



Adolescent girl from an indigenous village, Bangladesh © Nathalie Bertrams / GAGE 2022



## Adolescent girls' and boys' experiences of violence: evidence from Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE)

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### Key messages

Age- and gender-based violence during adolescence is widespread, and the risks permeate all spheres of adolescents' lives – family and marriage, schools, peer networks and communities. Yet this violence affects girls and boys very differently within and across low- and middle-income country (LMIC) contexts. Midway through the Sustainable Development Agenda, data from the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) research programme reinforces the urgency of investing in a tailored, adequately resourced package of interventions, coordinated across sectors and development actors. This would allow the global community to make meaningful progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 and 16 to eliminate all forms of violence affecting young people.

- **Violent discipline at the hands of caregivers is common but too often normalised**, with some adolescents failing to perceive it as violence and others failing to report it because they see it as a private family issue. This age-based violence is deeply gendered, and boys are generally at higher risk—especially of physical violence—than girls. Girls are usually disciplined for not conforming to gender norms around appropriate feminine behaviours, while boys face physical punishment largely because they show less compliance to parental rules.
- **Violence at the hands of teachers is universal in some contexts, and aimed primarily at boys in others, and is typically used to instil classroom order and to punish poor mastery of lessons.** It is common for students to be punished for failing

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to master their lessons. When girls are punished, it is often due to the difficulties of balancing their school work with domestic and care work demands.

- **Boys are more likely than girls to experience and perpetrate peer violence** because it is a way for them to act out their own experiences with violence and to demonstrate masculinity to their peers. The gender gap also reflects girls' parents' refusal to tolerate girls' engaging in 'masculine behaviour'.
- **Sexual violence is under-reported, by girls and boys**, because survivors are stigmatised and blamed – and sometimes do not recognise their experience as a violation of their right to bodily integrity.
- **Girls' risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), the age at which it is carried out and the type of cutting are all context-dependent**; where FGM is seen as key to girls' marriageability, efforts to eliminate the practice face deep-rooted cultural resistance and are therefore making slow headway.
- **Child marriage is seen – often by caregivers as well as girls – as critical to protect girls' social and economic futures, as well family honour**. This makes the practice hard to resist, even for those who understand the risks. For communities affected by forced displacement and where young people's futures are especially precarious, the risks are exacerbated.
- **Intimate partner violence is extremely common**, especially for the youngest girls who marry, because husbands believe they have a right to use violence to teach their wife how to behave and because girls and boys believe that wives owe their husband absolute obedience.

## Introduction

Almost a decade ago, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) highlighted that violence was the second leading cause of death for adolescent girls (UNICEF, 2014). Since then, advocates' successful lobbying has resulted in three clear targets in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Target 5.2 calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls; target 5.3 calls for the elimination of harmful practices, including child marriage and FGM; and target 16.2 calls for the end of all forms of violence against children. Despite these targets, and the stepped-up collection and curation of data they have inspired, frameworks for understanding violence against girls – and the databases those frameworks have given rise to – remain inadequate. For example, national figures on gender-based violence obscure the sub-national variation that is key to the tailored strategies needed for elimination; sexual violence and intimate partner violence are considered as one and the same thing despite being disjoint in at least a sizeable minority of cases; and forms of violence that affect all children – such as violent discipline at home and at school – are rarely disaggregated by gender and are thus often disregarded in efforts to tackle violence against girls.

While the focus of the SDGs on violence against girls and women represents a huge step forward – because it renders such violence visible – it risks minimising the violence that adolescent boys experience. Liu et al. (2022) estimate that boys aged 15–19 are more than four times more likely to die of violence than girls the same age. This brief, which draws on data collected in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Jordan as part of the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) longitudinal research programme, aims

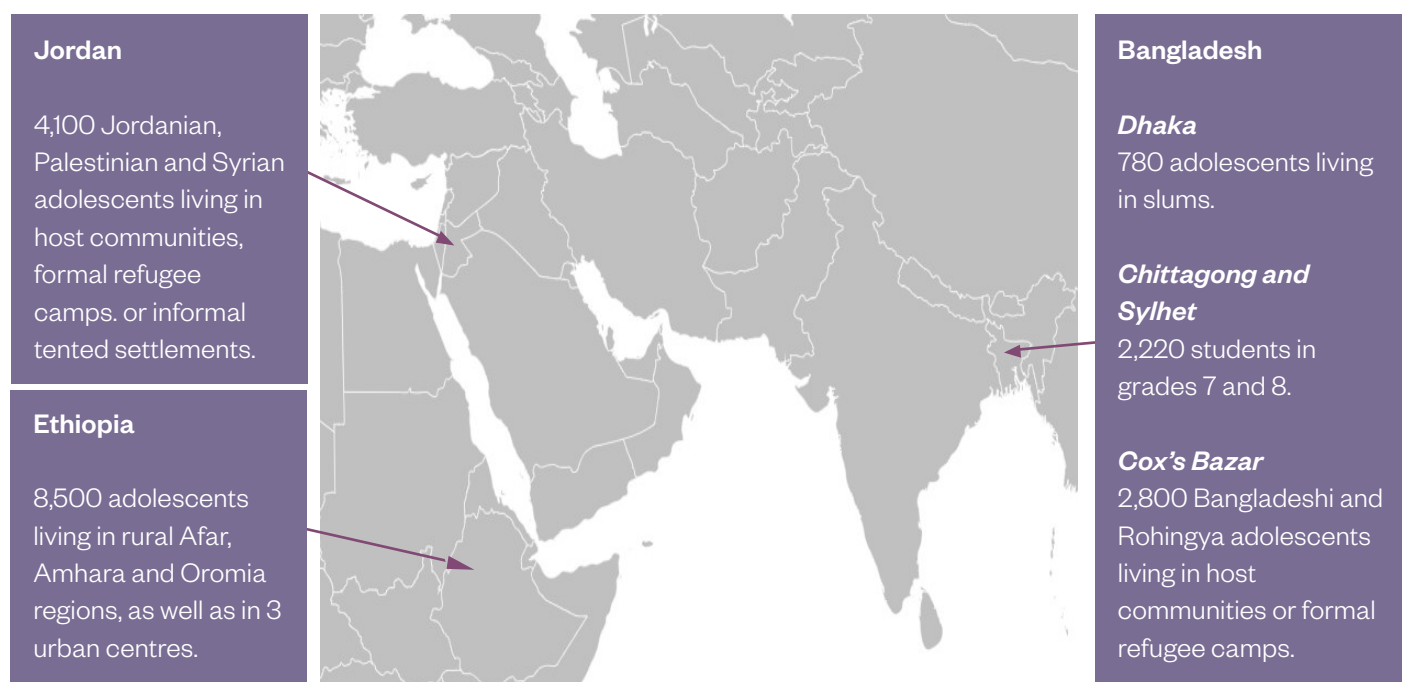
to simultaneously help address these evidence gaps – carefully disaggregating data by gender and nationality (or location, depending on context) – and to highlight that they are even larger than they first appear. As a consequence, they necessitate urgent attention if the global commitment to leaving no one behind is to be effectively realised.

## Background to our research and methodology

The GAGE research programme, funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), is generating evidence about the diverse experiences of adolescents (10–19 years at baseline in 2018) living in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). It explores the challenges – including of myriad forms of violence – facing adolescents at this crucial life stage, and identifies what works to support them to develop their full capabilities as they transition to adulthood. The GAGE sample includes those adolescents who are most at risk of being left behind, including girls who are (or have been) married, young people who have been forcibly displaced, and young people with one or more disabilities.

This brief draws on data collected in three of GAGE's core countries: Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Jordan (see Figure 1). In Bangladesh, GAGE has three distinct samples. In the city of Dhaka, we sampled 780 adolescents living in slums. In Chittagong and Sylhet regions, we sampled 2,220 adolescents currently enrolled in grades 7 and 8. In Cox's Bazar, we sampled 2,280 adolescents – approximately half of them Bangladeshi living in host communities and

**Figure 1: The GAGE study sample in three core countries: Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Jordan**



Source: commons.wikimedia.org

half Rohingya living in refugee camps. In Ethiopia, GAGE's sample includes 8,500 adolescents. Most live in one of three rural regions (Amhara, Oromia and Afar) while just under 2,000 live in one of three urban locations. In Jordan, GAGE's sample includes 4,100 adolescents affected by forced displacement. These young people are Jordanian, or refugees from Palestine or Syria, and live either in host communities, formal refugee camps or informal tented settlements.

