

## Civic Update

### Social and Behavior Change

Citizen Participation & Inclusion Team | January 2022

Social norms are the unwritten rules of behavior that are shared by members of a group or society. They are informal, implicit and make up the social agreements among groups and society about the right way to behave. As such, norms impact how politics is practiced and how decisions are made. Examples of political impact can include expectations about young people deferring to older power holders and widespread social acceptance (or resignation) regarding corruption. Norms are increasingly being recognized by actors across the democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) sector as important determinants of sustainable democratic development. Programs are being designed to shift norms by tackling behaviors that negatively impact democratic practice. These [social and behavior change \(SBC\)](#) interventions can add a powerful dimension to development work. SBC approaches can assist NDI staff and partners to better understand their social and political environment and learn how to identify and shift behaviors that influence political interactions.

This Civic Update explores the interrelationship between norms and behaviors, provides insight into developing an SBC approach, and highlights SBC benefits and limitations. SBC within the democracy and governance sector is still evolving, with best practices, lessons learned and challenges being collected and analyzed. This Update is not meant to address all aspects of SBC or implications for DRG work. Instead, it provides a general framework and practical examples from programs in Kosovo, Uganda, and Ukraine which highlight some of the ways NDI is thinking about and applying SBC approaches. This Update serves as a stepping stone for NDI as we continue to explore SBC and understand how SBC interventions can contribute to making democracy work.

### What are social norms?

Social norms are implied rules that govern behavior within groups and shape a full range of social interactions, from waiting in line to



*In August 2021, NDI hosted a conference in Kosovo to assess the status of women in politics and governance and to set a forward-looking agenda.*

practicing civil political discourse. How people act is defined, in part, by norms that dictate what is expected and acceptable in a given situation. Norms can also change based on the environment, situation, and culture. Although social norms are important for social functioning, they can also result in harmful outcomes. Gender norms, a subset of social norms, are commonly accepted social or cultural rules that specify male and female characteristics, roles, acceptable behaviors, and capacities. In most contexts, gender norms are framed in binary terms (female and male), which erase non-binary or gender-fluid identities. Gender norms often reflect and reinforce unequal gender relations, usually to the disadvantage of girls and women, but also boys, men, and people of diverse gender identities. Adherence to specific norms, including gender norms, can determine an individual's status or belonging in a group and whether they are accepted or rejected by society. Social norms impact and influence every facet of society, including politics.

## What is the relationship between norms, attitudes, and behaviors?

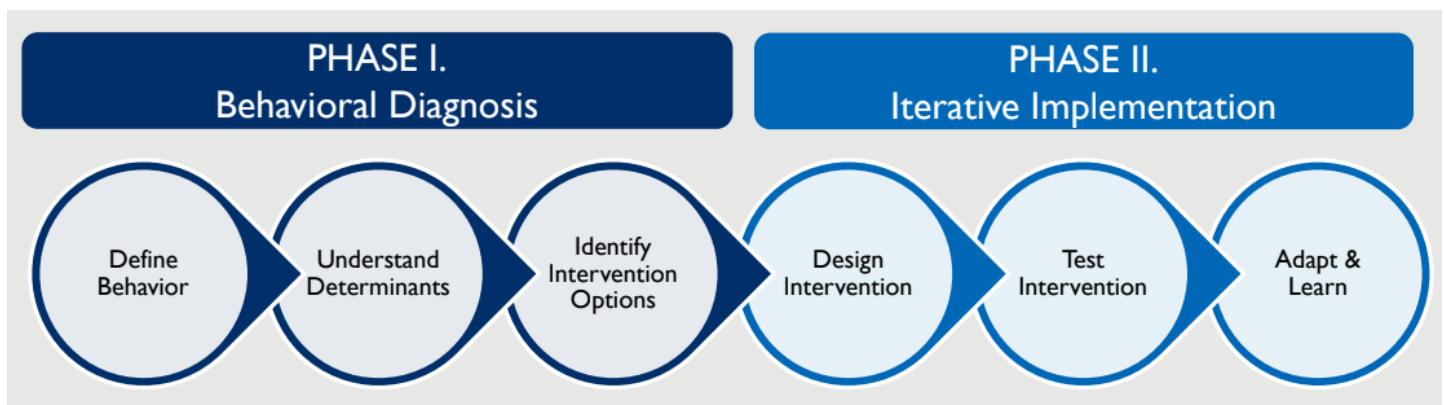
Understanding the difference between norms, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors has important implications for designing programs and interventions. However, it can be difficult to distinguish the difference between each concept. A brief guide titled, [How Are Social Norms Different](#), describes the distinction between social norms and related concepts and why this is important for programs. According to the guide, an attitude is a personally held belief or judgment about something or someone. Attitudes are often the result of experience and although attitudes may be influenced by others, they are not based on what others do or think. This distinguishes attitudes from social norms, which can only exist in relationship with others. Social norms are based on ‘what we see or believe others do’ and ‘what we think others expect us to do.’ While attitudes can have a direct impact on behavior, social norms have the ability to override attitudes. The prevalence of a strong social norm can sway someone’s deeply held attitude or belief. For example, if appointing campaign sponsors to key policy-making positions after an election is a norm, a newly-elected official might do so, even if it goes against their belief in a competitive hiring process. When people are faced with a strong social norm, they may do things they do not agree with. Behaviors, such as giving preferential treatment to a campaign sponsor or paying a bribe, are actions. Behaviors can result from a combination of factors, including norms, attitudes, abilities, circumstances, and morals. Social norms can incentivize behaviors but are not the same thing as a behavior. Understanding the difference between each concept helps practitioners design strategies and interventions that more effectively target norms, attitudes or beliefs.

