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# U.S. Agency for International Development Anti-Corruption Task Force (ACTF)

## Countering Corruption Through Social and Behavior Change (SBC) **FINAL ANALYSIS REPORT**

May 2023

This report was prepared for the U.S. Agency for International Development under the terms of task order IDS2021:34. It was produced by Metropolitan Group on behalf of PM Consulting Group. The opinions expressed herein are the sole responsibility of PM Consulting Group and Metropolitan Group and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

As an applied research product, this report is not intended for program design. The report may produce recommendations, which USAID and other actors will determine whether or how to address.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking to update and develop their strategic, technical, and policy guidance on countering corruption by addressing social norms and behaviors. In pursuit of this objective, the USAID Anti-Corruption Task Force (ACTF) commissioned research on how **social and behavior change** (SBC) approaches address social norms and behaviors related to corruption, and where SBC approaches can be used to improve current and future anti-corruption activities. Metropolitan Group (MG) has conducted a qualitative research scan and analysis drawing lessons from five country case studies on how SBC approaches can be harnessed to influence decisions, norms, and behaviors around corruption and how social norm sensitivity and the use of social nudges might inform programming. This report presents the findings from those case studies and recommendations for SBC approaches that may be applied in anti-corruption efforts. .

Drawing from the fields of psychology, neuroscience, economics, and political science, SBC is the application of theory-based approaches to address the factors that drive or enable behaviors at the individual, community, and/or societal levels.<sup>1</sup> Approaches to change behaviors, attitudes, and norms are widely understood to form a critical part of efforts to counter corruption, but these approaches are currently poorly understood and underutilized.<sup>2</sup> **As a result, few large-scale anti-corruption initiatives have been informed by SBC insights**—partly due to a lack of evidence on the effectiveness of SBC approaches for these efforts.<sup>3</sup>

However, this research showed that **many anti-corruption efforts do utilize some core SBC elements**. This indicates that there is an opportunity to demystify SBC among anti-corruption implementers and partners to help them identify where they are already utilizing SBC elements, where more robust SBC elements and approaches may be appropriate or useful, and how to analyze SBC impact on key norms and behaviors.

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<sup>1</sup> USAID. “Social and Behavior Change in Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance: A Primer.” [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00XWX4.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XWX4.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Claudia Baez Camargo and G. Burges (2022). “Behavioral drivers of corruption facilitating illegal wildlife trade: Problem analysis and state of the field review.” Basel Institute on Governance. <https://baselgovernance.org/publications/wp-39>.

<sup>3</sup> C. Stahl (2022). “Behavioral insights and anti-corruption: Executive summary of a practitioner-tailored review of the latest evidence.” Basel Institute on Governance. <https://baselgovernance.org/publications/behavioural-insights-and-anti-corruption>.



## Methodology

The case study selection process consisted of a preliminary assessment and criteria development phase, followed by a more rigorous assessment of 15 potential case studies. Although the evidence review did show a lack of anti-corruption activities incorporating full SBC frameworks, **the research ultimately focused on five anti-corruption case studies that incorporated elements of SBC:**

- Guatemala, International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG)
- Malawi, Construction Transparency Initiative (CoST)
- Mexico, Anti-Impunity and Gender Equality Initiative
- Moldova, Maia Sandu and the Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS) Campaigns
- Tanzania, Addressing Bribery in the Health Sector

Each case study review and assessment included a literature review, key informant interviews, and a review of relevant polling and indices. With each case study, MG sought to answer a set of **key underlying questions** (while acknowledging that not every question would be answered for every case study), including:

1. What is the relevant context and background?
2. What are the behavioral determinants that need to be addressed?
3. What are the principal social norms driving corruption in this context?
4. What SBC approaches were utilized?
5. How effective were the SBC approaches and why?

## Findings and Recommendations

This research identified a number of cross-cutting recommendations that appeared in multiple cases. These recommendations include general guidance to incorporating SBC into anti-corruption efforts, as well as specific SBC and social and behavior change communication (SBCC) tools and tactics that may be considered helpful in countering corruption.

**Comprehensive and Intentional Application of SBC with Rigorous Evaluation:** There is an opportunity to increase the scale and frequency of SBC elements in anti-corruption efforts, and more comprehensively evaluate how they shape social norms and behaviors. New, upcoming, and existing anti-corruption initiatives should look for opportunities to build in SBC elements into their strategies and identify where SBC elements already exist and merit closer evaluation and measurement.

**Prioritize Social Norms:** Utilization of SBC elements (such as the development of new narratives, SBCC, shifting key drivers or enablers, or stakeholder-centric design) can be targeted to shift specific norms. Legal and policy advocacy can be used to create institutional support



for anti-corrupt practices, thereby mitigating or shifting norms about acceptable corrupt behaviors. Monitoring and evaluation of changes in attitudes and norms should be built in as a component of iterative implementation to assess programmatic influence on key norms and the influence of changing norms on corruption.

**Incorporate Stakeholder-Centric Design:** SBC approaches should be designed based on formative stakeholder research that identifies the factors driving the norms and behaviors implementers seek to address. These factors may include the identification of closely held values, relevant economic, political, or historical context, and existing perceptions and beliefs related to corruption and to specific drivers or enablers identified in the diagnostic process.

**Build Resiliency:** Resiliency-building for anti-corruption initiatives is necessary to mitigate attempts to discredit or counter anti-corruption efforts and to prepare to counter potential backlash. Resiliency-building may include the intentional development of infrastructure, networks, and policies to ensure the ability of a movement to withstand backlash, crises, or scandals. SBC planners should also consider including SBCC elements that inform stakeholders about the benefits of anti-corruption accomplishments, building the legitimacy and public profile of the anti-corruption effort.

**Utilize Social and Behavior Change Communication:** Social and behavior change communication (SBCC) is a communications strategy that explicitly incorporates evidence-based findings about the beliefs and norms that influence behaviors and attitudes to influence norms, beliefs, perceptions, awareness, and action. Using this strategy can ensure a communications strategy that is best tailored to the priority stakeholder groups being addressed. Even in instances where a full SBC approach is not being pursued, consideration should be given to building SBCC into anti-corruption initiatives. SBCC can also be utilized to support other SBC elements, such as the demonstration of change and difference by raising awareness<sup>4</sup> and understanding of opportunities and successes anti-corruption activists have achieved.

**Demonstrate Change and Difference:** Throughout the design and iterative implementation of an SBC initiative, opportunities should be identified for early wins (establishing changes in policies or practices), demonstration of difference (high profile accountability, evident improvement in service delivery, etc.), and other tangible changes which can show people that change is possible, and that their decisions and actions can make a difference. It is important not to over-sell these demonstrations. Tangible demonstrations of changes and difference

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<sup>4</sup> This report makes several references to the importance of raising awareness of anti-corruption successes and opportunities. A study of nine social norm and behavior change experiments across the globe from 2016-2022 comprising twenty-three different treatments that used behavior change communication approaches to identify factors associated with effective interventions suggest that using generic information about corruption actually emphasizes its pervasiveness and negative trends, and anti-corruption campaigns appear to be more successful when they include locally-contextualized information, utilize positive or hopeful messaging, and target specific audiences. Stahl, Cosimo. *Behavioural insights and anti-corruption: Executive summary of a practitioner-tailored review of the latest evidence (2016–2022)*. Basel: Basel Institute on Governance, 2022. <https://baselgovernance.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/241116%20Behavioural%20interventions%20report.pdf>.



should be presented in ways that align with stakeholders' daily experiences; otherwise, they are likely to disbelieve and/or dismiss the message.

**Develop Hope-Based Narratives:** As part of the diagnostic process, mapping should be conducted on social norms and related dominant and salient narratives to analyze and identify the need or opportunity for hope-based narratives and the core values drivers (strongly-held values that drive key choices or behaviors) of key stakeholders. Where hope-based narratives are used to target social norms, the narratives should be developed to trigger identified values drivers and tested with priority stakeholders for refinement to ensure efficacy. Capacity-building and support should be provided to allies, advocates, CSOs, and other partners to apply and customize the hope-based narrative.

