



SOCIAL NORMS ANALYSIS

Introduction

Social norms overlap with development outcomes throughout a woman's life-cycle: they will determine whether she has any opportunity to forge her own pathway to empowerment and to contribute to the empowerment of her community or not. Research on discriminatory social norms have shown the many ways in which discriminatory laws and practices may curtail her ability to break the cycle of poverty and access the resources she needs for her empowerment.

The social norms guidance document is a set of exercises that helps programme teams to identify and discuss the social norms, perceptions and expectations that shape, constrain or promote women's economic empowerment in economic development initiatives within their context.

These exercises are complementary to our strategies and interventions on employment, food security, care work, enterprise and markets development.

IMPACT GROUP CLASSIFICATION

Average time for using this tool?

1-day workshop. See individual steps for time breakdowns

Who leads?

Local partner with legitimacy in the local area when possible.

Who needs to be involved?

Oxfam project staff and partners; Oxfam programme managers; community level facilitators; community members; other organisations in order to gather additional information, as needed

Important Related Items

- Gender Based Violence Guidance
- Women's Economic Leadership
- Systems and Power Analysis

Activity 1: Getting started

Introduction to social norms and the changing social norms in a specific context

Activity 2: Focused discussions

Step 1 is required for all groups, then facilitators select exercise 2 or 3 or 4 to identify social norms to challenge or promote, within specific topics.

IMPACT GROUP CLASSIFICATION

Activity 1: Getting started

Step 1: Introduction

Talking about social norms can be uncomfortable for some participants. Your first job is to make them feel as comfortable as possible doing so. Ensure they know that there is no right or wrong answer to give during the workshop, and that all opinions and ideas are equally valid.

Explain and agree objectives of the session/day with participants.

Working together, also define the terms we will be using (norms, attitudes, perceptions), and ask for examples to check understanding. Write this up so it is visible throughout the workshop.

Present evidence relating to the social norms which will be discussed, that is relevant to the context. This is important for framing the discussions. For example, present numbers of women in different paid occupations in project area/agricultural markets; survey results on prevalence of gender-based violence; results on women's and men's time use from the Rapid Care-Analysis or Household Care Survey. You may also choose to present this evidence at the start of step 4 instead.

Step 2: Determining the social norms in this context

(1 Hour)

Objective:

- To give us an idea of current social norms as understood by group members

Method:

Ask participants to answer one question from a list (based on the one below) out loud without commenting on each other's answers.

Ask for any comments after all questions have been answered, and everyone has had a chance to speak. The facilitator can draw out issues of what people think 'should be', versus what 'people do'; differences

IMPACT GROUP CLASSIFICATION

between unwritten norms and written rules, and differences between norms of different groups or generations.

Examples questions to ask (edit as necessary for your context):

- How do women and men dress? (In school? At work?)
- How do young people speak to elders?
- For what reasons do women travel away from their houses?
- When do young people leave home? What is expected then of their relationship with parents?
- How is a funeral paid for? Who pays?
- How often do people do religious activities?
- What do parents expect children to learn from school? How many years should a child study?
- What foods would you offer a guest at your house? Cooked at home or purchased foods?
- What is considered a 'good husband'?
- What are considered 'valuable possessions'?

Step 3: What were social norms like 10-20 years ago (have norms changed)?

(30 minutes)

Objectives:

- To strengthen the understanding that norms have changed and will continue to change, and to what extent changing norms are significant.
- To explore – to help participants think more creatively about norms, with more nuance, and respect each other's opinions.

Method:

Building on the first exercise, choose a relevant time-period for change. Ask participants to answer the same questions, but this time thinking: "what would have been the answer 10-15 years ago?" or "what would have been the answer in your grandmother's time?"

Encourage people to expand briefly if they give a short answer – was it different for different social classes, ethnicities, locations? [But ask people to wait to discuss *how* change happened until exercise 3.]

Notice/comment when participants use sayings or expressions.

Notice/comment when participants mention what happens when people didn't adhere to norms – what were the consequences?

IMPACT GROUP CLASSIFICATION

Then ask the group the following questions, and have a brief discussion:

- To what extent have changes in norms influenced behaviour? Or has behaviour continued the same, even while norms and expectations have changed?
- In what ways have your lives improved because of these changes in norms?

Activity 2: Focused discussions

Step 1 should be done in all workshops. Facilitators then choose from steps 2 or 3 or 4.

Step 1: How do/can social norms change here?

Objectives:

- To strengthen participants' understanding of the complexity of the process of changing social norms, perceptions, and expectations.
- To brainstorm a range of sources and drivers of change

Method:

Select two to four “most-interesting norms changes” from Activity 1, Step 2, depending on how many small groups can be formed. Select ones that represent different dimensions of life/behaviour.

Write each ‘norm’ on the top of a large piece of paper, with three columns labelled ‘driver/source of change’, “+/-“ and ‘response’.

Divide participants into small groups to work on one norm each.

Ask participants to brainstorm sources of change, being as specific as possible. *i.e. how the norm has been influenced by specific laws & policies, media/images, religious leaders; cultural figures/celebrities; evidence/ information; migration or new populations; schools/training; new technology, employment etc....* Record this in column 1.

Next, ask them to discuss and record whether this source / driver/ leader influenced, or promoted, change or reinforced the existing norm, and how influential it was.

Next, for the third column, answer on family/community responses to this change in norms – has there been praise and approval of those exhibiting the new norm? ignoring the change? criticism? backlash or

IMPACT GROUP CLASSIFICATION

violence? acceptance and flexibility? What is the perception of the benefits or problems associated with the new norms?

Encourage participants to note disagreements. Ask each group to also answer the questions:

- How did the norm begin to be debated?
- What combination of factors was necessary to change the norm?