## How do norms impact political participation?

Norms are important determinants of political behaviors, including those associated with legitimate democratic practices (e.g., public consultation) and illegitimate practices (e.g., vote-buying). Strengthening democratic institutions and processes alone does not guarantee democratic behavior. For instance, norms can make political parties unwilling to place women at the top of candidate lists or prevent citizens from accessing public services without paying a bribe. The full and equitable participation of all people in public life is essential to building and sustaining democracies. However, harmful social norms limit the ability of people to participate in political life and decision-making processes. Different types of power, such as [invisible power](#), are also influenced by social norms. People can believe that various forms of power exercised over them are natural or unchangeable. To develop and sustain a democratic culture, specific norms often need to be replaced. In many places where NDI operates, democratic development is threatened by political norms that favor nepotism, cronyism or identity politics. These types of norms influence how power is used and abused, by limiting equal opportunities for all people to participate. The application of SBC approaches can help DRG practitioners identify behaviors, attitudes and beliefs that negatively impact politics and design interventions that disrupt the status quo and cultivate new behaviors.

## Overview of SBC Phases

SBC approaches are interventions that are designed to influence the attitudes or behavior of a target population. SBC approaches help practitioners clearly identify the factors that drive or enable



behavior and apply behavioral insights and evidence to influence sustainable behavior change at the individual, community, and societal levels. As behaviors begin to shift, norms will also begin to shift. Taking an SBC approach means program design is focused on changing behavior, and a shift in behavior is required to achieve the desired outcome. USAID developed an [SBC guide for DRG practitioners](#) which describes six phases of an SBC approach: 1) defining the behavior, 2) understanding determinants, 3) identifying intervention options, 4) designing interventions, 5) testing interventions, and 6) adapting and learning.

## Defining Behavior

An SBC approach starts with identifying norms and behaviors that need to be changed and the individuals or groups practicing the behavior. When considering which behavior to target, practitioners should brainstorm relevant behaviors that they want to change and generate a potential list. For example, if vote-buying is the ultimate norm that practitioners want to change, what are the relevant behaviors or attitudes associated with vote-buying? Tools for mapping out behaviors or attitudes can include surveys, focus groups, and other qualitative and quantitative research methods. To narrow down which behavior to target, teams can ask a series of key questions, including:

- What is the desired outcome as a result of the behavior change?
- Are there potential risks when pursuing the desired behavior? Are the risks greater among different communities?
- How likely is it that the behavior can be changed?
- Can the behavior and change in behavior be measured?
- How likely is it the behavior will have an impact, either positive or negative, on related behaviors?

During this process, practitioners should include diverse perspectives in an effort to minimize potential biases. Individuals may not always be conscious of their biases and a diverse, inclusive working group can help mitigate this challenge.

## Understanding Determinants

Determinants of behavior help us understand and answer an important question in SBC program design: What drives people to behave in a specific

way? Once target behaviors and the drivers behind those behaviors are identified, the following two steps are essential to concretize an understanding of the determinants of behavior.

### Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is an integral part of the SBC process and can be collected in a variety of ways including focus groups, interviews and secondary research. At NDI, staff have utilized observation, interviews and focus groups to identify and inform behavior determinants. Observation captures the quick, intuitive, and unconscious cognitive process of individuals, groups and society as a whole. These take place over an extended period of time and rely heavily on real-time lived experiences. During this process researchers consciously record observations of behavior and instances that lead to that behavior over time and try to remain as objective as possible to minimize bias. In SBC, this is supplemented with public opinion research.

SBC is a data-driven process and data collection and analysis are vital. Effective data collection helps to map out all behaviors and observed social norms, which act as influencers of behavior. Data analysis techniques such as correlation testing and hypothesis testing help to measure and quantify the correlation as well as causation between the targeted behavior and determinant. Segregating determinants based on the strength of their correlation with the targeted behavior will add integrity to the answer of “why” certain behaviors exist. The factors that have the strongest correlation with the targeted behavior inform the intervention.

## Identifying Interventions

Once determinants have been identified, they can broadly be attributed to the Attention, Belief Formation, Choice, Determination (ABCD) framework which assists in identifying the interventions that will result in behavior change. Interventions should focus on activities that will be the most effective in creating the desired behavior change. There are several different types of interventions that serve different functions and can be utilized collectively or individually. These include:

- Increasing knowledge, understanding and skill sets through education and training
- Utilizing communication to persuade or stimulate action that results in behavior change
- Utilizing rewards as a way to incentivize certain types of behavior
- Enforcing rules or restrictions that reduce the



- opportunity for engagement in target behaviors
- Creating more enabling environments that reduce barriers to the practice of positive behaviors
- Establishing a cost associated with the practice of target behaviors

The research conducted to identify determinants can be utilized to identify which interventions may be more effective in targeting specific behaviors or which interventions may be more likely to lead to change.

## Designing Interventions

Designing the intervention requires a deeper analysis of the ABCD framework. Once practitioners classify their observations into the 4 elements of the framework, it is important to understand what motivates each element.

**Attention:** To design interventions targeting attentional issues, the intervention needs to be relevant and seize attention. Important questions to ask when determining attention biases include: (1) “Why is the behavioral issue an attention problem?”, (2) “Is the behavioral issue accessible enough?”, and (3) “Is the behavioral issue easy to understand?”.

**Belief Formation:** To target a belief formation, beliefs need to be challenged. Prompting reflection in a target population will lead them to question their relationship with existing social norms and, by developing a broader perspective, be more open to understanding other beliefs. What are the pre-existing social norms and beliefs and what questions can we pose to prompt the audience to challenge these beliefs in an ethical and harmless way?

**Choice:** To shift people’s preferences, creating motives to highlight the better option can lead to the individual deliberating their options. Emotions are a strong navigational tool for making choices. People often choose a particular option if they associate a strong memory with it or internally simulate the consequences of making one choice over the other. SBC experts can help anticipate the public’s emotions and frame a strategy accordingly.

**Determination:** Encouraging and assisting the target audience to develop concrete action plans towards a goal helps to increase confidence and a sense of agency, leading to more informed and determined behavior. To assess determined behavior, one might ask what are the difficulties individuals are facing in relation to the desired behavior? Also, are people aware of how to harness their resources and develop



*In 2020, NDI CSO partners united to launch the Rizni.Rivni (Different.Equal) campaign, the first-ever national campaign for LGBTQI+ equality in Ukraine.*

sustainable plans for themselves and the people around them?

## Testing Interventions

Intervention design is directly linked to the ABCD framework and testing the efficacy of the design is as important as designing the intervention. Randomized experiments can be one way to do this. Randomized experiments, or more commonly called randomized control trials (RCTs), rely on experimental design to test the efficacy of the intervention. RCTs work with a representative sample size of their target audience and divide the audience into two groups - one that receives the intervention and one that does not. The group that receives the intervention is called the treatment group and the group that does not is called the control group. It is important that both of these groups are under observation to test the efficacy of the intervention.

There are some obvious and high-reaching barriers to conducting RCTs, some of which include cost and feasibility. Alternative options include public opinion research, such as surveys, in-depth interviews, implicit association tests, and focus group discussions, at various stages of a program to compare and analyze differences and similarities to determine whether significant changes occurred.

