

EASTERN AFRICA LEARNING COLLABORATIVE ON SOCIAL AND GENDER NORMS PRACTICE

Background

Social norms—the often unspoken rules that govern behaviour—shape almost every aspect of human life. In the Eastern African Region, social and gender norms are pivotal in positioning and determining peoples' ways of life, shaping opportunities and outcomes. The impact of harmful social norms, such as expectations related to gender-based violence, childbearing, women's economic engagement, reproductive health, and masculinity have received increasing attention over the last decade. As more programs seek to foster norms that support healthy and positive behaviours, there is an opportunity to advance understanding of social and gender norms—what they are, how to measure them, and how they influence behaviour—and how to scale-up normative interventions that show promise. Given the increasing number of researchers and practitioners working on social and gender norms, it is a critical moment to make the latest knowledge and evidence on social and gender norms widely accessible and provide opportunities for practitioners and researchers from different disciplines and sectors to share and generate knowledge. Moreover, as social and gender norms initiatives expand, opportunities for reflection on what constitutes promising practices for shifting norms, the costs and scalability of these approaches, high-quality measurement and the ethics of social and gender norms transformation becomes ever more urgent.

A Learning Collaborative to Advance Social Norms Practice

The vision for the Eastern Africa Learning Collaborative on Social and Gender Norms Practice (EALC) is to support effective program implementation and scale-up with evidence-based approaches. This will be achieved through support to a community of practice (CoP), and sharing of expert knowledge and resources. The EALC seeks to strengthen social and gender norms practice



Co-hosts:

The School of Women and Gender Studies at Makerere University and CARE International in Uganda

Managing Partner:

The Center on Gender Equity and Health at the University of California San Diego

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in the Eastern Africa Region in all areas and sectors that are influenced by social and gender norms. Representatives from local governments, NGOs, researchers, evaluators, donors, and development partners will form a social and gender norms CoP to strengthen or forge networks; build sustained expertise and capacity in Eastern African organizations and institutions; and support effective programming. The EALC was formed in April 2020, co-hosted by the School of Women and Gender Studies (SWGS) at Makerere University and CARE International (CI) in Uganda. The EALC brings together willing actors to document and share best practices, cultivating an environment of innovation and collaboration.

Mission

The mission of the EALC is to build a network of practitioners, researchers, and evaluators that supports social and gender norms programming, strengthens expertise at the implementation level, informs policy, and advances positive development outcomes.

Project Objectives

1. Promote networking and the exchange of experiences among practitioners, researchers, and evaluators in the Eastern Africa Region.
2. Promote the integration and adoption of evidence-based social and gender norms approaches in policy and programming in the Eastern Africa Region.
3. Share the latest social and gender norms evidence, approaches, and resources.
4. Strengthen social and gender norms program implementation, research, and evaluation.
5. Generate and share knowledge and innovations nationally, regionally, and globally.
6. Build capacity of Higher Education Institutions in gender and social norms theory and methodology.
7. Mobilize resources and promote collaborations within the CoP to strengthen social and gender norms practice.

Enabling Principles

1. **Convening power** that occurs regularly, is engaging, and maintains participation and interest of the members of the collaborative.
2. **A shared vision** built around a set of core values to provide guidance and improve programming.
3. **Distributed leadership** in which everyone in the collaborative network matters.
4. **Gender sensitivity and inclusion.**
5. **Learning and reflection space** that is effective.

Method of Work and Operation

EALC activities are implemented through online platforms that are conducive to collaborative learning and exchange. A few face-to-face activities may be organized in accordance with the Government of Uganda's COVID-19 prevention measures and guidance.

The Eastern Africa Learning Collaborative on Social and Gender Norms Practice is supported by the Center on Gender Equity and Health at the University of California San Diego with funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. It works closely with the Global Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change—a global network of researchers, practitioners, and donor organizations collaborating to advance social norms theory, measurement, and practice—as well as with other regional learning collaboratives in the network: <https://www.alignplatform.org/learning-collaborative>