



TIPPING POINT BANGLADESH

Phase 1 Evaluation Findings

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ACRONYMS

ASD	Action for Social Development (formerly Association of Slum Dwellers)
CPA.	Community Participatory Analysis
EVAW	Ending Violence Against Women
FGD	Focus group discussion
GED	Gender, Equity, and Diversity
JASHIS	Jaintia Shinnomul Songstha
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
SNAP	Social Norms Analysis Plot

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Phase 1 of CARE's Tipping Point project addressed child marriage through a dynamic process of innovation, insight, and influence in 90 communities in Sunamganj, Bangladesh. The program operated in partnership with Action for Social Development (ASD) and Jaintia Shinnomul Songstha (JASHIS). In its first phase, the project promoted girls' rights and choices about marriage through focused engagement with groups of girls, boys, and parents. The groups received skill trainings and conducted advocacy events to promote gender-equitable social norms. Additionally, Tipping Point engaged allies and potential champions for girls' rights, such as government and civil society actors, to help drive social change and direct more resources towards girls' empowerment in project communities.

At the conclusion of Phase 1, an external evaluation team visited a sample of project sites to conduct data collection with girls, boys, parents, and community members. Based on the evaluators' findings, Tipping Point's iterative and adaptive strategies have proven to be effective in supporting social norms that promote gender equity. Among the results:

- **Girls gained psychosocial skills, knowledge of their rights, social capital, and increased confidence.** Safe spaces established by the project brought adolescent girls together, and life skills education raised their awareness of their rights and their abilities to effectively advocate for themselves. The evaluation found that girls had a thorough understanding of how gendered social norms affected their lives and were speaking up to defend themselves against harassment and express their opinions. Through activities like football and drama troupes, girls discovered their power to win new, although limited, freedoms to be active and visible in public despite some negative reactions in their communities. Girls still lacked agency in many areas of their lives, but there was significant evidence of girls reaching out to adult allies in the community for support when negotiating with parents to stay in school, delay marriage, participate in project activities, or address safety concerns. The dreams and aspirations of girls became more focused on meaningful careers and equitable relationships in a future marriage. With new knowledge in menstrual management, nutrition, and livelihoods, adolescent girls in project groups were well-respected, and many of them were successful in advocating for resources and support from local government authorities.
- **Girls' mobility and visibility increased significantly.** Through project activities, girls spent more time outside their homes and gained greater freedom of movement. Platforms created by girls' football and community events raised the profile of girls in their villages, and beyond, as teams traveled to compete, drama groups toured, and the project facilitated participation in outside conventions and trainings. Girls' greater visibility faced some backlash from community members and religious figures, but adolescents grew more resilient and

determined in the face of such sanctions. The possibility of relationships with boys and elopements continued to animate parents' fears of losing family honor; at the same time, it became socially acceptable for girls and boys to mingle publicly in the project's meeting spaces.

- **Parent-adolescent relationships improved, and parents were less concerned with family honor.** Tipping Point fostered better communication between parents and children through dialogues and special events. Parents reported enjoying their adolescent children more, and girls spoke of greater trust and openness in their relationships. Perhaps because parents, and mothers especially, became better listeners and valued girls' voices more, parents who had daughters participating in Tipping Point were less concerned with family honor, which is closely linked to girls' behavior, than other parents in the communities. These mothers also seemed to play a more balanced role in decision making with fathers about daughters' lives, and parents of girls who joined Tipping Point groups displayed some non-normative behavior, such as better chore-sharing between men and women in the home.
- **Key norms loosened for some groups.** Dowry was considered less acceptable among individuals who were exposed to Tipping Point's messages, and it became a point of pride for girls in project groups to speak out against dowry. The education of girls, following a trend that pre-existed the project, became more normal, and there was less concern about girls being overly educated. Some respondents even said that the idea of a "good" girl had transformed to include that girls advocate for themselves and share their knowledge. Boys who joined Tipping Point groups began challenging norms of male dominance in the home and were more likely to take on household work normally done by their sisters or mothers. They also showed some change in their hopes for marriage and stressed equitable decision making between spouses.
- **Strong allies for girls emerged in project villages.** By the end of Phase 1, girls came to know that they could rely on members of Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) Forums, local volunteer groups that met regularly with adolescent cohorts. EVAW Forums advocated for girls collectively with local government, services, and religious leaders. Also the forums advocated individually, intervening with a girl's family, school, or perpetrators of harassment to solve barriers to staying in school, delay or cancel a planned marriage, or guarding girls' bodily autonomy by engaging directly and ensuring good outcomes for girls in arbitration processes related to rape, domestic violence, consensual extramarital relationships, eloping, and marriage dissolution. Several allies for girls also emerged from among religious clerics who authorize marriages and government officials managing budgets or overseeing schools, although support from these groups was less consistent.

- **Project staff transformed their assumptions about men, women, work, and how to lead change.** Because local staff were the faces of Tipping Point, the ones who sparked change, the project prioritized fostering their own internal transformation on gender and other topics. Through workshops and personal reflections, staff became aware of the role of gender in shaping their lives and discovered new capabilities in leading personal and social change. The topics of sexuality and bodily autonomy were especially valued by staff, most of whom had never talked about such things before. Because community members witnessed the personal growth of project staff and their fortitude in withstanding criticism from villagers for their work, staff came to be seen as role models.

In just a few years, Tipping Point made significant progress in mobilizing advocates for girls' rights and in shifting social norms related to child marriage in Bangladesh. It was difficult to measure the impact of Tipping Point on the practice of child marriage itself, but there were many stories of marriages averted through the intervention of parents, boys, and girls involved with the project or in conjunction with ERAW Forums.

The successes of Tipping Point to date have not completely overcome the many barriers girls continue to face in realizing their potential and achieving agency in key life decisions. However, there are notable successes that hold promise for Tipping Point's approach to social norm change and girls' empowerment: Phase 1 demonstrated that activities that disrupt traditional social norms in safe, public environments are effective in shifting attitudes and giving people permission to think and behave differently. In addition, the project piloted new ways of operationalizing social norm change work, with programming according to a set of principles that include focusing on positive messages about girls rather than the negative outcomes of child marriage.¹ Tipping Point also deployed innovative measures of social norms and normative change that can inform academic and program design thinking, such as the Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP) framework.

A key challenge for Tipping Point in its second phase will be to engage a broader range of community members and to engage parents and boys more intensively in collective action activities. Fathers and boys were more difficult to mobilize and need creative approaches to their participation. The strength of girls' groups can be expanded with networking activities between villages. Legal and quasi-legal structures, such as local-level arbitration bodies that present platforms to intervene in individual girls' cases, seem a logical extension of the role that ERAW Forums have played to date. Additionally, religious leaders have great influence in project sites and should not be assumed to be homogeneous opponents of change.

¹ Social Norms Innovation Briefs. *CARE Tipping Point*. Retrieved from <https://caretippingpoint.org/innovation/>

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

Phase 1 of CARE’s Tipping Point project addressed root causes of child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) through a dynamic process of innovation, insight, and influence in Nepal and Bangladesh, two countries with high rates of CEFM. The project focused on identifying the root causes of child marriage and facilitated innovative strategies to create alternative paths for adolescent girls. As a learning and innovation initiative, the full project is expected to contribute to the global understanding of the complex issues driving child marriage and different strategies that can contribute to a “tipping point” of sustainable change to prevent child marriage and create viable alternative paths for adolescent girls.

In Bangladesh, CARE worked with local partners Jaintia Shinnomul Songstha (JASHIS) and Action for Social Development (ASD), formerly Association for Slum Dwellers, to implement the Tipping Point project in 90 villages in the district of Sunamganj, Sylhet division. The legal status of child marriage in Bangladesh is complicated: the minimum age in law is 21 for males and 18 for females, but the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 2017 permits marriage for girls under 18 in “special cases” for “the greater good of the adolescent,” where the court and both parents agree.² Nationally, 59% of women aged 20-24 were married by the age of 18 and 22% by the age of 15.³

Phase 1 of Tipping Point (2013-2017) focused on engaging adolescent girls, boys, parents, and community leaders in 90 villages⁴ where CEFM is common, in Sunamganj district across three Upazilas. Tipping Point’s vision of change in Phase 1 was five-fold: build the agency of adolescents; change adolescents’ relationships with key adults, particularly parents; transform social norms; and grow networks for collective action and influence. Personal change among project staff provides a foundation for change (Figure 1). Accordingly, the Phase 1 programming worked to create spaces for dialogue between adolescents, parents, and the broader community, deepen awareness for gender equity and rights, promote positive gender equitable norms, and encourage networking. Project activities varied across villages but were built on collective groups formed by the project. Each village had an adolescent girls’ group, an adolescent boys’ group, and a parents’ group, facilitated by staff and volunteers. Groups participated in trainings and facilitated discussions on life skills, gender, adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, and engaged in creative processes to organize community events to spur discussion and advocate for social change.

² FCO. (2016). *FCO Human Rights Priority Country update report: July to December 2016*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/peoples-republic-of-bangladesh-human-rights-priority-country/human-rights-priority-country-update-report-july-to-december-2016>

³ Bangladesh. *Girls Not Brides*. Retrieved from <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/bangladesh/>

⁴ In the third year of Phase 1, to focus more on normative changes, collective actions, and sexuality, Tipping Point prioritized and intensified activities in 30 “primary” villages. Regular interventions continued in the other 60 “outreach” villages. The evaluation sampled only primary villages and gave special attention to two that had also been sampled in the CPA.

Table 1. Numbers of Tipping Point collective group participants

<i>Group</i>	<i>Group members</i>
<i>Girls' Fun Center members</i>	2,050
<i>Boys' Fun Center members</i>	1,788
<i>Women in EAW forums</i>	1,131
<i>Men in EAW forums</i>	777
<i>Mothers' group members</i>	1,500
TOTAL	7,246

Section II of this report includes a discussion of Tipping Point's approach to Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning, the primary evaluation questions, methods used and process of analysis. **Section III** presents evaluation findings by five key outcome areas for the project: changes experienced by girls and parents, respectively; shifts in gender discriminatory social norms; building networks of allies for girls' rights; and staff transformation. Changes among adolescent boys are also addressed under social norms and alliances. **Section IV** provides a set of recommendations for girls' empowerment and social norms programming and details a set of policy implications for government actors. **Annexes I, II and III** give more information about the methods used in the evaluation.

SECTION II: EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

PROJECT MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING OVERVIEW

The monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) approach for Phase 1 of Tipping Point (Figure 2) builds on developmental evaluation⁶ and feminist evaluation⁷ principles – which, together, facilitate innovation and prioritize learning.

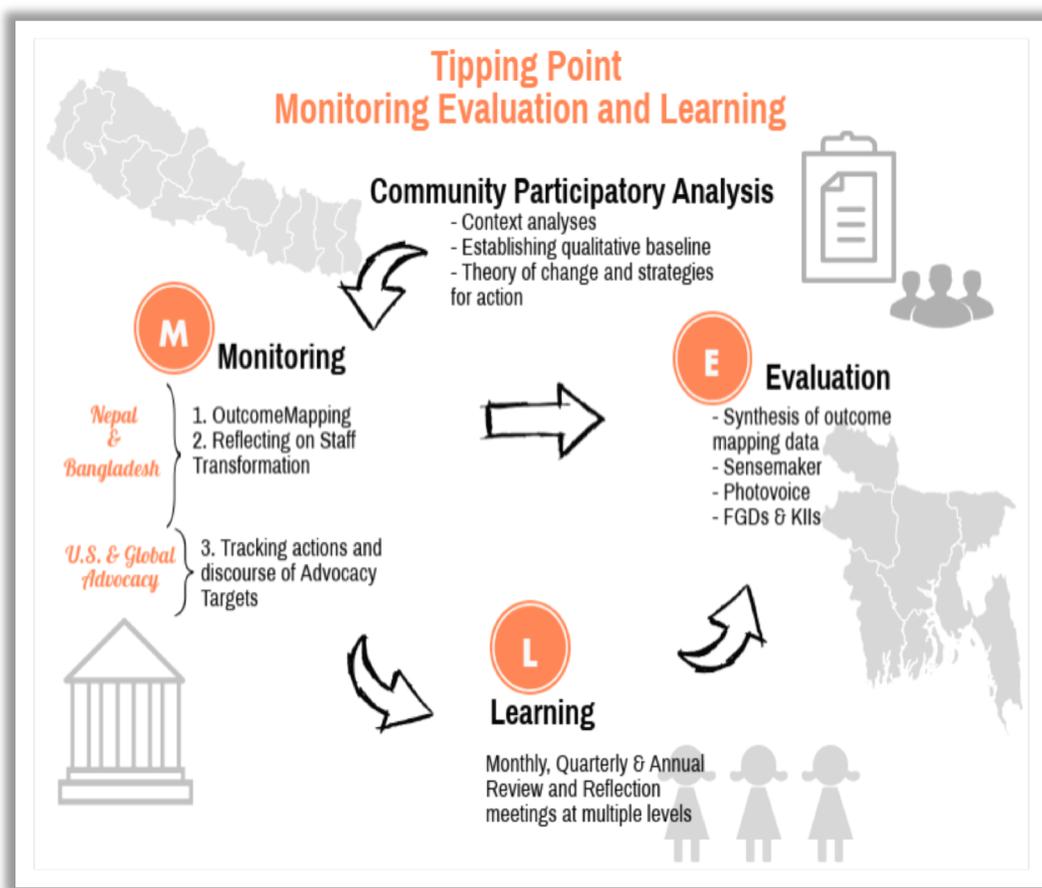


Figure 2. Monitoring, evaluation and learning approach

⁶According to Patton (2010), developmental evaluation “supports innovation development to guide adaptation to emergent and dynamic realities in complex environments. Innovations can take the form of new projects, programs, products, organizational changes, policy reforms, and system interventions [...] Complex environments for social interventions and innovations are those in which what to do to solve problems is uncertain and key stakeholders are in conflict about how to proceed.”

