

 **care**® TIPPING POINT**Phase 2 |** Technical Brief

## INTER-GROUP DIALOGUES FOR GENDER AND SOCIAL NORMS CHANGE

CARE's Tipping Point Initiative addresses the root causes of child, early and forced marriage (CEFM). Tipping Point views CEFM as an act of violence, so it enables girls to assert their rights, helps families and communities to support them, and influences policy to sustain change through community-level programming in Bangladesh and Nepal, evidence generation and multi-level advocacy and influencing efforts at national, regional and global levels. Tipping Point's approach uses synchronized engagement with different participant groups (e.g. girls, boys, parents, community leaders), around key programmatic topics, and creates public spaces for all community members to be part of the dialogue. The program integrates a social norms

approach to address inequitable gender and social norms at the root of CEFM, using different platforms to facilitate critical reflection and community-led collective action. Inter-group dialogues between the core participant groups on prioritized topics represent one of these platforms.

This technical brief provides an overview of the way that Tipping Point facilitates inter-group dialogues by bringing together girls, boys and parents to share reflections in a way that links to the sessions each group is doing separately. This brief accompanies Tipping Point's [Inter-Group Dialogue implementation manual](#), which contains more detail on the facilitation of each activity.

## Inter-Group Dialogues for Relational and Norms Change

Inter-group dialogues are designed to strengthen communication across participant groups to enable negotiation for girls' rights to occur in the home. In Tipping Point Phase 2, inter-group dialogues are organized to create opportunity for groups of girls, boys, mothers and fathers from the same village to discuss and reflect on different norms and their effects on their own life and on the community through structured facilitation. Before and alongside these dialogues, Tipping Point creates space for girls in their own groups to reflect on norms and behaviors and gain confidence, enhance skills and knowledge to be able to negotiate. Then, the dialogues serve as a platform for structured discussion with boys, fathers and mothers as allies on prioritized norms and topics. Inter-group dialogues are therefore meant to strengthen both capacity and opportunity to dialogue on sensitive subjects that in turn strengthen relationships between participant groups. As these forums are open to non-Tipping Point group members as well, this is a public-facing event that helps normalize sensitive conversations, combat ignorance, and lift up positive deviants demonstrating gender equitable behaviors and attitudes in their homes.

### Themes of Inter-Group Dialogues

The themes for inter-group dialogues are based on the discriminatory social norms that were identified during Tipping Point's [Community Participatory Analysis](#) during Phase 1. The social norms interacting with poverty and limited livelihood options are a powerful formula for the inter-generational perpetuation of child marriage in both Nepal and Bangladesh. Hence the following social norms were selected for inter-group dialogues:

- **Girls' Mobility and access to safe spaces: Adolescent Girls with Adolescent Boys.** In this dialogue, participants complete a transect walk around their village in 4 groups and come up with a map to show the spaces that the girls feel safe and where they do not feel safe with reasons. These maps lead to discussion between adolescent girls and boys on steps that can be taken for girls to access public spaces comfortably and to be seen in different spaces more frequently.
- **Girls aspirations: Adolescent girls, boys, mothers and fathers.** This dialogue starts with a quiz where adolescents and their parents are playfully questioned about how well they know each other. The quiz reveals if parents know what aspirations their adolescent children have and if they were similar or different from their own. This leads to a reflection about everyone's dreams and aspirations during adolescence and to see what kind of similarity or difference there are in the aspirations across generations and across gender. The activity is completed with adolescents and parents creating a poster to show what the adolescent girls' dreams are and the pathways to accomplish them.
- **Gendered division of labor: Adolescent girls, boys, mothers and fathers.** In their respective groups, Tipping Point participants made daily clocks of chores and activities for girls, boys, mothers, and fathers. In this dialogue, the groups do a gallery walk viewing the daily clocks, which leads to a discussion on the different groups' workload and how the workload could be equal for all. During the discussion, participants are also shown a [video](#) illustrating that household labor can be done by men. Next, there is a discussion between fathers and daughters, observed by mothers and boys. This dialogue is an important way to challenge a norm that fathers and daughters don't communicate with each other. To conclude the activity, all participants have an opportunity to share their experiences related to the division of labor and reflect on how they may change it.