**Activate Influencers and Messengers:** Implementers should engage in stakeholder mapping and other formative research to identify the messengers and influencers (individuals, institutions, and/or organizations) with the most trust, reach, and potential efficacy influencing the priority stakeholder segments. Once messengers and influencers are identified, additional research should be conducted to understand their values, motivators, and alignment with the core anti-corruption objectives. This will help identify pathways to engage and activate the messengers and influencers.

**Analyze Response to Anti-Corruption Messages:** It is a good practice to include the intentional selection of how to frame corruption as part of the diagnostic and design stages. In some cases, it was identified that naming certain behaviors as corrupt practices was an effective way to shift key perceptions and behaviors; and in one key example, implementers opted to focus on the benefits of countering corruption instead. As part of the diagnostic phase, anti-corruption initiatives should include in their formative research an assessment of the public perception and reaction to messaging around corruption and gauge whether anti-corruption messaging is persuasive. Planners should make a case-specific determination of how to focus messaging on corruption.

The case studies in this activity demonstrate that, while it is a nascent and under-studied approach in anti-corruption efforts, SBC can play a critical role in countering corruption. While there remains much to be learned, the case studies in this activity demonstrate there is the potential for SBC approaches and for the incorporation of SBC elements into other anti-corruption interventions to support more effective change efforts in policies, behaviors, enablers, drivers, and norms that either bolster or counter corruption.



# INTRODUCTION

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President Biden, when naming countering corruption as one of his administration’s core national security priorities, stated that “corruption corrodes public trust; hobbles effective governance; distorts markets and equitable access to services; undercuts development efforts; contributes to national fragility, extremism, and migration; and provides authoritarian leaders a means to undermine democracies worldwide.”<sup>5</sup> The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) activated an Anti-Corruption Task Force (ACTF) in June 2021 to lead efforts to “strengthen, elevate, and integrate anti-corruption across USAID’s work.”<sup>6</sup> As part of USAID’s efforts to update and develop strategic, technical, and policy guidance on countering corruption, USAID commissioned research on what **social and behavior change** (SBC) approaches address social norms and behaviors related to corruption, and where SBC approaches can be used to improve current and future anti-corruption activities.

Metropolitan Group (MG) has conducted a qualitative research scan and analysis drawing lessons from a series of case studies from Guatemala, Malawi, Mexico, Moldova, and Tanzania on how SBC approaches can be harnessed to influence decisions, norms, and behaviors around corruption, and how social norm sensitivity and the use of social nudges might inform programming. This final report is intended to inform ACTF’s guidance around best practices to prevent and fight corruption by addressing social norms and driving systemic behavioral change.

This report includes: (1) a quick **overview of key concepts and definitions** related to corruption and SBC; (2) a review of the **research methodology** used to identify and assess relevant case studies; (3) a **summary of the case studies**, including the norms and SBC elements identified in each; and (4) MG’s **findings and recommendations** regarding corruption, anti-corruption, social norms, and SBC approaches.

## Anti-Corruption Efforts and Social & Behavior Change

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<sup>5</sup> “Memorandum on Establishing the Fight Against Corruption as a Core United States National Security Interest,” The White House, June 3, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/06/03/memorandum-on-establishing-the-fight-against-corruption-as-a-core-united-states-national-security-interest/>.

<sup>6</sup> “United States Committed to Supporting Democracy,” Voice of America, August 5, 2021. <https://editorials.voa.gov/a/united-states-committed-to-supporting-democracy/5992287.html>.



Drawing from the fields of psychology, neuroscience, economics, and political science, SBC is the application of theory-based approaches to address the factors that drive or enable behaviors at the individual, community, and/or societal levels.<sup>7</sup> Broad SBC approaches can employ a range of strategies, including SBC communications (SBCC), advocacy, social and community mobilization, and changing laws or regulations. SBC interventions have increasingly gained ground as tools to impact policies, practices, behaviors, and social norms. SBC interventions have been used to target individual, social, and structural factors that influence key behaviors needed to achieve development goals.

SBC strategies also often focus on understanding and changing attitudes, beliefs, and social norms that influence, drive, and reinforce behavior. Social norms are shared understandings about obligatory, permitted, or forbidden actions within a society.<sup>8</sup> Examples of SBC strategies that specifically target social norms include strategic communication, narrative, and message framing development and dissemination, enhancing community participation, facilitating group deliberation and reflection, supporting role models, publicizing trendsetters and positive deviants, creating a new reference group, encouraging public commitments or declarations, social nudges, and comparing performance to peer groups.<sup>9</sup>

To date, SBC approaches have most notably been utilized in interventions to address development issues such as international public health (e.g., maternal and child health, family planning, HIV prevention), gender equality, and gender-based violence.<sup>10</sup> SBC approaches have not been as widely employed in the democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) sector. Approaches to change behaviors, attitudes, and norms are widely understood to form a critical part of efforts to counter corruption, but these approaches are currently poorly understood and underutilized.<sup>11</sup> **As a result, few large-scale anti-corruption initiatives have been informed by SBC insights**—partly due to a lack of evidence on the effectiveness of SBC approaches for these efforts.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> USAID. “Social and Behavior Change in Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance: A Primer.” [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00XWX4.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XWX4.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> D. Jackson and N. Köbis. (2018). “Anti-corruption through a social norms lens.” U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Center. <https://www.u4.no/publications/anti-corruption-through-a-social-norms-lens>.

<sup>9</sup> D. Chigas and P. Dininio (2019). “Strengthening Rule of Law Approaches to Address Organized Crime: Social Norms.” USAID White Paper. Bureau for Africa. [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00TXDQ.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00TXDQ.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> USAID. “Social and Behavior Change.” <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/global-health/cross-cutting-areas/social-and-behavior-change>.

<sup>11</sup> Claudia Baez Camargo and G. Burges (2022). “Behavioral drivers of corruption facilitating illegal wildlife trade: Problem analysis and state of the field review.” Basel Institute on Governance. <https://baselgovernance.org/publications/wp-39>.

<sup>12</sup> C. Stahl (2022). “Behavioral insights and anti-corruption: Executive summary of a practitioner-tailored review of the latest evidence.” Basel Institute on Governance. <https://baselgovernance.org/publications/behavioural-insights-and-anti-corruption>.



Despite this, the research found that **many anti-corruption efforts do utilize some core SBC elements**, including values and stakeholder analysis to help drive stakeholder-centric design; iterative implementation based on ongoing assessments; the use of hope-based narratives; and communication that is focused on social norms, perceptions, and attitudes. This indicates that there is an opportunity to demystify SBC among anti-corruption implementers and partners to help them identify where they are already utilizing SBC elements, where more robust SBC elements and approaches may be appropriate or useful, and how to analyze SBC impact on key norms and behaviors.

**This report aims to help bridge this gap by reviewing anti-corruption initiatives that contain SBC elements to influence or shift social norms around corruption.** In pursuit of this goal, MG reviewed case studies from five different countries (Guatemala, Malawi, Mexico, Moldova, and Tanzania) to identify which behavioral determinants and social norms influence behaviors and attitudes around corruption; examples of SBC approaches applied to anti-corruption efforts and their effect and utility; and learnings about the gaps in the methodologies, evaluations, or data that could be the focus of future research.

## Key Definitions and Frameworks

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Throughout the case studies and this analysis report, MG refers to several SBC-related terms that include the following:

- **Social norms** are the mutual expectations held by members of a group about the right way to behave in a particular situation.<sup>13</sup>
- **Social mobilization** is the process of bringing allies together to raise awareness and demand for something—a program, behavior, or need in the community.<sup>14</sup>
- **Social and behavior change communication** is the strategic use of communications to influence norms, perceptions, knowledge, and action.<sup>15</sup>
- **Social nudges** encourage or suggest change in people's behavior while still giving them the freedom to make their own decisions.<sup>16</sup>
- **Enablers** are the conditions that allow or create greater ease for actions and behaviors to occur.
- **Drivers** are the factors that cause or motivate patterns of behavior.

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<sup>13</sup> Claudia Baez Camargo. "Social norms and corruption." Basel Institute on Governance (September 4, 2019). <https://learn.baselgovernance.org/course/view.php>.

<sup>14</sup> Mercy Corps. "Social and Behavioral Change: Mercy Corps Approach."

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein. *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. (2008). Penguin Books.