⁷Podems and Negroustoueva (2016) stated that “Feminist evaluation puts the voice of women and girls at the centre of knowledge generation for the purpose of achieving more equitable social outcomes and dismantling structural and systemic forms of gender-based discrimination. It is a way of thinking about evaluation rather than being a prescribed set of methods, but often draws upon qualitative and participatory approaches to advance social justice through inclusive and reflective practice.”

At the project's start in 2014, Tipping Point conducted a Community Participatory Analysis (CPA) to deepen understanding of the contextual factors and root causes driving the prevalence of child marriage in the programming areas in Bangladesh.⁸ The project subsequently utilized Outcome Mapping⁹ as its core monitoring, reflection, and learning tool.

ENDLINE EVALUATION

For the endline evaluation, the project utilized a combination of qualitative methods and SenseMaker to explore changes in three areas related to the Phase 1 programming in Bangladesh:

1. What changes (expected and unexpected) can be observed within the project communities in relation to core Tipping Point objectives? Were the changes meaningful and relevant for people?
2. What was the relationship between Tipping Point processes, approaches and activities and the changes observed? Did project activities contribute to these changes?
3. To what extent have there been changes in staff reflecting upon and taking up values, practices and action that model anti-oppression and reflect critically on beliefs about sexuality?

Note that the evaluation did not seek to quantify the average age of marriage or changes in the rate of married girls and boys in project communities.

METHODS

This evaluation drew upon multiple methods for assessing the project's contributions to changes at community and individual levels.

1. Photovoice

The evaluation used Photovoice¹⁰ to explore the changes that adolescent girls who had participated in Tipping Point programming perceived in their communities. In Photovoice, participants were taught basic photography and asked to document aspects of their lives. They then returned to the group to discuss the significance of the images they took and what issues they represented. **Photovoice** was conducted with two groups of Fun Center girls and one group

⁸Tipping Point project (2016). *The cultural context of child marriage in Nepal and Bangladesh. Findings from CARE's Tipping Point Project Community Participatory Analysis* [PDF file]. Retrieved from

⁹ According to Smutylo (2005), outcome mapping is a methodology for planning, monitoring and evaluating development initiatives that aim to bring about social change. The process of outcome mapping helps a project team or program to be specific about the actors it targets, the changes it expects to see and the strategies it employs.

¹⁰ Wang, C., & Burris, M. (1997). Photovoice: concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education & Behavior*, 24 (3). Retrieved from: <http://heb.sagepub.com/content/24/3/369>

of mothers in two Tipping Point communities. The girls ranged in age from 12 to 19 and mothers from 30 to 45. None of the girls were married; all but one of the women cohabited with husbands.

2. Focus group discussions and interviews

Focus group discussions (FGDs) with 4 to 9 participants per session and in-depth interviews took place in 12 Tipping Point communities. Table 2 shows how many individuals participated in FGDs and interviews. Girls' and boys' FGDs occurred in two age groups: 12-15 and 16-19. Annex I provides more information about the FGD and interview methods and participants.

3. SenseMaker¹¹

The SenseMaker method involves soliciting story narratives from respondents on a given theme, followed by a series of predetermined questions about themes in the story, the actions and motivations of individuals in the stories, and what contextual factors drove the story forward. The answers help the analysis team understand the story from the teller's perspective. Aggregated data is analyzed for patterns in meaning, giving insight into the thinking of groups of respondents.

For the Tipping Point evaluation, respondents were asked to tell a story about a girl (themselves, a sister or daughter, or a girl in the village) who faced a challenge and how she dealt with the challenge, including who was involved and their relationship to the girl, how events unfolded, and how the situation resolved. The following questions asked respondents to identify characteristics in the story along a continuum or a triad of possible interpretations; for example, how positive or negative the experience was for the girl, or to what degrees a boy in the story was acting in his own interest - in a way helpful to the girl or in a way harmful to the girl. Interviewers also collected demographic information and attitudinal data about these respondents. Annex II and III provide more information on SenseMaker and how it was used in the evaluation.

See Table 2 for the number of girls, boys, mothers, and fathers who participated in the SenseMaker component. Girls were sampled in two age groups: 12-15 and 16-19; boys were aged 12-19. Only 5% of girls and 2% of boys were married.

¹¹ SenseMaker (2015). *Cognitive Edge*. Retrieved from <http://old.cognitive-edge.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/GH-SenseMaker-brief.pdf>; <http://cognitive-edge.com/sensemaker/>

Table 2. Number of Photovoice, SenseMaker, FGD, and in-depth interview participants

Tipping Point group members and staff					
	Girls	Boys	Mothers	Fathers	Tipping Point staff
Photovoice	20		9		
SenseMaker	155	111	84	85	
FGDs	39	22	16	10	26
Interviews	2	1	1	1	

Non-Tipping Point group members					
	Girls	Boys	Mothers	Fathers	Community/ district leaders ¹²
Photovoice					
SenseMaker	170	103	82	85	
FGDs	14	12	12	8	
Interviews					6

The evaluation was also informed by two other methods of analysis: Outcome Mapping¹³ change stories recorded by project teams over 14 months as part of the project monitoring and reflection system; and CARE’s Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP)¹⁴ framework used to conceptualize and assess progress made towards reducing the prevalence of gender discriminatory social norms. The Outcome Mapping monitoring and reflection system are change stories coded as notable events witnessed by staff in project communities that demonstrate a person’s behavior related to the project’s desired outcomes and goals. CARE’s SNAP framework, on the other hand was utilized as a tool to differentiate empirical expectations (“what I think others do”) and normative expectations (“what I think others expect me to do”). It also explores dimensions of social norms that can indicate how they might be shifting or loosening, namely, social sanctions for transgressing norms, such as gossip, isolation, or ridicule, and exceptions under which a person might transgress norms without being sanctioned. A reduction in sanctions or an expansion of the exceptions to the norm suggests a norm undergoing change. Additionally, not all individuals are equally sensitive to the effects of social sanctions; empowerment programs can bolster people’s confidence or resolve to act contrary to dominant norms despite sanctions. The SNAP framework informed the evaluation interview questions and the tools used to explore social norm

¹² Includes two EAW forum members.

¹³ Tipping Point project (2018). *Tipping Point Phase 1 Outcome Mapping report*. Retrieved from https://caretippingpoint.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Phase1_OutcomeMapping.pdf

¹⁴ Stefanik, L.; Hwang, T. (2017). *CARE’s Journey Piloting Social Norms Measures for Gender Programming* [PDF file]. Retrieved from <http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/file/view/care-social-norms-paper-web.pdf>

change in FGDs relating to the rights of adolescent girls specifically and processes of marriage generally.

CHANGE ANALYSES

The evaluation allowed some comparison of the data from the CPA in 2014 with the endline data. Two FGD exercises from the CPA were replicated with some respondent groups:

- 1) Visioning exercise—This exercise was conducted to explore the dreams and aspirations of adolescents, paying attention to the barriers and facilitators to those dreams.
- 2) Risks/benefits—This exercise sought to understand parents' perceptions of the risks and benefits of child marriage versus delaying marriage, with special focus on girls. Findings from the risks and benefits exercises relate to changes in what parents consider when making decisions about their daughters' marriages.

The analysis also compared the FGD and SenseMaker data from Tipping Point group members and their parents with FGD and SenseMaker data from community members that had not joined Tipping Point groups, to see if exposure to project activities made a difference to individuals' attitudes, skills, expectations, behaviors, and interpretations. SenseMaker story data allowed further comparison of stories about girl members of Fun Centers with stories about nonmember girls. The evaluation team triangulated the findings from SenseMaker, FGDs, and interviews with Outcome Mapping change stories and Photovoice results.

SECTION III: EVALUATION FINDINGS

Tipping Point set out an ambitious agenda for its first three years: to build on and generate social infrastructure to support adolescent girls' personal and interpersonal growth, an enabling environment, and new opportunities for their empowerment. At the end of this first phase, girls have gained new psychosocial and instrumental skills for navigating daily life and achieving future goals. Adolescent boys demonstrated their ability to think critically about relationships with girls and women and how to be better friends and brothers to girls. Parents, especially mothers, grew closer to their daughters and appreciated their opinions and wishes more. ERAW Forum members found solutions for barriers to girls' education and resistance to change in communities. Tipping Point project staff transformed their own assumptions about men, women, work, and how to lead change. Finally, a few key social norms that restrict girls' opportunities and autonomy have opened up a little.

This section presents the key findings of the evaluation regarding the project's contribution to five outcomes:

- 1:** Girls have critical awareness of gender and rights, and strengthened confidence, skills, and social capital for making progressive choices in their lives.
- 2:** Parents value the voices, opinions and aspirations of adolescent girls.
- 3:** Social norms related to marriage (dowry expectations, perceptions of girls' potential, and perceptions of marital relationships that promote hegemonic masculinity and ignore girls' rights) are changing to be more supportive of girls and against early marriage.
- 4:** Networks, solidarity groups and organizations collaborate together (laterally and vertically) to take actions for girls.
- 5:** Staff continue to reflect upon and take up value practices and action that model anti-oppression (based on gender, caste and other group identities) and reflect critically on their beliefs about sexuality.

1. REPLANTING THE FUTURE, GROWING SKILLS AND DREAMS: ADOLESCENT GIRLS

OUTCOME 1: Girls have critical awareness of gender and rights, and strengthened confidence, skills, and social capital for making progressive choices in their lives.

Key findings

- Girls developed higher expectations for future spouses and careers
- Girls gained knowledge of their rights, built confidence, and began advocating for themselves but remained aware of limitations on their agency and safety
- Girls gained practical skills and knowledge for menstrual management, nutrition, and livelihoods
- Girls had increased social capital and were well regarded by community members
- Girls engaged in collective action and influence



“Earlier we couldn’t go out of our house. We couldn’t see the outside world. Only we could see standing behind the curtain. But after joining the Fun Center we could move outside of our house. Now I can see everything. Now I feel very good. I am happy. All the participants feel happy.”

Earlier girls could not mix with anybody, couldn’t go anywhere but now they feel free and enjoy the freedom to go outside.”

-Adolescent girl, age 14

Adolescent girl groups were a central focus of Phase 1 of Tipping Point. The project teams established Fun Centers in villages, safe spaces where adolescent groups met to socialize, discuss issues, gain new competencies, support one another, and plan community action. Girls’ groups met three times a week for about 1-hour long session in a 14-month span, led by a volunteer facilitator and a partner NGO staff member, and supported by CARE staff. Each group had between 20 and 25 members between the ages of 10 and 19. In many villages, the Fun Centers were also used by adolescent boys’ groups and provided time for girls and boys to interact.

Girls developed higher expectations for future spouses and careers

The Visioning exercise with girls at the time of the CPA showed that girls wanted to study and have occupations before they married, and they wished to marry after age 18. In the evaluation, girls said that they had become more aware of the possibility of careers that not only provided income but also helped others. There were no notable differences in girls’ ideal age of marriage between the CPA and the evaluation nor in the highest-rated quality that girls wanted in their future husbands (i.e. shared household decision-making). However, girls in CPA FGDs had named ‘being handsome’ as the second

most important trait for a husband; in evaluation FGDs, girls spoke of equitable relationships and a husband's ability to manage a household instead. These shifts suggest that **Tipping Point raised girls' expectations for their careers and gender equality in marriage.**

SenseMaker analysis found that when stories from all respondents that feature a Fun Center girl are compared to those that feature a girl who did not participate in a Fun Center group, **Fun Center girls were more likely to have their behavior be attributed to their dreams and aspirations**, that is, they were more likely to be seeking to fulfill their dreams. **Stories about Fun Center girls also had a stronger association between self-confidence as an influencer of behavior and motivations related to dreams and opportunities than did stories about other girls.** For example, the Fun Center girl in the following story dreamt of becoming self-reliant:

"Her family was not financially sound. She is continuing her studies without the help of her family. She dreams of becoming independent through her studies. She pays the fees to continue studying. When she was in class 8, her neighbors asked her to get married, but she didn't agree, and she was able to make her family understand her wishes. Her teacher is helping her by giving fees and giving her books for free."

Girls gained knowledge of their rights, built confidence, and began advocating for themselves but remained aware of limitations on their agency and safety

Through Fun Centers, Tipping Point provided sessions on girls' rights to education, information, health care, and social participation, among other key rights, and training in psychosocial skills for communication, goal setting, negotiation, and leadership. Girls could apply these skills in advocating for themselves with family decision makers and others. The evaluation data are rich with examples of Fun Center girls seeing improvements in agency and self-confidence and practicing greater self-advocacy. Girls themselves in FGDs did not always directly attribute their achievements to greater confidence, but the SenseMaker data provides such evidence. Besides the association between self-confidence and pursuing dreams in SenseMaker stories about Fun Center girls, **confidence was also associated with situations that were seen as good for girls and with girls having more control over a situation.** In all stories shared by girls that were said to be good for girls, 57% of respondents said that "self-confidence" influenced the outcomes of the stories over 'family or social connections' and "laws or rules." In stories that were seen as bad for girls, only 12% of respondents said that the bad outcome was influenced by "self-confidence." **These connections suggest that girls' confidence is perceived to contribute to better outcomes for them.** One reassuring aspect of this finding is that greater confidence of girls was not associated with harm or negative outcomes that could result from social approbation for outspokenness or assertiveness in girls, providing evidence that Tipping Point's work remains in line with Do No Harm principles.

