building girls’ solidarity and agency, changing social norms, and developing male allies.

Similarly, Dr. Feven Mekuria, Senior Advisor for Sexual Reproductive Health Global Program at CARE, highlighted the many complexities of child marriage. Dr. Mekuria discussed how girls and women struggle to earn a living, attend school, or even visit a health facility. In the world’s poorest communities, girls and women bear the brunt of poverty, are often the last ones to eat and the first ones to be kept at home from school. Their freedom to leave their homes or walk down a street has been denied consistently.

Focusing on only one angle like education or work, Dr. Mekuria said, cannot solve these issues at their root. “We need to look for and think more deeply about solutions.”

CARE’s unique vision and approach amplifying the voices of girls and women around the world, through video and photo, resonated with Soho House members who work predominately in traditional creative industries including film, fashion, advertising, art, and music sectors, and with CARE’s other invited guests.

Marcela Hahn, CARE’s Executive Director for Strategic Partnerships, shared overarching themes on gender, power dynamics, and the root causes of child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM). She introduced three initiatives that have had a considerable impact on CARE’s work globally. The first one took place in Azraq, a refugee camp in Jordan, where filmmakers taught about 25 young adults how to tell their own stories in film. The second initiative discussed by Marcela featured one of the first microfinance savings associations in Niger through virtual reality, and how it creates a one-to-one connection between viewers and women in a film called Women on the Movie. In the third one, CARE partnered with Facebook to create a first-hand day in the life of women in sub-Saharan Africa, portraying how women turned economic opportunity into personal and community transformation - allowing a new generation to live out their dreams.

On a similar note, Dr. Nidal Karim, Project Director for the Tipping Point initiative, commented on this multi-country project that focuses on the prevention of child marriage by addressing its root causes. One of the project’s investments, Photovoice, is a method where participants are given cameras to take pictures of things that are important to them. Afterwards, through facilitated discussions and a process of reflection, participants share what each picture represents and its importance to them. Through the photographs taken by adolescent girls in Bangladesh and Nepal and video footage, Dr. Karim shared the unique perspectives of the adolescent girls with the audience. You can view some of the pictures in the Photovoice virtual gallery.

Child marriage is both a cause and a symptom of gender inequality. Therefore, gender equality is critical in achieving rights and dignity for all. Leigh Stefanik, who is the Senior Gender Advisor on the Gender Justice team at CARE USA, shared the organization’s work to address the root causes of the practice and to mitigate the negative impact on girls, their families, and communities. She also emphasized the different approaches CARE uses to make the existing systems work better such as building girls’ solidarity and agency, changing social norms, and developing male allies.

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On January 16, 2018, CARE hosted “Through the Lens: Confronting Child Marriage in Bangladesh and Nepal” at Soho House, an exclusive membership club in New York City.

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Through the Lens: Confronting Child Marriage in Bangladesh and Nepal

at Soho House, New York City, on January 16, 2018

Panelists at Soho House