



CARE® TIPPING POINT

Phase 1 | Method Briefs

SENSEMAKER®

CARE's Tipping Point initiative focuses on addressing the root causes of child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), by promoting the rights of adolescent girls through community level programming and evidence generation in Nepal and Bangladesh, and multi-level advocacy and cross-learning efforts across the globe. The [Tipping Point Phase 1 Vision of Change](#) demonstrates an iterative approach of learning and adaptation. This promotes positive social norms change that supports gender equitable opportunities and rights for girls.

Phase 1 (2013-2017) of this three-phase project used participatory feminist and developmental evaluation approaches as the basis of the [monitoring, evaluation and learning framework](#), and its evaluation incorporated multiple approaches to measure social norms change. SenseMaker® is one of the methodologies used during the Phase 1 evaluation. In this brief, the Tipping Point's experience with SenseMaker® is described, including the methodology for data collection and analysis and lessons learned in the process.

SenseMaker®

SenseMaker® is a narrative-based approach that involves the collection of short stories from targeted participant groups in response to a common prompt. Each group of participants has a specific version of the prompt. First, respondents write down their stories. Then, the respondents interpret their own story through a series of questions about topics in the story, the actions and motivations of individuals in the stories, and what contextual factors drove the story forward. This is called the 'signification framework.' After the respondents make a primary analysis of their stories using the questions, respondents' answers are then aggregated to identify patterns in the data. By referring back to the narratives, additional insights can emerge which provide rich contextual information that can help evaluators see which norms are prevalent in a community and the mechanisms that may loosen these norms. To accurately analyze SenseMaker®, it is necessary to use its [corresponding software](#) for collection and analysis.

Overview of the Process

STEP 1

A story prompt triggers participants to share an experience, moment or event that matters to them.

STEP 2

Storytellers answer the 'signification framework': a series of questions that provide rich context and participant-led analysis.

STEP 3

Participants answer demographic questions that enables more nuanced analysis based on group identities.

STEP 4

Researchers ask for participants' consent to share the stories externally.

STEP 5

Data analysis using the SenseMaker® Collector app for revealing, comparing, and contrasting patterns that cannot be detected by reading (or textual analysis) of the stories.

STEP 6

SenseMaker® interpretation workshop (to refine the understanding of the data).

Prompt 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?

Prompt 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?

Prompt 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?

Methodology

In Tipping Point's evaluation, respondents were asked to tell a story about a girl (themselves, a sister, their daughter, or a girl in the village) who faced a challenge, how she dealt with the challenge, who was involved and their relationship to the girl, how events unfolded, and how the situation was resolved. The prompt was deliberately designed not to focus on child marriage explicitly but rather aimed to capture data on a broader range of issues that adolescent girls are facing. The components of the open-ended prompt also allowed evaluators to identify key actors that influence the outcomes of challenging situations and important resources girls use to overcome obstacles.

After participants wrote their stories, they were interviewed using the signification framework questions with the SenseMaker® Collector app on Android tablets. The SenseMaker® interviews were organized following steps 1-4 in the box above.

SenseMaker® is designed so participants can add nuance to their response by answering the signification framework questions on a spectrum, using dyads, triads, and stones questions:¹

Triads: A triangle describes an overarching concept through three defining elements. The storyteller places an 'X' within the triangle, based on how strongly they feel each element is presented in their story (Figure 1 and 2). The closer the 'x' is positioned to a corner, the more weight that answer is given compared to the other answers (corners). For example, using a triad allowed girls to nuance to what degree someone in the story was acting in her/his own interest, in a way helpful to the girl or in a way harmful to the girl (figure 2).

Dyads: The question enquires about the story on a spectrum between two extremes (Figure 3). Respondents position an 'x' on the scale between the two extreme answers. The closer the 'x' is positioned to an extreme, the more weight that answer is given compared to the other answer. For example, storytellers can decide if the girl in the story provides a good example for other girls, neither a good nor a bad example, or provides a very bad example for other girls (Figure 5).

Stones: The storyteller places a labelled 'stone' onto a grid or matrix where the storyteller feels it best fits in relation to their story. The closer the symbol is positioned to an extreme, the more weight that answer is given compared to the other extreme answer (Figure 4).