Stories about Fun Center girls also indicated that those girls were less likely to be motivated by concerns about their safety and security than other girls. This difference is explained in Photovoice

and FGD data, which most often related safety to “eve-teasing”—primarily verbal harassment from boys—and suggested that Fun Center girls felt more confident to talk back to boys in these situations or that they could summon the support of others to deal with the situation. Eve-teasing has a relationship to child marriage in that girls who receive such attention from boys are often blamed for it, increasing their chances of being married out of the household to preserve family honor. Tipping Point explicitly addressed eve-teasing by teaching boys about girls’ rights, providing means for them to be supportive of girls as equals, and making girls aware that they could get support from peers, parents, ERAW forum members and project staff. In SenseMaker stories, **when boys involved in eve-teasing were confronted by girls and others, the behavior usually stopped entirely**, as this Photovoice photo and comment show:



“A river went through the eastern side of our village. In our village, not everybody has a tubewell, so some villagers used to go to the riverside to take baths. Females also take baths in the river. Some bad boys used to sit on the boat when the females took baths and teased them. They also made bad sounds towards us. We didn’t tell anybody. After joining the Fun Center, we told the center coordinator, and she told us to protest this. So, one day when those boys were criticizing and teasing us, we showed them our shoes. We also threatened the boys by saying ‘If we find you making bad sounds towards us then we will slap you in such a manner that all of your teeth will fall out.’ Since then they didn’t dare to tease us.

We all have the courage to do that. When we protest, the eve-teaser stopped teasing us. It is because when we protested, they all became ashamed and they don’t come in front of us again.”

Adolescent girl, age 13

For their part, girls in SenseMaker and Outcome Mapping stories frequently sought assistance from others to deal with eve-teasing with great success, demonstrating that **when girls did not feel safe enough to talk back to harassers themselves, their networks of contacts in the community made allies available to them.** This support seemed to be effective in raising girls' understanding that harassment was not their fault: **Fun Center girls strongly disagreed with the statement that a girl who receives unwanted male attention causes her family to lose honor,** while other groups had mixed answers to this question. Photovoice participants also gave examples of girls seeking help from EAW forum members and Fun Center facilitators to convince parents to continue their schooling or delay marriage.

Adults in interviews also described how Fun Center girls are no longer shy and speak up for themselves, even inspiring other girls to be more vocal about their needs and wishes. **Girls were said to be braver than before and able to stand up for themselves and negotiate for their own safety and dignity.** A large percentage of Outcome Mapping change stories told of girls advocating for their rights within their own families or asking for support from adults in the community such as EAW Forum members, service providers, and government representatives. Several of the change stories were accounts of girls stopping planned marriages by reaching out to allies in the community. These were echoed by a fewer number of stories in the SenseMaker data suggesting that **girls had little control over marital decisions but that Fun Center girls had more influence on the process than other girls.** FGDs with girls who did not join Fun Centers indicated that knowledge about the rights of girls had spread beyond the project through Fun Center girls sharing information with other girls and community events. One group said that the situation for girls had changed dramatically in their community, that people now accepted the opinions of girls. **Another group reported that speaking up for your own or other girls' rights had become a quality ascribed to "good girls."** Similarly, an EAW Forum member said:

"Girls and boys are not hesitating now. They can present themselves very beautifully...They are smarter than before. They don't hesitate to talk with officers, they can ask about their rights, can communicate with others. They are very active. Tipping Point made it possible. It's really a great relief."

Respondents also pointed to the sports activities that Tipping Point organized as key to growing confidence and leadership skills in girls. Previously, the sight of girls being physically active in public was unacceptable to community members, but with the structure and support the project provided, **football, cricket, and cycling became acceptable activities for girls and even sources of pride in some villages.** Girls' football especially impacted community life, as the project set up an area league for girls to compete in and provided a coach and transportation to competitive games. Footballers not only gained the positive regard of their neighbors as representatives of their villages but also broadened their life experience and social capital through visiting other villages and getting to know

girls there. In the tournament, some girls also got to experience being cheered on by friends and family and crowned as winners.



“Earlier, we, the girls, didn’t play football, we couldn’t even go out of our house. But after joining the Fun Center now we can play football. In my village, I formed a team for playing football and went to Sunamgonj to play. At the very beginning, villagers used to criticize us a lot by saying ‘Girls play football!’ They used to say bad things to us. There were other girls in the team, but not everybody got permission from their parents. My father didn’t forbid me to play football, but my mother did. So, my father made other villagers understand the issue. Then the villagers realized, and other parents let their daughters play football. At first, we played football in our village, then we went to Dirai Upazilla to play a match and we won that match. Then we played in other villages too. Finally, we went to play football at the district level in Sunamganj, and we won the championship trophy. We won the match by 4-0 goals. Now I am considered a very good goal keeper. Now the villagers do not criticize the girls for playing football like earlier. Rather, they are more supportive. They want us to play football, and they committed to support us in every way and inspire us. Now they want us to play football and to win in the higher-level matches.”

Adolescent girl, age 15

Yet, as the above Photovoice caption shows, **the journey of football in Tipping Point also demonstrated the limitations on girls’ freedom and the continued role of others who shape the parameters of their lives.** Girls in FGDs noted external factors as primary enablers of them achieving their dreams for the future, such as support from others, the distance to school, and avoiding others’ perceptions of them as behaving in “bad” ways, which would lead to greater restrictions on their

mobility and perhaps to an early marriage. SenseMaker analysis found that, compared to doing what a girl “thinks people expects of her” or what ‘she is told to do,’ a main character of a story was much less likely to be seen to be doing “what she wants to do.” There were also real risks to girls’ safety that were salient for some respondents, as 27 (out of 875) SenseMaker stories were about rapes by strangers, family members, or boyfriends.

SenseMaker stories were categorized according to themes identified by the respondents. **Two themes emerged as areas in which girls were predominantly said to be acting according to their own wishes: romantic relationships and schooling.** Stories about education centered on either a girl choosing to leave school due to her lack of interest or overcoming pressure from family members to leave school. Romantic relationship stories were most often about intimate relationships, love marriages, and elopements, although a small number of stories showed a girl refusing attention from a boy or resisting her parents’ plans for her marriage. There were several tales of girls engaging in sexual behavior, implied to be consensual, outside of marriage and being caught in the act, becoming pregnant, or eloping. Unplanned pregnancies outside of marriage usually led to a girl’s parents arranging her marriage to either her sexual partner or another man, or abortion, which in at least some cases was a decision made by parents. Maternal mortality and morbidity in adolescent pregnancies also appeared in some stories.

Although there was no information about the availability of family planning to adolescents or their desire to control their fertility, the frequency of these stories suggests that **adolescent girls need to be equipped with reproductive health knowledge and services, including sexuality education,** to make informed decisions about their bodies. Preventing unplanned pregnancies may also forestall early marriages for those girls who have begun sexual activity.

Some examples of girls exercising agency pointed to the reality that girls are constrained by heavy controls on their behavior, and that asserting agency in the face of such constraints can involve extreme actions with dangerous results. Indeed, the most extreme stories involved girls taking their own lives—the ultimate act of self-determination—when they felt they had no alternatives. While these were only a handful of stories of the almost 900 stories, it points to the severity of restraints faced by girls.

Girls gained practical skills and knowledge of menstrual management, nutrition, and livelihoods

Tipping Point helped girls gain not only psychosocial skills related to their confidence, knowledge of rights, and ability to negotiate but also practical skills in menstrual hygiene, nutrition, and livelihoods. Tipping Point connected some Fun Center girls to government and NGO-provided trainings in income generating activities like sewing, tailoring, basket weaving, and farming. Generally, these activities were in line with traditional roles for women, but they provided the girls with needed income and a sense of personal achievement and self-reliance. Girls and adults in FGDs frequently mentioned the concept of independence particularly in financial terms. Independence was

seen as a desirable trait for girls, especially ones who had left school and were unable to re-enroll; additionally, earning an income overrode concerns about girls moving around the village unaccompanied and made girls more valued family members. In Outcome Mapping stories, some girls said they believed that they could do the same work as boys and took up jobs normally done by boys and men, such as cutting paddy and fishing. In the SenseMaker stories, for girls who had dropped out of school, working was often seen as the only alternative to early marriage.

In FGDs, girls reported that Fun Center sessions on nutrition taught them that the dominant belief that boys need more and better food than girls is not true, and that girls need to drink water to stay healthy, which previously they had limited because of the scarcity of toilets in many locations.

Facilitators at Fun Centers also worked to counter shame about menstruation. The CPA found that girls were not being educated about menstruation. Girls and women typically hid signs that they were menstruating from men and boys, including by hiding cloth menstrual pads after washing before they could dry fully in the sun. Outcome Mapping change stories explained the effect of Fun Center sessions on reproductive health and body mapping exercises was that girls and their mothers learned the importance of menstrual hygiene and drying pads in full sun to prevent the spread of bacteria. As a result, **they began to talk more about menstruation and hang their pads in the open, which contributed to destigmatizing a normal function of the female body**, as this Photovoice example shows.



“Earlier in our village ... after washing their menstruation cloths, [women and girls] used to dry them in the corners of their house so that nobody could see them. But that was not hygienic... After joining the Fun Center, we came to know that drying the cloths used during menstruation inside the room can’t kill germs. And this is not hygienic at all. So we discussed this in our house... Now all of us wash these cloths with soap properly and dry them under the sun. And now we do not feel shame at all. Everybody knows, boys and males know this thing. We do not feel ashamed of discussing menstruation with our friends and family.”

Adolescent girl, age 13

SenseMaker captured similar stories:

“She started menstruation when she was in class 5. She was really shocked. Then she told her sister-in-law. She told her that it was normal and not to be scared. She told her mother as well. Her mother also told her the same thing and suggested she use rags. She also told her that it shouldn't be shown to a male. And that the cloths will have to be cleaned with soap but should be

dried up in a way so that no one sees it. Sometimes she stopped attending school as well. At first, she thought of it as a curse. Then Tipping Point's sisters discussed many things with her. Now she doesn't feel ashamed."

Girls had increased social capital and were well regarded by community members

SenseMaker data revealed the importance of “family and social connections” in girls’ lives, as respondents said that this factor had the most influence on the outcome of stories about girls compared to “self-confidence” and “laws or rules.” Family and social connections can include a broad set of actors in girls’ lives, from those most powerful in determining her opportunities – like fathers to male and female peer adolescents – to adults in the community that can serve as allies. In FGDs, girls underlined the importance of supportive family members, especially parents but also neighbors and husbands of married girls, in their ability to pursue their dreams for the future. **Tipping Point facilitated solidarity building among groups of girls by providing safe spaces for discussions and socializing, and adolescent girls valued the opportunity to see friends so frequently, which was rare before the project.** A 15-year-old girl explained it this way:

“Earlier we used to sit idle in our house after coming back from school. But now we come to the Fun Center every day, and we share our thoughts and learnings. There are some things we cannot share with our parents; we share those with everybody in the Fun Center. I like to meet everybody in the Fun Center every day. I love working together in the Fun Center. We express our thoughts here. We play badminton, carom, we have stopped child marriage, we mix with boys, we read story books and other books. We have learned about adolescence from the Fun Center. All the adolescent girls from our village come. Now we can meet them every day; earlier we could see them maybe once or twice a year. I do not feel good spending my time alone in my house. I have got so many friends here.”

As the girl said, Fun Centers were also open to boys to join in certain discussions, support community events to promote girls’ rights, and play games. Perhaps the most intensive interaction between girls and boys outside of the family unit was through drama troupes that performed sketches on child marriage, dowry, and other issues about girls’ rights. Performances were followed by facilitated discussions that drew out different perspectives from the audience and actors. **These activities gave girls and boys a socially acceptable reason to be interacting with each other in public and expanded girls’ social networks.** SenseMaker stories indicated, however, that girls and boys still could not identify as friends outside of these forums and not at all as romantic interests without calling into question a girl’s honor.

As the number and range of socially acceptable activities grew for girls, so did their networks and public visibility. **Fun Center girls came to be seen as knowledgeable and friendly by other girls and adults.** Girls who had not joined Fun Centers said that girls who did shared what they learned about

health, hygiene, child marriage, and rights. These girls often wanted to participate in Fun Center activities but faced constraints such as the distance to Fun Centers and the burdens of school and housework. Adult FGD participants agreed with this positive view of Fun Center girls, although at times they relied on the assumption that only “good” girls would be allowed to do the things that Fun Center were allowed to do, such as play outdoors.

Girls engaged in collective action and influence

As mentioned, girls’ groups became involved in organizing community events like drama performances that raised their public profiles and spurred discussions about topics that were key to their quality of life. **Multiple respondents in different villages mentioned the importance of the dramas on child marriage in changing how people thought and felt and in raising awareness of the harms of child marriage.** Other activities led by Fun Center groups included cooking competitions for men and boys (to showcase the fluidity of gender roles), a joint picnic trip with boys’ group members (to challenge ideas that forbid platonic relationships), and campaigns to help individual girls continue schooling or delay marriage.

FGDs also provided examples of girls involved in such advocacy and fundraising work. Girls from the Fun Center in one location joined together to raise enough money for a certain girl to continue her studies, while in another village, girls raised enough money for five students by going door to door in their village. In other cases, Fun Center girls accompanied the project’s community volunteers and facilitators to visit the parents of adolescents who had dropped out of school, successfully convincing parents to reenroll their children.