- Forms of **political accountability**, including:<sup>17</sup>
  - **Horizontal accountability** occurs when state institutions oversee government through actions such as questioning officials, demanding information, and punishing bad behavior.
  - **Vertical accountability** occurs when the population holds the government accountable through elections and political parties.
  - **Diagonal accountability** occurs when the media and civil society organizations (CSOs) hold the government accountable through oversight.
- **Hope-based narratives** are stories that make people believe change is possible and desirable and contribute to long-term changes in ideas, attitudes, and behavior.<sup>18</sup>
- **Iterative implementation** is the systematic process of designing, implementing, testing, and adapting interventions based on the behavioral diagnosis.<sup>19</sup>
- **Advocacy** is the use of public influence engagements and campaigns aimed at changing the behaviors and attitudes of public leaders and decision-makers.
- **Community engagement** is the use of community-led participatory problem-solving efforts that aim to identify problems, propose solutions, and empower action and social accountability.

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<sup>17</sup> V-Dem Institute Policy Brief. “Political Accountability: Vertical, Horizontal, and Diagonal Constraints on Government.” (April 18, 2014), [https://www.v-dem.net/media/publications/pb\\_22\\_final.pdf](https://www.v-dem.net/media/publications/pb_22_final.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> “About | Hope-Based Communications: a strategy for change?” hope-based comms, n.d., <https://www.hope-based.com/about>.

<sup>19</sup> USAID. “Social and Behavior Change in Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance: A Primer.” [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00XWX4.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XWX4.pdf).



# METHODOLOGY

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This section addresses the process and methodology used to identify and select appropriate case studies and the methodologies used to conduct the formative research.

## Case Study Selection

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During the selection process for this research activity's case studies, MG sought to identify a set of anti-corruption schemes that utilized SBC approaches. MG also hoped to identify a set of case studies that would provide a level of diversity across a number of axes (geographic, type of intervention, initiative drivers, level of government at play, private sector being targeted, etc.).

The case study selection process first consisted of a **preliminary assessment and criteria development phase** to identify potential case studies through (1) a literature review of relevant articles and reports (such as the Corruption Perceptions Index and Freedom House reports)<sup>20</sup>; (2) a review of indices (including Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index and V-Dem's Liberal Democracy Index); and (3) a round of interviews with Tufts University Center for Justice and Legitimacy Program and the Luminate Group. MG engaged USAID ACTF throughout the initial assessment process to provide input on the initial selection criteria<sup>21</sup> and preliminary recommendations, ultimately identifying 15 potential case studies.<sup>22</sup>

Following this initial assessment, MG conducted a more rigorous **case study assessment and final recommendation process** based on criteria developed in coordination with USAID.<sup>23</sup> During this assessment phase, MG (1) conducted a literature scan of available reports and

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<sup>20</sup> When assessing potential case studies, MG reviewed a number of indices that track levels of democracy, freedom, and corruption around the world. MG averaged each country's scores over a five-year period to identify countries experiencing moderate to high levels of corruption or authoritarianism; and moderate to low levels of democracy and freedom.

<sup>21</sup> MG's criteria for suitable case studies, submitted as a Task 1B deliverable on April 1, 2022, included (1) a known, ongoing issue of public corruption; (2) an applicable anti-corruption initiative incorporating SBC; and (3) a case study set with geographic and subject matter diversity.

<sup>22</sup> For more information about the preliminary assessment process and initial recommendations, please refer to the [Case Study Selection: Review and Recommendations](#) deliverable.

<sup>23</sup> For more information about the final criteria and recommendations process, please refer to the [Recommended Country Selection Process and Criteria](#) deliverable.



articles for each of the 15 potential case studies and (2) conducted a review of relevant indices for each country going back five years. This assessment aimed to identify countries with high levels of corruption and initiatives that incorporated SBC approaches. While the evidence review did show a lack of anti-corruption activities incorporating full SBC frameworks, this research includes five case studies that incorporated elements of SBC and represent a diversity of geography, levels of government, and sector.<sup>24</sup>

**Assessments of the following anti-corruption initiatives were conducted:**

- **Guatemala, International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG):** CICIG was an international commission established to investigate and prosecute serious crimes in Guatemala as an effort to mitigate the wide-scale impunity of government officers and security forces that utilized SBC elements, including SBCC and stakeholder-centric design.
- **Malawi, Construction Transparency Initiative (CoST):** CoST Malawi is the local chapter of an international transparency initiative and model that aims to engage public awareness and activate public oversight of public procurement and infrastructure spending that utilizes SBC elements, including influencer activation and demonstration of change.
- **Mexico, Anti-Impunity and Gender Equality Initiative:** This initiative is the work of a coalition of civil society organizations aimed at transforming social norms away from the acceptance of corruption and impunity through SBCC.
- **Moldova, Maia Sandu and the Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS) Campaigns:** This case study follows the campaigns of Maia Sandu, the current president of Moldova, and her party, the Party of Action of Solidarity, when they achieved unexpected success in 2020 and 2021 in the context of an anti-corruption focus utilizing SBC elements focused on shifting norms and hope-based narratives.
- **Tanzania, Addressing Bribery in the Health Sector:** This case study reviews an SBC approach to an anti-corruption intervention aimed at reducing the behaviors of gift-giving and reciprocity in Tanzania’s health care sector.

A summary of each case study, including the behavioral norms and drivers identified, the SBC elements utilized, and key findings and takeaways for each, can be found in the next section.

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<sup>24</sup> For more information about the final case study recommendations, please refer to the [Case Study Selection](#) deliverable.



## Case Study Review

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Each case study review and assessment included (1) a literature review of relevant academic papers, policy papers, reports, and media coverage of the anti-corruption initiative, and research into the social and behavioral norms and practices influencing corruption in each country; (2) key informant interviews with relevant researchers, participants, academics, and experts with insight into the initiative;<sup>25</sup> and (3) a review of relevant polling and indices.<sup>26</sup>

The research for the case studies was aimed at addressing **four areas of inquiry**:

1. Identifying behavioral determinants, including social norms, that influence behaviors and attitudes around corruption and anti-corruption.
2. Identifying SBC elements that have been used to counter corruption.
3. Assessing the impact and utility of SBC elements on countering corruption.
4. Identifying any gaps in the methodologies, evaluations, or data that could be the focus of future research.

With each case study, MG sought to answer a set of **key underlying questions** (while acknowledging that not every question would be answered for every case study), including:

1. What is the relevant context and background?
2. What are the behavioral determinants that need to be addressed?
3. What are the principal social norms driving corruption in this context?
4. What SBC approaches were utilized?
5. How effective were the SBC approaches and why?

Following the case study review, MG and ACTF hosted a workshop that included representatives from USAID's Center for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG), Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS), along with several additional members of ACTF. MG used this workshop to elicit feedback on the case study findings and gain insights into the priorities and objectives of USAID colleagues regarding user needs for this report.

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<sup>25</sup> MG identified and engaged interviewees for four of the five studies. We did not succeed in securing an interview with anyone involved in the Malawi case study. The Malawi case is well documented with evaluation by various sources.

<sup>26</sup> For a full list of sources and interviews, please see the references appendix at the end of this report.



# CASE STUDY SUMMARIES

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In this section, a summary of each of the following case studies is presented, highlighting the norms and SBC elements identified and relevant findings, takeaways, and lessons learned.

## Case Studies

- Guatemala, International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG)
- Malawi, Construction Transparency Initiative (CoST)
- Mexico, Anti-Impunity and Gender Equality Initiative
- Moldova, Maia Sandu and the Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS) Campaigns
- Tanzania, Addressing Bribery in the Health Sector

## Defining Key Norms

The definition of *norms* is an ongoing discussion and area of refinement among SBC practitioners and experts. Many SBC practitioners define norms broadly as widely shared beliefs, attitudes and perceptions that are seen as normal, acceptable and appropriate. For example, UNICEF defines social norms as “rules that define acceptable and appropriate actions within a given group or community,” stating that norms may relate to “what we do, what we believe others do, and what we believe others approve of and expect us to do.”<sup>27</sup> Practitioners are also calling for more precision when identifying norms and advocating for narrowing the definition to those informal rules that establish expectations and sanctions, rather than simple perceptions or beliefs.

