

The Global Alliance for Social and Behaviour Change

A new movement for building informed and engaged societies

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and necessary to inform people-centered development initiatives that are driven by social change and behavior change.

Key messages

- > There is a need to: demonstrate the impact of social and behavior change (SBC), showcase best practices, encourage adaptation based on lessons learned, and support advocacy for policy change and funding in a consistent way to drive the use of evidence-based approaches and improve the wellbeing of many.
- > The Global Alliance for Social and Behaviour Change (the Global Alliance) has a unified commitment to and for people-centered development through the use of evidence-based SBC approaches to improve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) outcomes related to gender, health, environment and education, among others.
- > Although still nascent, the Global Alliance has begun to gather compelling research findings highlighting the impact of people-centered strategies on the SDGs throughout the world.
- > The Global Alliance's structure includes three clusters that drive the entity's work: Evidence for Impact, Coordination–Infrastructure and Policy Engagement.
- > Strategies endorsed by the Global Alliance are important

The need to shift norms and change behaviors

Development challenges demand solutions that shift norms, change behaviors and amplify the voices of those who have the most at stake. Evidence-based SBC approaches offer solutions to these challenges. Yet, many who work in development have limited or no access to, or understanding of, the existing body of evidence in SBC, especially in sectors other than health. Furthermore, we often do not use the same terminology to communicate these evidence-based approaches, our program design and implementation, and later our findings. We also do not always share or publish our work in a way that could drive learning and knowledge at local, national and international levels.

In recent years, it has become clear that we need an entity that can help to demonstrate the impact of SBC, showcase best practices, encourage adaptation based on lessons learned, and support advocacy for policy change and funding to drive the use of evidence-based approaches to SBC that can improve the wellbeing of many. This entity – the Global Alliance for Social and Behaviour Change: Building Informed and Engaged Societies (the Global Alliance)¹ – was founded in 2018. It is a coalition of organizations² representing a range of fields and technical areas that support the SDGs. Its core work is based on the people side of development, including empowerment, inclusiveness and equality. It reflects a unified commitment to and for people-centered development through the use of evidence-based SBC approaches to improve SDG outcomes in relation to gender, health, environment and education, among others.



“The Global Alliance reflects a unified commitment to and for people-centered development”

Focusing on the people who are central to development progress

For local, national and international development to become more principled, effective and sustainable, a movement is needed that allows people, from all walks of life, to work with equal standing, take action and make decisions on SDG priorities in their own context and based on evidence. The Global Alliance is this movement. The Global Alliance focuses on the people who are central to development progress but also invests in processes that engage and support the people affected by development at the local, national and international levels. People-centered development initiatives that are driven by SBC inform and engage societies' work. Product development (e.g., drugs, water technologies), macro-policies (e.g., economic, land reform) and other major development priorities are of course important. However, the strategies endorsed by the Global Alliance, such as community engagement and action; media development; entertainment-education; social marketing; behavioral economics; social justice; public and private dialogue and debate; information and knowledge development and sharing; communication for development; culturally driven action; and policy debate, are also important and necessary.

Although still nascent, the Global Alliance has made great strides in its first 2 years. In its newfound role, it has begun to gather compelling research findings highlighting the impact of people-centered strategies on SDGs throughout the world. Findings showed that strategies such as community dialogues and mobilization, television and radio programming and discussions, early childhood education, economic empowerment, intensified interpersonal counseling, and participatory processes can have a sustainable impact on individual behaviors, community norms and empowerment across diverse geographical settings, societal levels and issues. Many of these strategies take place on a very significant scale, in common with most actions driven by social change, behavior change, and informed and engaged societies' initiatives.

“The Global Alliance is working to produce an SBC code of ethics”

The Global Alliance is also working to produce an SBC code of ethics to guide organizations across the private, nonprofit and intergovernmental sectors in setting ethical expectations and practices. The Global Alliance also recently hosted Social and Behaviour Change & Climate Action on 23 September 2019; the aim of the event was to examine how SBC can build greater consensus to enable meaningful shifts in attitudes, norms and behaviors related to climate action. We discussed what lessons can be learned from initiatives to communicate climate science, climate policies, climate risks and climate impacts.

Most recently, at the International SBCC Summit 2020 in Marrakech, Morocco, held from 30 March to 3 April 2020, the Global Alliance conducted a business meeting open to founding and new member organizations to discuss achievements, lessons learned and its future. The Summit brought together people from across the globe, including Global Alliance members, to examine the most recent evidence and innovations in our field of work, build on our diverse methodologies and provide a forum for us to debate our way forward while highlighting successes and challenges.

Three-cluster structure

The Global Alliance has organized itself around three areas of work, which we call clusters:

- 1. Evidence for Impact:** this cluster is focused on compiling evidence from the SBC field of work. Led by the Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs, a database is being created and coded to bring together a comprehensive review of currently available literature. The database will be structured around the SDGs and will be publicly available.
- 2. Coordination–Infrastructure:** this cluster works to drive the development and functioning of the Global Alliance. It is chaired by the CORE Group, and focuses on the development of organizational bylaws, new member onboarding, website development and an SBC code of ethics.
- 3. Policy Engagement:** this cluster, chaired by UNICEF, works to advance the field of SBC by advocating for better funding, positioning and recognition through high-level dialogue and engagement. Much of this work happens through meetings and events attended by member representatives or through the arrangement of special events.

To date, the Global Alliance has been coordinated through a Secretariat, currently staffed on a pro bono basis by UNICEF. Moving forward, the Global Alliance is working to create a sound foundation for itself that includes a more fixed Secretariat, a long-term governing structure and sustainable funding streams. Interested organizations from the Southern and Northern Hemispheres are being considered for membership and onboarding. The movement has begun, and it is our goal to keep it moving and driving the accessibility and use of evidence-based SBC approaches.

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