Five of six FGD groups mentioned that Fun Center girls had actively intervened in a similar way, with face to face dialogue with parents, to try to prevent early marriages that were being planned. At times, they engaged the local Union Parishad member, the EAW forum, or the Fun Center staff. Although the girls’ accounts showed that families did not change their plans just by speaking to the girls, or in a couple of cases halted marriages only temporarily, **it is remarkable that groups of Fun Center girls had the confidence and ability to approach others in their community to advocate against cases of early marriage. Girls demonstrated that they knew who to inform as allies to their cause within the local power structures and that they found strength in confronting a difficult situation together, drawing on their social capital to express collective agency.**

Fun Center girls also described their efforts to garner resources for girls’ empowerment and rights. In addition to fundraising for girls’ education costs as described above, in some areas, girls started to advocate for other resources to meet their needs. In one site, girls from the Fun Center convinced their relatives to build a bamboo bridge between two parts of their village, to ease the path to and from the Fun Center. The Photovoice image and caption below shows a group of Fun Center girls who successfully requested funds from the local Union Parishad for the group to organize cultural activities and to play football. **These successes underline the importance of applying new**

competencies and confidence for girls to engage with power holders and enhance the sustainability of Tipping Point programming.



“With this photograph, I show that a few days back we arranged a cultural program. To arrange that cultural program, we needed some money. One of the adolescent girls of the Fun Center proposed to ask the Union Parishad [local government] member for some financial help. So, they went to his office and discussed everything. The Union Parishad member took some time to discuss it in the office. After discussing, he got approval and was able to collect some funds from the Union Parishad which he gave to the girls to arrange the cultural program. As a result, the girls were able to arrange the program nicely. We also informed him that a few days back they had won a tournament in Sunamganj. To continue their practice, they needed some equipment for which they needed money. For them the member again arranged money from the Union Parishad. So, through this photograph I wanted to convey the message that now we are capable enough to communicate with our Union Parishad member and with their support we can continue our work.

We took the photograph where we arranged the cultural program. We feel good because we could achieve something which we couldn't even think of before in our lives. That's why we feel proud. In the photograph we are eight people, but there were more people involved with the cultural program. We have courage. We are capable enough to help the villagers.”

Adolescent girl, age 18

2. BETTER LISTENERS, BETTER SUPPORT: PARENTS OF ADOLESCENTS

OUTCOME 2: Parents value the voices, opinions and aspirations of adolescent girls.

Key findings

- Parents of Fun Center girls were less concerned with family honor
- Parents communicated more with their daughters and valued their voices more
- Change in the roles of mothers and fathers was nascent



“This is my mother. She got married at a very early stage. This affected her health. And she is sick. She cannot do household work due to her bad health. Also, she has many children. She cannot take good care of her small kids. So, I must help her. I do the household chores. I share my learnings from the Fun Center with my mother. My mother also participates in the mother’s meeting. Now she is very conscious about child marriage. Though my family received several proposals for my marriage, she didn’t marry off me. My mother told that she won’t let me face the same thing like her. I feel sad when I see this picture.”

Adolescent girl, age 13

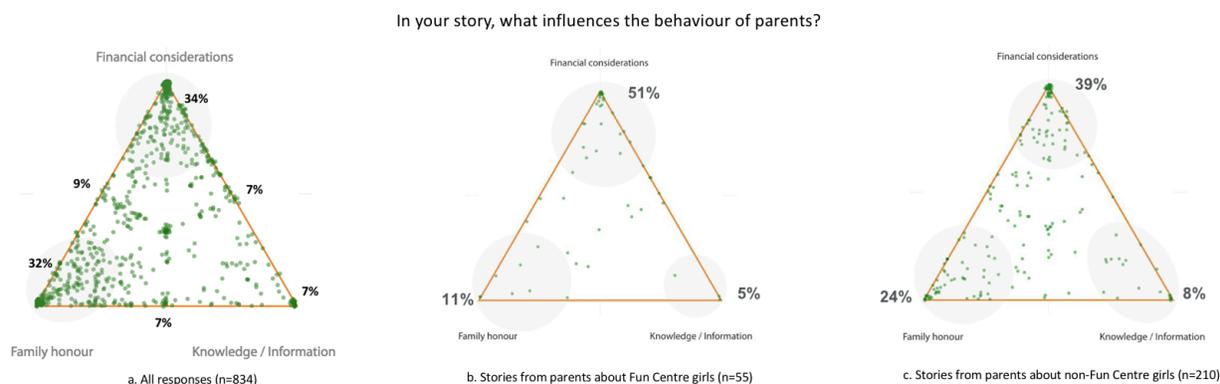
Midway through Phase 1 of Tipping Point, the team in Bangladesh organized mothers’ groups in order to engage them more meaningfully. Groups met once a month to discuss issues including diversity, understanding parental and adolescent roles, health, gender equality and violence, social norms, and sexuality. Among SenseMaker respondents, 91% of mothers of Fun Center members had participated in at least one project event but only 62% of fathers had. Fathers were harder to reach because they were often working outside the village during the day. Tipping Point had the most success engaging them during breaks in work—at tea stalls—and therefore the project facilitated informal discussions about gender, masculinity, and girls’ rights at tea stalls. Men were also involved through public competitions in traditionally female tasks such as cooking, washing clothes, and bathing babies. Discussions following these events drew out ideas about stereotypes and the division of labor.

Parents were sometimes reached on an ad hoc basis through visits by collective groups of girls and mothers to their homes. These were targeted to households with adolescents who had left school or had marriages being planned.

Parents of Fun Center girls were less concerned with family honor

The SenseMaker study explored some of the factors that influenced parents' behavior in stories about girls by asking respondents to identify the parents' motivations related to three factors. Figure 6 shows to what degree respondents saw parents' actions influenced by family honor, financial considerations, and knowledge/skills in the 834 stories that involved parents. In this figure, each dot represents a single respondent's answer to how strongly parents were influenced by the three factors in relation to one another. Dots in the areas around the corners of the triangles indicate when parents' motivations were said to relate more strongly to a single factor.

Figure 6. What influenced the behavior of parents?



Across respondent categories, family honor and financial considerations received the greatest weight, and knowledge/information received fewer responses. When the sample of stories is limited to those given by parents and then separated into stories about Fun Center girls (6b) and stories about other girls (6c), parents of Fun Center girls were less concerned about family honor and more concerned about financial considerations. There are many possible explanations for this: parents had more trust in Fun Center girls, they had less restrictive expectations for girls' behavior, they were less concerned with social sanctions for defying norms, and/or they felt more comfortable with the people who were around Fun Center girls. Alternatively, they may have greater financial restrictions than other families.

However, family honor is one of the deepest cultural constructs shaping girls' lives: it is often placed on their shoulders, and perceived threats to it via sexual harassment or non-normative behavior of a girl can lead directly to a family's decision to arrange a marriage for a daughter. **That family honor may have played less of a role in the minds of parents of Fun Center girls suggests that Tipping Point's messaging has been effective with them.**

Parents communicated more with their daughters and valued their voices more

The CPA revealed little evidence of intimacy between adolescents and parents, with parents' expectations for their children's futures and adolescents' ambitions largely differing. Phase 1 of Tipping Point aimed to strengthen parent-adolescent relationships and expand lines of communication between them by organizing intergenerational activities between parents and adolescents. In one village, fathers and daughters played carom together, which they found entertaining. A mother in an FGD said that it had made them all friendlier with each other.



"This is my mother and I sitting at the courtyard of our house in the afternoon. Earlier I couldn't talk to my mom on sensitive issues. I used to feel shy. Now I can discuss many important topics with her."

Adolescent girl, age 16

Mothers' groups also stressed the importance of women's and girls' voices. Many of the Outcome Mapping change stories about mothers told of mothers listening to adolescents and talking about topics from parents' meetings, such as gender discrimination, equal rights, and girls' potential. Other change stories described girls convincing their fathers to allow them to keep studying. **Interviews with girls and some political officials pointed to a deeper understanding between parents and daughters and more open discussion of girls' aspirations for the future.** Photovoice data, too, gave examples of parents communicating more with their children about sensitive topics and developing closeness, like this comment from an 18-year-old (photo not available) and photo from a 15-year-old:



“Earlier I could not talk much with my father; I was not free with him; I felt shy to talk with him. After joining the Fun Center, I came to know that it’s very good to share everything with both of my parents. I got confidence and courage. I discussed this with my father and now I can share many things. From one session, I came to know about menstruation. During menstruation, I used to use cloths. After washing those cloths, I would dry them in various corners of our house so that other people would not notice them. Because it was a matter of shyness for me. From the session, I came to know that this is not hygienic. These cloths need to be washed with soap and dried in the sun. So, I shared this with my father. Now I can share everything with my father. My father, for the sake of my good health, now purchases sanitary napkins for me from the market.”

Improved listening by parents also seemed to encompass the transfer of knowledge from adolescents to parents, as adolescents brought home new information from Fun Centers. In a FGD with mothers who did not participate in Tipping Point, respondents noted a ripple effect in that adolescents were making their parents “smarter”.

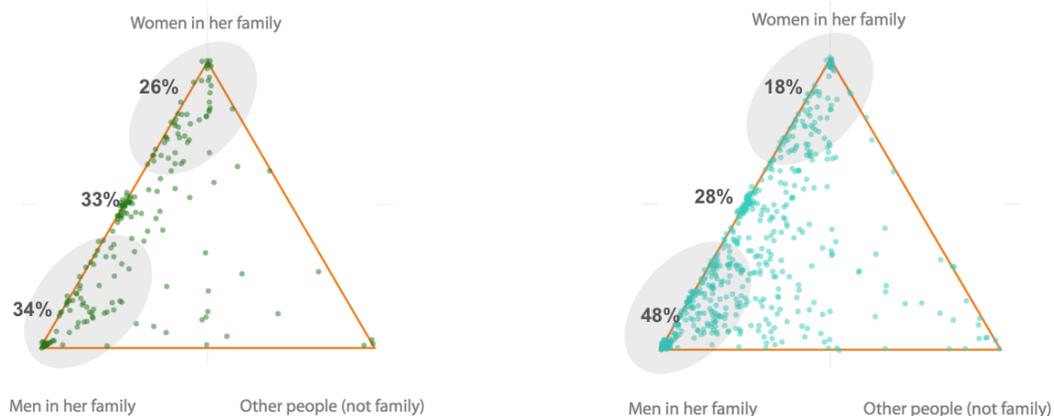
The same group of mothers noted that parents of girls in Fun Centers are now letting them play outside, and they do not tolerate criticism from others for doing so. There was also a difference in the SenseMaker stories between girls in Fun Centers and other girls. **Fun Center girls were more likely to benefit from family support for their rights and ambitions.** In contrast, the family members

of non-member girls were more likely to provide material support for a girl’s dowry than for her education.

Change in gendered roles of mothers and fathers was nascent

Inherent in activities to increase the status of adolescent girls are a questioning of power relationships and gender roles between adult men and women. SenseMaker data found a notable difference between girls who attended Fun Centers and girls who did not in terms of which family members most influenced decision making about their lives. For both groups of girls, respondents more often said that men in a girl’s family—presumably fathers—influenced decision-making about her life more than women did—presumably mothers. However, Figure 7 shows that for Fun Center girls, there was a smaller gap between mothers versus fathers’ influence (26% and 34%, respectively) as compared to other girls (18% and 48%). This suggests that the balance of power in households of Fun Center girls was more equitable.

Figure 7: Who influenced decision-making about the girl’s life?



a. All stories about Fun Center girls (n=196)

b. All stories about non-Fun Center girls (n=548)

Photovoice and Outcome Mapping data suggested that mothers’ influence may be happening through greater advocacy for their daughters. Change stories included tales of mothers motivated to help their daughters avoid the difficulties they themselves had endured as young and undereducated brides.

There were also many examples of mothers and fathers challenging traditional gendered roles. Several Photovoice pictures were of men doing housework and women doing paid work outside the home such as fishing and carrying earth, like the following:

Photovoice participants expressed that men and boys had an increased feeling of self-efficacy and experienced less stigma than before when completing traditionally female tasks. This was especially relevant with cooking, as men no longer had to wait for women to cook for them but could cook for themselves. The cooking competitions held by the Fun Center were frequently cited as the impetus for this. However, respondents pointed out that men are not expected to share in childcare and household labor. Rather, it is a choice they make, and only a few participants said that they felt comfortable asking a man to contribute in this way. Nonetheless, women and girls used words like “love” and “intimacy” to describe what they felt when working together with husbands or brothers.



“Earlier my nephew didn’t carry any babies in his lap. But after joining the Fun Center, he changed. Now he frequently takes babies into his lap.”

Mother, age 38

3. SHIFTING SOIL, WIDER PATHS: SOCIAL NORMS

OUTCOME 3: Social norms related to marriage (dowry expectations, perceptions of girls' potential, and perceptions of marital relationships that promote hegemonic masculinity and ignore girls' rights) are changing to be more supportive of girls and against early marriage

Key findings

- Girls' mobility and visibility increased dramatically
- Relationships with boys and love marriages continued to be linked to family honor
- Fun Center boys began challenging norms of masculine dominance
- Educating girls became more normative
- Dowry became less socially acceptable in some groups
- Tipping Point participants faced sanctions but grew resilient to them



"My nieces are playing football near my house. Earlier we used to restrict girls from playing football. That time people used to criticize a lot. But now we are allowing our daughters to play football. Villagers do not criticize anymore."

Mother, age 32

Alongside encouraging individual empowerment and equitable relationships in girls' lives, Tipping Point sought to shift social norms related to child marriage and adolescent rights at a community level. Tipping Point utilized CARE's Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP)¹⁵ framework in conceptualizing and assessing progress made towards reducing the prevalence of gender discriminatory social norms.

This section discusses the most relevant signs of shifting norms and widening windows of acceptable behavior for girls and girls' resilience to sanctions using the SNAP Framework as guidance for categorizing these movements.

