

# Applying social norms theory for measurement in gender- focused programming

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# Outline



- Background
- Measurement methods
- Formative research
- SNAP framework
- Findings
- Adaptations of SNAP
- Social Norms Programming Design Principles
- Resources

# CARE's Journey: from theory to practice



Focused on four learning projects:



**Sri Lanka**

**ReNEW (J&J)**

IPV prevention  
focusing on male  
engagement and  
media campaigns



**Ethiopia**

**TESFA (J&J)**

adolescent  
empowerment and  
early marriage  
mitigation



**Ethiopia**

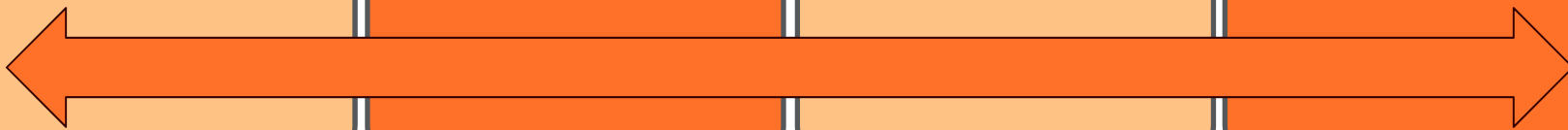
**Abdiboru (BMGF)**

girls' empowerment,  
early marriage  
prevention,  
improvement of health  
and nutrition outcomes



**Tipping Point  
(The Kendeda Fund)**

child marriage  
prevention in Nepal &  
Bangladesh



Grounded in gender transformative programming



# What is a social norm?

**Unspoken rules of behavior within a group about what is considered acceptable:**

**Consists of 2 types of social expectations\*:**

- What I think others are doing, AND
- What I believe others think I SHOULD do

**Reference groups:** the people whose opinions matter to us  
(who would influence our behavior)

**Sanctions:** reactions (positive or negative)



# Measurement stages & methods

From diagnosing whether a norm exists...  
...to understanding if and how norms change

STAGE	PURPOSE	METHODS
<b>Formative research</b>	Identify possible social norms, sanctions, reference groups	Literature review, informal discussions with community
<b>Baseline</b>	Verify social norms, assess strength, identify "cracks" in norms & opportunities for interventions	Quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, & vignettes in FGDs
<b>Monitoring</b>	Observe signs of norm change; monitor backlash	Activity monitoring, observation
<b>Endline</b>	Changes in social norms, correlate with changes in behavior & attitudes	Quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, & vignettes in FGDs

## Sample formative research FGD Qs from Abdiboru



*In your community, what are the typical steps involved when a young woman gets married?*

- 1) At what age for the bride – range and average, who influences this?
- 2) Who decides who is chosen to be the groom? Who else influences this?
- 3) What factors lie behind the different decisions, economic, social, other?
- 4) How much say do the bride/groom have? *[Get a sense of the average and the range]*
- 5) How does the community see girls who are not married by age [use ideal age given above by respondents]? How does this affect those girls? Whose opinions matter most to the girls?
- 6) What would others say about parents whose daughters are not married by [use ideal age from above]? How does this affect the parents? Whose opinion would matter most?

# Sample analysis of formative research data, from Abdiboru project



PRACTICE	SOCIAL NORM	WHOSE BEHAVIOR DO WE WANT TO SEE CHANGE Who make decisions about the norm?	REFERENCE GROUPS Whose opinion is most influential to decision maker?	SOCIAL SANCTIONS if deviate from norm
Girls' Marriage	Girls are expected to marry before the age of 17	Adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close friends and siblings</li> <li>• Marriage brokers (peers, siblings, other relatives)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considered by others as unattractive and unlovable</li> <li>• Considered as bad luck to family; humiliation to themselves and their family</li> </ul>
		Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shamed to tolerate a burden to the family</li> <li>• Considered as unlucky parents</li> </ul>