The GAGE programme uses mixed-methods research. With the caveat that not all stakeholders were prepared to have all questions asked in all countries, with each sample we fielded a survey that includes modules on diverse forms of violence, covering corporal punishment at home and at school, peer violence, sexual violence, child marriage, and intimate partner violence. In Ethiopia, we also surveyed girls about their experiences with FGM<sup>1</sup>. Adolescents' caregivers also completed surveys that contained modules on violence. A subset of adolescents and their caregivers were selected to take part in individual and group interviews, during which we used a variety of interactive tools to explore young people's attitudes towards and experiences of violence<sup>2</sup>.

The Covid-19 pandemic interrupted scheduled data collection. In Bangladesh (2019) and Jordan (2018–2019), we have baseline data<sup>3</sup>. In Ethiopia, we have both baseline (2017–2018) and midline (2019–2020) data. In all countries, we completed two rounds of phone surveys and two rounds of qualitative interviews (2020 and 2021) during the pandemic to explore its impacts on adolescents' lives<sup>4</sup>. Due to concerns about young people's lack of privacy during phone surveys, questions about violence were amended; rather than asking young people about their own experiences of violence, we asked about common experiences 'in their community'.

The GAGE research design and tools were approved by ethics committees at the Overseas Development Institute, George Washington University, and country-level bodies. Consent (written or verbal as appropriate) was obtained from caregivers and married adolescents; written or verbal assent was obtained for all unmarried adolescents under the age of 18. There was also a robust protocol for referral to services, tailored to the different realities of the diverse research sites.

<sup>1</sup> *Trigger warning:* as the title highlights, this brief presents mixed-methods evidence on adolescents' experiences of multiple forms of violence. Readers may find some of the case study content disturbing. All data has been collected following robust research ethics and referral standards – see 'Methods' section.

<sup>2</sup> For toolkits that provide the guidance on these approaches please see: [www.gage.odi.org/types/methods-tools-and-guides](http://www.gage.odi.org/types/methods-tools-and-guides)

<sup>3</sup> Because our Ethiopian sample grew considerably between baseline and midline, as current events led us to ask new questions, in this brief and for some kinds of violence, we distinguish between our midline longitudinal sample – which allows us to compare the same adolescents at two points in time – and our midline cross-sectional sample, which is much larger (primarily because it has more rural adolescents) but is not directly comparable to the baseline sample.

<sup>4</sup> The surveys can be found here: [www.gage.odi.org/types/methods-tools-and-guides](http://www.gage.odi.org/types/methods-tools-and-guides)

## Findings

### Violence in the home

Across contexts, adolescents are quite likely to report experiencing physical violence in the home (see Table A1). At baseline and combining data for girls and boys, incidence rates over the past year ranged from 16% in Jordan to 55% in the host communities of Cox's Bazar. Parents admit to using physical violence to discipline children, with those in Cox's Bazar (62% of parents in camps and 73% of parents in host communities) and Dhaka (62%) especially likely to do so. In Ethiopia, where 55% of caregivers admitted to having hit or slapped their children the last 30 days, a father from Amhara despite signs of progress in that region (see Box 1) - explained

that corporal punishment is seen as a vital component of proper parenting: *'If they have committed a mistake, I punish them... I use sticks and a leather strap. Then I give them a warning not to repeat similar types of mistakes.'* Indeed, excluding Chittagong and Sylhet (Bangladesh), where many parents declined to answer whether they had recently beaten their child severely, it was not uncommon for parents to admit to using severe physical violence. Rates were highest in Dhaka (11%). Interestingly, and highlighting the importance of triangulating experiences using both quantitative and qualitative data (see Box 2), parents are more likely to admit to having used physical

#### Box 1: National averages can hide differences that speak to change pathways

The GAGE programme findings emphasise that national averages often obscure important differences. In Ethiopia, sub-national variation in rates of violence speaks not only to different cultural risk factors but also to variable investments in services and programming aimed at prevention and support.

For example, at midline, the adolescents in our longitudinal sample who are living in urban areas (20%) and Amhara (19%) were far less likely to report having experienced physical violence at home in the past year than those living in Oromia (32%) or Afar (38%). Adolescents living in urban areas (34%) and Amhara (32%) were also less likely to report having experienced corporal punishment at school compared to their peers in Oromia and Afar (56% and 51% respectively).

Our qualitative work suggests that higher levels of commitment and stepped-up programming in urban areas and Amhara, as compared to Oromia and Afar, account for much of these differences. Better enforcement of disciplinary policies has reduced corporal punishment at school, as a school director from Amhara noted: *'Whatever happens in the classroom, the teacher cannot beat the student.'* Higher levels of school enrolment – and a wider set of more active student clubs, including those that focus on gender and civics – have also ensured that more adolescents know about their rights and know how and where to report any violations. A 14-year-old girl from Dire Dawa (an urban area), for example, reported approaching both the police and the Bureau of Women and Children Affairs to prevent neighbouring children from being beaten by their father.

Finally, better outreach to parents – through parent-teacher associations (PTAs) and women's groups – has helped parents learn to use alternative discipline strategies. A mother from Amhara commented: *'Nowadays no one will do that [hit a child], we just give advice.'* Although research findings are unequivocal – violence against children is still common in Amhara and urban areas – these aspects of adolescents' lives stand out for the number of stories we heard about pathways to change.

#### Box 2: The value of combining quantitative and qualitative research to explore adolescents' attitudes to and experiences of violence

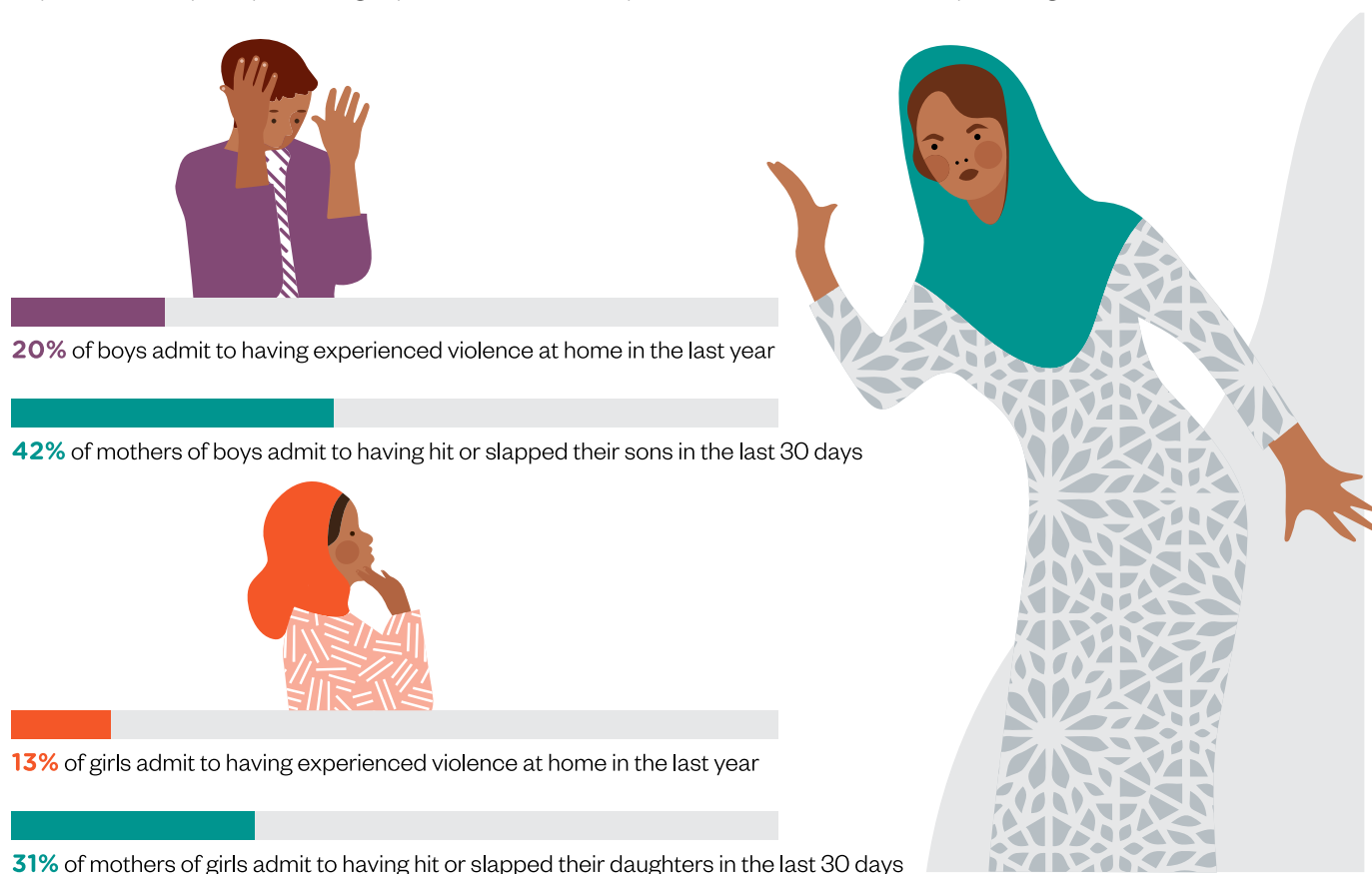
GAGE is finding that respondents often answer questions quite differently depending on whether they are completing a survey or taking part in a more personal interview. In some cases, differences appear driven by respondents' fear of honest reporting. Our baseline survey in Jordan, for example, found that Syrian caregivers (32%) were far less likely to report having hit or slapped their child in the past 30 days than Jordanian (52%) or Palestinian (42%) caregivers were. Qualitative evidence stands in stark contrast, however; it suggests that Syrian caregivers are under-reporting their use of violent discipline to protect the reputation of their community, due to its precariousness. A mother in a host community in Jordan, reflecting the pressures she feels, admitted that, *'I like beating... it is like emptying and a release.'*

