# Annex 7: Abstract NCA Global Programme GBV

# Sub-goal 1 Dominant norms transformed to protect girls and women from violence and harmful practices

**Examples of social and gender norms that support violence against women and girls**

* A man has a right to assert power over a woman and is considered socially superior;
* A man has a right to physically discipline a woman for “incorrect” behaviour;
* Physical violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflict in a relationship;
* Intimate partner violence is a “taboo” subject;
* Divorce is shameful;
* Sex is a man’s right in marriage;
* Sexual activity (including rape) is a marker of masculinity;
* Girls are responsible for controlling a man’s sexual urges

(Source: WHO, 2010)

Poverty, low status of girls in society in general and social norms that dedicates girls are brought up to do care within the household, marriage and family for women and girls are sites of protection (from sexual promiscuity), control over girls’ sexuality are in general factors contributing to child marriage. In some communities, young girls are married off to secure or increase economic security of their family. Evidence show that girls who are married off young suffer from higher rates of maternal mortality, domestic violence, HIV, divorce and have higher birth rates. Girls that are married off early barely goes to school, and or finishes school. There are huge societal consequences and intergenerational cycles of poverty.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Other violent behaviours, such as IPV, may not necessarily be held in place by social norms specifically relating to IPV i.e. there may not be social expectations that a man hits his wife, and husbands may not sanction another man for refusing to do so. However, where IPV is highly prevalent, evidence suggests that there are other social norms underpinning this behaviour, for example around gender roles, power and the wider acceptability of violence that contribute to shared expectations around a man’s use of violence. Most of these are gender norms – widely held beliefs about what is typical and appropriate behaviour for men and women, and boys and girls i.e. gender norms are a category of social norm. Gender norms shape how men and women see themselves as men and women, their social and intimate relationships, their sexuality and the allocation of power and resources. The most effective initiatives address underlying risk factors for violence, including social norms regarding gender roles and the acceptability of violence. Complex, multi-faceted issues such as harmful practices require a comprehensive response and interventions to target at multiple and operating across all levels: individual, interpersonal, community, institutional, policy and laws.

Social norms are shared beliefs about what is typical and appropriate behaviour in a valued reference group. They can be defined as a rule of behaviour that people in a group conform to because they believe: (a) most other people in the group do conform to it; and (b) most other people in the group believe they ought to conform to it. There can be different reasons for why change does not occur, and the elements of the ‘social ecology’ that may interact to drive and sustain harmful behaviours[[2]](#footnote-2):

* Structural forces, such as conflict, weak or discriminatory legal and institutional frameworks, racism, rules about who can own and inherit property and gender ideologies[[3]](#footnote-3) that underpin gendered differences in power;[[4]](#footnote-4)
* Social factors, such as harmful social and gender norms;[[5]](#footnote-5)
* Material realities, such as household poverty and lack of economic opportunities for women and girls and weak infrastructure;[[6]](#footnote-6)
* Individual factors, such as inequitable gender attitudes condoning VAWG and mistaken factual beliefs, as well as women’s agency, aspirations, and self-efficacy.[[7]](#footnote-7)

## Programme Standards

Legal norms, moral norms, social norms and religious norms are different sets of rules which implies how we should behave.

**Legal norms** are put in place by a formal authority, which are written down in constitutions, and legal framework, which the police and justice system is set to enforce. People follow legal norms out of respect for authority and fear of what will happen if they break them.

**Religious norms**, rules based on how a we believe we should behave based on behaviour within a religion, religious norms can also be legal norms if they are enforced by an authority; for example, rules set out in Islamic law.

**Moral norms** are personal rules which guide how each individual behave, they are based on a person’s inner beliefs about right and wrong.

**Social norms** are the informal rules that members of a group expect other members of the same group to follow. Social norms tell people which behaviour is expected of them, and which behaviour is forbidden. We follow social norms because we get rewarded (acceptance, respect) for following them, and can be punished (disapproval, rejection) for breaking them. NCA will focus on influencing legal, moral and social norms, as when these are in harmony, they have the strongest influence on people’s behaviour and prevent harmful practices and harmful norms. Behaviours are most entrenched when they are held in place by moral, legal and social norms, and as such programmes should ultimately look to influence all three.

