



EVIDENCE SUMMARY: ADVANCING WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

SOCIAL NORMS

This document summarizes evidence and recommended actions from a USAID landscaping study on Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE) and Social Norms.

Proven Evidence = clear beneficial effect and strength of evidence

Promising Evidence = promising beneficial effect and strength of evidence

Proven Interventions to Shift Social Norms:

- Household methodologies combined with sector-based activities, such as agriculture and global health. Support facilitated dialogues, critical reflection, and goal-setting that increase cooperation within households, and trigger shifts in norms that promote more equitable workloads and economic opportunities.
- Group-based collective action and learning that increase women’s productivity and financial inclusion. Support village savings and loans associations, producer organizations, and self-help groups that bring women together and help to shift norms about women controlling income and engaging in markets and production.
- Meaningful male engagement. Recruit men and boys as allies in changing norms that perpetuate patriarchy and inequality by appealing to men’s self-interest and highlighting the benefits of positive masculinities for increased earnings and cooperation in productive activities and shared childcare.
- Context-specific gender analyses and norms diagnostics to measure the strength of norms. Conduct assessments to better understand barriers to women’s participation in economic activities and identify potential pathways for effecting positive shifts in perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors.



Promising Interventions to Shift Social Norms:



- Mass media campaigns and/or “edutainment.” Support targeted messages and programs containing role models that resonate with viewers or listeners to prompt shifts in norms about women’s employment and access to finance.
- Positive norm messages among reference or peer group members. Support organized diffusion using social network analysis to identify reference group “messengers” and engage their support to accelerate normative shifts and positive role-modeling.
- Multicomponent income-generating and empowerment-based life-skills training. Support programs to improve women’s self-esteem and human capital that can shift gender norms, reducing rates of early marriage and adolescent pregnancy.