In other cases, differences between quantitative and qualitative findings appear to reflect how normalised violence has become. In group interviews, Syrian adolescents reported being beaten for myriad offences, including *'if I got into a fight'* (boy); *'if we talk about politics'* (boy); *'if my teacher complained about me'* (boy); for being seen 'without a veil' (girl); and to encourage them 'to listen to parents' instructions' (girl). Despite this, Syrian adolescents were only half as likely to report having experienced violence at home in the past year as their caregivers were to report having hit or slapped them in the past 30 days (15% versus 32%).



**Figure 2: Gender differences in adolescent experiences of violence at home, and adolescent/caregiver differences in reporting on violence**

In Jordan, **boys** are more likely than **girls** to report having experienced **violence at home**. Interestingly, adolescent girls and boys are less likely to report having experienced violent discipline than **caregivers** are to report using it.



violence against their children than young people are to admit having experienced it. In Dhaka and the camps of Cox's Bazar, for example, 40% of adolescents reported that they had experienced physical violence in the past year, despite 62% of parents admitting to having hit or slapped their children *in the past 30 days*.

Boys are more likely to report experiencing physical violence at home than girls, with the largest gender gap (12%) in Chittagong and Sylhet (Bangladesh) and the smallest gap in Ethiopia at baseline (2%). Except for in the camps of Cox's Bazar, parents are also more likely to admit to perpetrating physical violence against boys than girls, primarily because boys are less compliant. The gender gap is the largest in Jordan (11%). A Syrian mother in a host community explained, *'I do not beat my daughter because this will affect her but when I beat my son, he will be better. Girls can hear the speech but you must hit boys in order for them to obey.'* In interviews, although girls reported that they are still physically disciplined – primarily for violating gender norms and despite their efforts to comply with parental expectations – they highlighted that non-physical violence can be just as painful as being beaten. One 13-year-old girl

from Oromia (Ethiopia) observed that she would rather be beaten than insulted: *'I would rather my mother hit me than insult me. She used to insult me. That made me upset... I really feel bad.'*

In Ethiopia, adolescents in our longitudinal sample were almost half as likely to report experiencing violence at home at midline as they were at baseline (24% vs. 40%). This patterning is also evident in other locations, by comparing younger and older cohorts. For boys, qualitative findings suggest that age-related differences are driven by older boys' more extended hours outside the home – and by their physical size. Several older Ethiopian boys admitted having beaten their father when he tried to physically discipline them. For girls, decreased exposure to parental violence as they get older reflects girls' more complete compliance, and also the fact that a growing number of girls no longer live at home because they marry in mid- or older adolescence.

### **Violence at school**

Across contexts, violent discipline at the hands of teachers is extremely common (see Table A2). At baseline, reported

incidence rates range from 29% in Jordan (where the survey question was framed around lifetime cumulative risk) to 91% in the host communities of Cox's Bazar (where the survey question was framed around experiences in the past 12 months). Teachers are forthright about their use of violence and admit that they use it not only to instil order (often in overcrowded classrooms) but also to punish students for arriving late, for having torn or dirty uniform, or for failing to master their lessons. A teacher in Ethiopia's Afar region stated that, *'I beat them when they do not sit properly... I also beat them when they do not give a right answer.'*

In the contexts in which GAGE is working, boys are more likely than girls to experience corporal punishment at school, which is a leading reason for school drop-out (see Box 3). The gender gap in experiences of violence at baseline is small and insignificant in the host communities of Cox's Bazar (92% boys vs. 91% girls) and Dhaka (84% vs. 80%), where incidence of corporal punishment is highest. The gender gap is largest in Jordan (49% boys vs. 10%

girls), where boys attend boys-only schools starting in third grade, and where male teachers feel undervalued and underpaid, and often take their frustrations out on their students. An 11-year-old Jordanian boy noted that there is little point in complaining to the school principal about teachers using violence: *'I told the principal that the teacher hit me. The principal hit me and told me to go home.'*

In Ethiopia, the GAGE survey found that violence at school declines as adolescents get older. At baseline, 69% of adolescents in our longitudinal sample reported having ever experienced corporal punishment; at midline, 40% reported having experienced it in the past year. Our qualitative research suggests several reasons for the decline. First, young people are better able to sit quietly as they mature. Second, older boys refuse to tolerate being hit by their teachers (it was not uncommon for boys to report having hit their teacher back). Finally, selection bias matters; by midline, the least interested and least able students had already dropped out.

### Figure 3: Gender differences in corporal punishment at school

In Ethiopia, at midline, nearly half of **boys** (49%) but less than a third of **girls** (32%) report having experienced **corporal punishment at school** in the last year.



At baseline in the host communities of Cox's Bazaar, corporal punishment by **teachers** is nearly universal: over 90% of girls and boys report experiencing this in the last year.





Adolescent girl with her father, Dire Dawa, Ethiopia © Nathalie Bertrams / GAGE 2022

### Box 3: The cascading implications of school violence in Ethiopia – Waktola’s story

Waktola lives in one of Dire Dawa’s most deprived neighbourhoods, where violence is an inescapable fact of life. He is surrounded by gang violence in the community and is regularly beaten at school. His greatest concern, however, is not how violence is impacting his own life but how teacher violence directed at Waktola has instead ruined his older brother’s life by costing him his education. Waktola, consumed by guilt over this, recalled what happened:

*When I was in grade 5, one of my brothers quarrelled with a teacher. He quarrelled because of me. The problem started because sometimes I was not going to school, because there were some children who were beating me and I was afraid. When my teacher made me kneel down and beat me, my brother saw him. Then he [the teacher] kicked me. Coincidentally, my brother was walking from the café to the toilet. My classroom was next to the café. My brother saw it when the teacher kicked me. My brother told the teacher that it was not allowed to kick me. The teacher said, “This is not your business!” and then the teacher beat my brother with a plastic stick. The school called our mother and suspended us.*

Waktola was suspended for one year. His brother, who was only trying to do the right thing, was suspended for two years. Waktola is now enrolled in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, a year behind his peers, but is determined to become an accountant and earn enough to move his mother to a better neighbourhood. Waktola’s brother, however, never returned to school after he left 7<sup>th</sup> grade. *‘I am the one who ruined my brother’s life. I always feel bad when I remember it,’* explained Waktola.

### Peer violence

Physical and non-physical<sup>5</sup> peer violence are common across contexts (see Table A3). At baseline, the proportion of adolescents reporting having experienced physical violence from peers in the past year ranged from 15% in Jordan and Chittagong and Sylhet to 37% in the host

communities of Cox’s Bazar. The proportion of adolescents having experienced non-physical violence from peers ranged from 24% in Jordan to 67% in Dhaka. It should be noted that rates of peer violence in Jordan are shaped by our sample, which is primarily Syrian. In the survey – and

<sup>5</sup> Non-physical peer violence includes not only verbal taunts, but also social exclusion and deliberate damage to personal property.