Girls' mobility and visibility increased dramatically

The norms of greatest interest to Tipping Point were ones that controlled girls' autonomy and freedoms. The CPA detailed restrictions on where a girl can go in and outside her village, with whom, and for what reason, usually determined by her parents, in-laws, and even brothers. The evaluation

¹⁵ Stefanik, L.; Hwang, T. (2017). *CARE's Journey Piloting Social Norms Measures for Gender Programming* [PDF file]. Retrieved from <http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/file/view/care-social-norms-paper-web.pdf>

showed that **increased mobility for adolescent girls was one of the most significant changes experienced by participants across all sites.** With participation in Tipping Point, girls were allowed to attend Fun Centers, community events, organizational meetings, intergenerational dialogues with local authorities and parents, income generating activities, and sport club trainings and games. **The project expanded girls' options for socially legitimate activities, stretching the window of acceptable behavior to include new exceptions to the norms that dictated girls' seclusion at home.** Even if the community was not unanimous in their approval, the presence of adult advocates like Tipping Point staff and volunteers, as well as EAW Forum members, gave the activities enough validity for many observers.

With growing trust between adolescents and adults, **many girls were also allowed to play outdoors with friends unsupervised and learn to ride bicycles and play football.** As discussed under Outcome 1, the football league and tournament set up by the project gave girls the opportunity to practice sports in public and travel to other villages. Drama troupes offered another venue for girls to be in public. The mere sight of girls engaging in physical activity and conducting performances was unusual in some villages and subject to community criticism, a form of negative social sanctioning. For example, in a FGD with boys who had not participated in Fun Centers, boys recounted harassment that girls in their football team had experienced. Other adolescent boys uploaded photos of the girls practicing to Facebook with negative comments. Fortunately, adults identified the offenders and reproached them, and there was no further harassment.

Still, according to girls who participated in Photovoice, **comments from the wider community on how girls should behave, where they should go, and who they should interact with, remained the largest barrier for participants' mobility.** Likewise, as mentioned earlier under the Outcome 1 findings, girls from different villages identified criticisms from their community as a significant barrier to achieving their dreams and aspirations.

Relationships with boys and love marriages continued to be linked to family honor

The CPA explained the primacy of notions of honor and sexual purity in the lives of adolescent girls in project areas. The critical importance of maintaining family honor through guarding a girl's sexuality shapes her movements, her activities, her friendships, and her access to the world around her, especially her contact with boys. Therefore, one aim of the Fun Centers was to create socially legitimate reasons for girls and boys to interact platonically and counter the dominant perception that any relationship between unrelated girls and boys was by default a romantic or sexual relationship, with limited success. **Most FGD respondents felt that playing carom or chess together at the Fun Center was acceptable,** with the implication that such activity was supervised by adults. Other activities such as picnics and drama performances that put boys and girls together in public remained contentious and a potential source of community approbation. Boys who taught girls to ride bicycles had negative things said about them, for example.

The 25% of SenseMaker stories from girls were labeled as being about honor suggests that it continued to be salient in their lives at the time of the evaluation. Certainly, **romantic relationships continued to be highly stigmatized**, sometimes leading to arbitration processes to resolve in a way that was acceptable to the community. Although some elopements were subsequently validated with official marriages, in other cases girls were disowned by their families – for example, a SenseMaker story related an interfaith elopement between a Muslim girl and a Hindu boy that ended this way.

Parental fear of love marriages was cited as a reason not to send daughters to boarding school or allow them to use mobile phones, as explained in a FGD with girls not involved with a Fun Center:

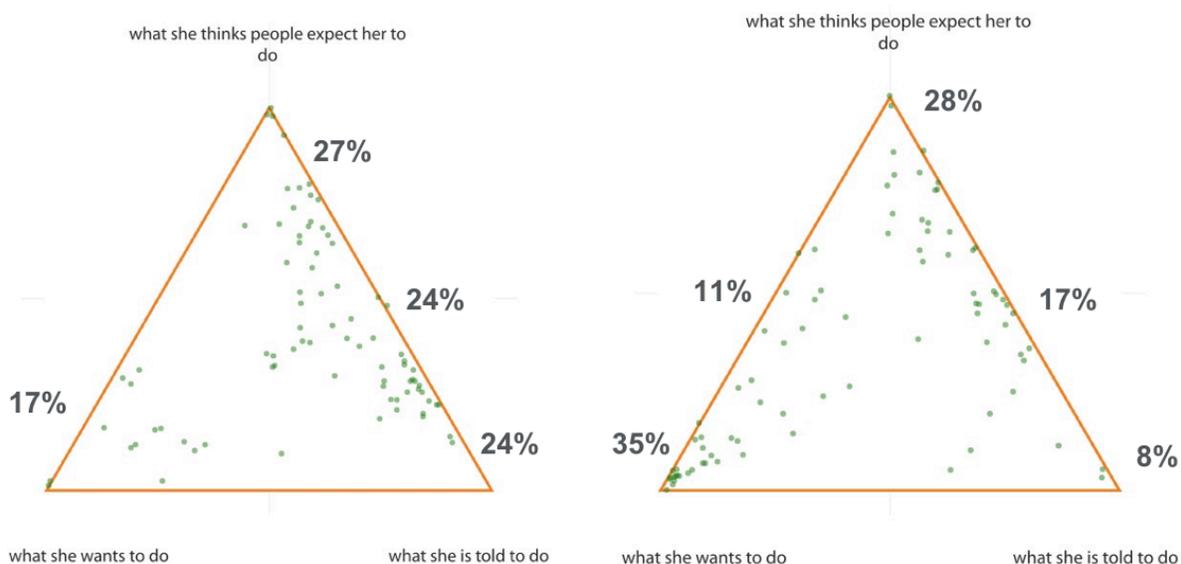
“Using mobile phone and talking with other boys unnecessarily is not allowed in society. Because if a girl uses a mobile phone, then there is a chance of getting engaged in a romantic relationship and eloping with a boy. For this reason, a girl can’t use a mobile phone. If necessary, then a girl can use her parent’s phone. When a girl doesn’t follow these rules, she is considered a bad girl.”

Other FGDs reiterated these ideas. **Community members retained strong ideas of the difference between “good” girls and “bad” girls**, notions that play a strong role in enforcing conformance with social norms. ‘Good’ girls were those that worked hard in the home and refused boys’ romantic propositions. When respondents were asked to describe a “bad” girl, a trait that frequently arose was “talks to boys.” Boys in the SenseMaker sample mainly found girls’ behavior to be a bad example to other girls. They included situations outside of girls’ control, such as forced marriage and eve-teasing, among girls’ “bad examples.” SenseMaker analysis suggested this paradox stemmed from a split between girls’ own experience of agency and others’ perceptions of girls’ agency in matters related to honor. As depicted in Figure 8, in stories related to “honor” (17%), girl respondents were much less likely to say the girl in the story did what she wanted to, compared to all other respondents (boys, mothers, and fathers) combined (35%). Girls described the main character of a story doing what she was told to do 24% of the time; other respondents perceived girls to be obedient in only 8% of stories. That is, boys and parents assigned girls in the stories a much higher degree of agency in situations related to honor than did girls themselves, although all groups agreed that girls usually did what they were told or what they thought others expected of them.

However, the evaluation noted some changes in how the traditional notions of “good” girls intersected with an increase in girls’ agency and confidence—through girls talking back to boys engaged in eve-teasing. **Previously, girls’ passivity in the face of harassment was expected, but communities began to respect girls who spoke up for themselves.** One FGD said that the situation for girls had changed dramatically in their community, that **people now accepted the opinions of girls, and speaking up about girls’ rights and issues like dowry had become associated with being a ‘good’ girl.** Girls in an FGD explained:

“If a girl talks about her or other girls’ rights, then she is considered a good girl. When a girl helps others, then she is considered a good girl. If a girl speaks up about eve-teasing, then she is considered a good girl because she helps other girls.”

Figure 8: Girls' agency and honor—In your story, the girl does...



a. Stories about honor from all girls (n=82)

b. Stories about honor from boys and parents (n=83)

There were also indications in SenseMaker data that **Fun Center girls were viewed positively in spite of norm breaking**. The behavior of Fun Center girls was more likely to be called good examples to other girls compared to the behavior of girls who did not participate in Fun Centers. This distinction mirrors many of the shifts in normative expectations for girls—those who joined Fun Center groups were generally considered “good” girls and given more leeway in their behavior than other girls.

Fun Center boys began challenging norms of masculine dominance

Tipping Point recognizes that changing social expectations for girls also involves changing social expectations for boys, and that engaging boys is critical to advance girls’ rights and address the root causes of child marriage. **The evaluation found some changes in adolescent boys’ attitudes and behaviors, including behavior that challenged traditional norms of masculinity such as dominance over women in the home.** Boys involved with Fun Centers demonstrated a growing understanding of reciprocity within marital relationships. While “beauty” was frequently mentioned in the CPA as an important trait in a wife, none of the Fun Center boys mentioned it in evaluation FGDs. Rather, they spoke of wanting harmonious relations with wives and stated that they would value their wives’ choices and opinions. Some even desired wives who were educated and employed.

The various data sources also had many examples of boys, as well as men, engaging in housework, even though they sometimes faced ridicule from neighbors who suggested the work was emasculating. An Outcome Mapping story quoted a boy who had participated in a cooking contest:

“Before participating in this contest, I thought cooking was not even work. If food was ever served late, I got angry at my mother. But now I understand that it is an important task, too. I help my mother and do chores like collecting water, cutting vegetables, cleaning rooms, etc. Now my mother is very happy with me.”

There was little evidence that these behavioral changes reflected a wider normative shift in the communities. Yet, there was some evidence of the diffusion of ideas outward from the project. For example, in FGDs with boys who had not joined Fun Centers, boys said that members of adolescent boys’ groups shared what they learned at Fun Centers and said **they saw these boys as role models of community service due to their concern for other people.**

Educating girls became more acceptable

Respondents to the SenseMaker story gathering were asked to indicate up to three themes for the story they told. Among them, education was the most common theme, being in 49% of all stories. When the data is limited to stories shared by girls, 62% are about education. Because respondents had been asked to share a story about a girl and a challenge she faced, one conclusion is that it was quite common for girls to experience challenges related to schooling. The same finding emerged in the CPA and was associated with norms that dictated girls’ obedience to in-laws and the belief that education could make girls less obedient. To maintain male dominance, husbands were expected to be more educated than wives.

The evaluation provided some evidence that educating girls was increasingly perceived as normative. Photovoice participants said they observed mothers using their own income to support schooling of their children, greater effectiveness of adolescents advocating for continuing attendance, and more families enrolling their girls in school at a younger age, as in this Photovoice example:



“This photograph was taken in my cousin’s house in the afternoon. My cousin is teaching her child. Earlier girls used to start their school at the age of 7 or 8 years. But now they can go to school at the age of 4 or 5 years.”

Adolescent girl, age 16

Importantly, mothers in FGDs said that community attitudes about educating girls had shifted; **people no longer thought that educating girls made them unmarriageable**. It is unclear how much of this shift was due to a desire for greater gender equality, as respondents pointed to more instrumental factors, namely that, with education, girls could also work paid jobs. There was some evidence that Tipping Point contributed to this development: attitudinal questions for SenseMaker respondents revealed that **girls, boys, mothers, and fathers involved with the project were more likely to say that daughters should have the same chance to work outside the home as sons**. An ERAW Forum member captured this point of view:

“Girls are continuing their study by going against traditional rules. People used to think that ‘why should we spend for girls’ education, it’s just totally a lost project, it’s not helpful for parents because girls will not give them money.’ Now gradually parents are understanding girls’ points of view. Tipping Point is trying to make them realize that if a girl can be independent they will also feel proud, and girls also can contribute to the family.”

Nonetheless, girls’ education was still hampered by the distance to schools, fears about girls’ safety on the journey to and from school, seasonal disruptions from flooding in the area, and the economic costs of admission, enrollment, and supplies. The ERAW Forums in particular worked very hard to overcome these challenges for girls.

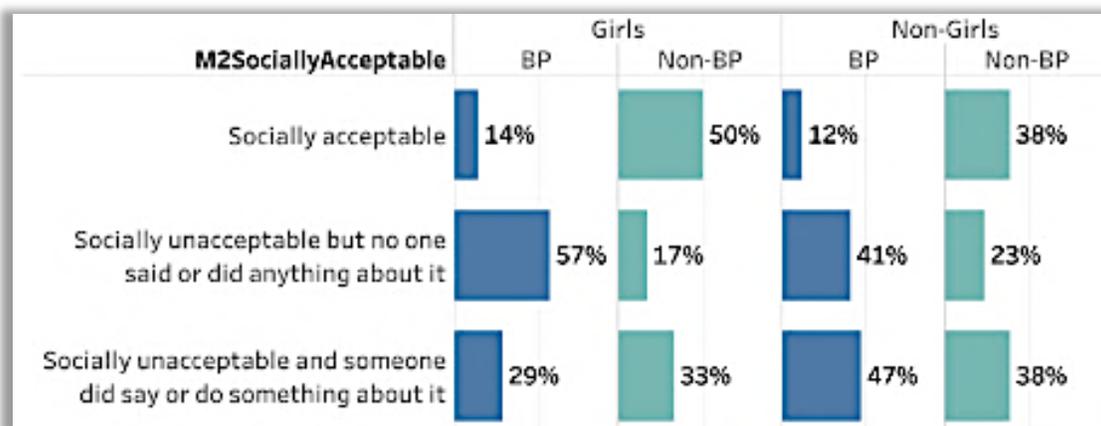
Dowry became less socially acceptable for some groups

Dowry is a part of the traditional marriage compact that can lead to violence against women and cause great financial distress for the families of brides. **Tipping Point participants in FGDs and Photovoice named dowry as highly problematic, but actual practices appeared not to have meaningfully shifted**. That is, interviewees described a trend towards voluntary gift giving by brides’ families rather than cash dowry agreed on with grooms’ families, but it was unclear if or how the status associated with a large marriage transaction had changed. This new pattern of exchange likely emerged because giving and receiving dowry is illegal in Bangladesh. Nonetheless, Tipping Point was credited for raising awareness about dowry in FGDs with girls:

“There is no dowry like before. People are more concerned. Tipping Point helped make them understand that there is no limit for dowry. If you give them 20,000 taka, then after a few months they can ask for more money. By doing this, you will lose everything. Now no one is giving dowry, but they do give gifts to their daughters so she is comfortable.”