Recognizing that this is an active and evolving discussion among SBC practitioners and experts, and in the interest of creating a document that will be useful immediately in the field, MG has sought to identify norms including the more specific expectations. For example while some of the sources for a case study described a norm in shorthand as “**resignation to the inevitability of corruption,**” based upon how the norm was specifically identified in the case studies SBC approach, *it is framed in this document with the more specificity as* “**expectation that corruption is expected, acceptable, and should not be resisted or countered at the risk of social censure.**”

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<sup>27</sup> UNICEF, “Defining Social Norms and Related Concepts,” November 2021. <https://www.unicef.org/media/111061/file/Social-norms-definitions-2021.pdf>.



## Identifying Key Tactics

The SBC approaches and strategies used during each case study have been identified in the following pages. These tactics, which will be expanded on in the **Findings and Recommendations** section to follow, include key SBC approaches such as stakeholder mapping, ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and the use of social nudges. However, it is worth noting that a substantial portion of each case study discussion covers SBCC-centric approaches, as MG found SBCC tactics to be the most commonly used and observed form of SBC in anti-corruption work. This reflects an evidence gap that persists in the SBC field, and should be considered when designing future SBC activities.



This project is coordinated by **Metropolitan Group**.

## Guatemala | International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG)

CICIG was formally established in 2007 and became operational in 2008 under the government of President Colom (2008–2012). The agreement between the Guatemalan government and the United Nations allowed local prosecution and investigation through the domestic legal system while strengthening the Commission’s capacities with international jurisdiction and competencies.

KEY NORMS	KEY TACTICS	CORE FINDINGS AND TAKEAWAYS
<p>Widespread expectation that military, political, and economic elite are granted broad impunity no matter what crimes they commit and that countering them results in personal risk and censure</p> <p>Expectation that corruption is a normal, even cultural aspect of Guatemalan society and is an acceptable behavior, particularly among elite members of society</p>	<p>Mapping, engaging, and leveraging priority stakeholders</p> <p>Strategic selection of emblematic cases</p> <p>Educating the public and making justice systems more accessible and understandable</p> <p>Leveraging, centralizing, and simplifying communication</p> <p>Addressing enabling factors through policy reforms</p>	<p>CICIG led successful education campaigns to create an understanding of the criminal justice system. Emblematic cases were leveraged to create a “soap opera effect,” wherein people started following key hearings as if they were soap operas or talk shows. This sparked public discourse, increased awareness of successes in and opportunities to hold corrupt actors accountable, and shifted perceptions that influence norms.</p> <p>There was a noticeable shift not only in awareness and support for the CICIG but also trust in the justice system. Responses to the World Justice Project survey showed increases in the trust Guatemalans felt toward public prosecutors (from 31 percent in 2018 to 39 percent in 2021) and judges and magistrates (increasing from 33 to 37 percent over the same period).</p> <p>On the other hand, poor preparation for resistance from elite groups and a lack of mechanisms to ensure the stability and resiliency of the movement left CICIG unprepared for the backlash it ultimately faced. Additionally, CICIG missed a number of opportunities to leverage high-profile moments and key influencers, which may have increased the effectiveness of their efforts. Both of these challenges might have been mitigated through ongoing assessments of stakeholder priorities and the political and social environment influencing norms and behaviors.</p>



## Malawi | Construction Transparency Initiative (CoST)

In 2008, Malawi established a pilot chapter of the CoST initiative, which provides a framework for anti-corruption, accountability, and transparency elements focused on construction procurement projects. This initiative aimed to increase public awareness and oversight over government infrastructure projects to identify when funds were being misused or when contracts were not being fulfilled.

KEY NORMS	KEY TACTICS	CORE FINDINGS AND TAKEAWAYS
<p>Expectation that extortion, bribery, and cronyism by government officers and construction firms are typical and acceptable practices in the construction procurement process</p> <p>Expectation by corrupt actors that there is no mechanism for transparency and accountability and that</p>	<p>Monitoring progress toward goals</p> <p>Engaging and activating priority stakeholders</p> <p>Activating the public through social nudges such as reminders through the media and local organizers to encourage engagement with the reporting tools</p> <p>SBCC and public education efforts through media</p>	<p>CoST Malawi has effectively institutionalized critical reporting and monitoring practices around construction spending, allowing them to sustain their presence and activity through Malawi’s Cashgate scandal<sup>28</sup> and a shifting political landscape.</p> <p>CoST Malawi effectively identified several key enablers of corruption, including the lack of accountability policies or practices and the modeling of corrupt behavior among procurement officers. By successfully advocating for changes to laws and policies that created more uniformity in disclosure requirements, they were able to remove one of the key barriers to effective information disclosure, which in turn allowed for the establishment of effective public oversight tools and mechanisms.</p> <p>The CoST initiative effectively activated media and influential stakeholders to share narratives that demonstrated changes being made, and began to shift the norm that it is futile to speak out against corruption.</p>

<sup>28</sup> The Cashgate Scandal was a high-profile scandal in 2013, where it was discovered that dozens of Malawian government officials were responsible for the theft of more than \$32 million in cash and goods from public funds. This scandal involved corrupt actors across Malawi’s government and public agencies, but the construction and infrastructure sectors were disproportionately implicated in the scandal, as reports uncovered millions of dollars worth of improperly tendered contracts. See, e.g., J.O., “The \$32m heist,” *The Economist* (February 27, 2014), <https://www.economist.com/baobab/2014/02/27/the-32m-heist>.





there will not be consequences for corrupt actions

engagement and civil society activation

Addressing enabling factors through policy and institutional reforms to establish more robust levels of vertical, horizontal, and diagonal accountability

Despite its success with buy-in to the program at the top and grassroots levels, CoST neglected to meaningfully engage the “missing middle” and build capacity for procurement officers. SBC mechanisms such as stakeholder mapping and resiliency building might have provided opportunities to engage these stakeholders and more directly address the pressures impacting the behaviors of procurement officials. CoST achieved only a limited engagement with the private sector in Malawi, limiting its potential influence in an environment of widespread corruption.



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## Mexico | Anti-Impunity and Gender Equality Initiative

Only seven percent of crimes get reported in Mexico; this degree of impunity reinforces the narrative that corruption is cultural – a message even conveyed by former president Peña Nieto. In this context, a group of organizations developed an initiative to promote policy and institutional changes and change cultural expectations and behaviors. A core aspect of the *#FiscaliaQueSirva* strategy was to help shift the narrative and change normative expectations about impunity as part of a broader network of coalitions working to drive this normative change by applying shared narrative to the messaging of their specific anti-impunity and anti-corruption initiatives.

KEY NORMS	KEY TACTICS	CORE FINDINGS AND TAKEAWAYS
<p>Expectation about the prevalence of impunity and corruption in Mexico, that the rich and powerful will not be held to account and that countering them results in personal risk and censure</p> <p>Expectation that corruption is a normal, even cultural aspect of Mexican society</p>	<p>Monitoring progress toward goals</p> <p>Engaging and activating priority stakeholders based on mapping</p> <p>Values and perceptions formative research</p> <p>Developing, testing, and building currency for a hope-based narrative</p> <p>Making policy changes that impacted enablers to corruption.</p>	<p>Identification, engagement, and activation of key stakeholder groups increased focus on the issues of corruption and countered the norm of futility to speak out against corruption. In particular, the successful leveraging of hope-based narratives and stakeholder-centric SBCC design contributed to shifts in perceptions and helped activate key stakeholders.</p> <p>The initiative monitored progress toward its goals, identifying achievements and opportunities to adjust, and focusing efforts on levers of change with potential for impact. For example, organizers took advantage of windows of opportunity in the 2018 presidential campaign and ultimate landslide victory of President López Obrador. Obrador ran on a strong anti-corruption campaign, which allowed organizers to advance anti-corruption messaging and advocate for policies and practices to limit impunity and corruption.</p> <p>Successful policy changes and the establishment of the independent public prosecutor shifted enablers of corruption; helping to counter the institutional protections for corrupt actors.</p> <p>The lack of a resilient, centralized coalition led to the lack of sustainable engagement with key stakeholders. Mistaken understanding of political dynamics (left-right versus power-based power analysis) led organizers to believe support was stronger among politicians than it actually was.</p>



## Moldova | Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS)

Moldova has experienced decades of ruling parties and officials who have used the state’s financial coffers and levers of influence to benefit themselves and those who sought their favor. Moldovan voters had grown cynical and had not been swayed by an anti-corruption narrative in recent campaigns. Sandu’s 2020 presidential campaign sought to change this by incorporating many elements of SBC; leveraging the attention and organizing principle of electoral and campaign efforts.

