



SOCIAL NORMS & AGENCY
LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

Social Norms & Adolescent Programming

What Really Drives Social Norms Change for Adolescent Girls and Young Women?

Global Evidence with Insights from India, Kenya and Nigeria

September 2025

Interpretation

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Quand vous l'ouvrez, vous verrez: Arrêt, Anglais, Français
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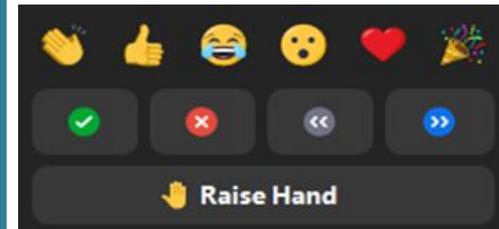
Zoom Logistics



Use the Chat box to join the dialogue. We would like to hear your thoughts and insights.



For questions, please click the Q&A icon and type in your questions there.



Use the reactions icon at the bottom of your screen to raise your hand if you would like to speak during the general Q&A session.

What We'll Talk About

1 Introduction to the LCs

2 Overview of the Social Norms & Adolescents Evidence Review

3 Nigeria Country Snapshot: Deep Dive Findings

4 Kenya Country Snapshot: Deep Dive Findings

5 India Country Snapshot: Deep Dive Findings

6 Parallel Sessions

7 Looking Forward: Challenges & Opportunities



**Tell us
about
yourself**



In the chat,
introduce yourself
and where you're
joining from!

Social Norms and Agency Learning Collaborative (LC) Network: Who We Are



A network of passionate individuals and organizations working together to influence and shape the field of social norms and agency



Comprised of 5 communities in Anglophone and Francophone West Africa, East Africa, South Asia, and the Global Learning Collaborative community for those not residing within these regions





OUR MISSION

Our mission is to strengthen research and practice on social norms, gender, and agency by building a network of practitioners, researchers, evaluators, and advocates who share knowledge, generate evidence, and develop resources to support SBC programming.

What We Do

**DOCUMENT & SHARE
EXPERIENCES**



**STRENGTHEN
CAPACITY**

Learning Collaborative

ACTIVITIES

**IMPROVE PRACTICE
THROUGH
PARTNERSHIPS**



**CO-CREATE
RESOURCES AND
PRODUCTS**

**Find out more about the LCs on our
brand new website!**



www.socialnormsandagencylcs.org

Presenting: Courtney McLarnon



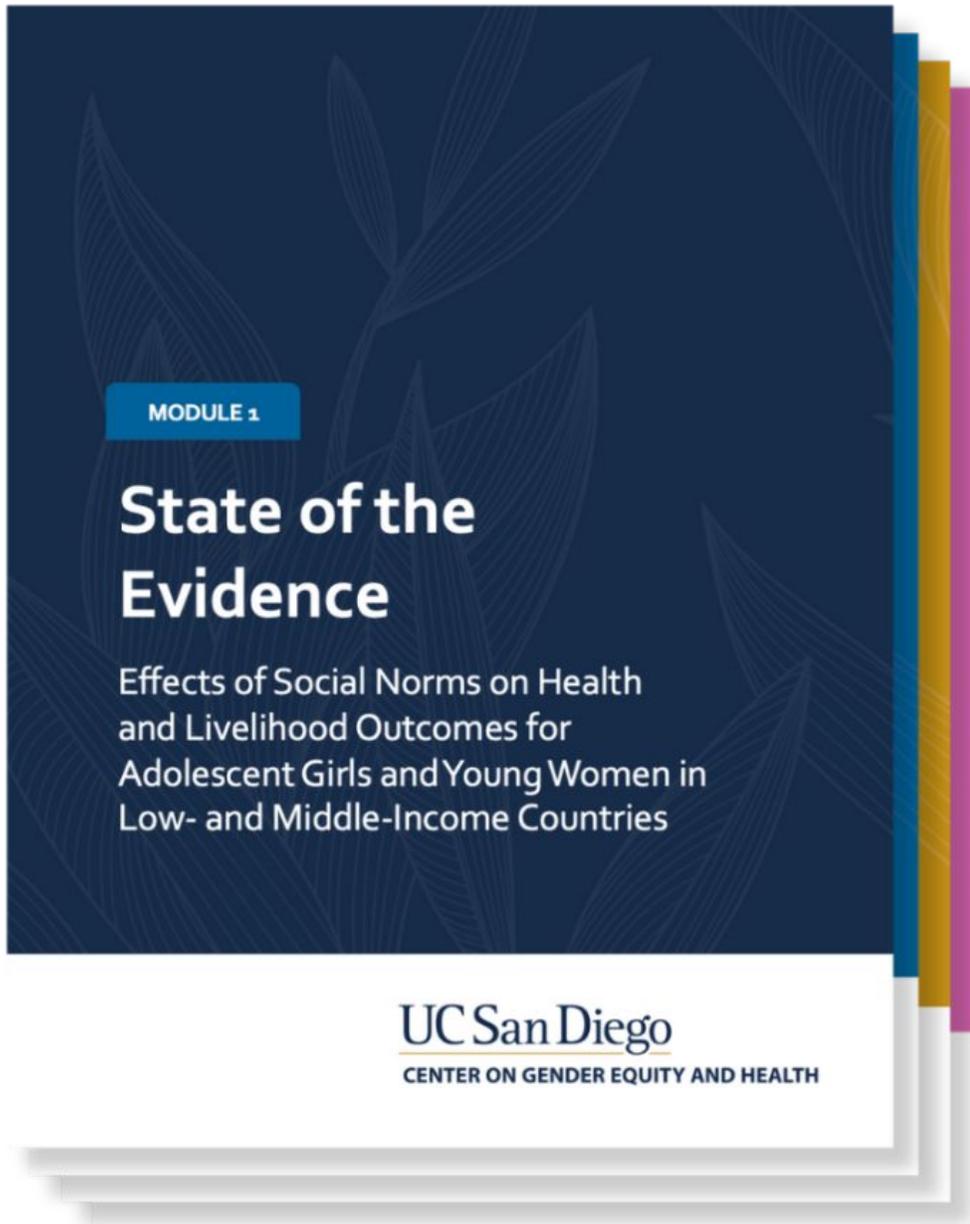
Courtney McLarnon brings over a decade of experience in social norms and behavior change, family planning and reproductive health, gender equity, male engagement, and gender-based violence prevention. Her work bridges implementation, research, learning, and capacity strengthening, particularly in support of locally driven, evidence-informed strategies for scale. At GEH, Courtney serves as the Director of Strategic Engagement and Impact. In this role, she leads donor engagement and business development efforts, including donor outreach strategy and special initiatives. Courtney was formerly the Deputy and Learning Director of the USAID-funded Agency for All project at GEH, and is currently working on a number of initiatives focused on generating and synthesizing evidence on social norms change for health and wellbeing.



