



# SHIFTING NORMS CHANGING BEHAVIOR AMPLIFYING VOICE WHAT WORKS?

THE 2018 INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOR  
CHANGE COMMUNICATION (SBCC) SUMMIT

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FEATURING ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION

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APRIL 16-20, 2018

## SUMMIT OVERVIEW

Many development results – like those outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – need people to do and sometimes think about things differently. Reducing maternal mortality depends on pregnant women having a check-up even when their relatives might disapprove of them doing so. Reducing the impact of climate change depends on people knowing how to adopt new agricultural techniques, or how to raise their homes above the flood level. Improving the status of girls and women in society requires that societies change their view of girls and women.

This conference is organized to understand better what works in shifting social norms, changing behaviors and in amplifying the voice of those who have most at stake in the success of development efforts. And it is designed to wrestle with the profound issues of social justice and agenda setting that affect these decisions. Who decides, for example, what behaviors need changing or which norms should be shifted? How can people's realities and voices be put at the center of such change? And how much emphasis should be placed on shifting norms and behaviors when power structures, policy environments or lack of services may constitute problems that overwhelm the capacity of individuals or communities to act?

This conference stands on the shoulders of an inaugural SBCC Summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in February 2016. Over 750 people gathered at the Addis conference, which focused on the “Art and Science of Social and Behavior Change” and highlighted the diversity and richness of different approaches being used.

The 2018 conference will focus on making sense of this diversity, and especially on understanding which approaches work best.



## THE WHAT WORKS SUMMIT – WHY NOW?

This Summit - the *What Works Summit* - takes place at a moment that confers more urgent relevance to these issues.

Digital transformation forms just one component of that backdrop. The revolution in how people communicate and consume information is having profound impacts - both positive and negative - on how people interact in society and shape their futures.

But it is not just technology that is sparking a reassessment of the role of communication in achieving change. The development community has increasingly well-documented and recognized evidence that shows that how people gain information and act on it, significantly determines development success. The recent trilogy of World Bank World Development Reports, starting with **Mind, Society and Behavior**, moving on to **Digital Dividends** and culminating in **Governance and the Law**, with its substantial emphasis on fostering citizen engagement, provide one litmus test for this. Together, these and other reports constitute a fresh articulation of how a traditional focus on the role of the state and markets needs to be complemented by a deeper understanding of people, politics and societies. A consistent thread running through each of these reports is an acknowledgement that issues of media and communication matter.

In addition, grim reality, not just intellectual analysis, has sparked a fresh interest in and reappraisal of the role of social and behavior change communication. **Reviews of the response** to the 2014–16 West Africa Ebola outbreak have consistently highlighted the importance of communication - how bad communication made the epidemic far worse than it needed to have been, and how good communication became a central component of containing it. Similar conclusions are being reached in response to many other public health issues - from **polio** to malaria, **HIV** to vaccine uptake. If a stronger, more effective focus had been made on social and behavior change communication on each or any of these, lives (potentially millions of lives) **might have been saved**.

Broader political, economic and social tremors are also shaping social and behavior change communication contexts. Increasing authoritarianism and populism, shrinking civic spaces, attacks on media freedom and increasingly shaky business models capable of supporting independent media provide a darkening prospectus for the future. Citizens' trust in the information they have access to is eroding. Violent extremism is on the rise, facilitated in part by the sophisticated use of social media to shift both norms and behaviors in disturbing directions.

Cross-border movements of refugees and migrants are intensifying humanitarian, political as well as global health challenges. Climate change and the growing needs of millions to adapt to its consequences together with the increase in - and increasing likelihood of - humanitarian emergencies add to a difficult backdrop. All these are shaping both the context of, and increasing the demand for, investment in effective social and behavior change communication.

The reality of the past and an increasingly difficult present is catalysing fresh energy for the future. **The 2030 Sustainable Development agenda** is ambitious in its expectations - not only of what states, donors and organizations will do - but on what people and societies need to be enabled or empowered to do or change. Of 13 targets set for the implementation of **SDG 3 Ensuring Healthy Lives and Promoting Wellbeing for All**, shifting social norms, changing behaviors and amplifying voice will be critical to achieving the first nine of them (just one being reducing the maternal mortality rate). Similar claims<sup>1</sup> can be made for Goal 2 (such as doubling agricultural productivity of small scale food producers), Goal 4 (getting children - especially girls - to go to school), Goal 5 (ending discrimination against girls and women), Goal 6 (achieving access to sanitation