KEY NORMS	KEY TACTICS	CORE FINDINGS AND TAKEAWAYS
<p>Widespread expectation that it is acceptable for political leaders to access a share of the spoils, and that countering them results in personal risk and censure</p> <p>Expectation that all politicians are corrupt and that anti-corruption campaign promises are not to be believed</p>	<p>Behavioral diagnosis to identify the enablers and drivers influencing candidate preference and voting; and formative research into stakeholder values and priorities</p> <p>Developing a hope-based narrative with asset framing</p> <p>Policy and institutional reforms to strengthen Moldova’s anti-corruption framework</p> <p>Demonstration of change and difference (elected officials acting honestly and implementing promises) to shift perceptions</p>	<p>Sandu and the PAS identified challenges with explicit anti-corruption narratives, diagnosing fatigue and cynicism around anti-corruption campaigns. Using data-driven analysis, they also recognized that many voters associated anti-corruption narratives with the European Union and West, connecting the platform to the divisive East/West wedge issue. They used a powerful hope-based narrative to address the economic challenges and thirst for opportunities that voters found most pressing.</p> <p>2021 marked the first time a majority of respondents to the Moldova Public Opinion Barometer said that at least one political party represented their interests; both PAS and Sandu scored high with Moldovan voters when asked about their trustworthiness. Sandu has retained an unprecedented level of public trust, regularly demonstrating (by flying economy, for example) her refusal to take advantage of her position.</p> <p>The tactic of promising tangible economic benefits risks creating a transactional frame and less-resilient shift. Sandu’s government has been forced to deal with economic and geopolitical crises that have eroded their public support and distracted from their core political goals. It is unclear how sustainable a political campaign-based SBCC strategy may be at shifting norms and behaviors in the long term, as the effects can be mitigated if other political objectives supplant corruption in terms of voter prioritization or if anti-corruption policies do not deliver the benefits that were promised.</p>



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## Tanzania | Addressing Bribery in the Health Sector

A research team from the Basel Institute of Governance, led by Claudia Baez Camargo, piloted an intervention aimed at reducing the behaviors of gift-giving and reciprocity in Tanzania’s health care sector. The pilot intervention was conducted at a large regional referral hospital in Dar es Salaam, and included a number of social nudges and signaling aimed at the drivers and norms influencing the gift-giving behaviors. This pilot occurred over a four-month period and aimed to address the social acceptability of bribery and gift-giving over the course of receiving and providing health services in public facilities.

KEY NORMS	KEY TACTICS	CORE FINDINGS AND TAKEAWAYS
<p>The expectation that gift-giving to medical professionals is a typical tool used to access health services in a timely manner (or at all)</p> <p>Expectation of reciprocity on behalf of patients who have given a gift to medical professionals and expect preferential or prompt treatment in return</p> <p>Expectation of obligation and duty for providers to grant favors/preference based on personal connections or gifts they have received</p>	<p>Social nudges designed to discourage gift-giving behaviors in the form of desk signs, posters, and engagement by staff champions</p> <p>Social signaling countering the perception that gift-giving and reciprocity are acceptable practices</p> <p>Addressing enabling factors that contribute to the gift-giving behavior through such mechanisms as: offering resources to providers to encourage alternative actions and responses when offered gifts by patients or their families</p>	<p>Despite the small sample size, there were promising results showing a reduction in the gift-giving behavior and shifts to the social perceptions of the acceptability associated with the practice of gift-giving.</p> <p>The Magafuli government delivered a national anti-corruption campaign with messaging that explicitly named gift-giving as an act of bribery. The messaging emphasized that those engaging in the practice of giving or receiving gifts could face negative legal consequences.</p> <p>Although the amount of gift-giving within the hospital decreased in the four-month period, there was not a significant decrease in the perceptions of gift-giving as a beneficial or acceptable behavior.</p> <p>Staff champions were selected by title rather than alignment with anti-corruption work, which meant that buy-in was mixed within the group promoting the pilot to hospital patients.</p>



# FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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While there are many individual nuances across the case studies, MG has identified a number of cross-cutting recommendations that appeared in multiple cases. These recommendations are presented in the following pages; along with the findings that informed their development, considerations for applying the learnings and elevating or incorporating SBC elements into anti-corruption work, and informative case study examples. These recommendations include general guidance to incorporating SBC into anti-corruption efforts and specific SBC and SBCC tools and tactics that may be considered helpful in countering corruption.

## **General Guidance for Incorporating SBC into Anti-corruption Efforts:**

1. Apply Full SBC Approaches and Rigorous Evaluations
2. Prioritize Social Norms
3. Incorporate Stakeholder-Centric Design
4. Build Resiliency

## **Specific SBC and SBCC Tools and Tactics for Application in Anti-Corruption Efforts:**

1. Utilize Social and Behavior Change Communication
2. Demonstrate Change and Difference
3. Develop Hope-Based Narratives
4. Activate Influencers and Messengers
5. Analyze Response to Anti-Corruption Messages



## General SBC Guidance | Comprehensive SBC Application With Rigorous Evaluation

<b>KEY FINDINGS</b>	SBC is under-explored in anti-corruption efforts. Many anti-corruption activities already involve SBC components; however, very few examples of comprehensive SBC anti-corruption initiatives are being implemented to date. This has limited both the benefit that full SBC approaches may provide to anti-corruption efforts and our understanding of the influence SBC has on addressing norms related to corruption.
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<p>More implementation and evaluation of SBC approaches in anti-corruption efforts is needed, including causal research on specific norms and behaviors that are being impacted by anti-corruption efforts. There is merit in doing full SBC implementation and rigorous evaluation in different regions and contexts to build a better body of knowledge around the norms that drive corruption.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to increase the scale and frequency of SBC elements in anti-corruption efforts and more comprehensively evaluate their impact on social norms and behaviors. New, upcoming, and existing anti-corruption initiatives should look for opportunities to build in SBC elements to their strategies, and identify where SBC elements already exist and merit closer evaluation and measurement.</p>
<b>CASE STUDY EXAMPLES</b>	The scan of 15 potential case studies found only one full SBC example of limited scope and duration. The <b>Tanzania anti-bribery initiative</b> is the only example MG found of a full SBC approach being utilized as an anti-corruption initiative. This approach incorporated formative research to identify key norms, drivers, and enablers influencing the corrupt practices of gift-giving and reciprocity in Tanzanian hospitals; stakeholder-centric design and messaging; the use of social nudges and SBCC to address the norms and beliefs driving corruption; the activation of influential messengers and stakeholders; and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the behaviors and norms at issue. The researchers were also able to engage in limited causal research into certain key norms through surveys administered before and after the testing period. However, this case study was extremely limited in scale and scope, being implemented at one hospital over a four-week period, making it difficult to extrapolate broader lessons or findings. The case studies of anti-corruption activities that utilized elements of SBC demonstrated positive outcomes and potential influences.