**SOCIAL NORMS & AGENCY
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Introducing the Evidence Review

Effects of Social and Gender Norms on
the Health and Wellbeing of Adolescent
Girls and Young Women



GLOBAL EVIDENCE REVIEW

*Examining the relationship between social norms and the health and livelihood outcomes of adolescent girls and young women in **sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.***



Evidence Review Objectives

- ✓ **Review and synthesize social norms evidence** related to the health and livelihood outcomes (WEE, SRH – FP and HIV, GBV, CEFM) of adolescent girls and young women in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia

- ✓ **Explore:**
 - The relationship between **social norms and key behaviors**
 - Effective program approaches, mechanisms of change, cost efficiency and the potential for scale, specifically **entertainment media** and **faith and cultural champions**

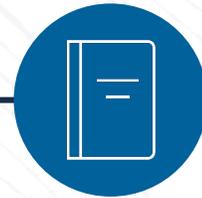
408 unique resources identified and analyzed; and vetted through collaborative and expert sensemaking processes



Decided on research methods and review methodology with multidisciplinary Advisory Board



Conducted search through scientific databases and rigorous search of grey literature and recommended materials



Reviewed title abstract and full text on Covidence; double reviewer consensus process

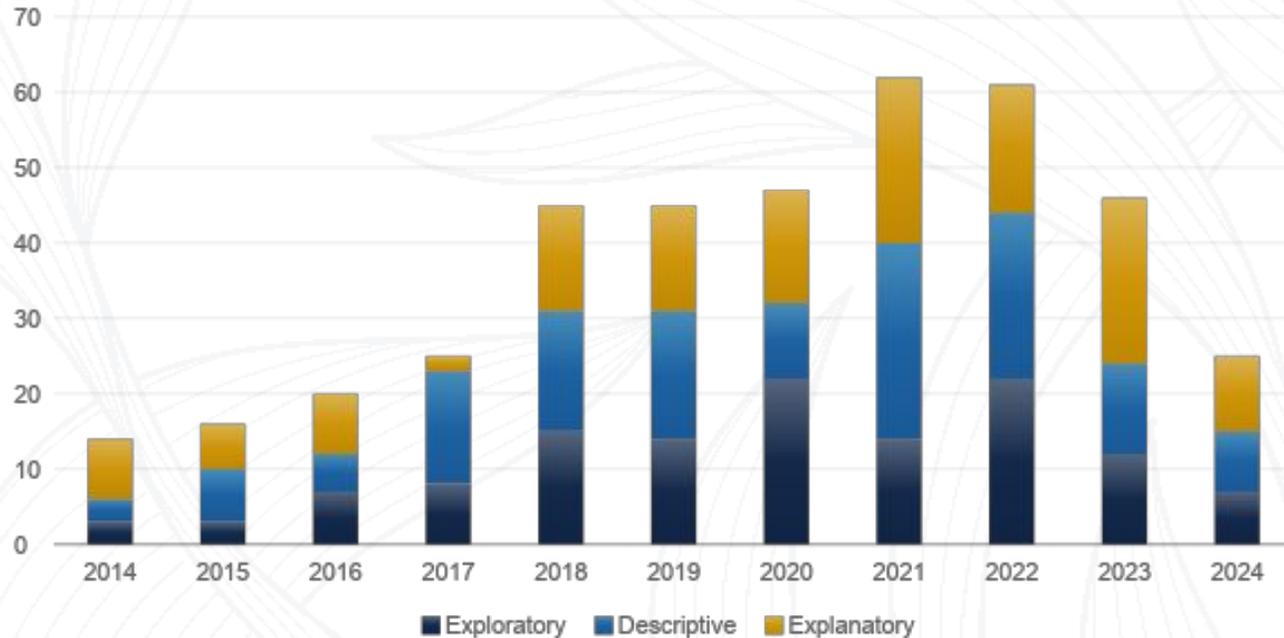


Extracted data from included literature; ran descriptive analyses; conducted thematic analyses



Held concurrent sensemaking workshops in region to vet early insights and identify gaps