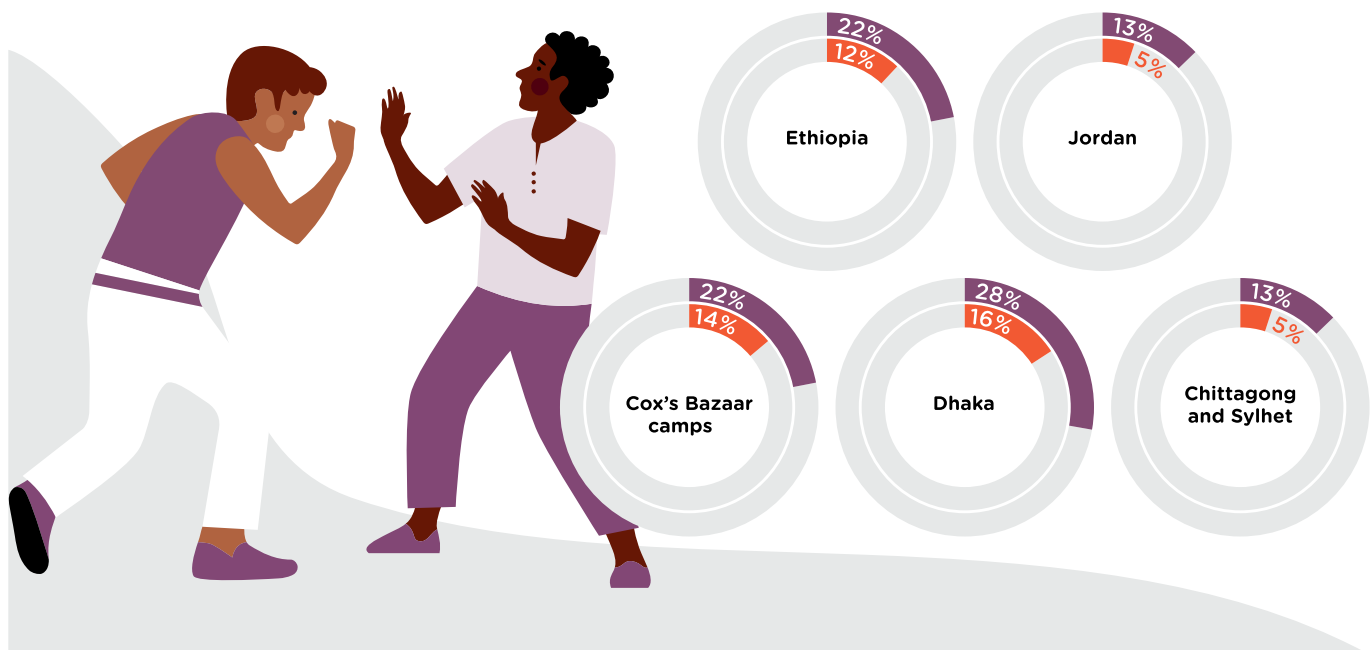
in marked contrast to responses in qualitative interviews – Syrian adolescents report less physical (14%) and non-physical (23%) peer violence than their Jordanian peers (19% and 32% respectively), with Syrians living in formal camps especially unlikely to report violence (11% and 21% respectively). Adolescents are also quite likely to admit to having perpetrated peer violence in the past year, with girls in the host communities of Cox’s Bazar the most likely to admit to having perpetrated physical violence (31%) and boys in Dhaka (46%) the most likely to admit to having perpetrated non-physical forms of violence.

In all locations other than the host communities of Cox’s Bazar, and especially for physical violence, peer violence is most common among boys. At baseline, the gender gap for experiencing physical violence from peers ranges from 8% in the Cox’s Bazar camps, Dhaka and Ethiopia to 15% in Chittagong and Sylhet. The gender gap for perpetrating physical peer violence ranges from 4% in Cox’s Bazar camps to 12% in Dhaka. Qualitative evidence suggests there are two primary reasons why boys are more likely to engage in peer violence – both of them related to gender norms. First, boys use violence to demonstrate their masculinity and jockey for status within their peer group. An 11-year-old boy from Ethiopia reported, *‘I am powerful in the neighbourhood. When boys try to create problem to me, I beat them. I am aggressive and I can beat everyone who has tried to create problems with me!’* Second, parents refuse to tolerate girls’ fighting because it violates notions of femininity. An 11-year-old girl from Dhaka explained how, *‘I got into a fight... My father grabbed me and punched me*



**Figure 4: Gender differences in perpetration of physical peer violence**

Across nearly all contexts, **boys** are more likely than **girls** to admit perpetrating physical **peer violence**. At baseline:





*four to five times, then he slapped me a lot.'*

Peer violence is especially common for adolescents with disabilities—given the stigma that surrounds disability in many contexts. The mother of an 11-year-old Syrian boy who is deaf explained, *'They were calling him deaf, speechless, and unable to walk. You know how our community are and their perception about anyone with a disability...'* Because many adolescents with disabilities are ashamed of being bullied – and are proud of fighting back against bullies – those with disabilities are often especially likely to admit to perpetrating peer violence. In Jordan, 21% of adolescents with disabilities (compared to 14% of those without disabilities) admitted to perpetrating non-physical peer violence and in Ethiopia, several boys with disabilities recounted throwing stones at peers who taunted them.

At midline, our longitudinal Ethiopian sample stands out for reporting low rates of peer violence. Only 9% of adolescents reported having experienced or perpetrated physical peer violence in the past year and approximately a fifth reported having experienced (21%) or perpetrated (16%) non-physical peer violence in that same time frame. Qualitative evidence suggests this is because adolescents at midline – two years older than at baseline and then surrounded by escalating political violence – had moved beyond being concerned about name-calling and fist fights and were instead terrified of the deadly gang and ethnic violence engulfing their communities. A 12-year-old boy from Amhara reported that, *'The number of killing incidents has increased... They use both gunshot and knives to kill one another.'* (See also Box 6).

## Sexual violence

GAGE's data on sexual violence (see Table A4) does not lend itself to cross-country comparisons, because cultural sensitivities regarding the nature of questions about sexual violence required surveys to include different questions. Indeed, in Jordan, where girls' sexual purity is paramount to their position in the family and community, we were forbidden by camp and internal security authorities from asking any questions about adolescents' experiences with sexual violence.

In Chittagong and Sylhet (Bangladesh), where our sample is on average younger (because it is drawn from 7th and 8th grade students at baseline), our survey found that 10% of girls and 1% of boys admit to having ever been sexually harassed (commonly known in Bangladesh as 'eve-teasing'). Prevalence rates are likely far higher, however, given that 65% of adolescents agree that girls are to blame for harassment (and thus disincentivised from reporting). A 13-year-old girl from Chittagong explained, *'No one says anything to a polite girl.'* Our qualitative research in other contexts also suggests high rates of sexual harassment. For example, a 19-year-old Syrian young woman living in Jordan identified it as the single biggest reason why girls are forced to leave school. She said, *'Many girls were forced to leave school because of the young men... 70% of girls who leave school [do so] because of the young men.'*

For older cohort girls, rates of sexual violence range from a high of 18% in Ethiopia's Amhara region (drawn from our cross-sectional midline, when girls were between the

## Figure 5: Gender differences in witnessing and experiencing sexual violence

**Sexual violence** is more common than most people believe:

- Nearly one-quarter (23%) of 15-17 year old Rohingya **boys** admit to having **witnessed rape or sexual abuse**.



- Almost one-fifth (18%) of 17-19 year old **girls** in Ethiopia's Amhara region report having **experienced sexual violence**.



ages of 17 and 19) to a low of 1% in the host communities of Cox's Bazar (drawn from baseline, when girls were between the ages of 15 and 17). Our qualitative work suggests there are two main drivers of these differences. First, culture matters. In Ethiopia's Amhara region, rape is most often perpetrated by strangers and is understood by girls to be sexual violence. In the Oromia region, however, sexual violence is most often perpetrated by peers in the context of adolescent-only cultural dances and so is not categorised as violence by girls (or their family and community). Only 7% of girls in Oromia reported having ever experienced sexual violence.

Second, in contexts where it is not safe for girls to report sexual violence – for fear of honour killing or retaliation against the girl or her family – they do not. Of the 292 older girls living in host communities in Cox's Bazar who completed our survey, 2 admitted having experienced sexual violence, and 16 refused to answer. Similarly, in the camps of Cox's Bazar, where only 3% of older girls reported having been raped, nearly a fifth of girls (19%) and a quarter of boys (23%) reporting having witnessed a rape. Given the dire security situation in camps, which have only communal toilets, our qualitative findings suggest that the figures reported for witnessing rape are likely to be a more accurate gauge of girls' risk of experiencing sexual violence.

The sexual abuse of boys tends to be more stigmatised than sexual abuse of girls. However, in Ethiopia and in Chittagong and Sylhet (Bangladesh), where adolescents were given an envelope in which they could silently and privately disclose whether they had ever experienced sexual violence, a significant number of boys answered in the affirmative. In Ethiopia, 5% of the boys in our cross-

sectional midline sample (who were then aged 17-19) admitted to having experienced sexual abuse; this was most common in urban areas (8%) and least common in Afar (1%). In Chittagong and Sylhet, 7% of boys admitted to having experienced sexual violence.

