



Year 9 | Impact Evaluation Fact Sheet

Findings from Kapilvastu and Rupandehi Districts, Nepal, 2019–2022

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Background

Girl child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) persists in South Asia, with long-term effects on health and well-being. CARE's Tipping Point Initiative (TPI) was designed to address the underlying causes of CEFM by challenging repressive gender norms and inequalities. The TPI engages different participant groups on programmatic topics and supports community dialogue to build girls' agency, shift inequitable power relations, and change community norms sustaining CEFM.

The CARE Tipping Point Approach

The Tipping Point Program facilitates shifts in inequitable gender and social norms, enabling adolescent girls to build and practice skills, enhance supportive relationships around them, and challenge the underlying causes of CEFM in their communities. Core participant groups—adolescent girls, adolescent boys, parents—are engaged in dialogues around four programmatic pillars: increasing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) knowledge and access, facilitating social norms change, supporting girl-led movement building, and expanding access to alternatives to marriage. Additionally, Tipping Point supports the creation of public spaces for all community members to engage in dialogue.

Methods

The Nepal TPI impact evaluation had an integrated, mixed-methods design. The quantitative evaluation was a cluster-randomized controlled trial with three study arms: Control; Tipping Point Program (TPP); and the Tipping Point Plus Program (TPP+) with emphasized social norms change. Fifty-four clusters of about 200 households were selected from two districts (27:27) with probability proportional to size and randomized evenly across study arms. Eligible study participants were unmarried girls and boys 12–16 years (1,140:1,156) and women and men 25 years or older (270:270). Baseline participation was eligible 1,140 girls, 1,156 boys, 270 women, and 270 men. Retention at follow-up, with targeted phone tracing, was high: 1,124 girls (99%), 1,143 boys (99%), 265 women (98%), and 266 men (99%).

The qualitative evaluation involved data collection with adolescent girls, adolescent boys, parents of adolescents and community stakeholders in eight TPP/TPP+ clusters through in-depth interviews (IDIs), key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGD) with participants. Data included in-depth interviews (IDIs) with 20 adolescent girls and 10 adolescent boys, 8 key informant interviews

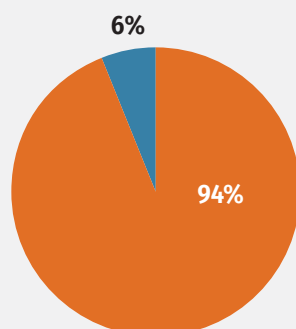
(KIIs) with adult community leaders, 16 FGDs with 8 groups of adolescent girls and 8 groups of adolescent boys, and 16 FGDs with parents of adolescents in study communities, 8 of which were parents of adolescent study participants and 8 with parents of adolescents not enrolled at the study at baseline and followed up through endline.

Key Findings and Results

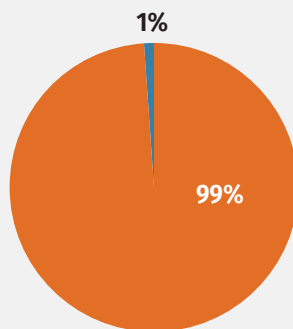
Marriage

Marriage was a rare outcome for adolescent girls and boys in the overall sample (<4%). Only a small percentage of adolescent girls were married by endline (6%), and the percentage of married boys at endline was even lower (1%).

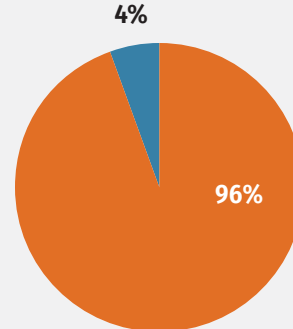
Percentage of Married vs. Unmarried Adolescent Girls 12-16 years at Endline, Kapilvastu and Rupandehi Districts, Nepal, 2019-2022



Percentage of Married vs. Unmarried Adolescent Boys 12-16 years at Endline, Kapilvastu and Rupandehi Districts, Nepal, 2019-2022



Percentage of Married vs. Unmarried Adolescent Girls and Boys 12-16 years at Endline, Kapilvastu and Rupandehi Districts, Nepal, 2019-2022



■ Married ■ Unmarried

Compared to those who were unmarried at endline, those who were married at endline had less schooling (mean 6.7 versus 7.7 grades) and were living in more impoverished households (household poverty index 39 versus 41). These patterns align with the qualitative data, where participants who were married or had their marriages “fixed” during the study period were children of families who were characterized as not valuing education and experiencing greater financial insecurity.