FIGURE 1.

Pattern of triad T4 of all stories featuring boys helping girls

In your story, boys act...

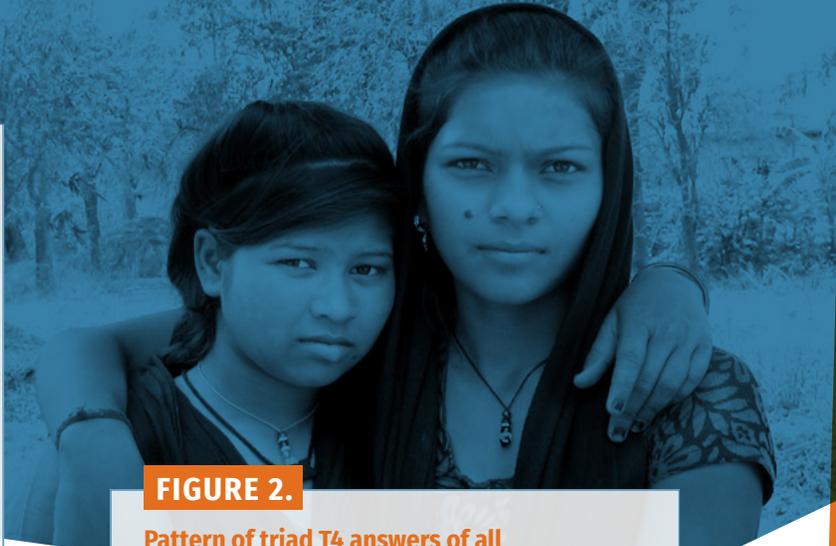
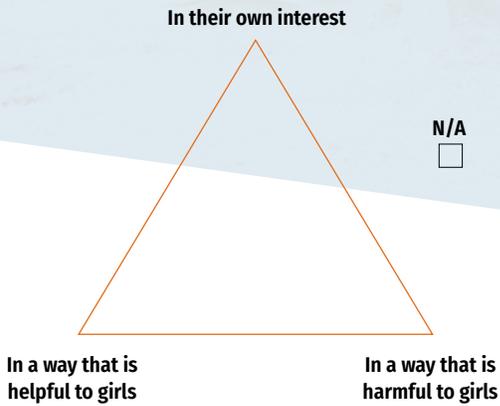
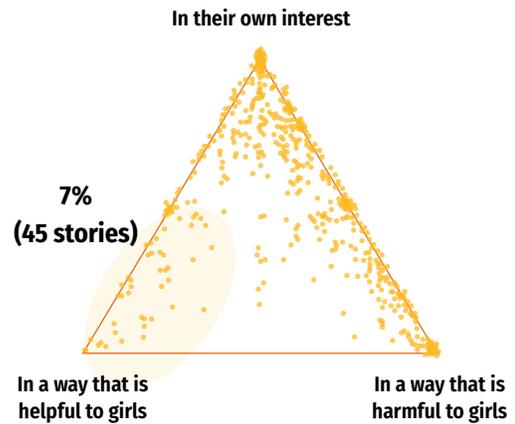


FIGURE 2.

Pattern of triad T4 answers of all stories featuring boys helping girls.

How are boys helping girls?

Most common themes tagged in the Helpful corner



Distribution of all stories for T4, highlighting stories in which boys were helpful to girls (n=626)

FIGURE 3.

Pattern of dyad D2 exploring social norms related to girls' behavior.

In your story, do you believe that the girl behaves in a way that is...



FIGURE 4.

Pattern of stones S1 exploring social norms related to girls' behavior

In the context of your story, how did people behave and how did others in your community react to the actions or decisions taken by different people?

Drag and drop the labels below onto the image, If any of the people listed are not in your story, do not move the corresponding symbol into the box.

- 1.
Girl(s) in the story
- 2.
Boy(s) in the story
- 3.
Mother in the story
- 4.
Father in the story
- 5.
Other adults in the story
- N/A

Behavior defied traditions/ social expectations



Behaved according to traditions/ social expectations

At the end of the interview process, each respondent was asked whether they wanted the story kept confidential or shared anonymously, including 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 used for any external communications.

