Indirect social norms** are mutual expectations about the right thing to do in a particular situation and can manifest in different behaviors.

Areas that would benefit from greater research

1. *The Permanence of Reference Groups:* research into the degree of fluidity of reference group membership would enable M&E practitioners to know how much attention to give reference group changes throughout the period of a program. Is it sufficient to work with the original group identified during the pre-program diagnostic stage? If so, for how long after that diagnostic was completed? Or is there a need for regular reviews as part of monitoring? Or should an evaluation seek to assess the reference group as a social norm change intervention may result in a change in the reference group?

Consider the constant churn that typifies many civil services, for instance. Can one assume that, despite the turnover, the identity group stays relatively constant within the agency? Or would an evaluation need to assess the accuracy of the original reference group determination before checking to see if norms have shifted?

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[55] "CRE is a holistic framework for centering evaluation in culture (Frierson, Hood, Hughes, and Thomas, 2010). It rejects culture-free evaluation and recognizes that culturally defined values and beliefs lie at the heart of any evaluative effort. Evaluation must be designed and carried out in a way that is culturally responsive to these values and beliefs, many of which may be context specific. CRE advocates for the inclusion of culture and cultural context in both evaluation theory and practice (Hood, 2014)." – Stafford Hood, Rodney K. Hopson, Karen E. Kirkha, Culturally Responsive Evaluation: Theory, Practice, and Future Implications, Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation, Fourth Edition, 2015, Page 281

2. Critical mass: an area for research very much related to the proxy question would be whether it is possible to equate behavior change to social norms change if there is critical mass involved in the new behavior? In other words, if you get sufficient people doing a new behavior does the norm end up being shifted as well? Research into the relationship would be very helpful to M&E as it would give practitioners a sense of when they can use behavior change as a proxy for social norms change.

3. Gender Differences: Our review found few references to how to integrate gender into M&E efforts, likely because much of this material comes from an explicit gender perspective. However, within the area of corruption, some social norms that drive corrupt behaviors overlap with gender norms, creating unique consequences. In some instances, social norms that drive corrupt behaviors must be seen through the lens of gender as there are different interpretations of the norm for women versus men. For instance, our research has shown that women often experience stronger social sanctions if they are caught engaging in corruption than men. The greater consequences are due to gender norms that expect women to be holders of traditional family values[56] which corruption is perceived to breach. The combination of the gender norm with a social norm that supports demanding illicit fees, for instance, is a dilution of the strength of the corruption norm. More research into common intersections between gender and corruption-driving norms is necessary to offer some insights for where M&E should focus its attention.

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[56] Kiely Barnard-Webster, A View on Corruption and Gender in Lubumbashi, Corruption in Fragile States Blog, September 27, 2016: https://www.corruptionjusticeandlegitimacy.org/post/a-view-on-corruption-and-gender-in-lubumbashi

Appendix 1: Detailed Methodology

In May 2020, we kicked off the review with the assumption that academic peer reviewed papers and grey literature would be relevant and useful. Searches using "M&E of social norms"; "literature review" and "social norms"; "evaluation of social norms"; "evaluation" and "social norms"; "measuring social norms"; "data collection" and "social norms"; "monitoring of social norms"; and "monitoring" and "social norms" of UlrichsWeb (a database that indexes journals), Taylor & Francis and Oxford UP were conducted. However, after a day of effort with limited results, the process pivoted to exclusively grey literature. The initial searches focused on work within the corruption space, but here again the initial scoping showed that this would not be fruitful, and this criterion was removed.

Grey material searches using Google Scholar and scoping the publication databases of development organizations and think tanks that have worked on social norms change program were conducted with the following terms:

Sr. No.	Search Words	Total Hits	Relevant Results
	"M&E of social norms"	3	Yes
	"monitoring of social norms"	1	No
	"literature review" "social norms"	180	Yes
	"measuring social norms"	134	Yes
	"measuring social norms"	61,000 (without the filter)	Yes
	"monitoring" "social norms" "changing" "indicators" "survey"	130	Yes
	"monitoring" "evaluation" "social norms" "measure" "indicators"	140	Yes

Our search was followed by preliminary shortlisting of literature based on the following thresholds:
a.) Literature that included guidance on what amounts to M&E of social norms;
b.) Literature that included case studies of M&E of social norms;
c.) Literature that shed light on lessons learned from past projects that involved M&E of social norms;
d.) Literature that compiled guidance from different projects carried out by various organizations pertaining to M&E of social norms

The first stage of the review identified 45 publications by the end of June 2020 – a complete list found in the Bibliography. The process was then paused and reconvened in March 2021. At this time, a rapid update search was conducted through Google Scholar and scoping databases of the same development organizations and think tanks as well as gathering of new material. The final review included 55 publications.

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