Primary reasons for individuals to adhere to a social, moral and legal norm[[8]](#footnote-8)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Legal Norms | Moral Norms | Social Norms |
| Positive Reasons | Legitimacy of authority,  respect for the law | Good conscience | Approval |
| Negative Reasons | Authority’s penalties | Bad conscience | Disapproval |
| A typical emotion in a violator | Fear | Guilt | Shame |

Designing programmes to transform gender norms and addresses harmful social norms, should have bring together multiple intervention approaches:

1. **Community Conversations and Dialogue**

Multi-component programmes including community-level messaging, collective dialogue and reflection focused on challenging acceptability of violence against women and girls, and perceived male rights to control female behaviour have been one of the most effective ways to change discriminatory social norms[[9]](#footnote-9). Opportunities for reflection show reluctant individuals that others have changed their attitudes, raise and allay fears of not engaging in the damaging norm, help people to understand the negative impact of gender inequitable norms and enable communities to change together. Community-level interventions tend to have components dedicated to mobilising specific people – sometimes known as change agents (generally men and women already displaying more gender equitable attitudes and behaviours) within a community to encourage others to change by diffusing messages and opportunities for dialogue and refection to people beyond direct participants.

1. **Media and Communication**

Innovative use of social media – communication to empower young women and men to challenge and break through prevailing norms that underpin gender violence and providing information of those.

1. **Legal Change**

Strengthening the legal and policy framework forms: -an important part of both prevention and response to GBV, bridging the gap between law and practice.

## Minimum requirement

Interventions that aim to transform gender norms and inequalities have proven more effective at reducing violence than those that only address individual attitudes and behaviours without tackling harmful gender norms (such as harmful notions of masculinity) which perpetuate violence. Although social norms are different from individual attitudes, factual beliefs and behaviours, they can be diagnosed, measured and evaluated by amending existing research strategies and methodologies, such as qualitative focus groups and quantitative surveys. Emerging evidence and insights from practitioners suggest that to shift harmful social norms programmes need to: a) shift social expectations not just individual attitudes, b) publicise the change and c) catalyse and reinforce new norms and behaviours[[10]](#footnote-10). Changing social norms therefore requires a systematic approach which follows five steps. The steps are: 1. Pre-contemplation (person has not identified issue as a problem); 2. Contemplation (begins to identify issue as a problem); 3. Preparation for Action (seeking information, support, alternatives for change); 4. Action (makes changes); and 5. Maintenance (sustain change).

NCA’s social norms work must address norms change and not only individual behaviour change and should have multiple intervention approaches following the 3 lines of ‘community conversation and dialogue, ‘media and communication’ and ‘legal change’.

## 3 working methods

***Development context****:* Addressing harmful norms and harmful practices requires us to address power, unpacking power, and understanding how power can be both negative and positive. Norm changing programmes walks communities through the change process, one step at a time reflecting the systematic approach, and avoiding the chronic cycle of awareness raising which does not lead to sustainable change. Changing norms must include a critical mass of people across all levels of society, from religious leaders, community leaders, teachers, police, women, men, boys and girls, to maintain a norm change. This phased approach helps NCA staff, partners and community members to reflect on their own lives and relationships before trying to influence others. The ultimate goal of norms change is to create a healthier and safer community for women and girls, and safer relationships between men and women.

NCA will focus on working with faith actors through dialogue, engaging them on theological reflections, national level advocacy, integrate issues of harmful practices their teachings and mobilizing their constituencies for change of social norms, both within the congregations and within communities, NCAs work will be both in rural and urban areas. And NCA recognises the importance of involving men and boys in norms change work. NCA will focus on addressing FGMC, ECM, IPV and acceptance by community members to access contraceptives.

Harmful practices are linked to gender inequalities and gender norms. Therefore, NCA promotes interventions that target changing social norms with organisations that have rooted community-based structures and culturally/contextually appropriate interventions that target changing underlining justifications. Interventions such as community dialogue/conversation, engaging men and boys, use of media, promoting positive masculinities, influential religious, and clan leaders, women and girls will be employed. Awareness on the legal provision will be provided to women and young girls, communities and law enforcing bodies to bridge the gap between laws and practices.