Outcome Mapping change stories gave several accounts of families refusing to give or accept dowry, and Fun Center girls in one FGD said that **“good” girls should know that dowry is illegal and be able to talk about it, presumably as a social problem**. SenseMaker stories also showed a split between those involved with Fun Centers and those uninvolved, although this was based on a small number of stories (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Social acceptability in SenseMaker stories about dowry involving Fun Center girls (n=7) and non-Fun Center girls (n=6). 'BP' refers to Tipping Point participants and 'Non-BP' refers to non-participants



However, there were contrasting examples from other data sources about dowry violence where families becoming indebted to pay dowry and experienced failed attempts to convince grooms not to accept dowry. These examples suggested that overall, little had changed in the broader community, and outcomes like the following Photovoice account continued to occur:



"This girl was married when she was very young. She has a kid and she is pregnant. Her husband left her. So, she sews blankets which she sells to earn her livelihood. Her husband asked for dowry. Since he didn't get dowry, he left her. Now she can take care of herself. We want this dowry system to be stopped. This is the change we want."

Adolescent girl, age 19

Tipping Point participants faced sanctions but grew resilient to them

As reflected throughout the evaluation findings, sanctions against individuals who broke norms related to girls' behavior, girls' honor, masculinity, and bodily autonomy mostly occurred through community gossip, shaming, and ridicule. When this was targeted at youth, adults associated with the project often intervened to defend them and redirect the negative attention onto themselves. For their part, **the adolescents and parents associated with Fun Centers expressed resilience in the face of criticism.** Girls in an FGD said:

“It was not in our imagination that we can play football. We thought that it was only for boys. Now we are playing football. We break the previous norms, though it was not easy. Villagers didn’t welcome us. They criticized a lot. They said girls should not go, football is not for girls, they should stay at home. But with the help of Tipping Point, they break the silence. Now girls realize that, ‘These [rules] are made by society, not by Allah.’”

Another girl respondent echoed this point of view:

“We don’t give any attention to the criticism of community people, we just listen to our heart and play football. Villagers don’t criticize in front of us, but they do it in our absence. Not only did villagers criticize a lot, they also talked with our parents and asked them not to allow us to play - but with the help of Community Volunteers and Facilitators [from Tipping Point], girls are now playing.”

Other FGD groups made similar statements related to riding bicycles and playing outdoors. Mothers who had not participated in Tipping Point reported that **mothers of Fun Center girls let them walk around with friends and play sports and that those mothers would not let anyone criticize them for it.** Boys were perhaps less resilient to comments about them helping girls learn to ride bicycles and donating their football field to the girls, although there were also examples of them engaging parents of girls to alleviate their concerns.

Despite increased resilience to sanctions, girls identified community criticism as the most significant obstacle to their mobility, participation in activities outside the home, and realizing their aspirations. As a 15-year-old Fun Center girl said:

“It’s not easy to break the construction of society. People love to criticize when you are trying to do it.”

The susceptibility of parents, who control girls’ mobility, to community sanctions was uneven, with some of them pushing through resistance to girls’ activities—like the father of the goalkeeper whose story appears in the section on Outcome 1—and others who feared gossip. In a discussion among Photovoice participants, girls explained that some of them were not allowed to go to the field to cut paddy with their brothers because their parents feared community criticism that could make them unmarriageable.

4. GATHERING ALLIES, BUILDING NETWORKS: PARTNERS AND ADVOCACY

OUTCOME 4: Networks, solidarity groups and organizations collaborate together (laterally and vertically) to take action for girls

Key findings

- EAW Forum members advocated for girls individually and collectively
- Allies emerged from among community and religious leaders
- Community arbitration and collectives of mothers, fathers, and boys present opportunities for future activism

Tipping Point sought to build the enabling environment around girls and contribute to a social movement towards the fulfillment of girls' rights. To this end, staff-built relationships across communities, government offices, local organizations, and other arenas to support girls' rights.

EAW Forum members advocated for girls individually and collectively

EAW Forums existed in many project sites before Tipping Point launched; in others, the project team established them with the purpose of supporting collective action against violence and on behalf of girls. Members were chosen by adolescents, setting up a strong relationship between EAW Forums and Fun Centers. EAW Forums interacted with adolescent groups each month for shared sessions on topics including women and rights, gender roles, laws that support women and girls, and burden of labor analyses. They also formed six-month workplans to set targets for engagement with government bodies and service providers for girls. A total of 267 meetings were held (approximately three per village) between EAW forums and the adolescents from the Fun Centers. This dialogue helped EAW members understand the issues adolescents were facing.

Change stories about EAW Forum members from Outcome Mapping included many examples of transforming gender relations inside members' homes and intervening with the families of girls at risk of marriage or school drop-out, with great success. SenseMaker data reflected a greater organizational maturity and effectiveness within EAW Forums. **It was clear that girls came to know they could rely on EAW Forum members in specific situations, such as stopping a boy from harassing a girl or speaking to a girl's parents about joining a football team or stopping a planned marriage, as well as general support for girls' rights.** Forums have invited government officials and local elite to events put on by Fun Center youth and solicited their support of opportunities for girls, such as livelihood training, and accurate birth registration so that girls' ages are correctly recorded.

A SenseMaker story from a Fun Center girl explained how instrumental EAW Forum members were in intervening with families on behalf of girls:

“I want to tell a story about a girl who used to live in our southern area. At the age of 14, when she was in class 6, she stopped studying. Her family was not interested in her studies either. Five months ago, her father set a marriage for her. The bridegroom was 25 to 26 years old. When the EAW Forum and Fun Center learned that a family had set a marriage of an underaged girl, they went to consult that family just a day before marriage. At that time, her parents said, ‘We have two daughters and three sons. We want to get our daughters married before our sons get married. We don’t [want] any problem in our family. If an unknown girl [a bride to one of their sons] comes to the family, our daughters will not be happy.’ But the EAW Forum requested they change their decision, and, after a long discussion, the marriage was postponed.”

When needed, EAW Forums also solved barriers to education. For example, they arranged a boat in the wet season so that students in remote locations could continue attending school. In another village, the Forum established a savings account to assist rural students. Forum members also held community sessions on domestic violence and gender-based violence and responded to reports of domestic violence by counseling couples. In some places, the work of the EAW Forum addressed issues of poverty and malnutrition, for example, by lobbying local government to build latrines for poor families, collecting iron tablets from clinics for Fun Center girls, and raising funds to donate rice to mothers of adolescents living in poverty.

Allies emerged from among community and religious leaders

Other community actors showed different levels of engagement with Tipping Point and/or changed behavior as a result of Tipping Point’s activities. **An interviewee reported that marriage registrars and kazis (Islamic judges involved in the marriage process for Muslims) were more routinely checking birth certificates before approving marriages.** There were also many examples in the data of Union Parishad members responding to advocacy for girls’ specific needs and wishes. Village Chairmen, other leaders, and local imams attended various meetings and Fun Center events. Their presence lent weight to the messages of EAW Forums and the project.

Other officials that emerged as allies for girls according to Outcome Mapping data and FGD respondents included Youth Development Officers and School Management Committees. In one village, the Youth Development Officer organized training for girls in sheep and goat rearing, which 18 Fun Center girls attended. The same person later followed through on a promise to provide sports equipment to the Fun Center. Tipping Point also worked with School Management Committees at some schools when individual girls needed extra support to continue school. **Several girls were able to stay enrolled or reenroll free of tuition through School Management Committee actions.**

Community arbitration and collectives of mothers, fathers, and boys present opportunities for future activism

SenseMaker and other data revealed that although Tipping Point reached out to a broad swath of the public, there were other institutions and people that a future phase of the project may wish to engage in a different way. Among these were the actors involved in customary processes for conflict resolution. Arbitration proceedings are the path of recourse for families affected by potentially shameful situations including rape, domestic violence, consensual extramarital relationships, and marriage dissolution. Arbitration appeared in SenseMaker stories as the mechanism for deciding girls' fates after being raped, eloping, or having sex. Decision makers in the arbitration process as reflected in stories were mostly individuals that Tipping Point recognized as potential and desirable allies, such as village leaders, religious leaders, and police, but **the project may be more effective in ensuring good outcomes for girls that respect their autonomy by seeking to engage directly in the arbitration processes.**

Religious leaders also appeared in a handful of SenseMaker stories behaving in ways that were sometimes beneficial to girls, such as checking birth certificates before conducting a marriage, and other times harmful to girls, including sexually exploiting students. More direct engagement with religious leaders may be necessary to identify true champions for girls and strengthen their accountability to the community.

Mothers and fathers of adolescents, as well as adolescent boys themselves, participated in Tipping Point primarily as individuals rather than collectives. Although mothers' groups formed and met regularly, FGD and Photovoice data portrayed the members as mostly passive recipients of information rather than active agents in their communities. The initiative that mothers' groups members did show was in spreading Tipping Point messages about girls' rights and health informally through their social networks, and mothers who had not joined Tipping Point activities evidenced this in FGDs with their strong knowledge of the project's messaging. Of course, EAW Forum members were often parents of adolescents as well, and there is great potential for mothers to emerge as public advocates for girls in the future.

Boys' groups organized through Fun Centers covered similar topics in their meetings as the girls' groups, including basic life skills. Boys' participation, however, was more erratic because many of them migrated seasonally for work. Nonetheless, Photovoice and FGD data suggested that many adolescent boys were solid allies to their sisters in teaching them skills in football, bicycle repair, and other areas, as in the Photovoice example below.



“This brother is teaching his sister to ride a bicycle. Earlier girls were not allowed to ride on a bicycle. Boys used to say, ‘Goats can’t plough land’ [a Bengali proverb that is insulting when said about people]. But now they are teaching girls how to ride on a bicycle.”

Adolescent girl, age 15

Boys also supported their sisters’ educations and adopted some housework to enable their sisters to do other things. In several Outcome Mapping change stories, boys appeared intervening with parents on behalf of sisters to halt early marriages. Some boys participated in the public cooking, washing, and baby bathing competitions despite the potential to be ridiculed; other boys were active in the community drama shows. Yet boys did not collectively organize themselves to advocate for support of girls by, for example, speaking with community decision makers, organizations, service providers, or other groups about funding or opportunities for girls. One exception was that boys collectively agreed to give up their football field in one location so that girls could use it, although they were provided with another field in its place.

However, in SenseMaker stories, **boys were much more likely to act “in their own interest” or “in a way that is harmful to girls” versus “in a way that is helpful to girls.”** This was true regardless of who was telling the story, boys or girls. Adolescent boy respondents therefore recognized harmful behavior in their peers, and, with a greater sense of collective accountability, boys may yet come together in their communities to support girls’ autonomy and dignity.

5. LEADING CHANGE, BEING CHANGE: PROJECT STAFF

OUTCOME 5: Staff continue to reflect upon and take up values, practices, and action that model anti-oppression (based on gender, caste and other group identities) and reflect critically on their beliefs about sexuality

Key findings

- Staff internalized critical awareness of gender and experienced changed attitudes and behaviors in their personal lives
- Sexuality and bodily autonomy were valued topics for staff
- Staff were seen as role models in communities

Local staff were the core of Tipping Point in Phase 1.¹⁶ They organized and facilitated girls' and boys' groups each week as well as regular meetings of parents' groups. They acted as teachers, mentors, and collaborators who provided leadership to group members in collective actions to shift social norms, such as street dramas about child marriage and girls' football matches. Outside of the group sessions and events, staff were also important advocates for girls' rights in intervening in individual cases to keep girls in school and to prevent child marriages.

Female staff, especially the younger ones, faced the same discriminatory gender norms that the project was working to change, and male staff were subject to the same expectations of dominance over women and other aspects of masculinity. To be credible voices and advocates for change within communities, project staff themselves needed to be able to question and analyze their own beliefs and actions before they could lead others in challenging norms and traditions. Therefore, staff transformation and capacity development were integral elements of Tipping Point, and the project invested in a series of workshops and transformative experiences for staff to support their skills in personal reflection and foster a process of internalization of new gender concepts and its fluidity.

The evaluation process included four FGDs with staff from partner organizations Jaintia Shinnomul Songstha (JASHIS) and Action for Social Development (ASD) in which participants reflected on how Tipping Point brought about significant changes in their values, beliefs, and personal and professional relationships.

¹⁶ Tipping Point Project (2019). *Staff Transformation Brief* [PDF file]. Retrieved from https://caretippingpoint.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/TP_Staff-transformation-brief_Phase-1.pdf

Staff internalized critical awareness of gender and experienced changed attitudes and behaviors in their personal lives

In FGDs, male staff expressed the changes they saw in themselves as a result of training, community work, and working alongside female colleagues. Previously, they felt that women were dependent on men for outside work; **now, they believed that women can be better than men at some kinds of work, including office work.** One male staff member said after the project's Gender, Equity, and Diversity (GED) training, he asked his wife if she wanted to work outside the home. She sought out training in sewing and eventually earned more money than her husband.