AGENCY RELATED OUTCOMES

Overall, significant increases were observed from baseline to follow-up for 10 of 15 secondary outcomes related to girls' intrinsic, instrumental, and collective agency; network social norms, and perceptions of discrimination in the

family. Significant increases from baseline to follow-up also were observed for adolescent boys for all 11 secondary outcomes related to aspects of their intrinsic, instrumental, and collective agency.

INTRINSIC AGENCY

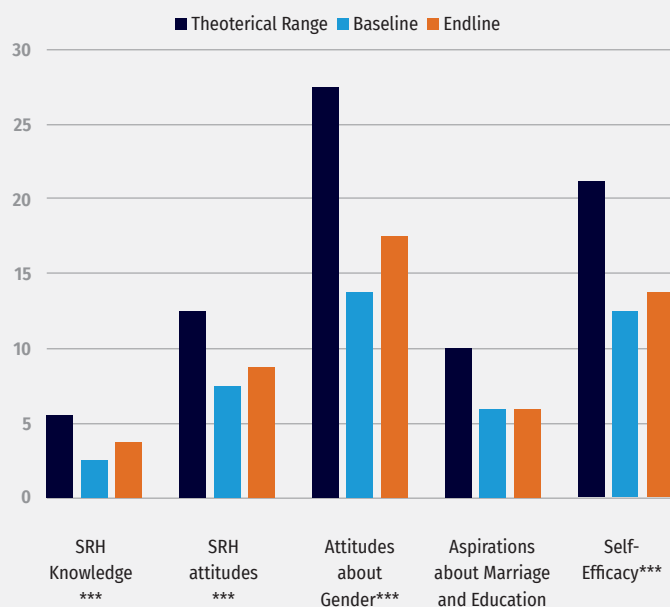
Four of the five intrinsic agency outcomes increased among girls from baseline to follow-up. These included sexual and reproductive health (SRH) knowledge, SRH attitudes, attitudes about gender roles, and self-efficacy. Mean scores for aspirations about marriage and education did not change from baseline to follow-up for girls. Among adolescent boys, all mean intrinsic agency scores increased significantly from baseline to follow-up.

These findings align with those from the qualitative data, as some participants reported perceived benefit from TPP to include new or enhanced knowledge to fill gaps in information about SRH, and a greater self-confidence and voice. TPP participants also reported equality of boys and girls labor in support of the household by parents and adolescents.

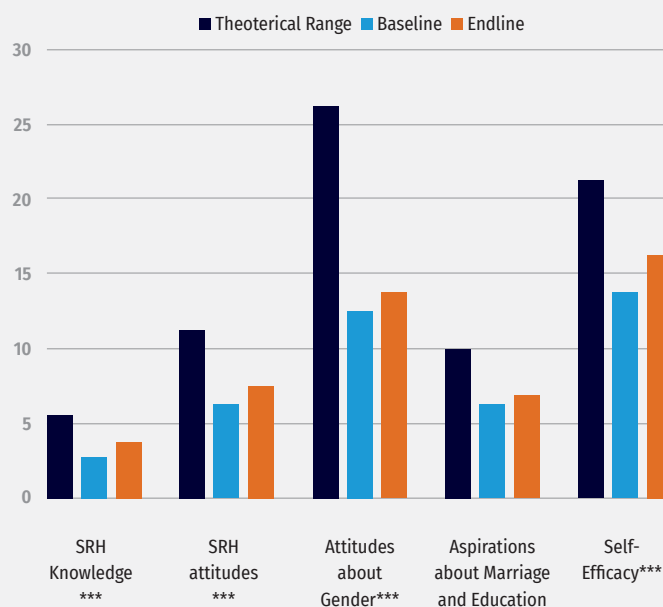
We used to play and talk. We even learned to make pads. We learned about good touch and bad touch and not differentiating between boys and girls. We used to talk about ourselves. We used to talk about menstruation...I used to get scared to talk to my family members, but I can freely talk to them now. I am not scared to talk anymore.