The sample was based on the minimum recommended figure of 60-70 stories per respondent subgroup to obtain reliable patterns in the SenseMaker® data. This target was expanded to 80 stories per subgroup cohort to increase the reliability of the data and expand ability for analysis within groups given the differing needs and experiences of younger versus older adolescent girls. 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 [Table 1]. The criteria for site selection was based on a consideration of three main factors: 1) geography/remoteness; 2) ethnicity, religion, and caste; and 3) access to primary and secondary schools.

Table 1: Number of SenseMaker® participants

ADOLESCENT GIRLS	ADOLESCENT BOYS	MOTHERS	FATHERS
Tipping Point group members and staff			
155	111	84	85
Non-Tipping Point group members			
170	103	82	85

Data collection for SenseMaker® and the qualitative methods combined took place for approximately two months, and then one month was needed for conducting analysis and reflection on preliminary SenseMaker® findings. The evaluation team used a multi-stakeholder SenseMaker® interpretation workshop in Bangladesh (June 2017) as an opportunity to refine the understanding of the data and to identify further areas for inquiry during the upcoming endline evaluation's focus group discussions, which followed immediately after the workshops.

Snapshot of SenseMaker® findings

Respondents that were exposed to the Tipping Point program share more stories about marriage and romantic relationships (appr. 50%) than respondents that were not exposed to the program (39% of non-participants' stories).

Marriage

Most girls find the age of 18 years old a good age for marrying. More than 25% of the girls even find 19-25 years old the ideal age. There was no remarkable difference found between the respondent groups.

Mothers show a similar pattern than girls, but more mothers (appr. 30%) find the ideal age between 20-25 years old.

Boys and fathers that are part of the TP program or were exposed to TP activities find marrying at younger age possible. This was surprisingly found among boys and fathers participating in Tipping Point sessions. Those not exposed to the TP activities found the age of 18 years old or older an ideal age.

Stories describing situations that were perceived as socially unacceptable

Most common themes tagged as socially unacceptable and someone did or said something about it:

- 1) Marriage (223 stories or 61%)
- 2) Safety/Security (150 stories or 42%)
- 3) Relations (133 stories or 37%)
- 4) Education (119 stories or 33%)
- 5) Romantic relationship (119 stories or 33%)

Compared to stories tagged as socially unacceptable but no one did or said something about it (n=237):

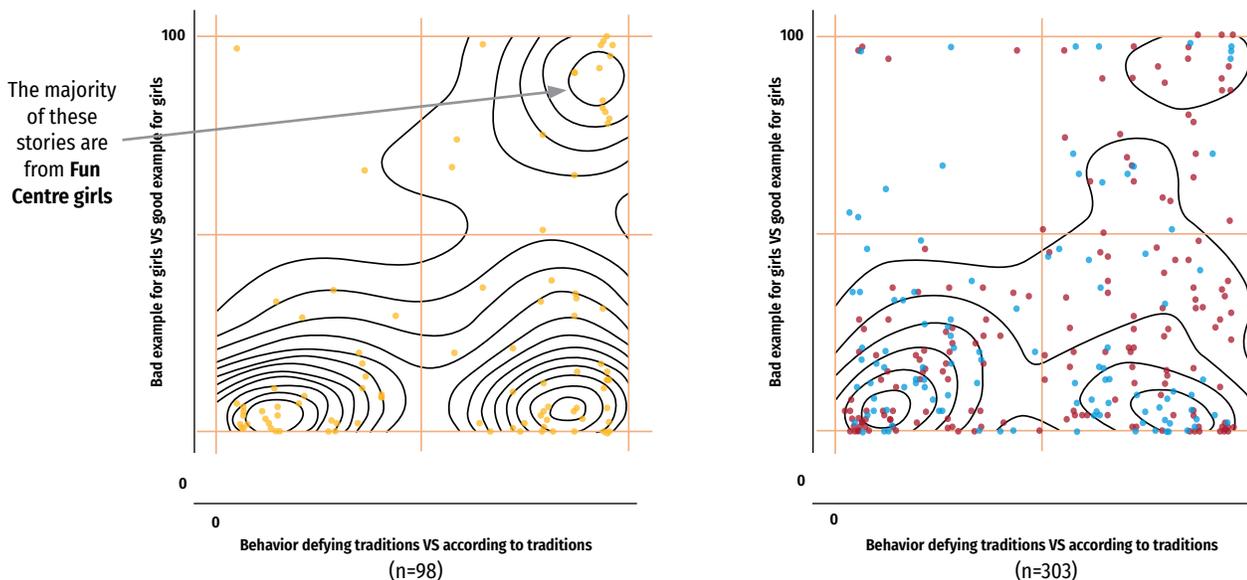
- 1) Marriage (109 or 46%)
- 2) Education (105 or 44%)
- 3) Family Relations (99 or 42%)
- 4) Safety/Security (92 or 39%)
- 5) Romantic relationship (38 or 16%)