In other stories from staff, men had already been participating in household chores but previously understood their behavior to be “helping” the women in their families. In their time with Tipping Point, their views about gender roles in the family opened up, and **they began recognizing the difference between occasionally joining in on housework, which could be fun, to taking it on as a shared responsibility that called for regular contributions, which was less fun.** Female staff noticed these changes in their male counterparts as well and felt that they had contributed to these changes by sharing their own experiences as women with the team. A challenge in this mental shift was getting others in the family and neighbors to appreciate their point of view.

Staff of all genders became much more aware of girls' rights to choose and consent within their families and gave examples of times when they protested child marriages happening with relatives. A few staff also mentioned intervening in domestic violence situations in their own communities.

At the beginning of the project, staff reflected that working with members of the opposite sex was uncomfortable and not something familiar to them. It took time for them to overcome some shyness about appearing in public alongside colleagues of a different gender.

Sexuality and bodily autonomy were valued topics for staff

Project staff were initially very reluctant to talk openly about sexuality, sexual health, and bodily autonomy for women. Even menstruation was considered taboo in mixed-sex conversations. **But talking about sensitive topics in Tipping Point with a positive attitude helped them become more comfortable addressing them in the villages and with their own family members.** For example, a male staff recounted that his 14-year-old son had asked his mother about condoms and sanitary napkins after seeing advertisements. When his mother gave vague replies, he stepped in and explained how the items are used and with which body parts. GED and sexuality training made many staff realize they had believed incorrect things about the human body. It also helped them overcome fears about transgender people. Likewise, in communities, **staff grew confident discussing aspects of sexuality without shame or judgment, especially important when a girl's behavior entered a conversation.**

Staff were seen as role models in communities

Evaluation interviewees noted that project staff had grown over the course of Phase 1. They cited improvements in their communication skills, organization skills, and public speaking. One person said that community volunteers and facilitators had become teachers for the whole village. Girls and boys at Fun Centers also appreciated and trusted project staff, pointing out the bravery it takes to behave in new ways that put principles of gender equality into practice. SenseMaker data also captured the effectiveness of staff and volunteers in intercepting planned marriages, personal advocacy with girls' parents, addressing sexual harassment, and promoting girls' visibility in the community. **Community members observed the difficulties that staff had faced, such as resistance to girls' football, bicycle riding, and increased mobility, and admired their fortitude in withstanding community criticism in order to do what was best for girls.**

CONCLUSIONS

In just a few years, Tipping Point has laid a strong foundation for empowering and connecting girls, mobilizing advocates for girls' rights, and driving normative shifts that increase girls' mobility, visibility, education, and agency in their own lives in project areas of Bangladesh. The project found and developed groups of early adopters—those girls and families willing to take some social risks—gathered allies for them and supported their initiatives to raise awareness of critical issues and present a broader spectrum of possibilities for girls, boys, and how they relate to each other. Street dramas, rallies, cooking competitions, football matches, and cycling competitions were influential moments for facilitating dialogue in their communities and increasing girls' visibility and voice. Mothers became more open and supportive of their daughters, contributing somewhat to a shift in the locus of decision making in the home, at least for Fun Center girls. Especially important, life skills training and the solidarity of friendships at the Fun Centers enriched girls' abilities to be agents in their own lives.

Community members who directly participated in Tipping Point groups through Fun Centers experienced the most significant degree of change in their awareness of girls' rights and their individual attitudes and behaviors. Those who less intensively engaged in the project or did not engage at all still received information and project messaging from their peers, and knowledge and skills in several areas spread outward from the project's participants as they shared with their friends and families. EAW Forum members were consistent advocates for girls individually and collectively, and project staff underwent their own processes of transformation in becoming models of self-awareness and principled action. Some norms began to open up, especially for Fun Center girls, and even beyond the project, the definition of a "good" girl began to encompass the ability of a girl to advocate for herself.

It is difficult to measure the impact of Tipping Point on the practice of child marriage itself, but there were many stories of marriages averted through the intervention of parents, boys, and girls involved with the project or in conjunction with EAW Forums. The successes that hold promise for the project's approach to social norm change and girls' empowerment demonstrate that activities that rupture traditional social norms in safe, public environments are effective in shifting attitudes and giving people permission to think and behave differently. In addition, the project piloted new ways of operationalizing social norm change work, with programming according to a set of principles that include focusing on positive messages about girls rather than the negative outcomes of child marriage.¹⁷ Tipping Point also deployed innovative measures of social norms and normative change that can inform academic and program design thinking, such as the SNAP tool.

¹⁷ Tipping Point project (2017, 2018) Social Norms Innovation Briefs. *CARE Tipping Point*. Retrieved from <https://caretippingpoint.org/innovation/>

The successes of Tipping Point to date have not overcome the many barriers girls continue to face in realizing their potential and achieving agency in key life decisions. Girls exercising agency pointed to the reality that girls continue to be constrained by heavy controls on their behavior, and that asserting agency in the face of such constraints can involve extreme actions with dangerous results. Romantic relationships continued to be highly stigmatized, and the possibility of relationships with boys and elopements continued to animate parents' fears of losing family honor. Dowry practices appeared not to have meaningfully shifted, and although Fun Center girls had more influence on marital decisions than other girls, adolescent girls still have little control over the process.

A key challenge for Tipping Point in its second phase will be to find creative ways to incorporate reproductive health knowledge and services in the project intervention package, including sexuality education, so adolescent girls are able to make informed decisions about their bodies. Equally important will be engaging a broader range of community members and to engage parents and boys more intensively in collective action activities. Fathers and boys were more difficult to mobilize and need creative approaches to their participation. The strength of girls' groups can be expanded with networking activities between villages. Legal and quasi-legal structures such as arbitration bodies present platforms of intervention in individual girls' cases, and involvement with them seems a logical extension of the role that EAW Forums have played to date. Additionally, religious leaders have great influence in project sites and should not be assumed to be homogeneous opponents of change.

SECTION IV: PROGRAMMING AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT AND SOCIAL NORMS PROGRAMMING

Build girls' skills in negotiating romantic relationships and sexual activity

It is expected that there would be community resistance to adding more explicit content to skill sessions with adolescent girls' groups. As an alternative, look for creative ways to incorporate transferable skills that could be applied to romantic or sexual relationships, such as consent, refusal, decision-making, and safety planning. Parents may also be more willing to allow comprehensive sexuality education if they are exposed to it themselves.

Involve more girls in Fun Center activities

If capacity is an issue, consider adding circles of membership, so that additional adolescents can participate at some level. For example, a wider group could join in planning and organizing community events, or core members could facilitate peer groups.

Find creative ways to engage fathers and men

Build on activities that men found interesting and that built their relationships with their daughters. Consider giving more fathers specific roles at Fun Centers, even minor roles, so that they feel their participation is important.

Address social media skills and mobile phone technology

As users of internet technology, youth need skills in recognizing unfamiliar threats and knowing how to protect themselves online. If boys are the primary users in project areas, they should be aware that their behavior online can have impacts on others in the real world.

Expand financial literacy and livelihood opportunities for program participants

Girls who earn income and contribute to their families may be more successful at delaying marriage. Tipping Point connected many girls to livelihood skills trainings and may consider building adolescents' skills in financial literacy, savings, and banking more directly.

Intensify community dialogue events

Events like the community talk show, drama performances, and cooking competitions drew in large crowds. More frequent activities like these will expand the project's reach and deepen the impact on observers, especially when dialogues are well facilitated. The project may wish to tailor events to certain audiences, such as fathers or elders.

Build girls' networks outside their villages

The football tournament gave girls exposure to other villages and other peers. Work with family members and community leaders to create safe, acceptable reasons for girls to travel and socialize with each other, so that their social networks and sense of solidarity grow.

Make inroads in formal processes of arbitration

Seek collaboration with the officials and religious authorities that conduct arbitration. ERAW Forum members would be well placed to liaise with them to create a role in arbitration processes for a girl's advocate.

Revisit the involvement of married adolescents

Because they face the greatest restrictions, adolescent girls who have already married are likely to miss out on activities that are not designed and targeted expressly to them. Their particular points of view, needs, and wishes are not well represented in the evaluation data and therefore it is difficult to understand the project's relationship to them as a group. Tipping Point could support married girls more in continuing their education, negotiating within their households, and by working with husbands and in-laws to promote married girls' rights.

Find religious leaders open to supporting girls' rights

Religious leaders can be challenging to work with, yet they make impactful allies in socially conservative communities. Find the leaders that have at least some stances in common with the project and build on those relationships. If there are progressive Muslim or Hindu organizations active in Bangladesh, consider ways to link local leaders to them.

Follow girls' interests

Ask girls to identify what activity they would like to start doing and be ready to support it in the same way that the project and its allies supported girls' football. For example, some girls expressed interest in music and singing, although they are frowned on for girls. The project could lend its credibility to new activities to expand what is seen as acceptable behavior for girls.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Clarify ‘special circumstances’ for marriage under 18 to ensure girls’ choices are respected**

The provision of the Child Marriage Restraint Act (2017) allowing a girl or boy to get married before 18 under “special circumstances” has the potential to be abused and to undermine ongoing efforts to address child marriage. The government should put in place administrative rules or measures that clarify the circumstances under which the exemption applies, as well as develop clear procedural/legal measures to uphold girls’ choice and consent in marriage decisions.
- 2. Ensure girls’ rights are protected in community arbitration processes**

The evaluation found that families often turn to legal or quasi-legal arbitration processes to address potentially ‘shameful’ situations involving girls, including rape, domestic violence, consensual extramarital relationships, and marriage dissolution. To ensure good outcomes for girls, the government should mandate safeguards within arbitration processes aimed at protecting girls’ rights and autonomy within these processes.
- 3. Invest in formal education and skills training for girls and young people in marginalized communities to expand choices and create alternatives to child marriage**

The government should expand and promote girls’ access to both formal and non-formal education, training and livelihood opportunities. Girls who earn income and contribute to their families may be more successful at delaying marriage. Skills training strategies should include diverse ways to connect young people from remote and marginalized communities to vocational, livelihoods, and employment opportunities and markets and supporting infrastructure and access to services and programs that can transform the geographic isolation of communities.
- 4. Improve services for married girls**

The government should target already married adolescent girls with increased access and opportunities for education, health services, livelihood opportunities, and financial resources. Married adolescent girls are among the most vulnerable members of society, and dedicated efforts to reach them are necessary to guarantee their rights are fulfilled.
- 5. Improve access to services through infrastructure solutions**

The government should invest in infrastructure that improves mobility and access for adolescents, especially girls, in isolated communities. Communities in the *haor* region are subject to cyclical flooding that exacerbates their geographical isolation and disrupts girls’ educations. Government-supported solutions to infrastructure limitations will enable greater access of girls and their families to essential services.

6. Integrate and scale up strategies to change discriminatory norms as part of government programs

The findings of the evaluation show the promise of approaches aimed at shifting discriminatory norms and expanding community perceptions of the potential roles and contributions of girls to their communities beyond household duties. Civil society organizations need support to scale up community-based efforts to shift norms through the promising approaches and strategies highlighted by the evaluation. This includes engagement of religious leaders and other influential stakeholders.

ANNEX I: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION AND INTERVIEW METHODS AND PARTICIPANTS

The evaluation involved semi-structured and open-ended discussions, using a set of focus group discussion (FGD) and interview tools aimed at different audiences and adapting some of the tools from the 2014 CPA exercise.¹⁸ The following table presents an overview of the FGD tools.

Focus group discussion tools by respondent group

RESPONDENT GROUP	FGD TOOLS
Girl Fun Center members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visioning: identifying dreams and aspirations, and enabling factors and barriers to achieve dreams • Collective action: Capturing the work of Fun Center girls' groups in their communities
Girl non-members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good girl, bad girl: exploring conceptions of socially acceptable behaviors for girls
Boy Fun Center members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visioning: identifying dreams and aspirations, and enabling factors and barriers to achieve dreams • Good girl, bad girl: exploring conceptions of socially acceptable behaviors for girls (emphasis on sisters)
Boy non-members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good/bad girls and boys: exploring conceptions of socially acceptable behaviors for girls and boys
Adult mothers and fathers (members and non-members)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks and benefits: Identifying the respective risk and benefits of marriage below and above age 18 • Good girl, bad girl: exploring conceptions of socially acceptable behaviors for girls (emphasis on daughters)

In-depth Interviews (IDIs)

Interviewers conducted IDIs with five individuals who had participated in Tipping Point and actively demonstrated positive deviance within their communities by adopting the behaviors that Tipping Point promoted, despite real or possible sanctions from family or community members.¹⁹ IDI respondents consisted of two older adolescent girls; one older adolescent boy; one adult mother;

¹⁸ Data collection tools used in both the CPA and the evaluation were the Risk/Benefits exercise conducted with parents and Visioning exercises with adolescents.

¹⁹ "Positive Deviance is based on the observation that in every community there are certain individuals or groups (the positive deviants), whose uncommon but successful behaviors or strategies enable them to find better solutions to a problem than their peers. These individuals or groups have access to exactly the same resources and face the same challenges and obstacles as their peers," Positive Deviance Initiative, retrieved from www.positivedeviance.org

and one adult father. Respondents were identified and recruited through the FGD sessions as well as upon the recommendation of frontline workers (i.e. Field Facilitators, Community Volunteers and Community Facilitators).