—(Adolescent girl, Kapilvastu, TPP+)

Intrinsic Agency Outcomes, Adolescent Girls 12-16 Years Baseline and Endline Overall Kapilvastu and Rupandehi Districts, Nepal, 2019-2022



Intrinsic Agency Outcomes, Adolescent Boys 12-16 Years Baseline and Endline Overall Kapilvastu and Rupandehi Districts, Nepal, 2019-2022



*** p < 0.001 for paired t-test of mean score at baseline versus endline.

INSTRUMENTAL AGENCY

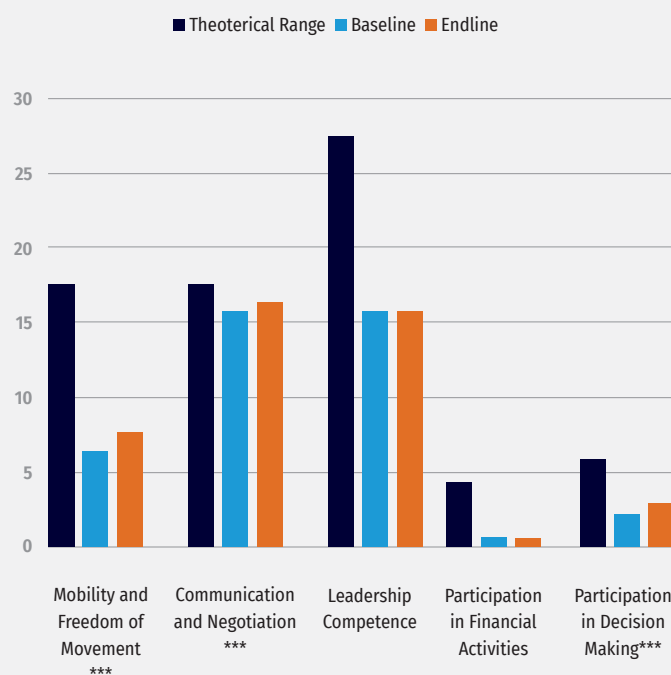
Girls experienced significant increases from baseline to follow-up in their mobility and freedom of movement, communication and negotiation with parents, and participation in decision-making, but their leadership competence and participation in financial activities did not change over the period. Adolescent boys experienced significant increases in their leadership competence,

communication and negotiation with parents, and participation in decision-making. These changes, again, align with the qualitative findings. As described by adolescents and parental participants, there is greater agency when decisions about marriage and education in the family take place in a context of greater communication and negotiation of these sensitive topics with parents.

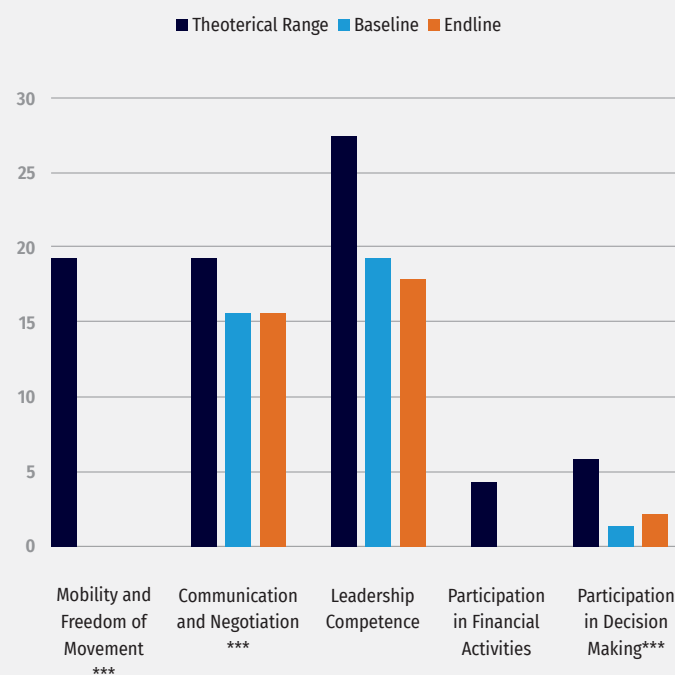
-I learned to talk from this club. After I participated in this program, I gained confidence to talk with my father or else before joining this I used to talk very less with my father. My father was also one of the participants of this club."

(Adolescent girl, Rupandehi, TPP OR TPP+)

Instrumental Agency Outcomes, Adolescent Girls 12-16 Years Baseline and Endline Overall, Kapilvastu and Rupandehi Districts, Nepal, 2019-2022



Instrumental Agency Outcomes, Adolescent Boys 12-16 Years Baseline and Endline Overall, Kapilvastu and Rupandehi Districts, Nepal, 2019-2022