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<sup>1</sup> This is a far from exhaustive list



and hygiene for all and ending open defecation), Goal 7 (improving usage of renewable energy), Goal 8 (reducing the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training), Goal 9 (improving access to information and communication technology), Goal 10 (empowering and promoting the social, political and economic inclusion of all), Goal 11 (reducing the number of deaths caused by disasters), Goal 12 (ensuring sustainable consumption), Goal 13 (improving education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning), Goal 14 (conserving and sustainably using the oceans), Goal 15 (halting deforestation) and Goal 16 (living in peace, ensuring access to information and protecting freedoms). And underpinning all the SDGs is the recognition that their success will depend on how effectively their implementation is built into national and local development strategies, and how much these strategies – including SBCC strategies – are genuinely owned and integrated into national governmental and CSO systems. Other international agreements, including the Paris COP Agreement on Climate Change provide yet further demand for strategies that enable and empower people to adapt behaviors and norms.

More fundamentally still, a complex and rich mosaic of innovation is playing out within societies, with civil society; social entrepreneurs; local, city as well as state authorities; media and journalist organizations and others experimenting and innovating to shift norms, change behaviors and amplify voice.

Despite this, the field of SBCC continues to be, in the words of one [report](#) published last year, “poorly funded, under-utilised and badly planned, bolted on to programmes as an afterthought.” There remains no process at present for effectively integrating the opportunities and strategies offered by SBCC into the 2030 development agenda, an issue the conference will also consider.

At its core, the conference will therefore address some of the primary challenges facing the SBCC community: understanding what approaches work and what investments in SBCC programing can expect to deliver, and making sense of the complexity and diversity in the field of SBCC that would facilitate greater investment.

## CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

This conference plans to address the following two key challenges:

### **Challenge 1: What works**

The increasing relevance of SBCC to 21<sup>st</sup> century development challenges is being accompanied by an recognition of the evidence that supports it. A 2013 Evidence Summit on population level behavior change and child survival and subsequent [journal articles](#) is being followed up by the World Health Organization (WHO)’s effort to improve the technical reporting guidelines for SBCC initiatives so they can be more robustly understood, critiqued and built on. WHO has also started to put together a business case for SBCC interventions focused on community engagement, something the 2018 Summit will hear more about. And UNICEF, together with other SBCC stakeholders, are exploring mechanisms to strengthen the uptake of SBCC evidence in development programs.

However, donors and others who support the field, and development policy makers who want to prioritize it, face major challenges in understanding what works and what does not work, what they can expect from an investment in this area and explaining its impact to sometimes skeptical publics. This conference will not only showcase different interventions, but also critique them with a view to enabling better processes to assess and generate insight around what we know about what works. Ultimately, it will seek to determine what it takes to ensure that policy and decision makers in the development sector feel sufficiently confident to invest decisively in strengthening the field.



And we will discuss what we mean by “what works”. For example, what works over a period of a few months through an intense messaging campaign may prove to have little sustainable long-term impact, whereas an approach that appears to show little short-term impact may over years prove to have been decisive (or possibly vice versa).

## **Challenge 2: Making Sense of Now**

There is no shortage of ideas or initiative when it comes to using communication to achieve social and behavior change. The modern field of SBCC is a product of decades of innovation and involves traditions as diverse as commercial marketing, participatory media, creative media production, civil society advocacy, not to mention the different strands rooted in the diverse public health, agriculture, governance, rights and other development fields where media and communication have been considered important. This field has, thanks to events such as the 2016 SBCC Summit, become more coherent, organized and effective, but it operates in one of the fastest changing arenas of any in the development sphere.

The speed of change is in part a product of the transformative shifts in information and communication technology, which has, in turn, generated a range of new digitally, focused approaches to addressing social and behavior change communication challenges. The innovation generated by new ideas and approaches has sometimes been seen to be in tension with the growing focus and necessity for generating evidence of what works and what doesn't. The conference will seek to discuss such tensions.

Technology is not the only source of innovation and, potentially, constructive disruption. The growing popularity among governments of drawing on behavioral economics and setting up behavioral insights teams has led to a different locus for addressing behavior change problems in public policy. Quite often the approaches of behavioral economics and more traditional social and behavior change communication interventions are similar or at least complementary, but the approaches have, when it comes to implementation, often been siloed. The conference will seek to enable a constructive and clear conversation across these and other apparently complementary but in reality quite siloed fields. These include the growing adoption of human-centered design (HCD), adaptive management (AM) and doing development differently (DDD) approaches in development policy.