## Adapting and Learning

During this phase, practitioners review the process and make any necessary adjustments. It is necessary

to revisit the political context and reaffirm that the correct behaviors are being targeted and that the intervention is having the intended impact. Are the results promising enough to motivate scaling the intervention? Would it be feasible in the current social and political climate? Also, fluctuations in behavior change should be monitored as well. Is the observed change long-lasting? Is it significant? After the process has been reviewed and validated, the results should be made public. Releasing documents or engaging the public using a social media campaign will inform the development of more effective, strategic programs and may encourage the public to take steps towards achieving positive political change.

## Benefits and Limitations of SBC

SBC is an effective way to diagnose problems, bridge the gap between research and practice, and inform comprehensive solutions that lead to sustainable democratic change. In addition, SBC helps practitioners understand what works and what doesn't by allowing them to test and refine their approach, ensuring programs are targeting the behaviors preventing democratic progress.

Additional benefits to SBC include:

- SBC can accurately assess and target behaviors to inform norm change. It promotes qualitative and quantitative analysis so that behavior change can be measured after the intervention has taken place and appropriate scaling can be done.
- SBC can lead to community-level change and shift social expectations. The audience is an active part of norm-shifting interventions and not just a static recipient of project-led activities.
- SBC addresses power imbalances and marginalization by shifting social attitudes and behaviors that drive marginalization, resulting in sustainable change that impacts all communities.
- SBC can result in both positive behavior change now as well as positive norm change in the future. As social norms influence behaviors, behaviors also have a ripple effect and can influence social norms. Positive behaviors can shift social expectations and group norms altogether.
- SBC answers the question "Why?" For example, why does violence against a particular group exist? What are a few of the most important determinants of it and how strong is their relationship with the behavior? Can we design an intervention based on the trend we observe or the lack of one? Does the intervention create a

significant impact and by how much?

Despite the benefits of SBC, there are also limitations:

- SBC is both time-consuming and resource-heavy. These approaches often require hiring experts with qualitative and quantitative research skills.
- Correlation does not mean causation. Analyzing determinants can establish a very strong correlation between the behavior and its determinants but to definitely say "these are the causal factors" requires more in-depth research and analysis.
- SBC is not applicable or feasible for every program. Each context is different and targeting social expectations and behaviors can be a complex process. In some cases, a focus on SBC can detract from the overall goal or purpose of the program.
- When conducting RCTs, the sample size needs to be representative, large enough and must have treatment and control groups that are as similar as possible.
- SBC approaches do not eliminate bias.

## Considerations and Recommendations

It's important to remember that SBC may not always be the best approach because not every problem is a social or behavioral problem. Therefore it is recommended that the situation be assessed and analyzed to determine whether the issue relates to existing social norms, expectations, or beliefs or is rooted in other structural or legal circumstances. In addition, SBC interventions that were effective in one context, will not be effective in another, requiring new analysis and starting from the beginning each time.

The individuals and groups that make up the target communities and audiences for SBC approaches should be supported in owning the process. Giving these communities greater agency is directly linked to higher confidence in results, a higher response rate, and concrete results of programs conducted. Therefore before utilizing an SBC approach, NDI should be able to clearly identify the communities being targeted and ensure they are involved in prioritizing issues, setting goals, and developing strategies. In addition, the SBC process must be implemented with a Do No Harm approach to ensure the process does not unintentionally reinforce existing barriers to inclusion, exacerbate

## Men, Power, and Politics

An NDI example of SBC at work is the [Men, Power, and Politics](#) initiative. Women in politics face a wide variety of challenges and barriers to full participation. One of the greatest obstacles facing women in politics is ideas about gender and the social expectations and personal attitudes and behaviors to which these ideas give rise. In many communities, countries, and regions, political power is inherently linked to masculinity. Many democracy and governance programs designed to increase women's political participation and leadership have focused on building the individual capacity of women or advancing gender equality issues in policies and political processes. However, women of all ages, across all segments of society, are still being excluded from decision-making. The Men, Power, and Politics program guide is a tool to engage male political leaders as transformative agents of change for gender equality. This initiative focuses on men, political power, and gender norms in order to restructure political organizations for gender equality as part of organizational development and political strategy. This approach represents a diversion from much commonly-used democracy and governance approaches, with an intentional focus on promoting equitable social norm change as a key factor in program success.

underlying social or identity-based tensions, or subject participants to different forms of harm.