# CARE's Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP) framework



COMPONENTS OF A NORM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE RESPONSE
<b>Empirical Expectations (EE)</b>	What I think others do	<i>"Once you have got the chance, you have to marry. Your friends are getting married."</i>
<b>Normative Expectations (NE)</b>	What I think others expect me to do (what I should do according to others)	<i>"...everybody in the community expects adolescent girls...at the age of 13 to 15 years... to get married"</i>
<b>Sanctions</b>	Anticipated opinion or reaction of others (to the behavior) – specifically others whose opinions matter to me	<i>"If a girl is not married at age of 15 years, many adolescent girls in the community would insult her saying 'haftu', which mean the one who is not needed, or unattractive"</i>
<b>Sensitivity to sanctions</b>	Do sanctions matter for behavior? If there is a negative reaction from others (negative sanction), would the main character change their behavior in the future?	<i>Most girls would change their minds and marry after prolonged insults and isolation.</i>
<b>Exceptions</b>	Under what circumstances would it be okay for the main character to break the norm (by acting positively)?	<i>Girls can refuse marriage if they excel at school and their teachers convince their family to let them continue school.</i>



## Example vignette - Abdiboru project



I will tell you a story of a girl I will call Rehima. [...] Rehima is a 16 year old student who lives with her parents. She attends school and helps her mother with household chores. One day Hindiya, Rehima's cousin comes over to visit Rehima's family. They are about the same age. Hindiya announces that she is engaged and getting married in a month's time. She also strongly suggests to Rehima that she should also marry soon as she is getting old for marriage. Hindiya reveals that she also knows someone from their village who is interested in marrying Rehima.



## Example vignette - Abdiboru project

1. *What would most adolescent girls in Rehima's position do in this situation?*
2. *What would Hindiya and most other girls expect Rehima to do in this situation?*

But Rehima doesn't want to marry young. She announces that she does not want marry at this age.

3. *What would Hindiya and most other girls say about Rehima's decision?*
4. *Would the opinions and reactions of her peers make Rehima change her mind about refusing the marriage?*
5. *Are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable for Rehima not to get married at her age?*

## SNAP – signs of change example analysis questions



- Are social sanctions lessening/weakening over time? Are there any changes in the type, severity, or certitude, or influence of social sanctions?
- Are (more) alternative behaviors perceived to be possible?
- Are there any increases in exceptions to deviate from the norm? Are there increases in the perceived amount of people who deviate from the norm?
  - AND are “positive deviants” seen as belonging to “in group”?

## Findings & insights



- Community members contrast existing norms with desired practice (TESFA & ReNEW)
  - Couples who share decision making and succeed financially are seen as role models.
- Fear of negative social sanctions influenced behavior, especially for men (ReNEW)
  - “It would not even be possible” for a man to tell his friends if he heeded his wife’s decision; he would lie about it to avoid ridicule.
  - As a result of his friends’ teasing, the husband would get angry with his wife and go out the next day and spend more money to make up for it.
- Wives’ sensitivity to sanctions on husband seemed to influence their behavior:
  - Married girls wary of possible sanctions on their husband, deciding not to pursue joint decision making. (TESFA)



## Insights from application

- Opportunity for change when community contrasts existing norm w/desired practice
  - *Make actual preferences known; lift up role models and network for support*
- Peer/social pressure is key to behavior, especially anticipation of negative social sanctions
- Honing in on influential Reference Groups
- Rigidity: no known/visible alternatives or exceptions
  - Women would never eat first (Abdiboru)



## Tipping Point Evaluation Techniques:

- A number of social norms driving child marriage were identified in study in inception phase of underlying causes
- Photovoice: open prompt
- Sensemaker: included social norms themes
- Innovation Briefs\*: interviews with community members
- Qualitative research: FGDs

\* "Innovations Series", Tipping Point. <https://caretippingpoint.org/innovation/>. CARE, 2017.



## Photovoice : Exploratory



*“Earlier I didn’t know how to ride on a bi-cycle. My family didn’t allow me to do so. But now I can do so. With the bi-cycle I roam around the village, roam around here and there near to my house. Earlier the villagers used to criticize, they used to say ‘being a girl she is riding on a bi-cycle’. But now they have changed.”*

Photovoice participant, Bangladesh. “Innovations Series”, Tipping Point. <https://caretippingpoint.org/innovation-photovoice/>. CARE 2017.