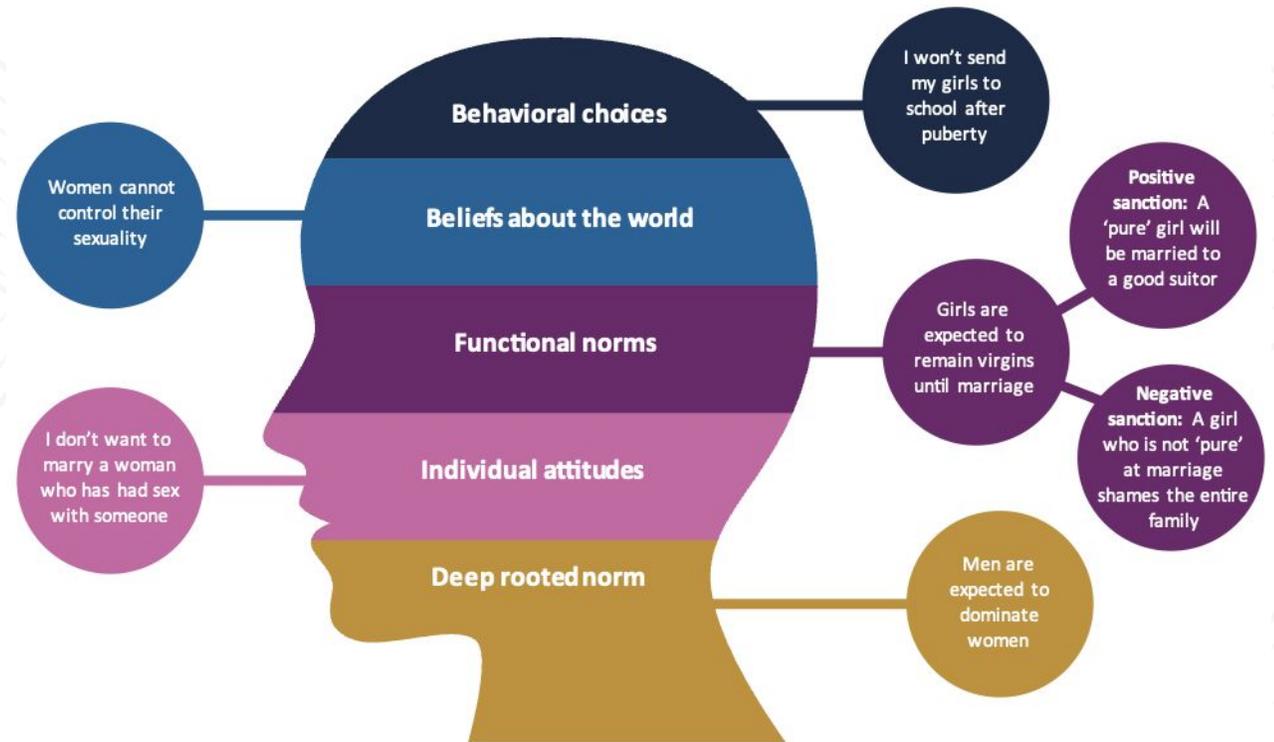
Evidence base shows significant growth in evidence on shifting norms with AGYW, but lack of measurement results in limitations in comparability across studies.

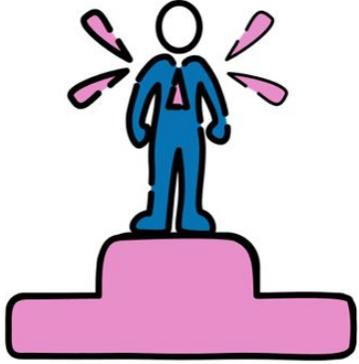


- **43 countries represented**, concentrated in East Africa, India, and West Africa.
- **Most studies descriptive**; fewer than a quarter used randomized or robust counterfactual designs.
- Studies focus mainly on **gender roles, SRH (fertility, family size), and GBV**. Less on menstruation, bodily autonomy, adolescent sexuality, or intersectional norms (disability, class, ethnicity).

Targeting functional norms alone may not be enough; **deeply rooted norms sustain systems of power for AGYW.**

- Norms are shaped by broader forces: such as laws, education, health services, economic shifts, conflict, and urbanization, **which can either reinforce harmful expectations or open opportunities for change.**
- Norms don't shift the same way for everyone: **gender and context matter.**





What's working with **faith and cultural champions** to shift norms with AGYW?

- ✓ 41 interventions
- ✓ Most in Sub-Saharan Africa
- ✓ Majority addressing gender-based violence and family planning

- **Layered strategies** (dialogue, reflection, diffusion) show stronger results
- Success depends more **on alignment with community** values than on leader type
- **Evidence thin on scale, cost, and sustainability**
- **Leaders engaged in;** but adolescents left out of design processes



What's working with **entertainment media interventions** to shift norms with AGYW?

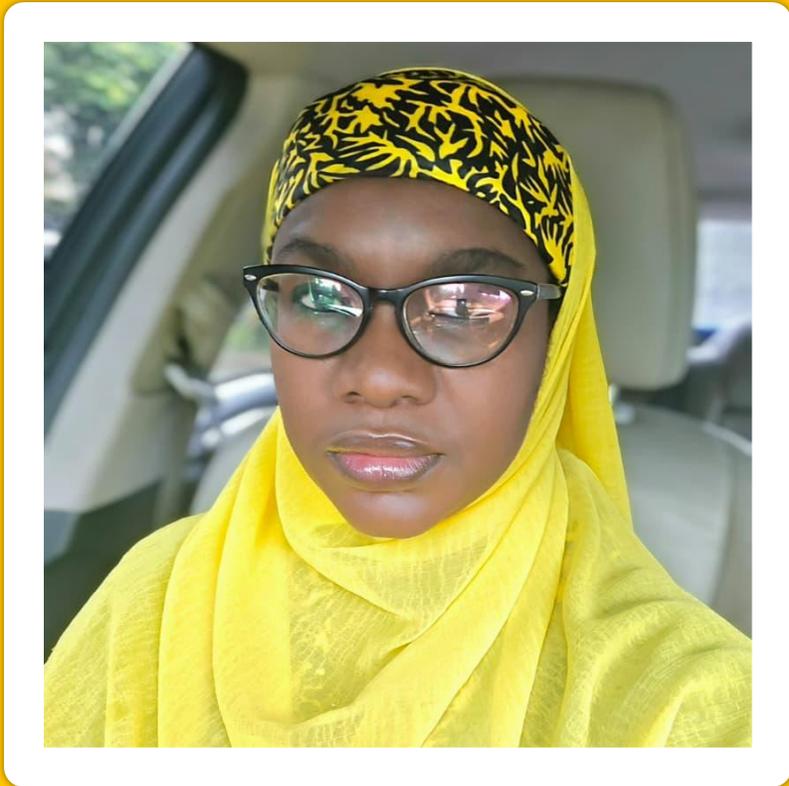
- ✓ 49 interventions
- ✓ Most in Sub-Saharan Africa
- ✓ Majority addressing gender-based violence and family planning

- **Short and long efforts both worked**, success depends more on strategy, dosage, and context
- Multimedia **together with interaction** is most effective, especially on sensitive issues like GBV & child marriage
- **In-person dialogue** (clubs, call-ins, community groups) deepens impact beyond exposure
- **Reference groups** (health workers, leaders) amplify reach and credibility