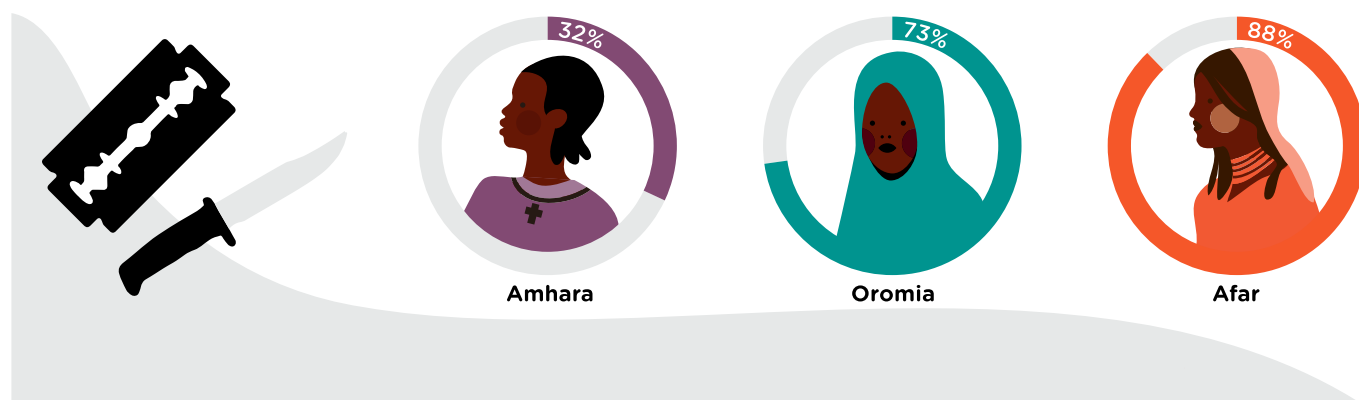
### Female genital mutilation/cutting

In Ethiopia, girls' risk of undergoing FGM is shaped by where they live and cultural traditions and norms, which vary significantly across regions (see Table A5). Using our larger cross-sectional midline sample, just under one-third (32%) of girls in Amhara had experienced FGM, compared to approximately three-quarters in Oromia (73%) and nine-tenths in Afar (88%)<sup>6</sup>. The type of FGM girls experience is also shaped by where they live and prevailing cultural traditions and norms in their community.

In Amhara, girls undergo a clitorrectomy (type 1); in Oromia, they predominantly experience excision (type 2); and in Afar, they are typically infibulated (type 3) (World Health Organisation, 2022). Although these location differences primarily reflect Ethiopia's cultural and religious diversity – with approximately three-quarters of older girls in Oromia (76%) and Afar (72%) in agreement that FGM is a religious mandate, compared to just over a tenth in Amhara (13%) – they also reflect Amhara's more intense efforts to educate girls and their families about the risks of FGM. In Amhara, due to the efforts of health extension workers and school-based girls' clubs, girls are far more likely to report that the practice has risks than benefits (72% vs. 17%). However, the reverse is true in other regions, with girls in Oromia more likely to report benefits of the practice than risks (39% vs. 34%), as are girls in Afar (53% vs. 49%). Unsurprisingly, girls in Amhara are less likely to believe that the practice should

**Figure 6: Regional differences in girls' experience of FGM in Ethiopia**

Ethiopian girls' risk of undergoing **FGM** varies depending on which region they live in:



<sup>6</sup> In Amhara and Afar, because girls are cut in infancy, many are unaware that they have undergone FGM. For those regions, figures are drawn from mothers' reports. In Oromia, girls are cut in middle childhood or early adolescence. In that region, figures are drawn from girls' own reports.

continue (12%) than those in Oromia (49%) or Afar (74%). Our qualitative research found that across locations, FGM is believed to protect girls' sexual purity and, in Oromia and Afar, is seen as essential if a girl is to marry.

### Child marriage

With the caveat that GAGE's sample was purposively selected for economic and social vulnerability, for girls, child marriage remains extremely common across locations (see Table A 6). At baseline, among older cohort girls (aged 15–17) and excluding Ethiopia<sup>7</sup>, 11% of those in Cox's Bazar host communities, 13% of those in Dhaka, 18% of those in Jordan and 32% of those in Cox's Bazar camps were married prior to age 18. In Jordan, as in Cox's Bazar, girls whose families are displaced are at greater risk of child marriage. Our survey found that 21% of Syrian girls were already married (vs. 14% of Jordanian girls), though qualitative evidence suggests that due to growing awareness of Jordanian law – which prohibits marriage before age 16 – a great many more were in unregistered marriages.

Again, with the caveat that our qualitative evidence finds many exceptions, our baseline surveys found that marriage before age 15 is less common. Among older cohort girls, 4% of Syrian girls, 5% of those in host

communities in Cox's Bazar and 9% of Rohingya girls had been married prior to age 15. For girls, and despite evidence that marriage can multiply their risk of violence on many fronts, the primary driver of child marriage is protection (see Box 4). Parents see early marriage as a way to protect their daughters' (and their own) honour and economic security. A Rohingya mother, whose daughter is not yet married, explained: *'They will have to get married. It's a sin for girls to go out... We want to get her married right now!'* A Syrian father agreed: *'Everyone is looking to have their daughters married before the age of 18, to have peace of mind and take her responsibility off their shoulders... There are many bad guys around here, and getting her married is safer for her.'*

Underscoring that different metrics paint different pictures, although our baseline surveys found that marriage before age 15 is comparatively uncommon, they also found that among married girls, the average age of marriage is approximately 15 years (ranging from 14.6 years in the host communities of Cox's Bazar to 15.4 years in Jordan, and excluding Ethiopia's baseline<sup>8</sup>) (see Table A7). A girl's husband is, on average, six years older than her. Our survey found no clear relationship between arranged marriage and girls' perceptions that they married too soon. For example, more than four-fifths of married girls



Syrian adolescent couple with their child, Jordan © Nathalie Bertrams / GAGE 2022

<sup>7</sup> Our baseline sample in Ethiopia did not include an older cohort of rural adolescents. All rural adolescents were between the ages of 10 and 12 at baseline. Very few of those girls were already married. Urban girls rarely marry before the age of 18, which is the legal age of marriage in Ethiopia.

<sup>8</sup> Ethiopia's baseline did not include an older cohort of rural girls—this means that few girls were married at the time of baseline, and those who were married at an unrepresentatively young age.



## Figure 7: Experiences of child marriage by GAGE focal country

In the GAGE sample, one-half of **Ethiopian rural girls**, one-third of **Rohingya girls**, and one-quarter of **Syrian girls** were **married before age 18**. On average, girls married soon after turning 15 to men aged 21.



in the camps (89%) and host communities (82%) of Cox's Bazar reported their marriage as arranged, but fewer than a quarter reported wishing they had waited to marry. Qualitative evidence suggests that this is because girls are eager to conform to the norms of their environment. For instance, an unmarried 17-year-old Rohingya girl reported that she was desperate to marry: *'If I can get married I won't have any tension.'* In Jordan, although 35% of married girls reported wishing they had waited to marry, only 21% reported that their marriage was arranged. In interviews, it emerged that married girls had been encouraged, primarily by their mother, to perceive themselves as being in love with the young man even though most barely knew their prospective husband at the time of their engagement.

GAGE's midline Ethiopian data speaks both to that country's progress so far – and to the work that remains to be done if it is to deliver on commitments to eliminate child marriage. Midline longitudinal data for older cohort girls shows child marriage to be rare; only 1% of girls aged 17 to 19 in that sample had married before age 15 and only 4% had married before age 18. However, the older cohort

longitudinal sample is comprised of exclusively urban girls, many of whom are capitalising on the recent expansion of educational opportunities for girls and nearly all of whom are well aware of the advantages of marrying in one's twenties instead of one's teens. By contrast, midline cross-sectional data, which includes a large cohort of rural girls, speaks primarily to stasis. Of the older cohort girls in that sample, 14% were married prior to age 15 and 43% were married before legal adulthood. Girls in Amhara (62%) and Oromia (57%) were more likely to marry before age 18 than their peers in Afar (49%). They were also more likely to marry before age 15 (25%, 24% and 9% respectively). Midline longitudinal data for younger cohort rural girls also speaks to the challenges Ethiopia is facing regarding eliminating child marriage (see Table A8). At midline, those girls were between the ages of 12 and 14. Despite their age, 4% of those in Amhara, 8% of those in Oromia, and 3% of those in Afar were already married.

GAGE evidence underscores the importance of embracing complexity. For example, although Amhara and Oromia have similarly high rates of marriage by age

#### Box 4: Complex intersections between child marriage and violence

Above and beyond child marriage being a form of violence in its own right, GAGE findings indicate that child marriage and violence intersect in myriad and complex ways. The life histories of two young brides in Jordan demonstrate some of this complexity. Sarah is happy with her marriage because it ended a childhood of constant abuse. Adara is now divorced, after experiencing a year and a half of violence, including forced fertility treatment, at the hands of her husband and mother-in-law.