A potential outcome in an SBC approach must be defined prior to the program design. This must be specific, measurable, set on its target audience, and planned according to time, budget, and resources. In addition, this is a data-driven process and so knowing which data can be collected, what resources it needs, and ensuring it doesn't compromise data privacy is important. Analyzing the data collected through data analysis techniques can help quantify the correlation between qualitatively identified determinants of behavior. A measure at every stage of the process will help better understand these drivers and will enable the teams and partners to streamline their process. Engaging in experimental design when safe and applicable is a good testing method to test the extent to which the intervention is effective in reaching the intended outcome. Finally, defining measuring indicators at the beginning of a program and evaluating them at every stage is essential.

## Program Examples

### **Kosovo**

NDI began supporting democracy in Kosovo in the immediate aftermath of its liberation in 1999, helping Kosovars carry out citizen-based election monitoring and assisting with the creation and development of a national legislature, the establishment of a political party system, and the building of a foundation of civic activism that is opening doors to public engagement with government. Programs in Kosovo have also supported young activists and leaders to conduct advocacy campaigns and increase the political

participation of women through its annual Week of Women and Women Leadership Academy. These programs have had a considerable impact in expanding political space for diverse voices and strengthening communication and transparency about the decisions that impact people's lives. Although SBC was never an objective for the team in Kosovo, various components of SBC have proven useful in ensuring NDI's programming in Kosovo remains relevant and evolves alongside democratic change in the country.

Acknowledging the role women and young people play in democratic progress in a country, the Kosovo team seeks to understand the drivers that shape barriers to participation for these groups. To begin, the Kosovo team conducted public opinion research which included interviewing people about their beliefs around participation and their lived experiences. The public opinion research was coupled with focus group discussions. Research found that young people in Kosovo are vested in building opportunities for peace and prosperity in the country. In addition, people increasingly expect to see women in public life and have the necessary leadership qualities to take on political roles. However, members of political parties argued that there are not enough qualified women to take on new roles and media scrutiny against politically active women is forcing many aspiring women to second guess their willingness to participate. With this data in hand, NDI, in collaboration with local partners, brainstormed which networks and political entry points could be leveraged to ensure young people and women had more opportunities to participate. The data also helped shape messaging around women and youth political participation, as well as the types of training women and young people,



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received in relation to conducting advocacy campaigns and policy development. NDI is working with the media to improve their portrayal of women, as well as with political parties to enhance their policies to be more inclusive and ensure women and young people get the support they need to rise in the ranks.

NDI also engages with an alumni network of young people and women who previously participated in NDI programs. Although this is more ad-hoc than the team would like, it has proven effective in enabling the team to adapt and shift programs to meet evolving needs. For example, based on feedback from young people, NDI has mainstreamed inclusion into their work and is ensuring activities are reaching young people and women from different ethnic groups. Young people also highlighted the need for better civic education, leading to NDI engaging with the Ministry of Education to update textbooks to be more relevant and practical. The Kosovo team routinely revisits public opinion research as a way to assess shifts in norms and behaviors and the team has seen norms and behaviors shift slowly. Public opinion research continues to show a positive trajectory regarding the political participation of women. Media outlets are also adhering to strong ethical reporting standards which have reduced one barrier to participation. With a stronger knowledge of SBC, the team hopes to take a more intentional approach in future programming towards shifting behaviors and norms. This means utilizing SBC to shift the barriers that are most resistant to change, including systems and structures that uphold certain norms and beliefs. The team advised that those utilizing an SBC approach should keep in mind that SBC requires iterations and can be a slow, step-by-step process. However, it has helped the team better identify positive momentum to harness in programs and overall achieve a greater role for women and young people in political processes.