***Humanitarian context****:* Armed conflict causes horrendous suffering, the changes to the community structure, economic roles, and social dynamics offer an opportunity to promote social norms that uphold women and girls’ equality, safety, and dignity. However, practices and norms which existed prior to the crisis may increase due to displacement, increased protection concerns, and lack of livelihood. Lack of livelihood opportunities may lead to opportunists exploiting and abusing women and girls who are in dire need of life-saving materials. Humanitarian interventions will focus around preventing and responding to early child marriages, forced marriages and intimate partner violence, in addition to addressing exploitation, abuse and trafficking in women and girls for forced prostitution, as these practices are exaggerated during conflict, displacement and disasters. The phases of change will be implemented during a shorter time span, focusing on immediate impact[[11]](#footnote-11), involving community groups and creating a critical mass for change.

In fragile, conflict and post situation harmful practices may drive from a breakdown of social and moral order, and harmful practices and other forms of GBV could be normalized. Early/child marriage often occurs in contexts of poverty and is increasingly an issue amongst conflict affected communities. NCA will actively engage in (UN) GBV clusters[[12]](#footnote-12) and integrate contextually appropriate interventions to refugee or IDP sites where harmful practices are widely practiced. The strategies will be guided with the direction from GBV cluster. NCA should promote incorporating of prevention interventions across diverse humanitarian sectors, such as health, water and sanitation, education, and livelihood programs. Moreover, NCA should cooperate with interventions targeted to rebuilding family and community structures and support systems that will strengthen conditions to improve accountability systems, engage in assessment, monitoring, and documentation and coordination.

***Advocacy****:* legal norms will be addressed under the advocacy approached, bringing rooted advocacy to the authorities to influence the legal norms, laws and regulations as well as the implementation of these. NCA will focus on laws that prohibit harmful practices, discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity[[13]](#footnote-13), and all forms of violence against women and girls.

**Engaging youth[[14]](#footnote-14)**: youth engage with religious actors, community leaders and decision makers to influence change in norms and practices. For example, the REJADH experience showed that youth can successfully engage all these categories. Youth can talk to youth and engage with youth faith groups. Encourage systematic involvement of youth in advocacy work related to change of norms and practices.

## Levels of Impact

**At local level,** these strategies will have impact in shifting attitudes, and benefit women and girls to live life free from violence.

**At regional level,** the programme can contribute towards regional policies and changes through advocacy.

**At global level,** the programme can contribute towards global achievements, contributing towards measuring impact on achievement of SDG 5, and support evidence-creation.

1. Child Marriage: Latest trends and future prospects

   <https://data.unicef.org/resources/child-marriage-latest-trends-and-future-prospects/> July 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. DFID, Shifting social norms to tackle VAWG [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Gender ideologies are ‘A world view of what gender relations should be like’. Marcus and Harper (2014) and El Bushra and Sahl, (2005). 8 Marcus [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Marcus and Harper (2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Heise (2011) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Structural and material factors shape the choices that individuals can make – they are fundamentally about power, although power dynamics are manifest across all factors. See Heise (2015) and Marcus and Harper (2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Heise (2011); Heise and Manji (2015) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Mackie et al 2014, drawing on the work of Antanas Mockus [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *SASA!* and *Communities Care: Transforming Lives and Preventing Violence* are two toolkits which promotes this approach. The *Community Dialogues on FGMC* *in Ethiopia and Somalia* has a similar set-up. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. DFID: Shifting social norms to tackle VAWG Guidance Note [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Reference to the Communities Care Package on social norms in humanitarian settings [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Read more about the UN cluster system here: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/what-is-the-cluster-approach> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Violence perpetrated against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons is “driven by a desire to punish those seen as defying gender norms” (OHCHR). The acronym “LGBTI” encompasses a wide range of identities that share an experience of being outside societal norms due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. OHCHR further recognises that “lesbians and transgender women are at particular risk because of gender inequality and power relations within families and wider society.” [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See youth section for further details on engaging youth [↑](#footnote-ref-14)