Sarah is a 14-year-old Syrian mother who married a 21-year-old cousin at the age of 12. She explained that for her, marriage had been a godsend. Sarah's mother died when Sarah was a small child, leaving her to be raised by her father and her older brother and his wife. Extreme abuse was part and parcel of her daily life, leading her to attempt suicide at the age of 10 and to see her husband as her protector. She recalled:

*My life was very difficult... My brother hit me with a stick or iron stick... My brother's wife accused me of many things and my brother believed her... They punished me, and they locked me in the room... They would not let me go out and play with the girls... I tried to commit suicide more than once... Once, I drank a bottle of chlorine and once, I opened the gas jar... And once, I drank a whole bottle of medicine, it was my father's medicine... Our neighbour came and put all of her hand in my mouth, and she forced me to puke then she took me to the hospital... My family came and beat me... Now my husband tells my brother, "I will not allow you to strike her"... He tells him, "I will not allow you to insult her in anyway"... He tells me that I must depend on myself and be strong... As long as my husband is with me, I am not afraid of anything.*

Adara, married at age 14 to a cousin aged 29 with a good livelihood, found marriage a nightmare. Her husband, who was denied permission by his own parents to marry the young woman he loved, took his frustration out on her, and beat her regularly. Her mother-in-law not only treated her as a servant, but because she hoped that fatherhood would encourage her son to forget the woman he loved, forced Adara to undergo fertility treatments that endangered her life. She recalled:

*Since the first week after marriage, a problem occurred between us. When I entered the room, I found him talking to a girl on his laptop. He told me, "Get out... I loved a girl for 15 years and will not forget her"... I asked him, "Why are you talking to women now? You are married now." He did not allow me to finish talking, he beat me and told me very bad words, his body shook... I told his mother and she said, "This is normal"... I told my father and he said, "This is normal... all men talk on the phone with women and our customs and traditions do not allow divorce"... My mother-in-law forced me to work starting at six in the morning and she used to tell me "Your family sold you and we bought you!"... His mother told him that if he did not marry, she would be angry with him, and she was searching for him for a little girl to give birth to children and make him forget the girl he loves... She took me to a doctor because she wanted me to become pregnant... She told the doctor that I was 19... The doctor gave me treatment which almost caused my ovaries to explode... I stayed at the hospital for two days.*

18, they have radically different practices. Marriages in Amhara are primarily arranged to protect girls' sexual purity (and family honour). In Oromia, with the caveat that backstories suggest more parental support for child marriage than either girls or their parents first admit, it is increasingly adolescent-driven—as young people emulate their peers and marry in early adolescence because they are afraid of being left out of the marriage market if they delay marriage after 18 years. In addition, while Amhara has the highest rates of child marriage and Afar the lowest, girls in Afar have the least recourse. They are required to marry a maternal cousin (or 'absuma') and are frequently guarded to ensure that they do not attempt suicide or try to flee the country before marriage.

Our Covid-19 survey in Jordan found that many girls had been married since baseline data was collected. At the time of the second phone survey (2021), an additional 67 girls reported themselves as married. These newly married girls had married at a mean age of 15.4 years – to men with a mean age of 21.5 years. Half of the newly married girls had already begun childbearing.

Boys are far less likely than girls to marry as children. In the GAGE samples, child marriage for boys is most common in Ethiopia (7%), where boys marry to acquire domestic labour for their parents and to demonstrate their masculinity; and among Rohingya refugees in Cox's

Bazar (4%), where parents arrange boys' marriages to 'settle' them down. A 17-year-old Oromo (Ethiopia) boy, who married at age 14 to a 10-year-old girl, recalled: *'My soul agitated me to get married right away when I reached puberty... I came across a gorgeous girl and wanted to seize the opportunity to marry her... We competed with a lot of males for the girl... The competition was fierce... Our rivals beat us with stones... I beat them and married her finally.'* Although boys tend to suffer fewer negative consequences because of child marriage than girls, due to biological realities as well as social norms, child marriage complicates boys' access to education and their transition to adulthood. Addressing child marriage among boys will help to protect girls too, as boys who marry as children almost always marry girls who are even younger than them.

#### Intimate partner violence

GAGE has two sources of data regarding intimate partner violence that allow for comparisons across countries: survey questions that capture older adolescents' beliefs about the acceptability of such violence; and qualitative evidence (see Table A9). Across contexts, most adolescent girls and boys believe that a man behaving violently towards his wife is a private matter, and that a woman should obey her husband in all things. These beliefs are held almost universally, especially in Cox's



16-year-old Syrian girl living in Jordan © Nathalie Bertrams / GAGE 2022

Bazar, where effectively all (~96%–99%) young people in host communities and camps agree with both statements. Agreement with these statements was lowest at baseline in Ethiopia, where just under half (46%) of urban adolescents believed that intimate partner violence is a private matter, and 60% believed that a woman should obey her husband in all things.

With a single exception<sup>9</sup>, where there are gender gaps in adolescents' beliefs about the acceptability of intimate partner violence, boys tend to hold more conservative beliefs than girls. For example, at baseline, 65% of urban Ethiopian boys compared with 53% of their female peers believed that a woman should obey her husband in all things. The gap is similar in Jordan, where 69% of boys and 53% of girls agreed with that statement, and in Dhaka, where 95% of boys and 87% of girls agreed with it.

At midline, the Ethiopian girls and boys in GAGE's cross-sectional sample were equally likely (83%) to agree that a woman should obey her husband in all things. The disappearance of the gender gap appears in part related to marriage. Adolescents who had been married by midline were more likely to agree that women owe total obedience than their peers who had not been married (89% vs. 80%). A similar pattern is evident in baseline data from Jordan,

where married girls also reported increased incidence of intimate partner violence due to the pandemic (see Box 5). While 48% of unmarried older girls agreed that women owe total obedience to their husband, 74% of married girls agreed with that statement.

Across contexts, our qualitative evidence suggests that *'it is very common for husbands to torture their wives'* (16-year-old Rohingya girl), with younger brides generally more at risk than those a few years older, and husbands generating their masculine pride from how well they can control their wife. Married boys and divorced girls (who can more safely report intimate partner violence than girls who are still married) report that violence can begin on the wedding night, when girls are held down and raped. A 19-year-old young man from Ethiopia's Amhara region, married to a 12-year-old girl, recalled how he *'forcefully had sex at first as she [his wife] refused to do so'*. Husbands readily admit that they use violence to ensure their wife's compliance. The husband of a 15-year-old Syrian girl reported that he beats his wife to teach her how to behave. He said, *'Wrong is wrong. I used to correct her when she did something wrong.'*

<sup>9</sup> The exception is urban Ethiopian adolescents' beliefs at baseline, about intimate partner violence being a private matter.



### Box 5: Covid-19 and violence against adolescents

When the pandemic was declared in early 2020, GAGE pivoted in response. Through a series of phone surveys, later augmented with virtual qualitative interviews, we were able to track the short- and medium-term impacts of Covid-19 on adolescents. Across contexts, young people reported increased household stress and violence – including, for married girls, intimate partner violence. Follow-up qualitative research also identified increases in child marriage in Ethiopia.

In urban Ethiopia and in Jordan, approximately half of adolescents (45% and 51% respectively) reported that households were more stressed because of the pandemic and related service closures. Differences between locations and nationalities were minimal. Adolescents in Bangladesh were even more likely to report increased household stresses. Nearly three-quarters of those in rural Chittagong and Sylhet (72%) and almost all of those in the slums of Dhaka (90%) and in the host communities (90%) and refugee camps (91%) of Cox's Bazar reported more household stress due to the pandemic.

With the caveat that data was collected over the phone, which meant that adolescents' ability to answer honestly was at times compromised, increased household stress levels resulted in heightened incidence of household violence. There were marked – and context-dependent – gender differences in adolescents' reports of household violence. In Jordan, girls were significantly more likely than boys to report increased household violence due to Covid-19 (45% vs. 38%). Compared to boys, girls were especially likely to report that husbands hitting wives was a challenge (21% vs. 6%) and that husbands forcing sex was a challenge (12% vs. 0%). In Bangladesh, gender differences depended on location. In Dhaka, girls were more than twice as likely as boys to report increased violence towards children in the home as a result of the pandemic (43% vs. 21%) – although boys reported pandemic-related increases in severe violence whereas girls did not (16% vs. 0%). Girls also reported more pandemic-related violence than boys in the camps of Cox's Bazar. A fifth (20%) of Rohingya girls reported increased violence towards children, compared to only a tenth (10%) of boys (with no adolescent reporting an increase in severe physical violence). In the host communities of Cox's Bazar, the reverse was true – boys were almost twice as likely as girls to report increased violence towards children (38% vs. 21%). Indeed, boys in those host communities were five times more likely than girls to report that severe physical violence towards children had increased since the onset of the pandemic (50% vs. 10%). The fact that Bangladeshi adolescents were twice as likely as Rohingya adolescents to report increased violence speaks not only to the normalisation of violence in refugee communities, but also to refugee adolescents' reluctance to further jeopardise their community's reputation in a host country.