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- Menstruation: Adolescent girls with mothers.** This dialogue begins with a “speed dating” activity to discuss menstruation, with questions such as: Who do you go to during a problem related to menstruation?, What do they use?, What are their coping mechanisms during a tough time? Has there been an embarrassing moment to share related to menstruation? The pairs then discuss restrictions and reasons for restrictions levied on the women and girls during menstruation. Then, the larger group discusses a story (provided in the [manual](#)), relating this with their own lives and discussing beliefs and misconceptions about menstruation. To conclude the session, the mothers and daughters commit to challenging harmful norms around menstruation.

- Dowry: Adolescent girls, boys, mothers and fathers.** This dialogue begins with a history of dowry, which was originally meant for girls to have their own resources when they go to their in-laws house after marriage but which gradually became a symptom of patriarchal society that relates this expense to marriage rather than investment in girls’ capacities and skills. Participants then discuss what things a girl takes to her in-laws when married that cannot be taken away from her, such as girls’ agency, confidence, negotiation skills, or business skills that will be with her married or unmarried. Finally, participants share positive stories they have known when dowry was not taken or given and plan actions at a personal level to challenge the practice of dowry.

Family honor, sexual harassment: Adolescent girls with boys. The dialogue begins with fun game to demonstrate how lies are acted out in everyday life. The game sets the environment to discuss how we everyone tends to lie when it comes to sexual health problems. In another exercise, participants list what they think is important in friendship, matching with what people across the globe also say is important in friendship. Next, adolescents discuss the different levels of friendship and how to respect boundaries in friendship so that their friends do not become uneasy or feel harassed. Girls and boys role play situations where sexual harassment happens. They discuss sexual harassment and how a girl feels in such situations. The adolescents then reflect on how masculinity, power and peer pressure trigger sexual harassment, and the need to address it as a harmful social norm. The adolescents also discuss how sexual harassment is tied to family honor and its negative impact on the lives of girls. Linking to the role plays, they share if they have witnessed someone taking action when they saw sexual harassment. To conclude this reflective dialogue, adolescents commit to bystander actions and plan a campaign to address sexual harassment in their community.



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## Added Benefits of Inter-Group Dialogues

### Early Supporters:

Discussion with parents and boys helps identify early supporters of the social norms that girls plan to challenge during community-level social norms events. Having a discussion with other participant groups allows girls to understand which issues are complicated to address and which are easier to discuss while thus are prepared to handle them better.

### Girls confidence in negotiation and organizing platforms:

Negotiating with people who are close to them and who already have undergone some reflections is an easy way to practice these skills for the larger events at community level. The girl activist groups that are a part of Tipping Point’s programming can also support planning and logistics for these dialogues.



## Lessons Learned

As a public-facing activity, each dialogue draws a crowd of more than 50 people, providing a difficult scenario to deeply reflect on sensitive issues. To respond to this challenge, facilitators identify girls and boys to support the activity management, such as discussion with the activist girls' groups to support venue selection and other logistics. It is difficult to coordinate participation of fathers as they go out of the village for work, but the adolescents prove quite instrumental to negotiate and bring their parents into the inter-group dialogues.

Most importantly, for safe and effective dialogues, the first step is to discuss these issues within a safe space, such as girls-only or fathers-only group sessions. Starting with these smaller discussions with each norm with all participants groups was useful for the facilitator to see how easy or tough each norm would be to address in the community and gain experience in facilitating those discussions within smaller groups. The second step is to reach out to have open discussions with would-be allies and the gatekeepers around girls. These platforms also give opportunities to the group members in large and small groups to ask questions to each other and challenge each other on the norms, gaining skills in facilitation and negotiation.

For more information on this or other Tipping Point Initiative activities, contact [tippingpoint@care.org](mailto:tippingpoint@care.org), and refer to the [Inter-group Dialogue Implementation manual](#) for details of each dialogue and the process of facilitating and managing activities with different participant groups.

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