# Sensemaker Triads



**T1. What influences the outcome of your story?**

*Family or social connections*

N/A

*Laws or rules*                      *Self-confidence*

**T3. In your story, what influences the behavior of parents?**

*Financial considerations*

N/A

*Family honour*                      *Knowledge/information*

**T2. In your story, what makes things difficult for the girl ?**

*Societal expectations/pressure*

N/A

*Lack of supportive relationships*                      *Lack of skills or knowledge*

**T4. In your story, boys act...**

*In their own interest*

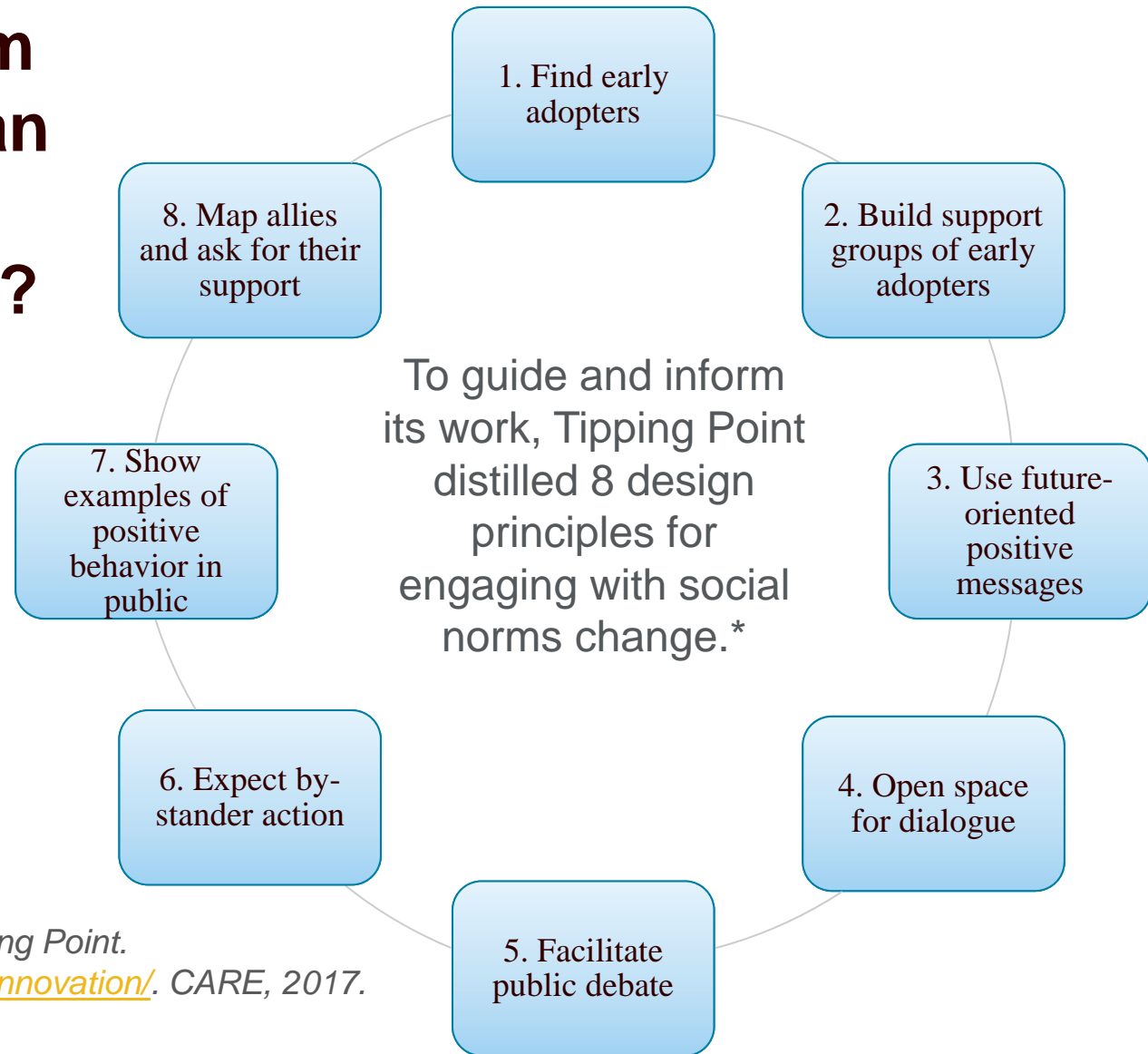
N/A

*In a way that is helpful to girls*                      *In a way that is harmful to girls*