## General SBC Guidance | Prioritize Social Norms

<b>KEY FINDINGS</b>	<p>Despite the lack of SBC-focused research into corruption, it is widely believed that corruption is reinforced by social norms. Using SBC to influence these norms has high potential for shifting corrupt behaviors, and supporting shifts to enablers and drivers aimed at countering corruption. The case studies that incorporated SBC elements to focus on social norms have been successful in shifting related behaviors and, shown in anecdotal evidence in some cases, beginning to shift social norms.</p>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<p>Anti-corruption initiatives should include formative research mapping the social norms connected to corruption to understand the key drivers influencing corrupt practices.</p> <p>Utilization of SBC elements (such as the development of new narratives, SBCC, shifts in enablers, or stakeholder-centric design) can be targeted to shift specific norms.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluating changes in attitudes and norms should be built in as a component of iterative implementation to assess programmatic impact on key norms and shifting norms on corruption.</p>
<b>CASE STUDY EXAMPLES</b>	<p><b>Maia Sandu and the PAS in Moldova</b> conducted formative research into the norms, values, and issues that drove Moldovan voters. They recognized that most voters believed it was futile to hope for change, and cynical about politicians who claimed to oppose corruption. This understanding allowed them to craft an alternate platform that did not center their anti-corruption positions but rather spoke to the economic issues that were of more immediate concern to voters.</p> <p>In the <b>anti-bribery initiative conducted in Tanzania</b>, researchers identified a number of key norms that drove the practices of gift-giving and reciprocity in service sectors (such as the belief that refusing a gift is inappropriate or insulting). Using their insight into these norms, the researchers designed signs, posters, and talking points that addressed these norms and beliefs directly by framing gift-giving as bribery and corruption.</p> <p><b>CICIG organizers in Guatemala</b> successfully diagnosed several key social norms shifting anti-corruption efforts, including the expectation that the elite are granted broad impunity no matter what crimes they commit, the perception that justice can be bought, and the expectation that countering corrupt elite actors results in personal risk and censure. They then used SBCC elements to counter these norms and shift perceptions and beliefs regarding corruption.</p> <p>In <b>Mexico, anti-impunity activists</b> explicitly aimed to shift social norms around corruption and impunity. Specifically, their objective was to achieve a cultural change by 2028 wherein corruption and impunity would be considered</p>





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unacceptable, reprehensible, and counter to social norms. To achieve this, they conducted formative research into core social norms and established iterative goals for evaluating and demonstrating progress.



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## General SBC Guidance | Incorporate Stakeholder-Centric Design

<b>KEY FINDINGS</b>	<p>Stakeholder-centric design is the strategic use of qualitative and quantitative data to target the values, beliefs, and issues that matter most to priority stakeholders to guide the selection of engagement options, messengers, mediums, narrative and message framing, and strategies to utilize levers of change. By centering stakeholder understanding in the design, SBC planners can more effectively engage, activate, and reinforce key stakeholders. The case studies included multiple examples of anti-corruption initiatives benefiting from data-driven, stakeholder-centric design that is geared toward the values, beliefs, and experiences of key groups.</p>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<p>SBC approaches should be designed based on formative stakeholder research that identifies the factors driving the norms and behaviors implementers are seeking to address. These factors may include the identification of closely held values, relevant economic, political, or historical context, and existing perceptions and beliefs related to corruption and to specific drivers or enablers identified in the diagnostic process.</p> <p><b>Opportunities to incorporate stakeholder findings in SBC design and implementation include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Segmentation, prioritization, and sequencing of stakeholders to activate those individuals with the ability to advance specific desired changes or help demonstrate and build momentum for shifting norms that can influence others to engage.</li><li>• Identification of which levers of change (policy, regulatory, influencer behavior, social norms, and expectations) should be strategically prioritized.</li><li>• Selection of the messengers and mediums that priority stakeholders find most credible and effective.</li><li>• Development of narrative and message frames and SBCC strategies and tactics that incorporate identified key values.</li></ul>
<b>CASE STUDY EXAMPLES</b>	<p><b>CICIG champions in Guatemala</b> engaged in stakeholder mapping that identified priority stakeholder groups—indigenous leaders, students, independent media, and non-political influencers—who could be leveraged into participation in the social demonstrations following the <i>La Línea</i> case. Champions engaged in direct outreach to priority stakeholders, providing education and exemplary stories to encourage activation.</p> <p><b>Sandu and the PAS in Moldova</b> engaged in behavioral diagnosis to identify the core values and issues that mattered most to their priority stakeholders—the Moldovan electorate. Recognizing that economic stability and opportunity were issues of primary concern to most voters, Sandu and the PAS made the explicit choice to connect all other issues – corruption included – back to the economic challenges that voters cared about most. They also avoided divisive</p>



geopolitical or identity-based wedge issues, not wishing to alienate large numbers of the Moldovan electorate from their campaign platform.

The **Tanzania anti-bribery initiative** centered its design on drivers and enablers the implementers had identified for both stakeholder groups (patients and their families and hospital staff). They crafted relevant messages specific to each group. Through social signaling and nudges, the initiative aimed to deter patients from offering bribes and offered resources to staff members who wished to avoid accepting bribes without triggering social backlash.



<b>KEY FINDINGS</b>	<p>Corruption is resistant to change due to systemic and institutional factors that incentivize those in positions of power and authority to protect corrupt actors and practices, and where corrupt actors are in positions of power and authority, they are highly incentivized to protect. As a result, resiliency-building for anti-corruption initiatives is necessary to mitigate attempts to discredit or counter anti-corruption efforts and to prepare to counter potential backlash. The case studies included one good practice example and two cases where the lack of infrastructure to address backlash was identified as a gap.</p>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<p>Resiliency-building may include the intentional development of infrastructure, networks, and policies to ensure the ability of a movement to withstand backlash, crises, or scandals. Resiliency can be increased by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mapping the power and influence of anti-corruption opponents during the diagnostic and design phase to focus on monitoring and proactively mitigate and rapidly respond to backlash.</li><li>• Expanding or strengthening the coalition or support network for the anti-corruption initiative to include allies from diverse sectors.</li><li>• Advocating for policy reforms that create institutional support for anti-corruption objectives.</li><li>• Advancing support across multiple accountability levels (vertical, horizontal, and diagonal).</li></ul> <p>SBC planners should also consider including SBCC elements that inform stakeholders about the benefits of anti-corruption accomplishments, building the legitimacy and public profile of the anti-corruption effort.</p> <p>Implementers should also anticipate and prepare for backlash, including ongoing monitoring and evaluation and rapid-response capacity in their iterative implementation plans. This will allow them to analyze backlash and delegitimizing efforts and be able to activate key messengers, influencers, and multi-sector allies, and deploy communication strategies to counter the attacks and backlash.</p>
<b>CASE STUDY EXAMPLES</b>	<p>The <b>CoST Malawi initiative</b> has employed a number of strategies that have ensured its stability through highly unstable moments in Malawi’s recent history. Led by a multi-stakeholder group that includes representatives from the government, civil society, and private sectors, CoST Malawi is also housed under the government anti-corruption body and includes the President of Malawi as a core sponsor. Additionally, CoST Malawi has successfully lobbied for policy and legislation that mandates disclosure in procurement and the use of CoST’s anti-corruption oversight tools.</p>



In two of the case studies, **CICIG in Guatemala** and the **anti-impunity initiative in Mexico**, the *absence* of resiliency mechanisms allowed backlash to either discredit the initiatives, diminish their public profile and standing, or limit their effectiveness. The CICIG organizers failed to anticipate the level of backlash they would face from the political elite; allowing it to be publicly undermined and demonized by antagonistic forces. Anti-impunity advocates in Mexico faced challenges when monitoring and adjusting their strategies and engaging in rapid decision-making, making them less resilient to attacks on the legitimacy of civic space and changing environments.



## Specific SBC Tools and Tactics | Utilize Social & Behavior Change Communication

<b>KEY FINDINGS</b>	<p>Social and behavior change communication (SBCC) is a communications strategy that explicitly incorporates evidence-based findings about the beliefs and norms that influence behaviors and attitudes to influence norms, beliefs, perceptions, awareness, and action. Using this strategy can ensure a communications strategy that is best tailored to the priority stakeholder groups being addressed. The case studies showed some evidence that the use of SBCC increased the awareness, understanding, and activation of priority stakeholders, helping to disseminate and build currency for narratives that shift social norms.</p>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<p>Even in instances where a full SBC approach is not being pursued, consideration should be given to building SBCC into anti-corruption initiatives. SBCC can also be utilized to support other SBC elements, such as the demonstration of change and difference by raising awareness and understanding.</p> <p>Diagnostic and design stages should include stakeholder mapping, formative research on stakeholder values and perceptions, identification of trusted messengers, and developing, testing, and refinement of narrative and message frameworks (including hope-based narratives, where appropriate).</p> <p>Build ongoing monitoring and iterative implementation into narrative, messaging, and communication strategies to ensure their ongoing relevance and responsiveness to changing contexts or dynamics.</p> <p>Consider inclusion of strategic communication capacity-building and support for key allies (CSOs, partner public institutions, private sector, etc), including ongoing communication-monitoring analysis and rapid response support.</p> <p><i>The four following recommendations (<b>demonstrate change and difference, hope-based narratives, influencer activation and analyze responses to anti-corruption messages</b>) are all examples of SBC tools that may include SBCC elements.</i></p>
<b>CASE STUDY EXAMPLES</b>	<p>In the <b>anti-impunity initiative in Mexico</b>, implementers engaged in SBCC strategies designed to utilize creative expression in the public square, social media, and media; maximize opportunities related to election cycle debates and civic participation; and guide the application of a shared narrative to numerous existing and new campaigns connected to the rule of law. Using core SBCC tactics (goal-setting and stakeholder-mapping, formative stakeholder research, trusted messenger identification, evidence-based narrative and supporting message frameworks, and strategic capacity-building and support), implementers focused their efforts and capacities on shifting people from a resignation mindset into action.</p>



