

TIPPING POINT INFLUENCE

Influencing USAID's Child Marriage Strategy

CARE has played a role in shaping the USAID roadmap for child marriage over the next decade.

This [roadmap](#) encompasses various components, including a theory of change, implementation strategy, learning agenda, and custom indicators. Collectively, these elements form the foundation of a new child marriage strategy that USAID missions will follow when implementing child marriage programs worldwide.

What was CARE's influence?

CARE's influence within the USAID strategy is evidenced by explicit citations of [Tipping Point](#) within the [implementation plan](#). Tipping Point's findings within programs in Nepal and Bangladesh emphasized the importance of addressing social norms as the root causes of child marriage, guiding USAID's approach. The USAID learning agenda now also includes a specific question on addressing the taboo of sexuality, derived from a document by the sexuality working group co-chaired by CARE.

Tipping Point provided critical evidence that justified a heightened focus on social norms change in child marriage programming. This evidence has led to a more progressive approach to child marriage prevention within USAID's strategy, resulting in several significant achievements.



Research and programmatic experiences from parts of South Asia suggest that families, influenced by long-standing and deep-seated social norms, dominate decision-making related to marriage. This is illustrated in CARE's Tipping Point program in Bangladesh and Nepal."

CARE-GBV. Implementation Plan: Addressing CEFMU. USAID; 2022

Key components of CARE's engagement for influence

➔ **Formative Research:** Tipping Point (TP) had been actively disseminating its [research findings](#) and ideas related to child marriage prevention over several years. This included consistently emphasizing key messages, such as the significance of addressing social and gender norms and sexuality in child marriage programming.

- ➔ **Engagement in Key Platforms:** CARE actively engaged in platforms like [CRANK](#), organized by [Girls Not Brides](#) and funded by UNFPA and UNICEF. Presenting research at prominent events aided in legitimizing CARE's findings.
- ➔ **Key Relationships:** Pairing relationships with evidence and learning was crucial in influencing USAID's strategy. A well-connected and active consultant played a large role in the advancement of TP's learnings into USAID's strategy. This highlights how individuals can champion feminist and gender equal policies and practices within their organizations.

What is the significance?

This updated strategy for addressing child early and forced marriage (CEFM) represents a shift in USAID taking a more gender equal approach. CARE's evidence through Tipping Point was then leveraged for transformative funding by USAID. Thus far, Tipping Point has influenced approximately \$105 million in child marriage funding, with more opportunities on the horizon.

While the current child marriage funding at USAID remains at \$20 million, the adoption of this new strategy is likely set to change how this funding is utilized across many countries. For instance, there is an upcoming USAID child marriage initiative in Bangladesh with an explicit focus on addressing social and gender norms as root causes of child marriage. USAID missions are expected to align with this strategic roadmap, resulting in a significant impact.

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