

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the 2nd Biennial LINEA meeting. I thank you all for joining us in the exciting and vibrant city of London.

For those of you who are new to LINEA, LINEA is a learning initiative on social norms, exploitation and abuse of children and adolescents. The project's goal is to explore the feasibility of using the social norms approach to prevent sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. LINEA's first phase started in 2013 for a duration of 2 years. In 2016, we had a hiatus of one year, and since the beginning of 2017 we are back with an expanded team now implementing our second phase, which will take us through the end of 2019. LINEA's first phase concentrated on three main activities: 1. Creating a learning community of researchers, practitioners and advocates who could exchange knowledge through LINEA network, webinars and meetings. 2. Gaining clarity on the concept of exploitation and reviewing the literature on the existing social norms content related to SEC, & 3. Conducting formative research in Tanzania, Uganda and Brazil to inform intervention design in LINEA's now phase two. For the formative research we decided to focus on the issue of intergenerational transactional sex highly prevalent in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa and linked to adverse reproductive and health outcomes, such as early pregnancy, STI's and HIV. We will be hearing results from these studies later in the day. We will also present results from the systematic review on social norms and SEC.

A lot has happened since our first meeting back in 2015. We have witnessed a polarisation of world politics, leading to politicians with extreme political views taking power, with devastating consequences from the disregard of women's rights to the threat of nuclear war. We have also experienced new and more severe environmental disasters, and ongoing wars that continue to displace vulnerable populations, now in greater numbers than ever since World War II. But good things have also happened, and the world has now embarked on the Sustainable Development Goals which for the first time recognise the importance of addressing violence against women and violence against children for sustainable human development. Women and men around the world have marched against misogyny, advocating for women's rights and equality. I personally believe that the role of academia and practitioners (besides attending the marches!) is to take a step back and try to understand the causes of this violence and use evidence to generate interventions that can prevent and respond to violence, particularly against the next generation ultimately and hopefully achieving real and sustained change where is most needed.

The LINEA meeting title this year is, 'From Research to Social Change: Exploring the Possibilities for SEC Prevention Using a Social Norms Perspective'. Intervening on social norms has created promising pathways of change in other public health issues such as hand washing, FGM and VAWG, however the application of a social norms approach to the field of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents is still in its early days, as evidenced in our systematic review and research so far. What we know though is that sexual exploitation of children and adolescents is a complex matter, and we do not think that a social norms approach on its own could fully address it. Nevertheless, approaching the issue without considering the norms that uphold the practice, would probably not achieve the desired change either. Interventions that seek to address structural factors underpinning gender inequalities and SEC may be strengthened and catalysed through addressing socially normative factors that act as harmful barriers to or positive pathways toward safe and healthy adolescent transitions to adulthood.

Bearing all this in mind and within this thematic context, I would like to ask you that throughout these two and a half days you help us reflect on how social norms theory intersects with other theories such as gender theories, including: 1) Issues of power and the role of social norms in maintaining social,

economic and political inequalities; 2) How to operationalize social norms theory to target and measure critical norm change through interventions; 3) How to scale up successful social norms interventions; and ultimately, 4) What are the best means of achieving social norms change and how does this change occur? We probably will not be able to solve all of these questions, but we have a diverse agenda with over 20 presentations from researchers, practitioners, funders and advocates that can provoke reflection and spark discussions around these topics. In putting the programme together, we have incorporated your suggestions from the first meeting and included more on sexual exploitation of boys, and prevention of SEC through normative interventions among others. We hope you find this space allows you to discuss and share knowledge, but also that it provides you with a platform to explore new potential partnerships or strengthen existing ones.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the OAK foundation for their support and for being such a generous and open minded funder. To Jennifer Schulte, Lottie Howard-Merrill and Michael Naranjo, my amazing LINEA team whose commitment, passion, knowledge and incredible organisational skills have made this meeting and LINEA in general possible, as well as Ben Cislighi our social norms expert for his invaluable input. Please accept my heartfelt thanks for your amazing support. And thank you all for being such great participants, the enthusiasm with which you replied to our invitation and your generosity in sharing your knowledge with us all.

Dr Ana Maria Buller, Principal Investigator, LINEA initiative

London, August 2017