**CICIG champions in Guatemala** used several SBCC approaches to influence stakeholders and shift social norms and behaviors, such as leveraging a simplified communication strategy and ensuring that criminal procedures were discussed in a manner that the general public could understand. Judges and media alike were encouraged to explain the procedures and investigations so that they could be understood by people with no legal expertise. This contributed to broader public attention, where more people paid attention to legal proceedings as a form of entertainment or popular interest.

In **Moldova, Sandu and the PAS** conducted formative research into the values and issues most relevant to Moldovan voters, and designed their campaign messaging around those issues. Sandu and the PAS avoided divisive wedge issues, focusing instead on economic challenges and priorities that resonated with large sections of the electorate. They also recognized that direct anti-corruption messages would not be effective given the widespread cynicism Moldovans felt towards anti-corruption campaign promises; instead, they actively demonstrated their trustworthiness and commitment through their behaviors, actions, and the policies they advocated for.



## Specific SBC Tools and Tactics | Demonstrate Change and Difference

<b>KEY FINDINGS</b>	<p>Demonstration of change refers to using exemplary stories of successes, advancements, and differences achieved by an organization or movement. By providing tangible demonstrations of difference and change, anti-corruption initiatives have been able to engender optimism and hope about the possibility of real change and to reinforce activation of stakeholders, changes in behaviors, and shifts in perceptions and norms.</p>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<p>Throughout the design and iterative implementation of an SBC initiative, opportunities should be identified for early wins (establishing changes in policies or practices), demonstration of difference (high profile accountability, evident improvement in service delivery, etc.), and other tangible changes which can show people that change is possible, and that their decisions and actions can have an effect.</p> <p>It is important not to over-sell these demonstrations. Tangible demonstrations of changes and difference should be presented in ways that align with stakeholders' daily experiences; otherwise, they are likely to disbelieve and/or dismiss the message.</p>
<b>CASE STUDY EXAMPLES</b>	<p><b>CICIG in Guatemala</b> utilized a series of exemplary cases to demonstrate the possibility of addressing corruption and impunity and to shift perceptions about the justice system reforms that might be possible. The use of emblematic cases also gave CICIG the opportunity to demonstrate its value and efficacy – leading to a rise in its public profile and approval.</p> <p>The <b>CoST initiative in Malawi</b> used a network of civil society advocates and media allies to amplify their successes and create greater transparency in construction procurement practices. They also took advantage of high-profile cases and moments of heightened public interest to focus attention on their activities and resources, creating greater awareness of their mission and influence.</p> <p>In <b>Moldova, Maia Sandu, and the PAS</b> have capitalized on their well-known reputation for anti-corrupt positions and practices. In a country where most Moldovan citizens believe that corruption among public officials is an inescapable reality, Sandu and the PAS have managed to curate a reputation for authenticity and a record of principled action.</p> <p>The <b>anti-impunity initiative in Mexico</b> included successfully establishing an independent public prosecutor. Disseminating information about key prosecutions and legal victories demonstrated the potential to drive high-level change and create horizontal accountability.</p>





## Specific SBC Tools and Tactics | Develop Hope-Based Narratives

<b>KEY FINDINGS</b>	<p>Hope-based narratives are ideas or visions created by a set of orchestrated and organic positive stories that contribute to the long-term changes in ideas, attitudes, and behaviors that make people believe change is possible and encourage behaviors that are more likely to bring that change about. Hope-based narratives activate positive feelings and mindsets such as joy, trust, and optimism, thus helping to counter “apocalyptic fatigue.” As a result, people are more likely to be receptive to listening and engaging with key issues. In the case studies, anti-corruption initiatives that developed and utilized hope-based narratives were successful at countering common norms, such as the belief that it is futile to expect changes to corrupt practices.</p>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<p>As part of the diagnostic process, mapping should be conducted on social norms and related dominant and salient narratives to analyze and identify the need or opportunity for hope-based narratives and the core values drivers of key stakeholders.</p> <p>Where hope-based narratives target social norms, the narratives should be developed to trigger identified values drivers and tested with priority stakeholders for refinement to ensure efficacy.</p> <p>The case studies demonstrated that narratives are most effective when conveyed through multiple channels by multiple messengers. Capacity-building and support should be provided to allies, advocates, CSOs, and other partners to apply and customize the hope-based narrative.</p>
<b>CASE STUDY EXAMPLES</b>	<p>In the <b>anti-impunity initiative in Mexico</b>, implementers developed, tested, and refined a hope-based narrative: <b>“To live without fear we need justice we can trust.”</b><sup>29</sup> This narrative conveyed two key aspects: first, triggering the core values of safety when talking about corruption; and second, establishing an overarching solution that can produce those objectives. The narrative was designed to counter the sense of hopelessness felt in Mexico regarding corruption and impunity, and to increase societal expectations for a functioning rule of law and equitable justice system that people can trust and rely on as a solution to the constant state of fear and insecurity in which most people live in Mexico. Capacity-building and support for a wide array of related coalitions, civil society groups, business advocates, and others drove widespread use and customization of the narrative, which was adopted into the messaging of numerous campaigns and initiatives countering corruption and impunity.</p>

<sup>29</sup> Metropolitan Group, “Formative Research on Impunity, Corruption, and Human Rights” (September 29, 2017).



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In **Moldova, Maia Sandu and the PAS** utilized positive, asset-based message framing to articulate a positive alternate vision of a society free of corruption. Corruption was explicitly framed as an obstacle to economic growth and better opportunities for people and families; and Sandu and the PAS emphasized that addressing corruption was a necessary step to economic modernization, stability, and opportunity.



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## Specific SBC Tools and Tactics | Activate Influencers and Messengers

<b>KEY FINDINGS</b>	<p>Influencer activation is the targeted engagement of priority influencers to spread awareness, cultivate engagement, and disseminate core messages among their peers and communities. Influencer activation also shifts social norms by signaling change and acceptability of an anti-corruption position. It is well-understood that the choice of messenger and influencer is key when engaging specific stakeholder groups. This was identified as an effective SBC approach across several anti-corruption case studies.</p>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<p>As noted in the stakeholder-centric design recommendation above, implementers should engage in stakeholder mapping and other formative research to identify the messengers and influencers (individuals, institutions, and/or organizations) with the most trust, reach, and potential efficacy influencing the priority stakeholder segments.</p> <p>Once messengers and influencers are identified, additional research should be conducted to understand their values, motivators, and alignment with the core anti-corruption objectives. This will help identify pathways to engage and activate the messengers and influencers.</p> <p>Provide influencers with the desired narrative and messaging, capacity-building as needed, and ongoing reinforcement through SBCC strategies using media and social media.</p>
<b>CASE STUDY EXAMPLES</b>	<p>In the <b>anti-impunity initiative in Mexico</b>, implementers conducted stakeholder mapping to identify messengers and influencers with political and cultural influence, as well as alignment with core values and objectives. Using this mapping, implementers identified and engaged 31 high-influence national messengers, and provided support and direct engagement, urging them to share the hope-based narrative. Influencers carried the messages in their own communication and social media. Various tactics were used to reinforce their message, such as using platforms to highlight their support through digital campaigning and creative expression exhibits.</p> <p>The <b>Malawi CoST initiative</b> sought out influential allies in local media and civil society as messengers and influencers to spread information about the resources available to provide public oversight and accountability over public infrastructure projects. They provided capacity-building to CSOs to support their efficacy as messengers. Additionally, CoST engaged stakeholders at the highest levels of government; in 2021, President Chakwera was named a CoST Malawi Champion, pledging to integrate infrastructure transparency into public dialogue and policy.</p>



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The **anti-bribery initiative in Tanzania** engaged staff champions in each of the treated departments in the hospital to spread the core anti-bribery message and offer resources to colleagues and patients.