Across contexts, our phone surveys found that adolescents primarily felt that the pandemic was reducing pressure for child marriage, because families could not afford the cost of a wedding (or dowry). In Cox's Bazar (Bangladesh), for example, approximately three-quarters of adolescents living in camps (71%) and host communities (75%) reported decreased pressure to marry – compared to approximately an eighth reporting increased pressure to do so (11% in camps and 20% in host communities). Adolescents living in rural Amhara and Afar (Ethiopia), on the other hand, reported that the pandemic had fuelled a spate of child marriages. Young people gave two reasons for this. First, when schools closed, girls were no longer seen as students – but as potential wives. Second, teachers often serve as 'first responders' in helping girls to avoid or cancel arranged marriages. A 17-year-old boy from Amhara explained, *'Previously, girls had their teachers to whom they could report if they were being forced into marriage by parents and the teachers can even take the parents to justice if they insist. However, now, children do not have these opportunities, as schools are closed and teachers are not in the locality.'*



Married adolescent couple with their baby, Chittagong, Bangladesh © Nathalie Bertrams / GAGE 2022

## Box 6: Adolescent experiences of violence in the context of armed conflict in Ethiopia

The conflict in northern Ethiopia is estimated to have killed tens of thousands of people if not more and to have displaced 60,000 people who have sought refuge in Sudan, while more than 3.2 million people have been displaced internally (UNHCR, 2022)<sup>10</sup>. The fighting was initially concentrated in the Tigray region in late 2020 and early 2021, but by mid-2021 the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) gained a temporary military advantage and fighting spilled over into the Amhara and Afar region. This resulted not only in widespread violence and destruction in GAGE study communities, but also the displacement of young people and their families from neighbouring districts fleeing the violence.

GAGE qualitative research findings undertaken in late 2021/ early 2022 underscore that adolescent experiences of violence during these conflict episodes were multiple, overlapping, gendered and highly context dependent. Adolescent boys highlighted that they felt considerable social pressure – either from peers, siblings, parents or the wider community – to join the armed forces or militia in order to defend their families, community and region against TPLF aggression. While the majority of those who enlisted were boys, a significant minority of girls also opted to sign up. Participation in the conflict was framed in terms of national patriotism, ethnic nationalism and in the case of Afar, which is predominantly Muslim, as a righteous jihad against the (predominantly Orthodox Christian) TPLF. A male teacher from Afar explained that this was why so many younger adolescents were joining the armed struggle: *'The bigger boys are joining the fight against Shene [Oromia Liberation Front] but this conflict is a "jihad" [holy war] and that is why there are children involved. The community was informed that they rape women and kill them.'*

Many adolescents reported experiencing or witnessing horrific violence. A 17-year-old adolescent boy from Afar explained: *'There were many who were attending school with us and died...ten students attending elementary and high school... We didn't get much support – it was just students, elders and regular people who were fighting. There were no special forces on the first day. ...There were brilliant students.... our age mates...'* Adolescent girls 15-17 years in a focus group discussion underscored that the high death toll affected young people on both sides of the conflict: *'No one left this place from the "junta" [TPLF] side. They all died here...We found a list of their people who died here. It is about 300 people. Children who went to the forest to look after goats found a dead body of one of their female fighters. We saw her hair and part of her dead body. I think she was injured, and hyenas mauled her body parts...Their bags and bras were found in the forest. We have seen their IDs. Their age is 15. They were very young.'*

Other young people emphasised that the conflict had also resulted in high levels of insecurity in their local communities because of a dearth of law enforcement with many militias, armed forces and community leaders absent due to participation in the war front, and the proliferation of guns. A 19-year-old girl from South Gondar, Amhara, explained: *'The community is killing each other.... They drink Tela [local alcohol] too much and fight and kill each other.... There is no police in the area, there was a person that kills a person. The murderer kills the man on Saturday and the relatives of the victim killed the murderer the following day on Sunday.'*

The risk of sexual violence was also heightened during the conflict and was a key driver of displacement. A 14-year-old girl from Afar emphasised that this was a key fear among her relatives and peers: *'We used to hear in Amhara region that they rape women when they surrender...That is why we were afraid we would be raped because we used to hear they rape women.'* Similarly, a 15-year-old girl from Amhara noted: *'We were scared that they would come here and kill us. Many people fled to other localities because of this fear. ...Only the poor and the ones who don't have family stayed here. We were scared because they ruined women, destroyed crops and killed people.'*

Our findings also pointed to a heightened risk of child marriage for adolescent girls. As a teacher from Afar explained: *'The communities think that the war between Afar and TPLF will not be ended, and they aspire to marry their child and to get another generation to fight TPLF. ...Some girls are 14, others are 16... Then the girls give birth early.'* This fear of forced early marriage is also propelling some girls into joining the armed forces. A 15-year-old boy from Afar noted: *'Three girls have joined the Afar special forces – they are my aunts. One was learning in 7th grade, and she joined the special police when people told her that she would be married to her absuma [maternal cousin] and then she joined without telling anyone. The second one had completed grade 12 and she also joined the special police fearing she could be forced to marry. The third was not in school, she was living with us and she joined when she saw her sisters' example.'*

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10 UNHCR (2022) Northern Ethiopia Situation: Factsheet March 2022. (<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/92250>)

## Conclusions and implications for policy and programming

GAGE findings highlight that adolescent girls – and boys – regularly face myriad forms of age- and gender-based violence. Risks are context-dependent, which in some cases means adolescent girls and boys do not perceive what they are experiencing as violence, and in other cases leads them to embrace such behaviour because it demonstrates to their peers and communities that they are conforming to social norms. Critical to tackling this violence is a recognition that age-based violence is often deeply gendered; that gender norms leave girls and boys at heightened risk of different types of violence; and that sometimes the best way to support girls to lead lives free of violence is to ensure that the boys in their environments are also free of violence. Based on our research, we suggest the following priorities for policy and programming:

- **To tackle parents' use of violence**, it is important to invest in discussions through schools and community venues to support parents to learn about positive disciplinary approaches and the importance of adolescent–parent communication. Awareness-raising efforts should include focused attention to prevailing gender norms and how they expose boys and girls to different types of violence over the life course. Efforts should be paired with investments in building a cadre of social workers to identify and address the worst forms of parental (and in-law) violence and with stepped up social protection, to address economic roots of parental stress and violence.
- **To eradicate teachers' use of corporal punishment**, there is an urgent need to step up efforts to train teachers in child-friendly pedagogies and positive disciplinary approaches. Efforts need to be complemented with strengthened parent–teacher–student associations, improved access to school counsellors, investments in accountability mechanisms, and improved enforcement and follow-up.
- **To combat peer violence**, investments in school- and community-based adolescent empowerment programming are urgently needed. Interventions should aim to foster friendships and promote collaboration, positive communication, and negotiation skills – while simultaneously proactively addressing peer violence in the community and ensuring that adolescents and young people know how to avoid, reduce and report it. Interventions must also directly address the gender norms that leave boys at greater risk of perpetrating and experiencing peer violence.
- **To address sexual violence**, it is important to invest in adolescent-focused empowerment programming that directly addresses gender norms and informs young

people of local reporting options. There is also a need for media campaigns that work to shift the blame off survivors; strengthened formal justice mechanisms that culminate in prosecution; and stepped-up psychosocial services for survivors.

- **To eliminate FGM**, it is vital to expand the reach of the health extension workers who carry the burden of educating parents about risks, to step up school-based programming that educates and empowers girls, and to work with religious leaders and through carefully tailored parenting classes to shift harmful gender norms at the community level.
- **To tackle child marriage**, it is important to adopt a multi-pronged and context-specific approach that includes stepped-up efforts to keep girls in school as long as possible (linked to education-focused social protection mechanisms). Interventions must educate and empower parents and adolescent girls and boys through community- and school-based venues that directly attend to gender norms, involving religious leaders as necessary. It is also important to build resilient reporting mechanisms and to strengthen enforcement and justice mechanisms.
- **To address intimate partner violence and other forms of violence within marriage**, investments are needed in programming that shifts violent masculinities, encourages in-laws to see daughters-in-law as individuals with their own rights and agency. Programming should also empower girls – including with knowledge of local reporting options – and strengthen parental support for girls by reducing the shame directed at divorcees and their families. Efforts should be paired with strengthened formal justice mechanisms that culminate in prosecution, and stepped-up psychosocial services for survivors.
- **To combat violence against girls – and boys – more broadly**, it is vital to invest in developing and expanding rights-based legal and policy frameworks and awareness-raising campaigns that address the social norms that underpin violence, remove the stigma that surrounds violence, and encourage survivors to report.
- **It is also vital to conduct the longitudinal**, mixed-methods research—including through internationally comparable surveys such as the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) – that produce the disaggregated data that renders visible the progress made and the gaps that remain– so as to point to improved, tailored and adequately resourced strategies for policy and programming.