Across the evidence and interventions reviewed, **several recommendations emerged to strengthen the evidence base:**

-  Improving measurement through use of validated tools.
-  Improving program documentation (and prioritize program reports, learning efforts)
-  Defining *which* norms you see shifting, and *why* (in theories of change)
-  Improving monitoring and tracking of signs of norms shifts like pushback
-  Providing information on cost, scalability, and sustainability
-  Engaging adolescents in design processes

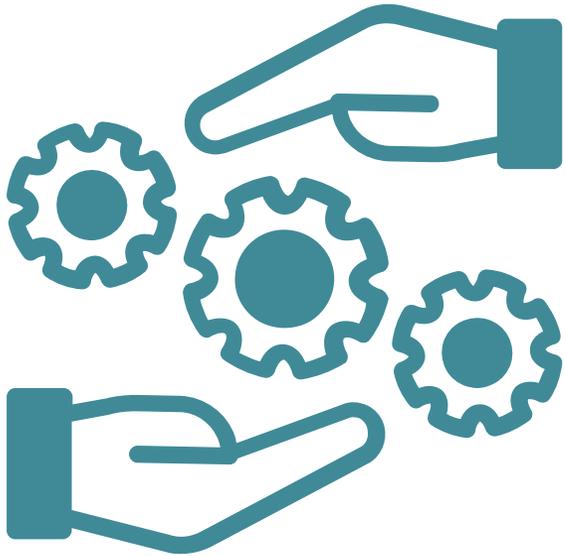
Presenting: Haishat Olufadi-Ahmed



Haishat is a public health researcher who collaborates with a dynamic team of experts to conduct comprehensive evaluations, develop actionable insights, and implement effective solutions tailored to the unique needs of West Africa's underserved population. Her role involves designing and executing research methodologies, analyzing complex datasets, and translating findings into practical recommendations that enhance healthcare management practices.

Nigeria Country Snapshot: Deep Dive Findings

Background and Methods (1/2)



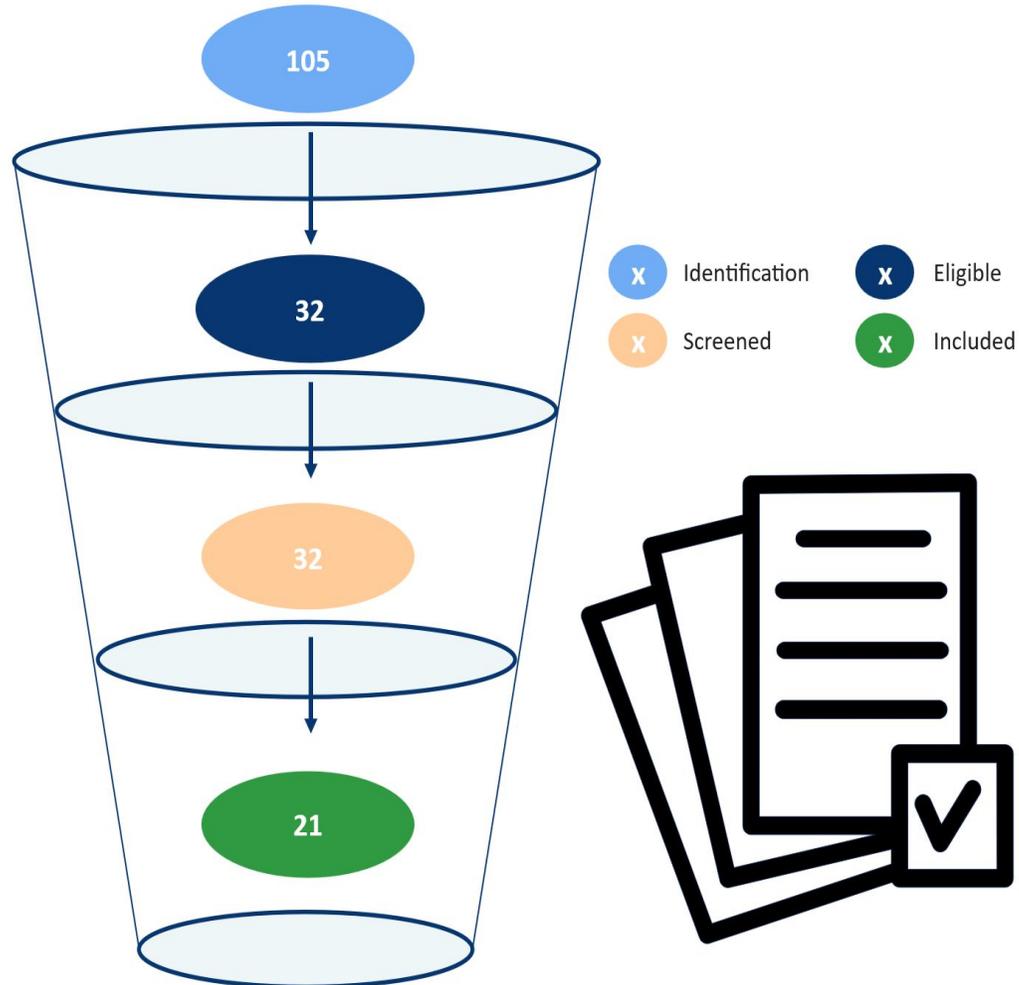
Patriarchal Norms and AGYW in Nigeria

Problem: Patriarchal norms hinder the health and well-being of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW).

Focus of the Study:

- How interventions engage Faith & Cultural Champions (FCC) and entertainment media (EM) to shift harmful norms.
- How the programs leveraging these approaches measured impact and documented sustainability in their programs.