Multiple other actors - including many civil society organizations - are increasingly using media and communication approaches in their own work to shift social norms, change behavior or amplify voice, pointing to the need for more attention to be given to this field of work. Making sense of these different approaches, creating connections between them and exploring how they can become better strategically aligned or integrated will be a key focus for the conference.

## **HOW THE SUMMIT WILL BE ORGANIZED**

The Summit, with a core focus on understanding and responding to the needs of the people, will be organized around three intersecting strands.

- *The What Works Strand:* This principal strand of the conference will focus on what works in shifting norms, changing behaviors and amplifying voice. The abstracts designed to shape the principal agenda of the conference will be explicitly focused on this theme. Presentations, sessions and posters will be encouraged to present not only their work and results, but to reflect on what worked (what was it about their theory of change, their approach, their innovation or creativity, their capacity to adapt,



formats, etc.) in enabling them to achieve their objectives, what did not work, how they know what worked, and whether their impact was sustainable.

Within this theme, there will be an emphasis on:

- A range of innovative peer review processes including the formation of a “what works” team made up of a practitioner, donor, developing country organization, and academic or research organization who, at the beginning of each day, will reflect on what they have heard and whether they are gaining insights around what works.
  - Highlighting, but also testing, innovation. Examples of innovation and creative approaches will be woven throughout the conference, but examples of innovation will be encouraged to reflect on whether and how innovation worked in achieving objectives. Examples of innovation in research, monitoring, measurement and evaluation will also be encouraged.
  - Examining what has worked, not only in project implementation but also in integrating SBCC into national development policy and systems and what can be learned from those countries where Ministries have established strong SBCC units or made explicit in national health policies a commitment to prioritizing SBCC, and what the experience of prioritizing risk communication within government strategies has shown (for example, in the wake of the Ebola epidemic).
  - Highlighting, in particular, entertainment education approaches and examples, and examining what entertainment education approaches and issues are especially well suited for achieving impact.
- *Making Sense of Now Strand:* A series of panels and debates will be organized to better understand the current state of SBCC in relation to current development challenges, and to reflect on how SBCC is organized and conceptualized. These panels will seek to:
    - Encourage dialogue and discussion around diverse strands of social and behavior change communication approaches (socio-ecological models, human centered design, behavioral economics, digital first strategies, etc.).Explore how broader political, economic and social tremors are shaping SBCC contexts including but not limited to: increasing authoritarianism, violent extremism, attacks on media freedom, cross-border movements, climate change, and humanitarian disasters.
    - Showcase how innovation, experimentation and risk-taking can be encouraged.
    - Highlight and develop current efforts to improve the status, substance and professionalism of the field, including the planned new global mechanism to advance the communication and media for development, social and behavior change field of work; the WHO reporting standards and business case; and linkages to the SDGs.
    - Examine how and whether national and international policy has shifted or increased prioritization of SBCC.
  - *The Voice and Agenda Setting Strand:* A series of conversations looking to the future designed to:
    - Identify what policies need to be created or changed and what capacities need to be built to ensure people have voice in shaping the agenda.



- Define the conditions needed to ensure greater investment in SBCC by governments, CSOs, funders and others.
- Determine how and when a focus on shifting norms and behaviors makes sense when larger power structures, policy environments, political paralysis or lack of services can constitute problems that overwhelm the capacity of individuals or communities to act.
- Generate stronger South-South cooperation and South-North leadership/cooperation.

### **Social and behavior change communication: what is it?**

The term “social and behavior change communication” (SBCC) is used to describe work with communication that is aimed at achieving desired outcomes. SBCC practice recognizes that many of the major individual and social determinants of behavior – like knowledge, attitudes and norms – are shaped by human interaction, in the form of communication between individuals and within communities. Public health and other development policies can also be shaped by communication between leaders, ordinary people and groups that represent them. SBCC practice encompasses a range of approaches and tools, including interpersonal communication, work with mass media and other information and communication technologies (ICTs) and social mobilization. Work with communication to improve development outcomes has taken place under a number of different banners over time, including: health, agricultural, resilience (or other issue) education; communication for development; health promotion; information, education and communication (IEC); behavior change communication (BCC); advocacy, communication and social mobilization (ACSM); social marketing; communication for social change; and risk communication. The recent widespread adoption of SBCC as a name for this work reflects an increasing desire by practitioners to coalesce around shared language to describe their work.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Sugg, Caroline Coming of Age: communication’s role in powering global health, BBC Media Action Policy Briefing #18, October 2016 <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/policybriefing/role-of-communication-in-global-health-report.pdf>

