

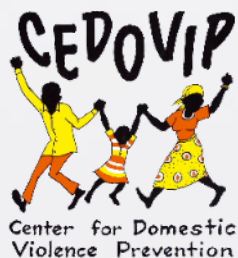


On the CUSP of change:

Effective scaling for social norms change programming for gender equality.

Community for Understanding Scale Up (CUSP)

Who we are?





Why we came together?

All of us have created initiatives that are now being scaled up

- Collectively we believe social norms change is key to addressing gender equality, including SRH&R and violence against women and girls.

Our methodologies and initiatives are:

- being used by many other groups
- often included as recommended programming in large funding calls
- regularly being used in ways that they were not originally designed for



These experiences brought us together to consider our responsibility as developers of these initiatives to guide quality programming and responsible scale up.

Photo credit: Institute for Reproductive Health

Big Question

As a field, the big question:

- How do we go to scale? How do we reach more people with effective programming?

CUSP Working Group challenges:

- How can existing initiatives be effectively and responsibly scaled up?
- How can innovation be encouraged while maintaining the principles and elements of effective social norms approaches?

The context:

- Evidence base for programming to change social norms to achieve gender equality, violence prevention, SHRH, has grown
- Growing recognition that social norms change programming is critical

However:

- Emphasis on RCTs as the only valid way of measuring impact
- In scale up, numbers alone can come to dominate
- Numbers focus undermines human rights based approach to development: de-emphasis for politicized social justice work and increased focus on technocratic approaches
- And more often, existing programs being taken to scale, less innovation

As a field, we need to learn how to scale the aspects of programming that makes them effective: values and principles

Starting at the beginning:

Why use a social norms change approach?

- Social norms are shared beliefs about what is typical and socially acceptable among group of people.
- Social norms shape and give order and meaning to our lives - they can be oppressive or freeing, confining or inclusive
- VAWG and gender inequality is sustained by norms that embody unequal gender power relations
- Shifting these norms rooted in power dynamics requires time and in-depth work to understand the social context
- The social norms change approach is inclusive and builds on community strength as opposed to using negative messaging and instilling fear.