Background and Methods (2/2)



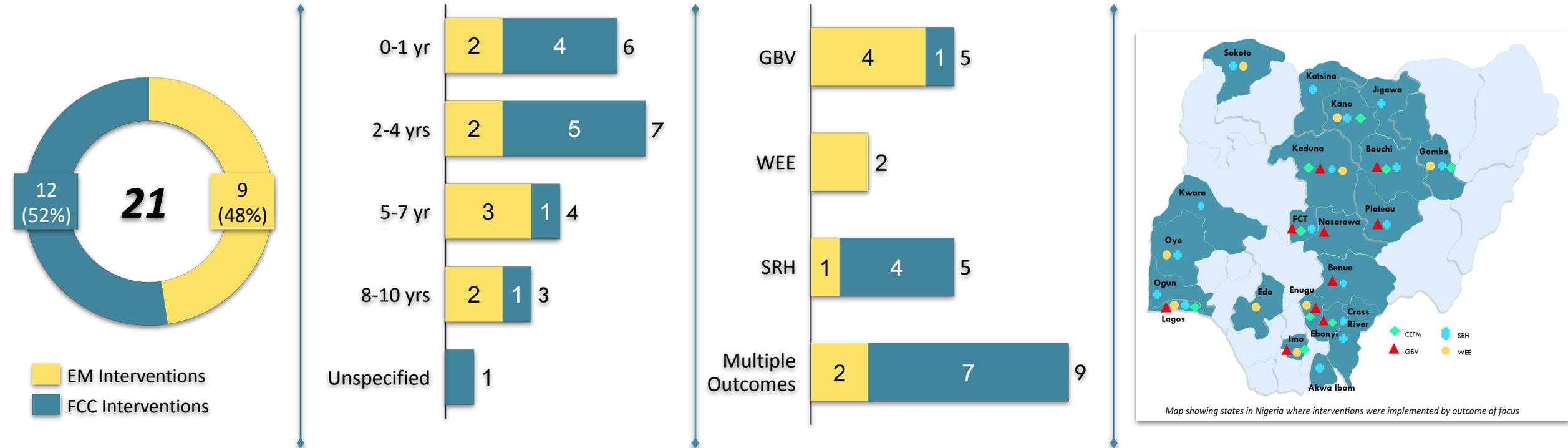
Data collection period:

- October 2024 – January 2025

Data sources:

- **Desk review** of technical reports, published articles, conference papers, and institutional repositories
- **Stakeholder consultations** with local organizations, faith-based groups, and program implementers to capture insights on intervention strategies, challenges, and outcomes

Results: Interventions mostly deployed FCC approaches, spanned less than 3 years and targeted multiple outcomes across geographies



Distribution of identified interventions from desk review, by norms-shifting approach type, intervention duration, outcome focus and geography

- There is a general dearth in availability of documentation of entertainment-media based interventions, signaling a need for more deliberate efforts for MEL in norms-shifting interventions that deploy this approach.
- Overall, most interventions were implemented over a short period of time (≤ 3 yrs), not allowing enough time for behavior change to occur, and often not building on past interventions.
- Entertainment interventions seemed to last longer, but did not often have specific measures linked to shift in norms.
- While some states had multiple interventions, there are gaps in evidence in some states.

Key Finding #1: Reviewed interventions deployed three approaches to measure success

Examples of measured indicators

Outputs and Process Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Social media engagement rate● Online interaction index● Multi-platform interaction index● Accumulated call time for programs that utilized phone calls● The number of downloads of mobile games● Participation in tele-counseling, hotline services, and follow-ups after radio programs
Outcome Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Behavioral surveillance surveys● Uptake of sexual reproductive health● Compliance with vaccination schedules● Changes in self-reported sexual harassment, attitudes towards victims, and discussions with adults and family members about sexual violence● Changes in knowledge and attitude of Religious and Traditional Leaders before and after capacity building
Norms Measurement	N/A

Insights on the measurement: Based on the desk review, none of the interventions were able to assess impact on norms shift; instead, they focused on performance evaluation; behavioral and attitudinal changes.

Key Finding #2: Sustainability initiatives are typically geared towards capacity strengthening, local partnerships and community-centricity

Continuous Training

- FCCs were trained and mentored by program implementers to advocate for primary health behavior
- WhatsApp groups were created to support continuous learning and progress tracking

Partnerships

- Partnerships were formed with FCCs, government bodies and media organizations to strengthen advocacy efforts
- Government officials and institutions like Sharia commissions supported the capacity building of FCCs ensuring sustained program implementation

Community Focus

- Interventions were tailored to local contexts, leveraging local resources and empowering communities to ensure sustainability
- Community-based groups were created to provide a safe space for adolescent girls and serve as support systems to address local challenges
- Integrating interventions into existing community structures and mobilizing local resources and networks were key to ensuring sustainability and continued growth of the initiative

Recommendations

01

Design with intention: Interventions can be more effective when they are co-created with communities and grounded in local realities

02

Strengthen measurement and adaptive learning: Implementers should use mixed-methods approaches, combining quantitative and qualitative data, to capture shifts in social norms over time and better understand the “how” and “why” behind changes

