OVERVIEW

The Tipping Point initiative is addressing child marriage through a dynamic process of innovation, insight (analysis and learning), and influence through advocacy. With the generous support of The Kendeda Fund, and in partnership with Siddhartha Samudayik Samaj, the Dalit Social Development Center, JASHIS, and the Association for Slum Dwellers, the project focuses on facilitating and learning from innovative strategies to influence change-makers and root causes of child marriage in Nepal and Bangladesh, two child marriage hotspots.

In 20 sub-districts of Nepal and 90 villages of Bangladesh, the project works with adolescent girls and boys, parents, and community and religious leaders, and nationally with networks of social activists, experts, and government agencies. CARE expects this learning and innovation initiative to contribute to global understanding of the complex issues driving child marriage and strategies that can contribute to a “tipping point” of sustainable change to prevent and mitigate child marriage.

Innovation
Exploring New Paths, Matching Solutions to Local Contexts

Child marriage is not restricted by religion, country, income bracket, or level of education. It disproportionately affects girls around the world because their rights, well-being, and potential are undervalued. Additionally, each community has complex and particular reasons for child marriage. CARE matches our strategies to the drivers of child marriage in each context.

In Nepal and Bangladesh, child marriage is rooted in a complex set of factors including family honor, control of sexuality, gender roles, economic insecurity, and women’s and girls’ education and livelihood options. Tipping Point partners are developing methods to work with communities to:

- Critically explore factors sustaining child marriage practices and innovate ways to transform them;
- Bring different actors together—including men and boys—to build social movements for change;
- Support sustainable social and economic alternatives for girls that allow them to have more options in their own lives;
- Connect regional and national activist networks.
Insight

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning to Find the Best Paths to a Tipping Point

Part of the Tipping Point project consists of key questions that can build evidence for social change and “tipping points.” The project is based on Developmental Evaluation (DE) principles, which see evaluation not only as a static end-point, but as a strategic approach to decision-making and action. As actors engage and issues emerge, shift, and take unexpected turns, our system helps us tailor our strategies to new situations.

The Tipping Point project seeks to build additional evidence for what works in which contexts to end child marriage. This might range from how to understand marriage transactions and markets, when to target pioneers, activists or individuals within communities who challenge existing child marriage practices, addressing adolescent sexuality in child marriage prevention work, approaches to building alliances with religious leaders and institutions, supporting existing structures to implement policies, and creating opportunities and safe spaces for adolescent girls.

National and regional efforts will link to advocacy at the US and global level, where the project will use evidence and learning to inform action and leverage the recent momentum on child marriage that has been achieved through activities of actors such as the Girls Not Brides Global coalition and the US chapter (which CARE co-chairs with key partners), the Elders, efforts by the World Health Organization, the U.S. administration, U.S. Congress, the G8 and G20 summits and the United Nations Conference on Population and Development. In particular with the US Government having recently strengthened its policies on child marriage a key focus of Tipping Point will be working with partners to monitor implementation progress on the USG policies and priorities in Nepal and Bangladesh.

Influence

Creating Change Through Local to Global Advocacy

Tipping Point’s advocacy strategy seeks to use learning and documentation from field experience to support action by local, national, and global coalitions, activists, and decision-makers against child marriage. Advocacy efforts extend beyond a focus on formal policies - such as age of marriage laws - to include efforts to influence social and cultural
institutions that drive gender discrimination and contribute to child marriage.

The Tipping Point project aims to strengthen, inform and support growing movements and coalitions working for social change in favor of girls’ rights at all levels in Nepal, Bangladesh and South Asia. It also aims to build on growing global momentum for ending child marriage.

Specifically in the US foreign policy context, there has been consistent and strategic pressure by the Girls Not Brides USA (GNB USA) coalition (co-chaired by CARE USA) in coordination with US congressional champions for the US to take on more of a leadership role to end child marriage globally.

Innovation in Implementation: Once a law is passed, the work is not done. We know that real change comes when people implement laws and change behaviors. In cooperation with the Aspen Institute, the Tipping Point project is piloting innovative methods to measure impacts of advocacy related to the implementation of new policy requirements against child marriage globally. We will use what we learn to hold policy makers accountable for impacts on the ground.

Ending child marriage depends on finding local solutions that address local causes and respond to the needs of the communities where we work.
In 2013, the coalition and champions secured a major success through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) reauthorization. Key amongst its provisions is a stipulation requiring the Secretary of State to draft a comprehensive and multi-year strategy to end child marriage.

This victory presents an urgent window of opportunity to work with the Obama Administration towards unprecedented policy and programmatic commitments to end child marriage. Tipping Point learnings will help leverage CARE’s leadership role in the US policy context to advocate the implementation of the VAWA mandate.

### Our Partners

**Finding Local Solutions with Local Partners**

Ending child marriage depends on finding local solutions that address local causes and respond to the needs of the communities where we work. CARE is pleased to work with local partners to reach communities to ensure that we can end child marriage for good.

**Siddartha Samuyadayik Samaj, Nepal**

Founded in 2003 years ago, SSS’s vision is a fair and equitable society, and their mission is to create social and economic and health empowerment for women to change their status in society. With 9 board members and 110 members, 105 of whom are women, SSS currently has programming in 30 VDCs, with partnerships with CARE, World Vision, the United Mission, and local and national federations. SSS’s areas of expertise are WASH, anti-trafficking, education, gender awareness, women’s empowerment and advocacy, and community health.

**Dalit Social Development Center, Nepal**

DSDC’s vision is to promote a self-reliant and dignified Dalit society, with a mission to mobilize Dalits in a participatory way and to facilitate their access to and control over local resources. They also work to inform community groups of their rights, and facilitate their access to rights and resources by linking them to local networks and governments. Their priority groups are the poorest of the poor, poor, vulnerable, and socially excluded women, illiterates, and minority ethnic groups, as well as areas that are more rural and less aware of girls’ and Dalits’ rights.

**Association for Slum Dwellers, Bangladesh**

Since its inception in 1988, ASD has worked to ensure poor peoples’ participation in the development process. ASD’s focus is to ensure that poor people have support and participation in processes so that they can change their own lives. Its mission is to encourage the poor to create solidarity, build skills, link to resources, improve their bargaining position, and have income earning opportunities. ASD works to improve their clients’ quality of life through social, institutional and public resources.

**Jaintia Shinnomul Songstha, Bangladesh**

JASHIS is a non-profit and non-government organization based in the Sylhet district of Bangladesh. JASHIS conducts most of its work through a participatory approach that considers everyone’s perspective. JASHIS values providing everyone with an opportunity to participate in the planning process, as well as have a role in decision making. JASHIS has gathered knowledge and skill through extensive training on PRA tools, and the team applies their learning during all stages of a project.