## Annex

Table A1: Percent reporting violence in the home

Round/Site		Adolescent reports experiencing physical violence in the past year	Caregiver admits to hitting/ slapping adolescent in past 30 days	Caregiver admits to severely beating adolescent in past 30 days
Ethiopia	Baseline	Total	40	55 <sup>#</sup>
		Girls	39	55 <sup>#</sup>
		Boys	41	54 <sup>#</sup>
	Midline longitudinal	Total	24	30 <sup>#</sup>
		Girls	21	28 <sup>#</sup>
		Boys	29	33 <sup>#</sup>
Jordan	Baseline	Total	16	37 <sup>#</sup>
		Girls	13	31 <sup>#</sup>
		Boys	20	42 <sup>#</sup>
Bangladesh	Cox's Bazar Camp	Total	40	62
		Girls	37	63
		Boys	43	60
	Cox's Bazar host	Total	55	73
		Girls	52	72
		Boys	58	75
	Dhaka	Total	40	62
		Girls	35	58
		Boys	44	65
	Chittagong and Sylhet	Total	31	32
		Girls	25	27
		Boys	37	37

<sup>#</sup>Caregivers of younger cohort only.

**Table A2: Percent reporting violence at school (of currently enrolled students)**

	Round/Site		Experienced corporal punishment	Witnessed corporal punishment
Ethiopia	Baseline (ever)	Total	69	92
		Girls	63	92
		Boys	75	92
	Midline longitudinal (12 months)	Total	40	79
		Girls	32	75
		Boys	49	82
Jordan	Baseline (ever)	Total	29	46
		Girls	10	23
		Boys	49	70
Bangladesh	Cox's Bazar Camp (12 months)	Total	64	70
		Girls	51	57
		Boys	72	78
	Cox's Bazar host (12 months)	Total	91	96
		Girls	91	96
		Boys	92	95
	Dhaka (12 months)	Total	82	92
		Girls	80	91
		Boys	84	92
	Chittagong and Sylhet (12 months)	Total	55	73
		Girls	48	70
		Boys	63	75

**Table A3: Percent reporting peer violence**

Round/Site			Experienced physical peer violence in past year	Perpetrated physical peer violence in past year	Experienced non-physical peer violence in past year	Perpetrated non-physical peer violence in past year
Ethiopia	Baseline	Total	23	17	42	22
		Girls	20	12	36	17
		Boys	28	22	49	28
	Midline longitudinal	Total	9	9	21	26
		Girls	6	6	15	11
		Boys	12	12	28	22
Jordan	Baseline	Total	15	9	24	8
		Girls	10	5	21	6
		Boys	19	13	28	10
Bangladesh	Cox's Bazar Camp	Total	25	18	36	25
		Girls	21	14	29	21
		Boys	29	22	45	29
	Cox's Bazar host	Total	37	29	55	42
		Girls	40	31	56	44
		Boys	34	27	53	41
	Dhaka	Total	30	22	67	44
		Girls	24	16	65	43
		Boys	36	28	68	46
	Chittagong and Sylhet	Total	15	9	46	23
		Girls	8	5	38	16
		Boys	23	13	55	31



**Table A4: Percent reporting sexual violence – older cohort only^**

Round/Site			Experienced sexual harassment - 12 months	Experienced sexual violence/ rape or sexual abuse – ever	Witnessed rape or sexual abuse – ever
Ethiopia	Midline longitudinal <sup>@</sup>	Urban girls	N/A	17	N/A
		Urban boys	N/A	9	N/A
	Midline cross-sectional <sup>@</sup>	All girls	N/A	13	N/A
		Amhara	N/A	18	N/A
		Oromio	N/A	7	N/A
		Afar	N/A	5	N/A
		Urban	N/A	16	N/A
		All boys	N/A	5	N/A
		Amhara	N/A	3	N/A
		Oromio	N/A	3	N/A
		Afar	N/A	1	N/A
		Urban	N/A	8	N/A
Bangladesh	Cox's Bazar camp	Girls	N/A	3	19
		Boys	N/A	0	23
	Cox's Bazar host	Girls	N/A	1 <sup>#</sup>	6
		Boys	N/A	3	8
	Chittagong and Sylhet <sup>@</sup>	Girls	10	9	N/A
		Boys	1	7	N/A

<sup>@</sup>In Ethiopia and Chittagong and Sylhet, adolescents were given an envelope in which they could disclose having experienced sexual violence without saying it out loud.

<sup>^</sup>In Chittagong and Sylhet there is a single cohort.

<sup>#</sup>Sixteen girls declined to answer.

**Table A5: Incidence rate and beliefs about female genital mutilation - Ethiopia**

		South Gondar Amhara	East Hararghe Oromia	Zone 5 Afar
Midline longitudinal	Has undergone FGM <sup>#</sup>	31	67	91
	Believes FGM has risks	78	32	41
	Believes FGM has benefits	9	32	58
	Believes FGM is required by religion	11	69	65
	Agrees FGM should continue	12	48	64
Midline cross-sectional	Has undergone FGM <sup>#</sup>	32	73	88
	Believes FGM has risks	72	34	49
	Believes FGM has benefits	17	39	53
	Believes FGM is required by religion	13	76	72
	Agrees FGM should continue	12	49	74

*<sup>#</sup>In Amhara and Afar, girls undergo FGM in infancy and often do not know if they have been cut. In those regions, we relied on female caregivers' reports.*

## Child marriage

**Table A6: Percent of older cohort adolescents reporting having been married by a given age**

	Round/Site		Married before 15	Married before 18
Ethiopia	Baseline	Urban girls	1	2
		Urban boys	0	0
	Midline longitudinal	Urban girls	1	4
		Urban boys	0	0
	Midline cross-sectional	All girls	14	43
		Amhara	25	62
		Oromio	24	57
		Afar	9	49
		Urban	5	22
		All boys	0	7
Jordan	Baseline	All girls	3	18
		Syrian	4	21
		Jordanian	0	14
		Palestinian	0	N/A <sup>#</sup>
		Boys	0	0
Bangladesh	Cox's Bazar camp	Girls	9	32
		Boys	0	4
		Boys	0	0
	Cox's Bazar host	Girls	5	11
		Boys	0	0
	Dhaka	Girls	3	13
		Boys	0	1

<sup>#</sup>Only one Palestinian girl was married at baseline. Our sample of Palestinians is too small to report an accurate figure.

**Table A7: Characteristics of married girls, their husbands, and their marriages**

	Round/Site	Age at marriage	Spouse's age at marriage	Marriage was arrange	Would have preferred to wait
Ethiopia	Midline longitudinal	14.2	19.9	73	46
	Midline cross-sectional	14.8	20.7	78	55
Jordan	Baseline	15.4	21.4	21	35
Bangladesh	Cox's Bazar camp	15.0	21.1	89	21
	Cox's Bazar host	14.6	21.9	82	24
	Dhaka	15.2	N/A	63	58



**Table A8: Percent of younger cohort Ethiopian girls reporting having been married**

	Amhara	Oromio	Afar
Baseline - at age 10 - 12	2	2	1
Midline - at age 12 - 14	4	8	3

**Table A9: Percent reporting beliefs about intimate partner violence – older cohort only**

	Round/Site		A man's violence toward his wife is private	A woman should obey her husband in all things
Ethiopia	Baseline	Urban total	46	60
		Urban girls	49	53
		Urban boys	42	65
	Midline longitudinal	Total	48	84
		Girls	46	83
		Boys	51	84
	Midline cross-sectional	Total	50	82
		Girls	51	83
		Boys	50	83
Jordan	Baseline	Total	57	61
		Girls	51	53
		Boys	63	69
Bangladesh	Cox's Bazar camp	Total	99	100
		Girls	99	99
		Boys	98	100
	Cox's Bazar host	Total	98	96
		Girls	97	96
		Boys	98	96
	Dhaka	Total	82	91
		Girls	79	87
		Boys	85	95
Chittagong and Sylhet <sup>#</sup>	Total	75	89	
	Girls	74	88	
	Boys	77	91	

<sup>#</sup>There is a single cohort in Chittagong and Sylhet.