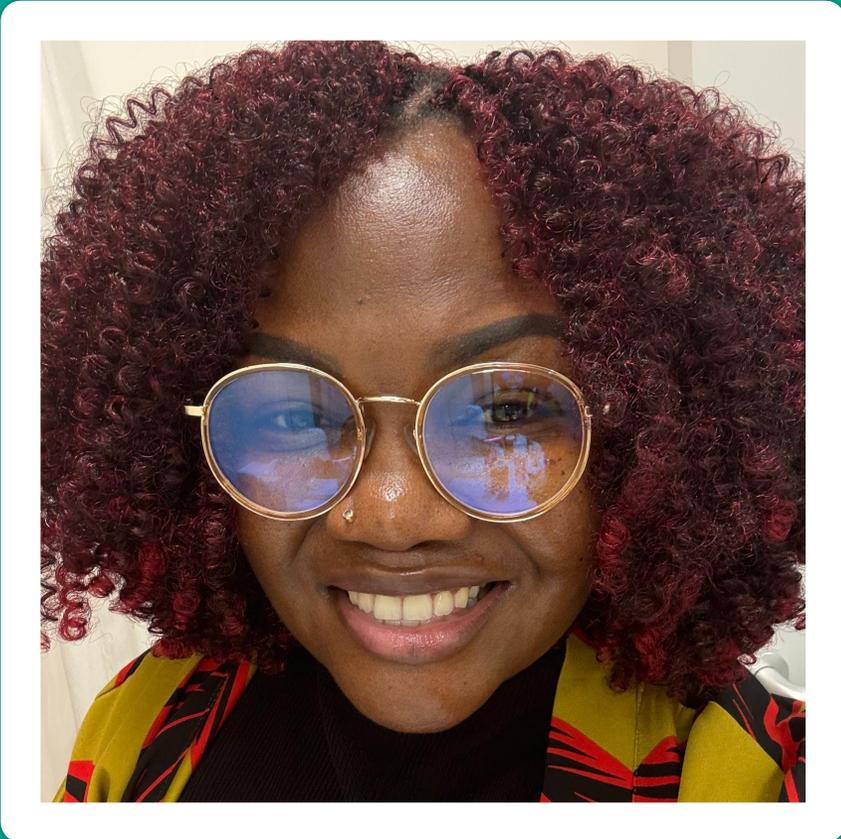
03

Scale up what works and prioritize sustainability: To ensure the continuity of norms-shifting interventions beyond the pilot phase, implementers must identify long-term funding sources from the outset

04

Close evidence gaps and drive innovation: To ensure the continuity of norms-shifting interventions beyond the pilot phase, implementers must identify long-term funding sources from the outset

Presenting: Stellah Bosire



Dr. Stellah W. Bosire is a medical doctor, lawyer, global health practitioner, researcher, and author with over 14 years of experience advancing gender equality, health equity, and inclusive governance across Africa. As Executive Director of the Africa Center for Health Systems and Gender Justice, she is advancing equity, investing in gender justice, and transforming health systems through gender equity, innovation, and sustainable investment. Dr. Bosire advances gender justice by tackling income inequalities as a fundamental lever for achieving equitable, responsive, and transformative health systems. Dr. Bosire serves as the Chairperson of Amnesty International Kenya, Governor of the Commonwealth Foundation representing Africa, and Board Member of Civicus Alliance. She was previously the Co-Executive Director of UHAI–EASHRI, CEO of the Kenya Medical Association, and Vice-Chair of the HIV/AIDS Tribunal of Kenya, consistently bridging civil society, government, and global institutions to shift power and resources toward equity.



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Kenya Country Snapshot: Deep Dive Findings

Background and Methods

Guided by two intersecting questions on:

- the **roles of faith and cultural leaders** in reinforcing or challenging gender norms, and
- how **entertainment media** is used to redefine what it means to be a man or woman in Kenyan society



Method #1:

Conducted desk reviews of grey literature and consultations with programme implementers and gender experts

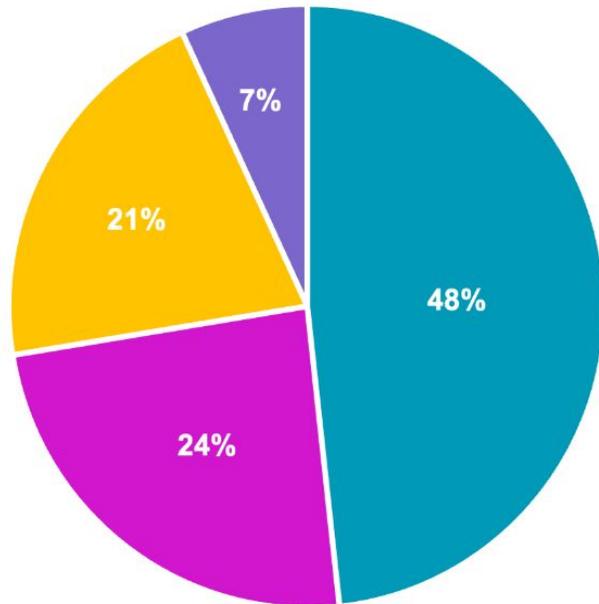


Method #2:

Centered the reviews on grey literature, as much of the knowledge gained from norm-shifting work in Kenya is found outside of academic journals

Results

Distribution of Faith and Cultural Champion Interventions
by Outcome Area (n=29)



■ Gender-Based Violence ■ Sexual and Reproductive Health
■ Child, Early, and Forced Marriage ■ Women's Economic Empowerment

- A total of 29 interventions engaged faith and cultural champions
- 11 explicitly focused on violence prevention or the transformation of harmful masculinities
- 9 interventions focused on sexual and reproductive health (SRH)
- 7 interventions addressed child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM)
- 2 interventions focused on women's economic empowerment (WEE)

Key Finding #1: Faith and cultural interventions demonstrate that masculinity norms shift through multiple, often overlapping, entry points and pathways

Beliefs need to change before behavior

1

Visible action precedes norm shifts

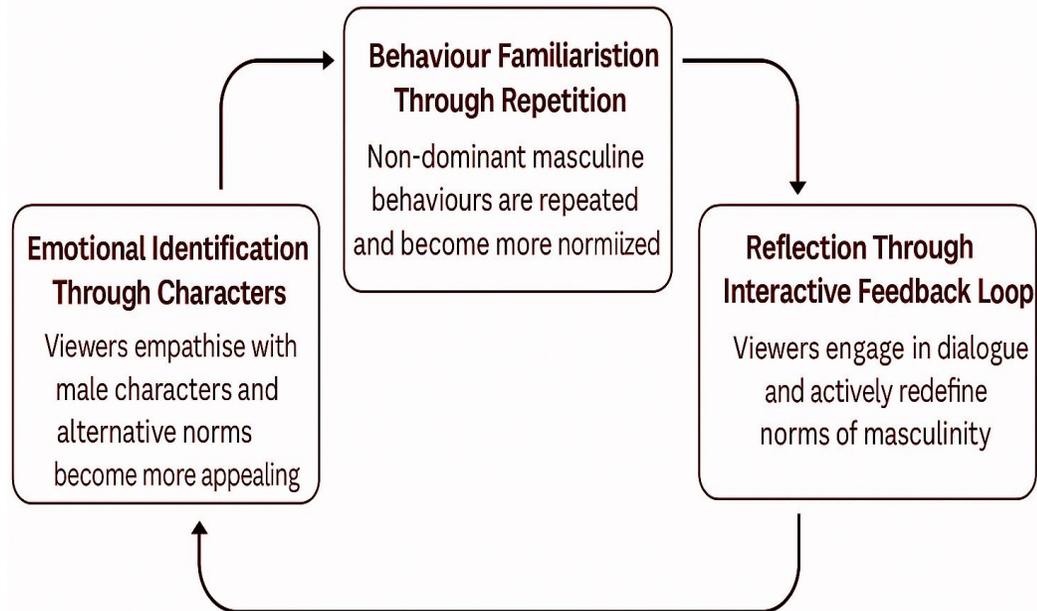
2

Beliefs and behaviors reinforce each other

3

Key Finding #2

Pathways of Norm Change via Entertainment Media



- Emotional identification through characters
- Behavior familiarization through repetition
- Reflection through interactive feedback loops