## **Uganda**

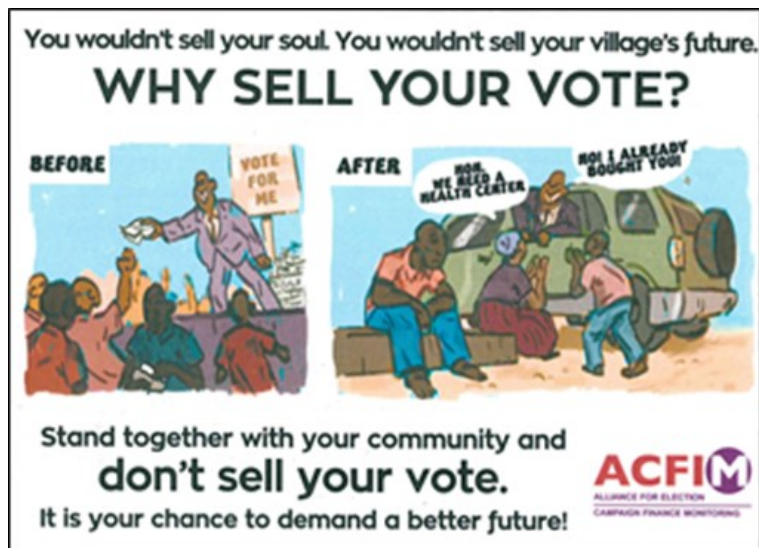
Despite the introduction of multiparty politics in 2005, Uganda's democratic progress has been uneven at best. For the past 35 years, the political landscape has been dominated by President Museveni and the ruling National Resistance Movement party, which increasingly relies on highly commercialized elections and state-sponsored repression of its opponents. This approach has fueled the rise of certain negative behaviors and norms around political processes and tactics including vote-buying, selling campaigns, utilizing



*2021 Week of Women: Policy Debates  
Remarks by Ambassador Nancy Soderberg, NDI Kosovo  
Resident Senior Country Director*

money to manipulate opponents, and keeping constituents in the dark about the decisions being made. These behaviors have disproportionately impacted women and young people who seek to be more politically active and resulted in a decline in voter participation. With a lack of political will from the ruling party and other decision-makers for reform, NDI has prioritized support to citizens, civil society organizations, and reform-minded parliamentarians, supporting them to realize their capacity to advocate for change and stronger accountability and transparency.

Although the team in Uganda has never taken a dedicated SBC approach to their work, programming has sought to identify determinants perpetuating negative behavior as well as interventions to alter behavior. This initially began with the behavior and norms around money in politics. Research showed that money in politics significantly hinders political processes within the country and is a tactic utilized by all political actors from political parties, to candidates and members of parliament. Although many candidates over the years have attempted to run issue-based campaigns, the increasing pressure of political parties to be successful has escalated the costs of campaigns and membership, making it difficult for grassroots candidates to be successful. The research also showed that Ugandans do not see vote-buying as normal, acceptable, or aligning with Ugandan values and yet it remains a useful tactic to gain influence and support. Through the research as well as observations, NDI was able to identify determinants of the behavior as well as



*An anti-vote buying and selling civic leaflet used during the 2016 general elections in Uganda.*

interventions, partnering with citizens and civil society organizations to integrate these findings into program design. Interventions included engaging with key stakeholders who could have real influence over addressing money in politics and leveraging opportunities where they existed, specifically narrowing in on local level initiatives where the impact could be more robust. Partners were also supported in leading efforts to successfully pass legislation against the misuse of money in politics. In addition to legislation, the shift in behavior around money in politics has also been seen in recent elections, with more young people and women running for office and stronger voter turnout. However, the use of money in politics has not yet been reduced.

The Uganda team found that certain approaches were effective in shifting norms and behaviors as well as expectations of citizens in relation to money in politics. This included an evidence-based and data-driven approach to increasing public awareness and leveraging partners' interests and priorities. Data was collected through a variety of methods including public opinion research, observations from extensive focus group discussions with the electorate and political party leaders as well as in partnership with other organizations who were already doing work related to mapping of incidences. Another key to NDI's success in Uganda was having strong, mutual partnerships with local organizations that had the space to provide feedback and adapt programming to ensure interventions aligned with the behaviors being addressed. However, local partners did lack

capacity in many ways which required NDI to equip partners with tools and skillsets for program design and implementation. In addition, given the political environment and often stunted civic space, partners were uncomfortable at times with their growing visibility and the risk it might mean for their organization. To counter this, NDI supported partners to learn from others operating in similar spaces as well as act collectively. The challenges remain, but the team did acknowledge that components of SBC have been useful, particularly in the ever-evolving political environment in Uganda.