Each group presents their page.

Step 2: Perceptions about the skills and value of work

(1.5-2 hours)

Objectives:

- To focus the group on perceptions about types of work, using their (new) understanding about norms to enhance ‘critical thinking’ about these perceptions.
- To describe the current, local perceptions/norms about gender roles and work.
- To introduce the idea that household/care tasks are also ‘work’.

Method:

Write up/display a list of types of work, modified for the context.

The list should consist of occupations that many households would have at least one family member performing, so that people are implicitly comparing skills/value of the work they are familiar with.

The list should also include 6-8 ‘care work’ tasks/occupations, mixed in with productive tasks. All written in a way that doesn’t identify it as paid or unpaid. (see end of step for an example list)

Ask participants to take 5 minutes to individually rank how s/he perceives these ‘economic activities/work’, from most skilled/valued to least skilled/valued – make a clear list from 1-15. Be clear with participants that there is no right answer.

Then ask participants to write each rank number next to the occupation-name on the list on display. Quickly calculate averages, display the range of ranks.

Ask participants to select (individually) five occupations that they think ‘contribute most to family welfare’. Each participant then puts five stars on chart, one next to their selected five.

IMPACT GROUP CLASSIFICATION

Ask participants to note on their own paper (individually) “20 years ago which occupations were usually men’s and which usually women’s” with ‘M’ and ‘W’.

Then ask participants to note “which activities are now mostly men’s and which are mostly women’s” with an additional M and W on their own paper, or B for both. Each participant writes an arrow and letter on the chart for those occupations that s/he perceives are changing gender roles (e.g. =>W; =>B; =>M) and nothing written for those not changing.

Facilitate a discussion, using the following as a guide:

- a) Why do they think these are the **average ranks**? How do you think other women in the community would rank these occupations (differences between this group and ‘other women’)? How do you think other men in the community would rank these occupations (differences between this group and ‘other men’)? What are the implicit criteria for skills/value?
- b) How does **average rank compare with the stars** for that task? with the **gender roles**? Are there any patterns about changes in gendered roles? Why is this? Does the gender role change depending on whether the task is paid or unpaid?
- c) What would you want to change in public perceptions of these skills, particularly the lower-ranked ones? Why? What would be the **(dis)advantages of reconsidering the skills/value** of these activities?
- d) What do you perceive as helpful or difficult about the changes noted in gender roles? **(Dis)advantages of changing gendered occupational roles** - for the community or the local economy? What might be the response (or backlash)?

Example list:

- Planting/harvesting crop
- Drying, processing an agricultural product
- Carpentry/making furniture
- Child care (bathing, looking after)
- Laundering clothes
- Bicycle repair
- Caring for ill people/nursing
- Preparing meals/cooking
- Trading/retail shop
- Driving a vehicle/transport
- Feeding/breastfeeding children
- Repairing a house/roof
- Cleaning house/sweeping/beds

IMPACT GROUP CLASSIFICATION

- Collecting fuel or water
- Taking care of farm animals
- Teaching/tutoring/training

Step 3: Changing Gendered Norms about Care Work

(2 hours)

Objectives:

- To identify specific changes in social norms about gendered roles in care work that are most relevant, and would be most beneficial to women's economic empowerment in this program, prioritised by the feasibility of change.
- Using the results of exercise 2 to brainstorm potential interventions, using a combination of drivers/sources of change, to promote positive change in these norms.

Method:

Divide participants into small groups to discuss and answer the questions, noting a range of answers (without debating). Share the answers in plenary at the end.

Ask "Why do you think that men do not do "care tasks" or "women's tasks" normally?" Encourage people to think about paid employment practices, institutions, education, policies and laws, as well as social norms.

Choose 2 tasks that the group identified (in exercise 4) as '*not changing*'.

Ask

"What is stopping men/boys from doing this work?"

"What is stopping women from requesting/giving more unpaid care tasks to men/boys?" Also identify norms and sayings that express this point.

Output: Brainstormed list of responses

Then ask "Which (*women's* care work) tasks are *more* feasible to ask men/boys to do?" "How might this change happen in your context? Would it happen?"

"How would you promote change in these tasks? What would be effective sources/drivers of change? Combinations of drivers of change?"

What would be the benefits of changing this norm about gender roles? How would you explain it to a relative or friend? What might be the drawbacks of the change?

Output: Agreement on task(s) feasible to change, proposals of how to make change, and explanations/arguments for why to make this change

IMPACT GROUP CLASSIFICATION

Ask the small groups to be very specific about one gender role change in care work. “How would you characterise this norms change? Think of the timeline of 20 years ago, and roles now, and agree a statement of roles for the future:

“ In 3/5 years, men will women will... “ (use answers to ii and iii above)

Ask the small group to be very specific about the social norm underlying this change. E.g. “The expression/saying now is *food cooked by men gives stomach aches*” and in 3/5 years “the saying will be *men cooking nourishes the family*”

Output: Proposal on statement of ambition, and the current and future ‘expressions or sayings’ about this change.

In the large group, share the answers, especially to iv-vi if time is short. Identify proposals that could be developed further, and integrated into wider program.

Step 4: Changing Gendered Norms about Productive/Paid Work

Objectives:

- To identify specific changes in social norms gendered (productive/paid) occupational segregation that are most relevant, and beneficial to women economic empowerment in this program, prioritised by the feasibility of change.
- Using the results of exercise 3, to brainstorm potential interventions, using a combination of drivers/sources of change, to promote positive change in these norms.

Method:

See step 3 above, and replace the term 'care work' with 'productive/paid tasks' in the methodology.

For example:

Why do you think that men do not do “women’s” farm/productive tasks” or “women’s” paid work normally?”

“What is stopping women from requesting/giving more of their productive tasks to men/boys?”