Reflections for Programming



Faith, cultural champions, and entertainment media interventions influence masculine norms through distinct but complementary pathways



Sustainable norm change happens when beliefs and behaviors evolve simultaneously, rather than following a rigid sequence



Effective interventions identify and engage context-specific male reference groups



Interventions must be aligned with local structures, social hierarchies, and points of resistance

Presenting: Shweta Singh



Dr. Shweta Singh is a consultant and academic with over 12 years of experience in social norms, behaviour change, and community engagement. She holds a Ph.D. in Social Sciences from Wageningen University & Research, The Netherlands, and has published and presented nationally and internationally on gender, food systems, and community development.



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India Country Snapshot: Deep Dive Findings

Background and Methods

Triangulated Approach

Literature review and **secondary analysis** of interventions

In-country **Sensemaking Workshop** (Delhi, Sept–Oct 2024) with CSOs, donors, media, practitioners

Grounded in Theoretical Frameworks: COM-B, Socio-Ecological, and Behavioural Drivers

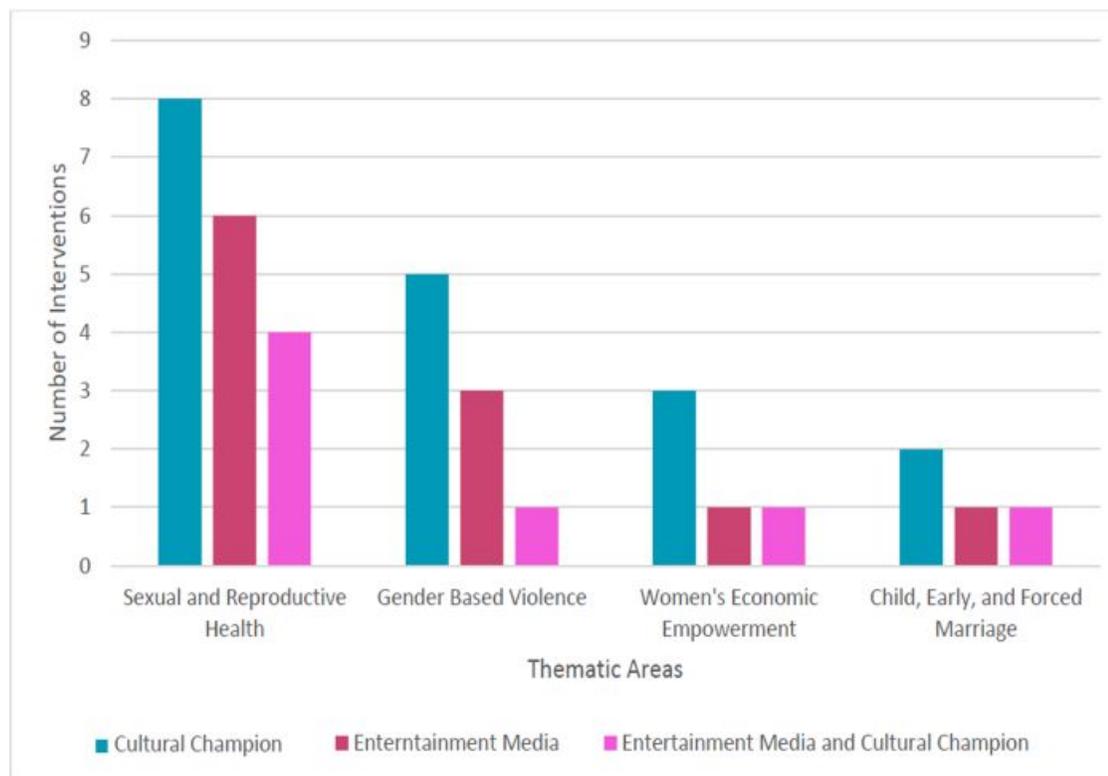
Deep Dive-India

Built on Global Evidence Review highlighting gaps in India-specific evidence

Focus of Exploration:

How norms shifts and behavioral changes occur, impact of norms-shifting interventions that leverage **entertainment media** and **cultural champions**

Results



Number of interventions (n=36) by thematic area and type, distributed across outcomes

36 interventions reviewed across India

- 18 (50%) **Cultural Champions**
- 11 (31%) **Entertainment Media**
- 7 (19%) **Combined approaches**