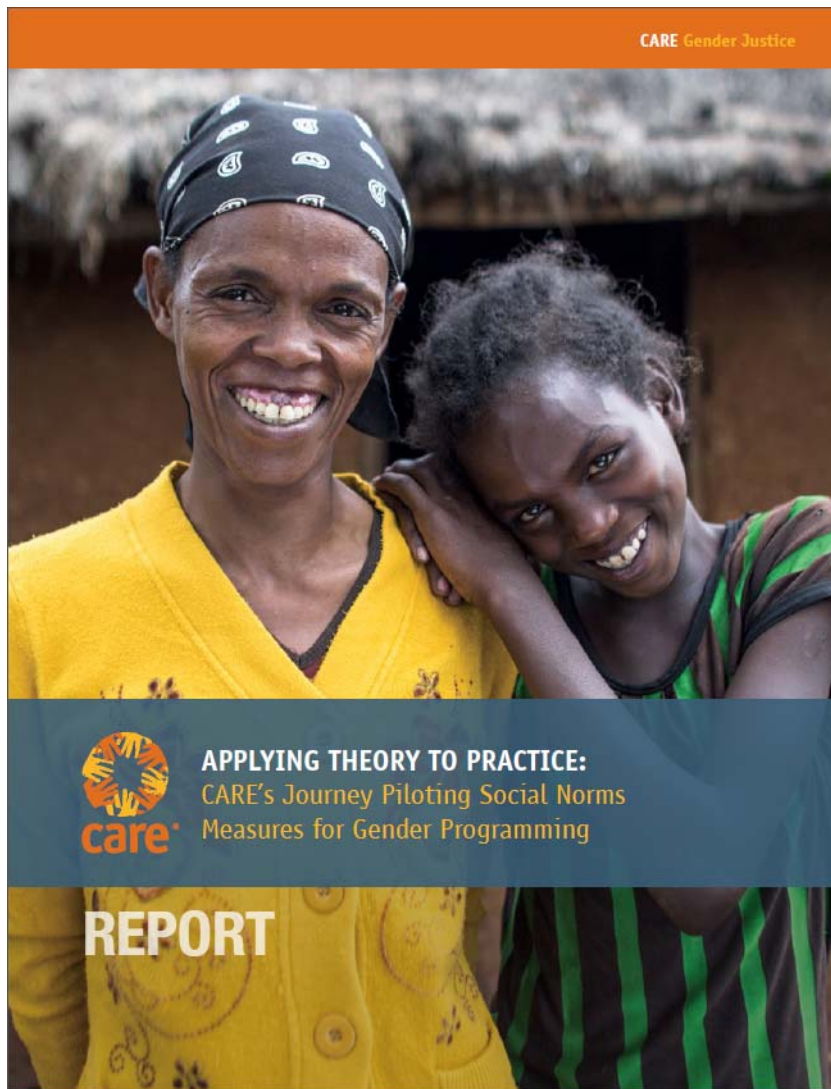
**How to inform  
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eye towards  
social norms?**

## How to inform design with an eye towards social norms?



\* "Innovations Series", Tipping Point.  
<https://caretippingpoint.org/innovation/>. CARE, 2017.

# Publications



Tipping Point Innovation Briefs:  
*“Innovations Series”, Tipping Point.*

<https://caretippingpoint.org/innovation/>. CARE, 2017.

Social norms measurement case study:

*Applying Theory to Practice: CARE's Journey Piloting Social Norms Measures for Gender Programming:*

<http://www.care.org/our-work/womens-empowerment/gender-integration/innovation>

# THANK YOU



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## Questions?

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