IDIs consisted of the completion of two timeline activities, in which individual respondents first provided a life history of happy and difficult times in their lives to date, and then focused on challenges within the past three years and whether/how engagement with the Tipping Point project assisted respondents to overcome these challenges.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the following key informants:

- EAWW forum members in 2 villages
- Youth Development Officer for 1 district
- Community Leaders in 2 villages
- Cooperative Officer from 1 *Upazilla* administration

ANNEX II: SENSEMAKER METHODOLOGY

SenseMaker²⁰ is a narrative-based approach involving the capture and analysis of a large number of short stories in order to understand and respond to complex systems. It aims to understand experiences through the eyes of the people themselves and to elevate the voice of storytellers in knowledge production. It is a form of meta-analysis of qualitative data that bridges a gap between case studies and large-sample survey data. Respondents share short stories and then they answer a set of pre-determined analytical questions, adding new layers of meaning to their narrative. The responses to these analytical questions are then aggregated to produce quantitative data.

The attribution of meaning by participants is influenced by the environment of social norms in which they are situated. This approach can support the identification of trends in attitudes, behaviors, and relationships. The fact that the storytellers themselves assign meaning to their stories is advantageous since it is done within the cultural framework and understanding of the respondent, thereby potentially reducing exposure to the cultural or normative biases of external enumerators and researchers. As such, it places respondents at the center of the research process and prioritizes their unique experiences and perspectives.

SenseMaker is particularly useful for programs that aim to deal with complexity and understand emergent patterns and trends or dimensions that are less tangible and more difficult to measure, such as sustainability, gender, inclusion, or resilience. If used effectively, it can also be instrumental in creating real-time feedback on development processes. SenseMaker can be used for program design, monitoring, evaluations, and impact assessments. It can be used as a stand-alone approach or in a mixed methods approach.

In practice, participants interpret, or tag, their stories through a semi-structured framework designed at the outset of the project. A SenseMaker signification framework consists of three core elements:

- 1) A story prompt that triggers participants to share an experience, moment, or event that matters to them.
- 2) A set of questions (signifiers) that reveal additional meaning to the stories shared.
- 3) A set of demographic questions that enable parsing of the data and more nuanced analysis based on group identities.

For the Tipping Point evaluation, the signification framework drew largely upon the overall theory of change of the project, CARE's Women's Empowerment Framework, the Tipping Point evaluation questions, and CARE's Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP) framework. The set of signifiers reflected the different concepts and dimensions that were crucial for the evaluation of Tipping Point.

²⁰ SenseMaker. *Cognitive Edge*. Retrieved from <http://cognitive-edge.com/sensemaker/>

Respondents provided stories of their own choosing related to the following prompts developed for adolescent girls, boy and parents of adolescents.

- For a girl: Please share a recent experience (within the past 6 months) about a challenge that you or another girl in your village has faced and how she dealt with this challenge. What happened? Who was involved? How did the situation end?
- For a boy: Please share a recent experience (within the past 6 months) about a challenge that a girl in your family or from your village has faced and how she dealt with this challenge. What happened? Who was involved? How did the situation end?
- For parents: Please share a recent experience (within the past 6 months) about a challenge that your daughter or another girl in your village has faced and how she dealt with this challenge. What happened? Who was involved? How did the situation end?

While the SenseMaker story prompt was an open-ended question, in asking about stories in which girls faced challenges, it naturally invited stories about more negative experiences. CARE and the evaluation team designed the prompt in such a way as to enable storytellers to share experiences about how girls responded to those challenges: who was involved as either allies or harmful influences; what assets did girls draw upon in order to face challenges; and what were the outcomes of these challenging moments in adolescent girls' lives?

Following the sharing of a story, the interviewers administered the signification framework using the SenseMaker Collector app on Android tablets. For the Tipping Point evaluation, the analysis mainly focused on the difference in patterns between the direct boundary partners and the final beneficiaries in the communities as well as the difference among the three types of key respondents, i.e. girls, boys, and parents. In this way, changes in perceptions, behaviors and norms across those groups can be observed.

For the purposes of the evaluation, a short set of multiple-choice survey questions was also added to the end of the signification framework to:

- Understand exposure levels of non-participants in Tipping Point to project activities;
- Explore the possible effect of project exposure on individuals' attitudes or on their responses to the SenseMaker signification framework; and
- Attempt to compare respondents' answers to attitudinal questions with their responses to questions addressing social norms.

At the end of the interview process, after sharing a story and interpreting it by answering the questions in the signification framework, each respondent had the option to determine the extent to which they wished to have their story shared. Respondents elected either to give permission for their story to be shared anonymously with others, including by citation in evaluation outputs such as

reports and presentations; or to share their story only with the evaluation team as part of the analysis process and not for any external communications. The SenseMaker stories in this report consist only of those for which the respondents gave permission for sharing publicly.²¹

²¹ Six per cent (54/875) of respondents in the SenseMaker sample chose not to give permission to share their stories publicly. The remaining 94% of the sample gave permission for the evaluation team and CARE to share their stories publicly if selected (e.g., for reproducing in a report of findings, public presentation, etc.).

ANNEX III: OVERVIEW OF SENSEMAKER DATA

The data about SenseMaker responses—who the stories were about and who told them—offer a couple of insights that are worth noting. Among other things, respondents were asked if the girl at the center of their SenseMaker story was a member of a Fun Center. Table 3 shows that the majority of stories, 64%, were about girls who had not participated directly in Tipping Point, and 23% were about Fun Center girls. **The only category of respondents that told more stories about Fun Center girls than about other girls were Fun Center girls themselves**, which makes sense given their social networks. Other respondents were less familiar with girls in Tipping Point collective groups and much more likely not to know whether the girls in their stories were members or not. Fathers especially lacked knowledge of girls’ participation in the project. Importantly, stories from girls who had not joined adolescent girls’ groups were disproportionately about non-member girls, reflecting the limited social circles of most girls in these communities.

Table 3: Number of SenseMaker stories by respondent and girls’ membership in Fun Centers

RESPONDENTS	STORIES ABOUT FUN CENTER GIRLS	STORIES ABOUT OTHER GIRLS	DON’T KNOW RESPONSES	TOTAL
Fun Center girls	86	63	6	155
Non-member girls	17	146	7	170
Fun Center boys and parents	76	169	35	280
Non-member boys and parents	18	186	66	270
TOTAL	197 (23%)	564 (64%)	114 (13%)	875

The majority of stories (52%) were classified by respondents as negative experiences for girls in the stories, likely because the prompt for storytelling focused on challenges faced by girls. Only 17% of stories were considered positive experiences, while 24% were deemed a mix of good and bad and 7% were ‘neutral.’ When breaking this down by whether the girl in the story was a Fun Center member or not, **it is reassuring that stories about Fun Center girls were somewhat less likely to be labeled ‘bad’ experiences for the girl** and more likely to be labeled ‘good’ compared to stories about other girls, an indication that girls’ participation in Tipping Point did not increase the challenges in their lives (Figure 3).

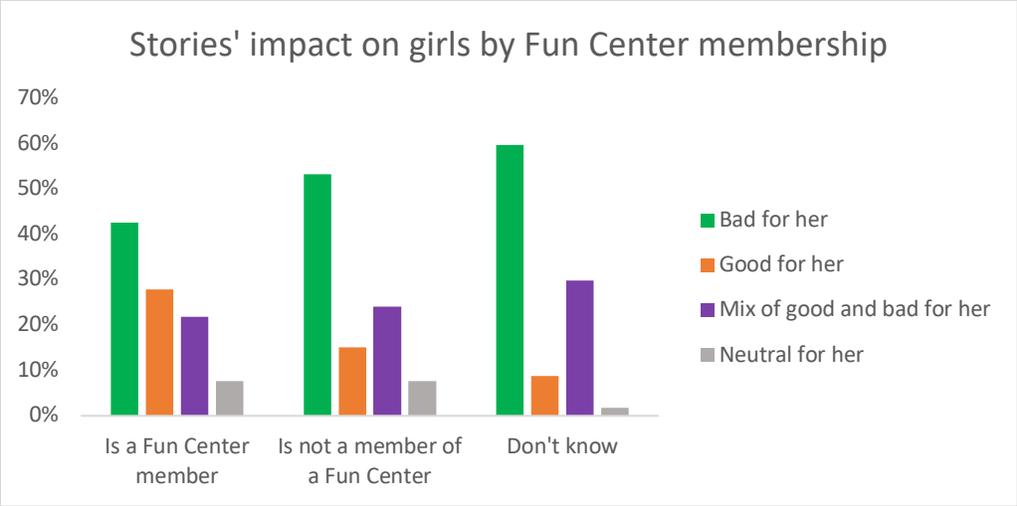


Figure 3

Respondents who were not members of Fun Center groups were also asked about their exposure to Tipping Point. Figure 4 shows how many had participated in at least one Tipping Point event, such as observing community theatre, attending public rallies, or watching football games.

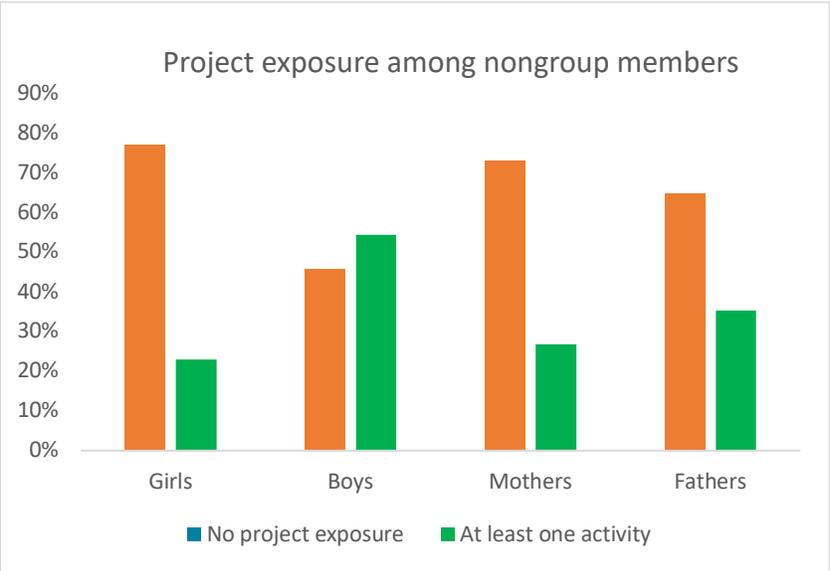


Figure 4

Girls that were not group members at Fun Centers had the least exposure to Tipping Point activities. **When girls are compared to non-member boys—the only category of respondent that had more individuals attending at least one project activity than attending none—the data indicate that there is a gender dimension to participation.** This might be accounted for by the fact that adolescent boys

typically have more freedom of movement and free time in the project areas than do girls. In any case, the data suggest that Tipping Point was not able to reach the majority of non-member girls, mothers, and fathers in project villages.

Data collectors also asked respondents to identify up to three actors (other than the girl protagonist) in their stories.

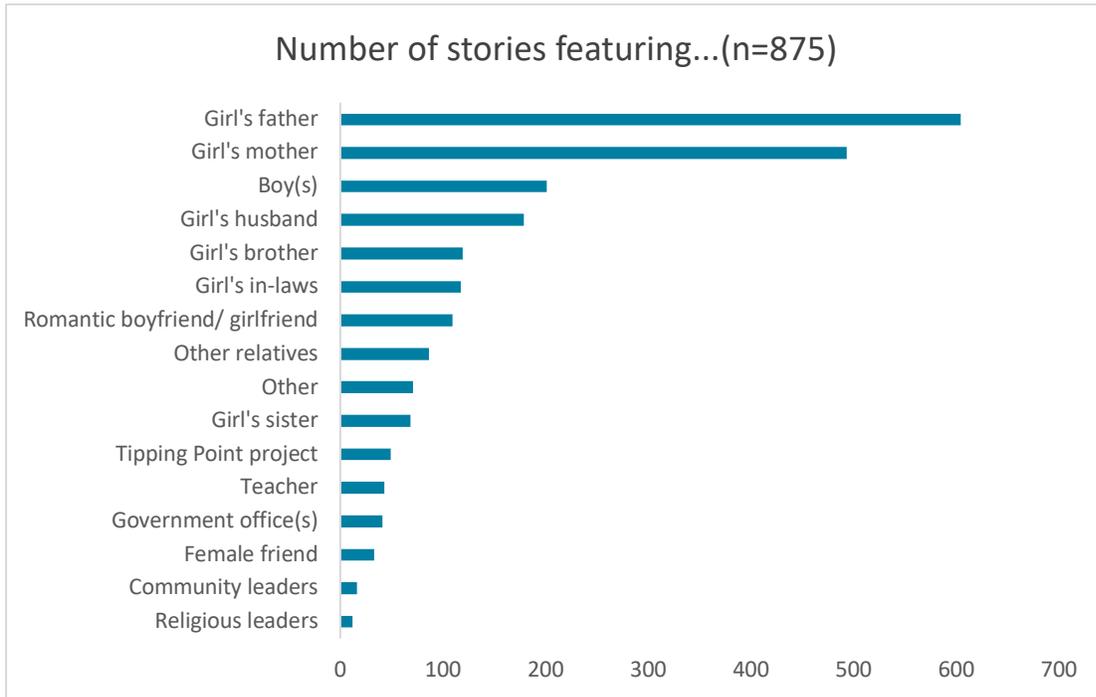


Figure 5

As Figure 5 shows, **fathers appeared most often in stories, followed by mothers and boys** (other than brothers or romantic interests). Roughly 20% of stories involved girls' husbands. The findings give some idea about which relationships are instrumental in girls' lives, either as drivers of challenging situations or of their resolution.

Indeed, the following sections, which draw from all the evaluation's data sources, highlight how important key relationships are in girls' lives and how essential are their skills in navigating relationships.

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