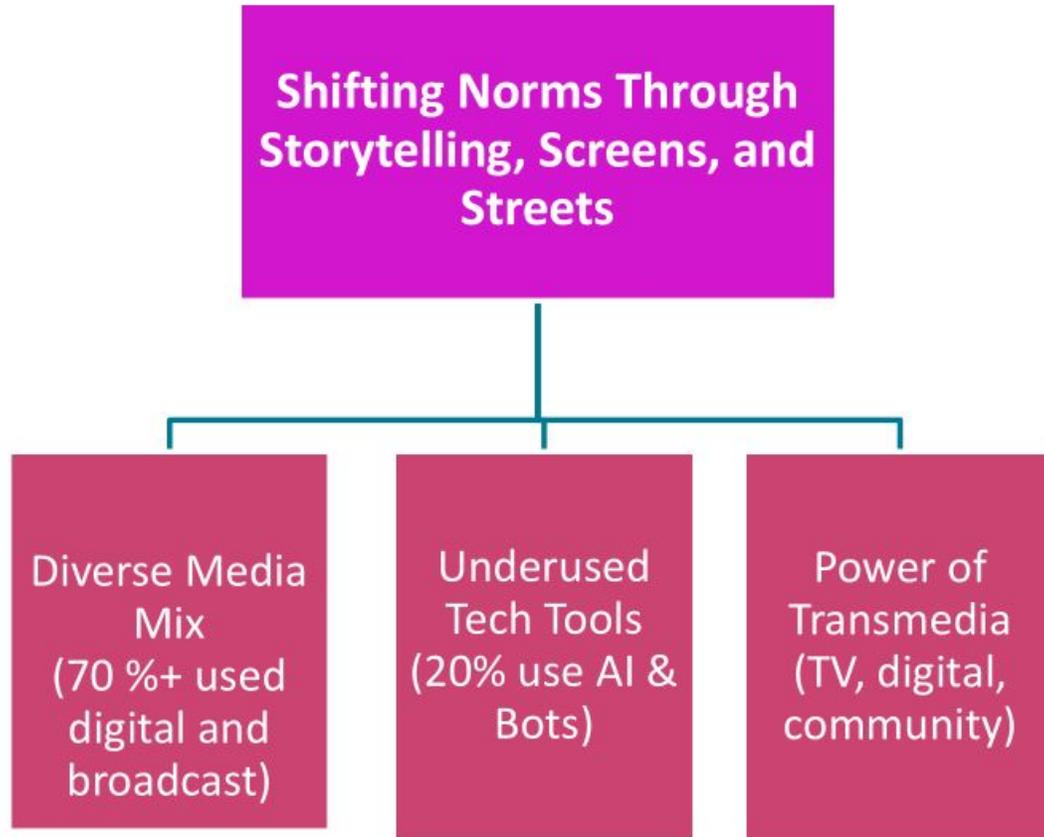
Thematic spread:

- **42%** Gender-Based Violence
- **30%** Women's Economic Empowerment
- **16%** Sexual & Reproductive Health
- **12%** Child, Early, Forced Marriage

Duration:

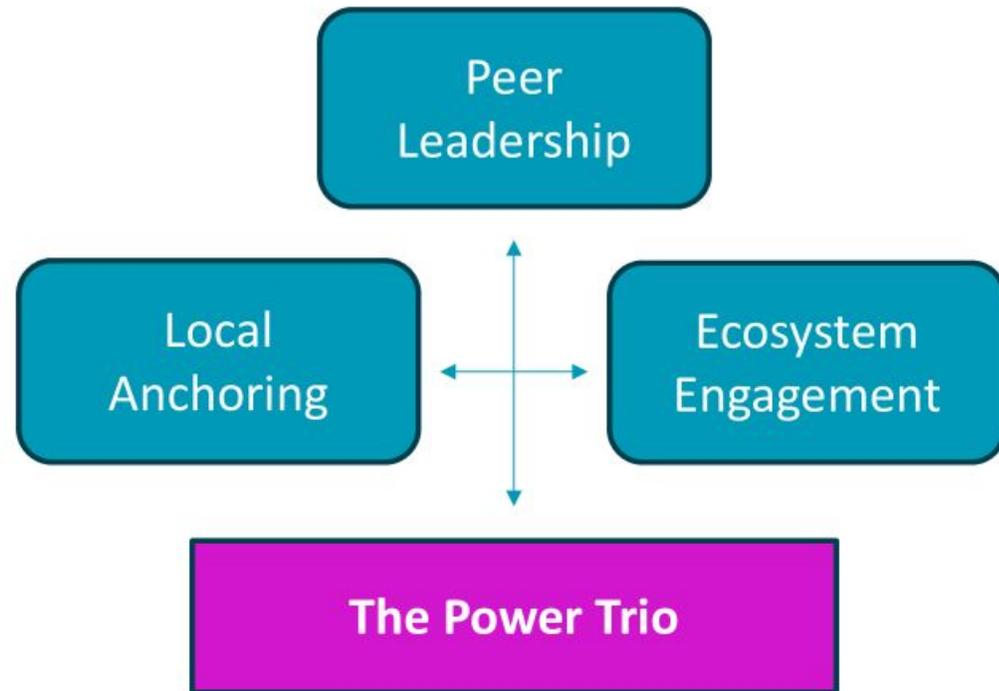
47% medium-term (1–3 yrs), 33% long-term (>3 yrs), rest short-term

Key Findings 1–Entertainment Media



- Multi-platform reach (TV, social, chatbots, games) drove high youth engagement
- Storytelling reduced stigma & modelled progressive behaviours
 - Examples: *MTV Nishedh*, *Bell Bajao!*, *Go Nisha Go*
- Untapped potential: gamification & AI used in only ~20% interventions

Key Findings 2–Cultural Champions



- Trusted grassroots figures (peer mentors, SHGs, teachers, religious leaders) built safe spaces
- Used street theatre, role-play, flipcharts, door-to-door outreach, mentoring
- Multi-level approaches (individual + family + community) sustained norm change
- Examples: *Plan-It Girls*, *Parivartan*, *We Can Campaign*
- Engaging reference groups (fathers, mothers-in-law) critical for acceptance

Gaps, Recommendations

Persistent Gaps: Digital divide, limited male engagement, backlash risks, weak measurement frameworks

Calls to Action:

- Design **inclusive interventions** for girls with disabilities & marginalized groups
- Embed **robust measurement** of *social norm shifts* (not just attitudes)

Questions?

In the Q&A box, share any questions you may have for the panelists.

Parallel Sessions

Select which breakout room you'd like to join for the next 30 minutes:

Room 1

Social Norms Measurement: Approaches, Insights, and Challenges

What it takes to shift norms with insights provided by practitioners working on entertainment media and champion interventions.

Room 2

Hot-Button Topics: Ally or Obstacle?

Can men, mothers-in-law, and other influencers be both allies and obstacles?

Room 3

Myth-Busting Social Norms

What the evidence *really* says.

Room 4

Shifting Norms Ethically: Who Decides What Changes?

Ethics and effectiveness in norms programming.

Looking Forward: Challenges and Opportunities

Leigh Stefanik, Gates Foundation

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brand new website!**



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Thank You