Analysis

Analysis was conducted by a consultant using Tableau and a combination of SenseMaker® Analyst and SenseMaker® Explorer software. A well-designed signification framework assisted in revealing, comparing, and contrasting patterns that cannot be detected by conventional coding or other textual analyses of the stories. Quantitative pattern analysis is complemented by qualitative textual analysis of stories for key findings. The multivariate analysis in Figure 5 represents the collection of stories related to child marriage. When it comes to child marriage, for example, girls, parents and boys see the behavior of girls mainly as a bad example for other girls (i.e. most of the stories are situated in the lower side of the Y-axis). While the stories in which girls defy traditions or social expectations are almost 100% seen as a bad example for other girls (i.e. they cluster in the bottom left corner of the plot), there are a few stories in which the behavior of girls are seen as a good example if the behavior is in line with traditions and social expectations and these stories were mainly about girls who had participated in Tipping Point groups.

FIGURE 5.

Contour map of the X-Y plot of marriage related stories: Behavior of girls is defying/according to traditions or social expectations (S1, figure 4) compared to girl's behavior is seen as a good/bad example for others (D2, figure 3).



For the Tipping Point evaluation, the first layer of analysis mainly focused on the difference in patterns between the Tipping Point group members and other people in the communities as well as the difference between the three types of key respondents, i.e., girls, boys, and parents.² In this way, changes in perceptions, behaviors and norms across those groups were compared and triangulated across respondent groups.

Based on the results of the initial analysis and the purpose of the overall evaluation study, the evaluation team decided to focus the second layer analysis on the stories shared by girls, structured around pre-defined topics. The key topics investigated were the factors that influenced the behavior and decision-making of parents regarding girls' challenges.



Lessons Learned

SenseMaker® is particularly useful for **distilling complex issues and understanding dimensions of programming that are often less tangible.**

SenseMaker® produces **incredibly rich, participant-driven, nuanced data** on a variety of social norms. The stories themselves are interesting and center respondent's experience and analysis.

SenseMaker® can be **instrumental in informing the development of other, more traditional, evaluation tools**, such as focus group discussion guides, by surfacing gaps in the data or surprising findings that require further exploration.

The open-ended nature of this methodology introduced **new themes and nuances to social norms that would have otherwise gone unstated** in the evaluation.

SenseMaker® provides many possible interpretations of the data, so Tipping Point found that as an impact evaluation it is only **useful in conjunction with other methods.**

Conclusions

The SenseMaker® component of Tipping Point's Phase 1 evaluation helped to validate certain aspects of the project's Vision of Change and provided new areas of exploration. The ability to combine different questions in multivariate analysis (*Figure 5*) and to contextualize data points by referring back to specific SenseMaker® stories enabled greater depth of analysis and also generated a large amount of qualitative data about girls' lived experiences of gendered social norms – resulting in a better understanding of different subgroups' perceptions of adolescent girls, the challenges they face, and how they resolve these challenges.

For more information about SenseMaker® or other [Tipping Point Phase 1 Methods Briefs](#), please contact Anne Sprinkel, Tipping Point Project Director, at anne.sprinkel@care.org.

ENDNOTES

- 1 GirlHub. (2014). *Using SenseMaker to understand girls' lives: Lessons learnt from GirlHub*. [PDF]. Retrieved from <http://old.cognitive-edge.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/GH-SenseMaker-brief.pdf>
- 2 EVAW (End Violence Against Women forums), VCPC (Village Child Protection Committees), and traditional leaders will be addressed in the qualitative research - including these cohorts in SenseMaker would provide inconclusive findings based on limited sample size.

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