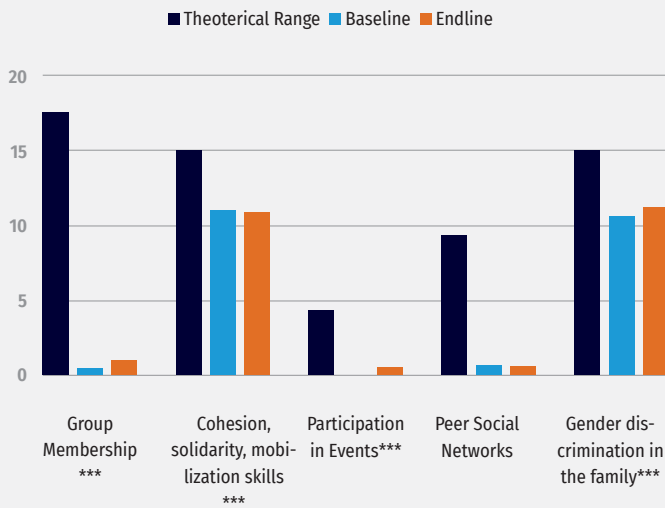
*** $p < 0.001$ for paired t-test of mean score at baseline versus endline.

COLLECTIVE AGENCY

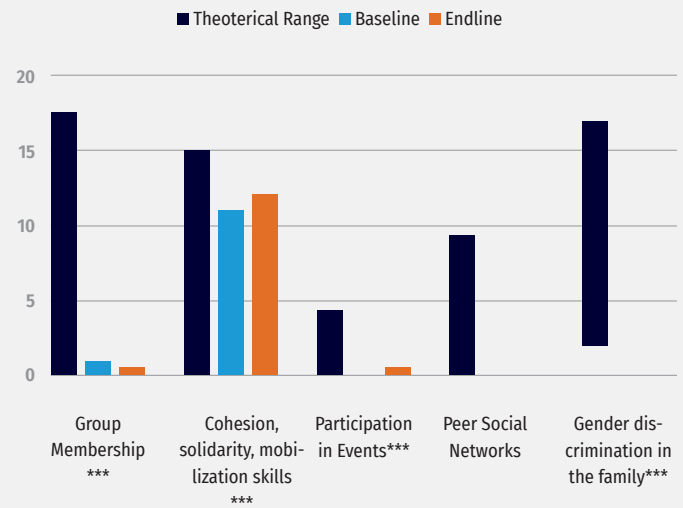
Among girls, group membership and participation in activities increased significantly from baseline to endline, but their levels of cohesion, solidarity, and mobilizations skills did not change. Reported gender norms among peer networks also did not change among girls, but their perceptions of discrimination in

the family increased, perhaps in part due to greater awareness of these issues. Among boys, levels of cohesion, solidarity, and mobilizations skills and participation in events also increased. However, their group membership decreased significantly over the study period.

Collective Agency Outcomes, Adolescent Girls 12-16 Years Baseline and Endline Overall, Kapilvastu and Rupandehi Districts, Nepal, 2019-2022



Collective Agency Outcomes, Adolescent Boys 12-16 Years Baseline and Endline Overall, Kapilvastu and Rupandehi Districts, Nepal, 2019-2022



*** $p < 0.001$ for paired t-test of mean score at baseline versus endline.

These changes align with perceptions of community members in the qualitative data.

SOCIAL NORMS OUTCOMES OF ADULTS

Community gender norms among adults increased over the study period to reflect greater endorsement of more gender equitable norms. These changes align with perceptions of community members in the qualitative data.



Implications and Conclusion

A final possibility is that social-norms and movement-building programs like Tipping Point may require concurrent programmatic efforts to alleviate household poverty and to improve the human resources of women to create a context in which gender-norms change related to CEFM can be realized.

The Nepal Tipping Point Initiative—a program designed to change community gender norms and to generate movement building among adolescent girls—did not improve agency-related outcomes in adolescent girls, and did not alter their risk of child, early, or forced marriage. Overall changes in girls' agency that were observed in Kapilvastu and Rupandehi may have resulted from normal developmental changes among girls in the study and/or similar contextual changes occurring across communities. The absence of any consistent program effect nine months after program completion may have missed immediate post-program effects that were not measured or sustained.

Alternatively, the COVID-19 pandemic may have dampened the anticipated incremental impact of TPP relative to control and TPP+ relative to TPP. A final possibility is that social-norms and movement-building programs like Tipping Point may require concurrent programmatic efforts to alleviate household poverty and to improve the human resources of women to create a context in which gender-norms change related to CEFM can be realized. The manualized Tipping Point program package is poised for integration with other economic empowerment programs, and testing the impacts of integrated economic empowerment and social-norms programming warrants further consideration.

For more information, contact tippingpoint@care.org

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