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## Specific SBC Tools and Tactics | Analyze Response to Anti-Corruption Messages

### KEY FINDINGS

There are cases where the most effective strategy was to specifically call out corruption and cases where the choice was made to instead focus on the benefits of countering corruption as the primary focus. Addressing corruption can be a galvanizing issue and can also be experienced with a sense of fatigue, resignation, and wariness around anti-corruption promises. Across the case studies, it was a good practice to include the intentional selection of how to frame corruption as part of the diagnostic and design stages. In some cases, it was identified that naming certain behaviors as corrupt practices was an effective way to shift key perceptions and behaviors; and in one key example, implementers opted to focus on the benefits of countering corruption instead.

### RECOMMENDATIONS & CONSIDERATIONS

As part of the diagnostic phase, anti-corruption initiatives should include in their formative research an assessment of the public perception and reaction to messaging around corruption and gauge whether anti-corruption messaging is persuasive. Planners should make a case-specific determination of how to focus messaging on corruption.

### CASE STUDY EXAMPLES

The **PAS and Sandu campaigns in Moldova** made the conscious decision to avoid direct anti-corruption messaging based on data-driven analysis of voter fatigue with anti-corruption messaging and cynicism about the honesty or commitment of politicians, regardless of their positions on corruption. Instead, Sandu and the PAS focused their messaging on economic challenges and opportunities and then tied these benefits to the outcome of a Moldova without corruption. When they addressed corruption, they did so in connection with their hope-based, economic-focused messages.

In the **anti-bribery initiative in Tanzania**, implementers learned from formative research that stakeholders did not believe gift-giving and reciprocity were inherently corrupt practices. They also identified that in the current context of strong government anti-corruption efforts, messaging, and penalties created an environment of concern and motivation to avoid corrupt actions. As a result, signage and posters developed for this initiative explicitly named gift-giving as a corrupt act that could incur penalties. This successfully shifted perceptions among stakeholders when considering gift-giving corrupt and also impacted behaviors as patients were disincentivized from engaging in the practice.



# CONCLUSION

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Despite the relative scarcity of current SBC initiatives in the anti-corruption space, the elements of SBC reviewed in these case studies provide promising results, including shifts in social norms, attitudes, and enabling factors that contribute to strengthening anti-corruption efforts and advancing changes to counter corruption. The case studies showed shifts in key attitudes related to corruption and impunity, and improvements in the perception that corruption is inescapable or impossible to counter. Policy and legal successes also produced identifiable shifts to enabling factors and enablers of corrupt behaviors. Consideration should be given to piloting full SBC anti-corruption activities, including the rigorous evaluation that would provide evidence to better understand and develop good practices for shifting the social norms that are often core to continuing or addressing corruption. There is also an opportunity to analyze current programming and initiatives to identify the elements of SBC already extant in current USAID anti-corruption activities. Identification of these elements, and communication of data collected and lessons learned, can lead to increased understanding of SBC as a contributor to anti-corruption efforts.

To summarize, the following SBC approaches have potential to strengthen current efforts as well as planned future anti-corruption activities:

## General Guidance for Incorporating SBC into Anti-corruption Efforts:

**Comprehensive and Intentional Application of SBC with Rigorous Evaluation:** There is an opportunity to increase the scale and frequency of SBC elements in anti-corruption efforts, and more comprehensively evaluate their impact on social norms and behaviors. New, upcoming, and existing anti-corruption initiatives should look for opportunities to build in SBC elements to their strategies, and identify where SBC elements already exist, and merit closer evaluation and measurement.

**Prioritize Social Norms:** Utilization of SBC elements (such as the development of new narratives, SBCC, shifts in enablers, or stakeholder-centric design) can be targeted to shift specific norms. Monitoring and evaluating changes in attitudes and norms should be built in as a component of iterative implementation to assess programmatic impact on key norms and the effect of changing norms on corruption.

**Incorporate Stakeholder-Centric Design:** SBC approaches should be designed based on formative stakeholder research that identifies the factors driving the norms and behaviors implementers seek to address. These factors may include the identification of closely held values, relevant economic, political, or historical context, and existing perceptions and beliefs related to corruption and to specific drivers or enablers identified in the diagnostic process.



**Build Resiliency:** Resiliency-building for anti-corruption initiatives is necessary to mitigate attempts to discredit or counter anti-corruption efforts and to prepare to counter potential backlash. Resiliency-building may include the intentional development of infrastructure, networks, and policies to ensure the ability of a movement to withstand backlash, crises, or scandals. SBC planners should also consider including SBCC elements that inform stakeholders about the benefits of anti-corruption accomplishments, building the legitimacy and public profile of the anti-corruption effort.

### **Specific SBC and SBCC Tools and Tactics for Application in Anti-Corruption Efforts:**

**Utilize Social and Behavior Change Communication:** SBCC is a communications strategy that explicitly incorporates evidence-based findings about the beliefs and norms that influence behaviors and attitudes to influence norms, beliefs, perceptions, awareness, and action. Using this strategy can ensure a communications strategy that is best tailored to the priority stakeholder groups being addressed. Even in instances where a full SBC approach is not being pursued, consideration should be given to building SBCC into anti-corruption initiatives. SBCC can also be utilized to support other SBC elements, such as the demonstration of change and difference by raising awareness and understanding.

**Demonstrate Change and Difference:** Throughout the design and iterative implementation of an SBC initiative, opportunities should be identified for early wins (establishing changes in policies or practices), demonstration of difference (high profile accountability, evident improvement in service delivery, etc.), and other tangible changes which can show people that change is possible, and that their decisions and actions can have an effect. It is important not to over-sell these demonstrations. Tangible demonstrations of changes and difference should be presented in ways that align with stakeholders' daily experiences; otherwise, they are likely to disbelieve and/or dismiss the message.

**Develop Hope-Based Narratives:** As part of the diagnostic process, mapping should be conducted on social norms and related dominant and salient narratives to analyze and identify the need or opportunity for hope-based narratives and the core values drivers of key stakeholders. Where hope-based narratives target social norms, the narratives should be developed to trigger identified values drivers and tested with priority stakeholders for refinement to ensure efficacy. Capacity-building and support should be provided to allies, advocates, CSOs, and other partners to apply and customize the hope-based narrative.

**Activate Influencers and Messengers:** MG recommends that implementers engage in stakeholder mapping and other formative research to identify the messengers and influencers (individuals, institutions, and/or organizations) with the most trust, reach, and potential efficacy influencing the priority stakeholder segments. Once messengers and influencers are identified, additional research



should be conducted to understand their values, motivators, and alignment with the core anti-corruption objectives. This will help identify pathways to engage and activate the messengers and influencers.

**Analyze Response to Anti-Corruption Messages:** MG found that it was a good practice to include the intentional selection of how to frame corruption as part of the diagnostic and design stages. In some cases, it was identified that naming certain behaviors as corrupt practices was an effective way to shift key perceptions and behaviors; and in one key example, implementers opted to focus on the benefits of countering corruption instead. As part of the diagnostic phase, anti-corruption initiatives should include in their formative research an assessment of the public perception and reaction to messaging around corruption and gauge whether anti-corruption messaging is persuasive. Planners should make a case-specific determination of how to focus messaging on corruption.

The case studies in this activity demonstrate that while SBC is a nascent and under-studied approach to anti-corruption efforts, there is strong potential for incorporating SBC elements into existing and upcoming anti-corruption interventions to support more effective efforts to change policies, behaviors, drivers, enablers, and norms that drive corruption or bolster anti-corruption efforts.





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## **Key Informant Interviews**

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Anonymous Interviewee 2 (Guatemala)

Anonymous Interviewee 3 (Guatemala)

Anonymous Interviewee 1 (Mexico)

Anonymous Interviewee 2 (Mexico)

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