## **Ukraine**

Despite a growing inclusion movement and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) rights and equality, LGBTQI+ communities continue to face marginalization in Ukraine. According to a December 2021 NDI survey, just eight percent of Ukrainians believed they personally knew a gay or lesbian person. Many Ukrainians base their understanding of LGBTQI+ individuals on media representation that perpetuates harmful stereotypes or fall victim to misinformation, often coming from Russia, that seeks to sow fear and discord around LGBTQI+ issues. As a result, the LGBTQI+ movement in Ukraine has not had the space to coalesce in a way that can effectively challenge harmful beliefs and norms that is paramount in countering disinformation and attacks from anti-inclusion movements. Acknowledging that changing public attitudes nationwide is necessary to the advancement of LGBTQI+ rights in the country, NDI has prioritized collecting and utilizing data to support local LGBTQI+ groups to deploy long-term, consistent interventions that utilize evidence to shift beliefs and target and address particular institutions, laws, and processes that exclude them.

In order to understand the national context and see if there existed any openings for interventions, NDI designed, conducted, and analyzed public opinion research on the experiences of Ukraine's LGBTQI+ communities and attitudes within Ukrainian society towards LGBTQI+ people. The research included focus groups, in-depth interviews, implicit association tests, as well as the first known use of deliberative polling in Ukraine. NDI's research found that most Ukrainians have little or no space to engage in informed dialogue on LGBTQI+ issues, and even though overt homophobia appears prevalent across Ukraine, the attitudes of the majority of Ukrainians towards gay and lesbian people are partially formed or unformed and can be





*An individual holds up a LGBTQI+ pride flag at the annual KyivPride march in Ukraine.*

countered through non-confrontational, strategic outreach that is evidence-based and shared in a safe environment. Furthermore, the research highlighted that the Ukrainians recognize gay and lesbian men and women to be among groups that are suffering from intolerance. At the same time, messages framed around discrimination and inequality tend to be less appealing, while messages highlighting the idea of “equal justice for all” were more effective. Personal interactions with gay and lesbian communities had a significant effect in terms of reducing prejudice, corroborating findings that those with prior contact with gay and lesbian people were more tolerant and less implicitly and explicitly biased than those without. Findings also suggested that a majority of public discourse is centered around values and misinformation. For example, misinformation that tends to resonate the most is about the so-called “traditional values” of society and that which presents LGBTQI+ issues as inherently “western rooted” and non-Ukrainian.

Given these findings, NDI in partnership with local LGBTQI+ activists and organizations worked to raise awareness and conduct evidence-based information sessions for targeted communities throughout Ukraine. Since 2017, LGBTQI+ organizations have conducted hundreds of public information sessions framed around human rights and have transformed the attitudes of thousands of people toward gay and lesbian individuals. In early 2020, NDI CSO partners united to launch the [Rizni Rivni](#) (Different.Equal) campaign, the first-ever national campaign for LGBTQI+ equality in Ukraine. This national campaign acted as a logical

next step to amplify and build upon the awareness-raising already taking place through the information sessions. The campaign reached more than one million individuals through innovative online platforms and involved dozens of Ukrainian celebrities, bloggers, and even fashion designers voicing their support for the movement. One of the key objectives of this campaign and broader program was to help LGBTQI+ partners adopt a more outward-looking approach to find allies outside of the LGBTQI+ community to advance their causes. While not easy, after significant investment and trial and error, successes have started to appear. Business leaders and political figures have signaled their support for the LGBTQI+ community in recent years, particularly during Pride activities when they promoted events on social media or attended Pride events, mirroring an apparently broader societal shift.

Ukraine provides a good example of how data and evidence can be useful, and often essential, tools in changing perceptions around social norms. Surveys revealed that a large portion of the population was unaware of the gender identities and sexual orientations of people they knew personally. By gathering that data and making it available to key stakeholders, public support and openness increased, bridging divisions in the community and helping LGBTQI+ groups to more effectively advocate for their rights. Another intended result, capacity building, was also realized as LGBTQI+ partners gradually developed better outreach skills and ally-building capacities, now able to work together on the national level, while continuing to address local issues in their respective localities. Key lessons learned included the process of trial and error as it relates to changing beliefs and norms, a necessity to pass on sustainable skillsets to partners as a way to sustain norm change, and how SBC is an effective tool for partners enabling them to revisit and reassess the on-ground situation as they continue to get more funding and adapt approaches as behaviors and beliefs change over time.

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*[Civic Update](#) is a production of NDI's Citizen Participation & Inclusion Team*

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