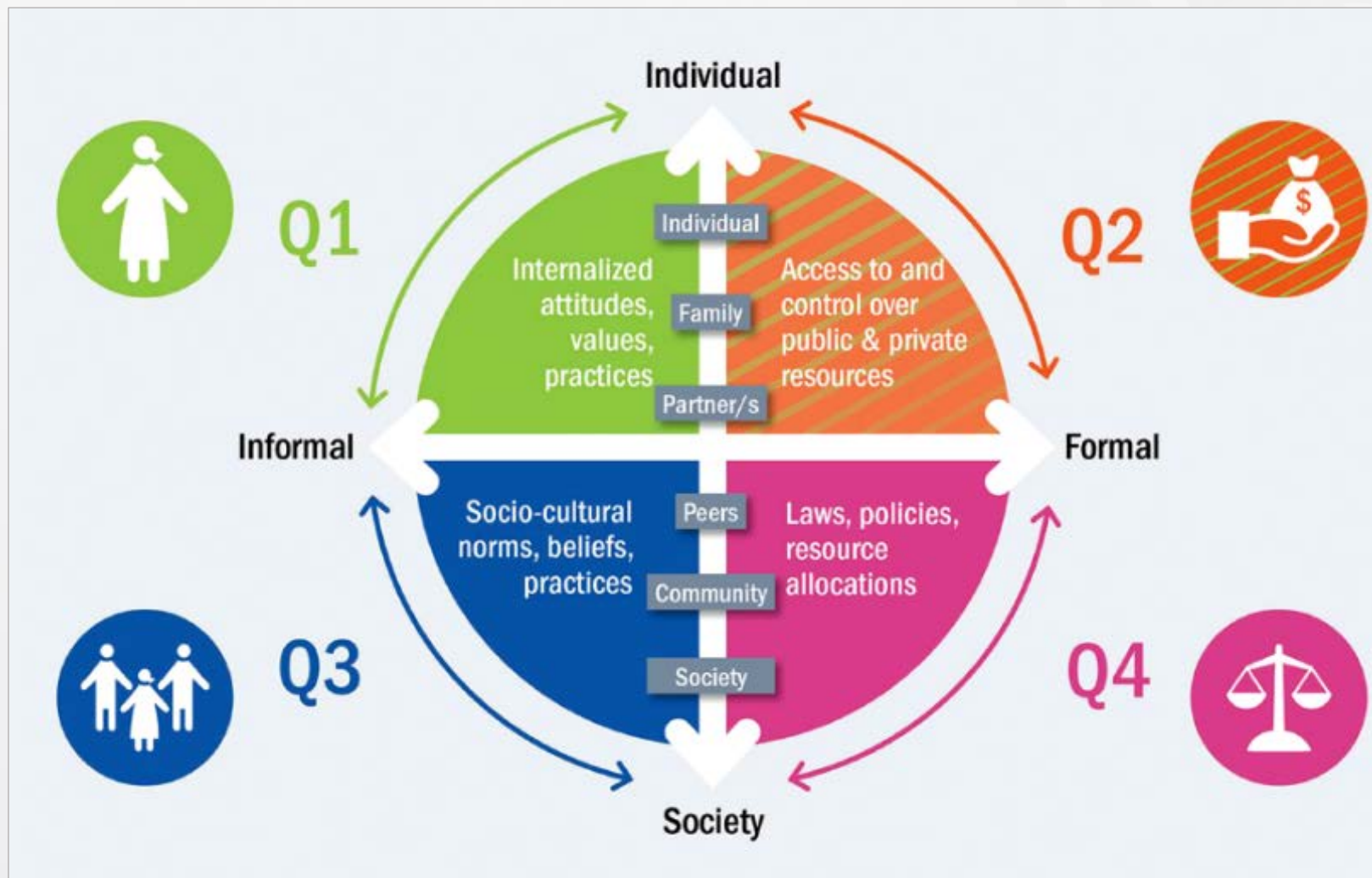
CUSP's approach to social norms change

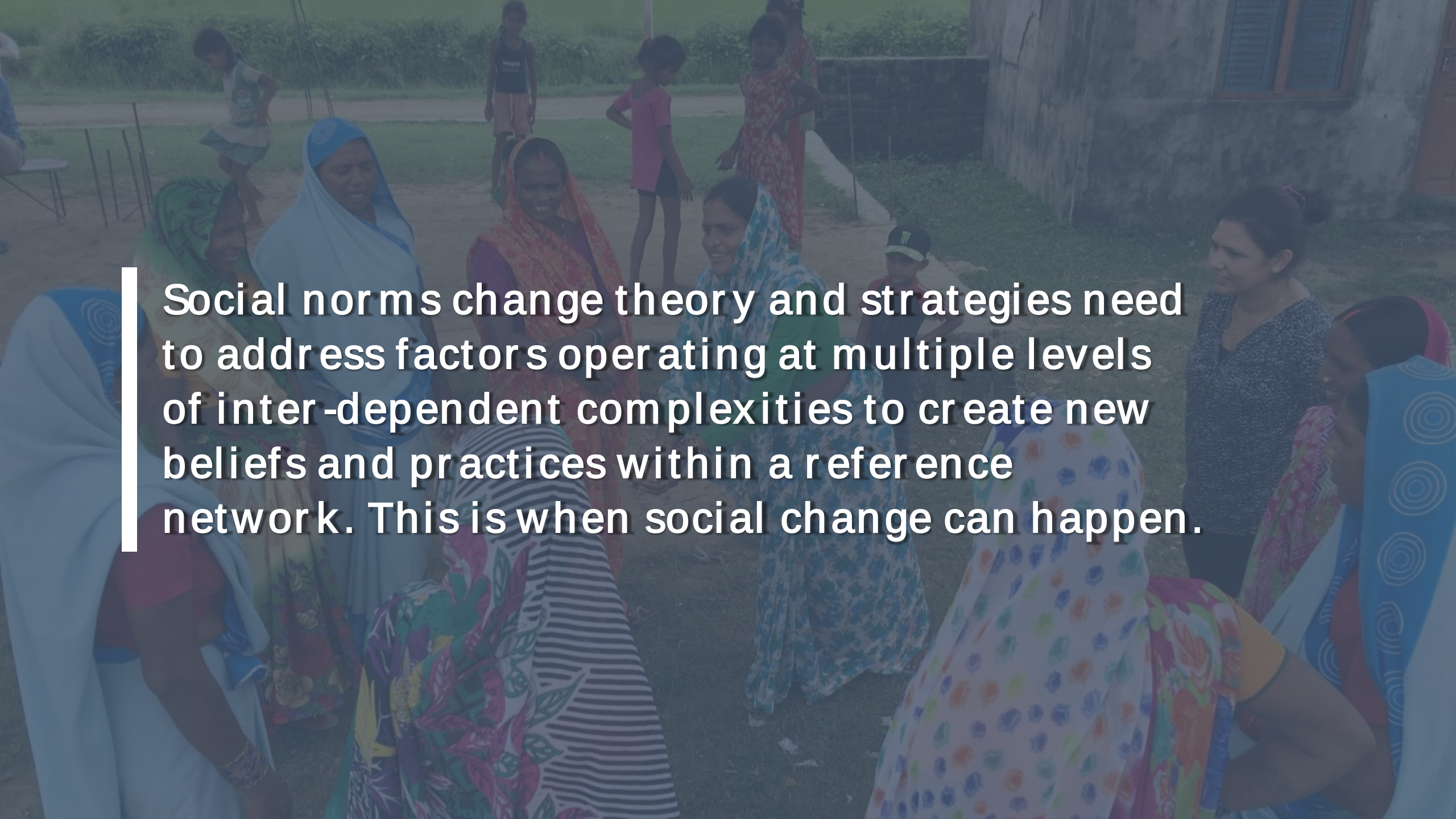
- We strive to shift social norms through aspirational and strengths-oriented approaches
- Developing the capacity of all people in all their diversities
- Envisioning a collective future where hope is based on people's own lived and gendered experiences
- Supporting communities to develop social norms change from within
- Identifying and building on community strengths, critically examining harmful behaviour, supporting positive change



A photograph of a group of women and children in a rural setting, possibly a village. The women are wearing traditional Indian clothing, including saris and headscarves. One woman in the foreground is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. The background shows a simple, possibly mud-brick building. The image has a blue tint and a semi-transparent white box containing text.

**Working across a range of groups,
perspectives and contexts to reach critical
mass or the ‘tipping point’**



A group of women, some wearing colorful saris and headscarves, are gathered outdoors in a rural setting. In the background, several children are standing near a simple building. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

Social norms change theory and strategies need to address factors operating at multiple levels of inter-dependent complexities to create new beliefs and practices within a reference network. This is when social change can happen.

Taking social norms change approaches to scale – no silver bullet

- Many groups recognize the need for **sustained, holistic, integrated and multisectoral approaches** to address **complex problems**
- However current models often
 - limit investment to evidence-based programs
 - are shortened, scaled down versions of evidence-based programs
 - include a mix and match of evidence-based programs
- This affects possibilities for both **effective programming of existing approaches** and **innovation for new approaches**



Scaling existing initiatives: key lessons

**Sufficient time
for NGOs to
internalize a
program
approach**

**Maintain fidelity
to core
principles**

**Create a strong
foundation**

**Engage
program
developers**

**Think beyond
numbers**

**Get
personal**

**Adapt
and evolve**

**Support
innovation**

Supporting innovation: scaling of principles



Do no harm



Work across the ecological model and change matrix



Use an intersectional, gender-power analysis



Ensure sustained commitment



Support theory and evidence-informed innovations



Promote personal and collective critical reflection



Support and invest in staff and community facilitators

Further reading



A call to action

CUSP's vision is for the scale up of social norms change programming to remain grounded in **gendered, social justice principles** both when taking existing programs to scale and embarking on new innovations.





We call for **longer-term funding and planning**, commitment to **do no harm**, a deeper **investment in people**, engagement with **communities as equals** with **hope and optimism**.



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