



Hands of married girls, ITS in Jordan @ Natalie Bertrams / GAGE 2020

Age- and gender-based violence: Midline findings from GAGE on the risks facing young people living in Jordan



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A photograph of a woman wearing a red headscarf and a yellow and black patterned garment, smiling and looking to the right. A young child with brown hair, wearing a blue shirt, is positioned in front of her, also looking to the right. The background is a light-colored, vertically striped curtain.

GAGE overview

Please note that the photographs of adolescents DO NOT capture GAGE research participants and consent was gained from their guardians for the photographs to be used for GAGE communications purposes.

Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE):

A longitudinal research programme (2016-2026)



We are following 20,000 adolescent girls and boys - the largest cohort of adolescents in the Global South

GAGE 3Cs Conceptual Framework



GAGE longitudinal research sample

Our research methodology

GAGE is employing a mixed-methods research and impact evaluation design, including:

Global: 20,000*

Jordan: **4,000**



Quantitative survey

- Surveys with adolescent girls and boys aged 10–12 and 15–17
- Surveys with their female and male caregivers
- Surveys with community leaders and school personnel

800*

250



Qualitative research

- In-depth interviews with nodal adolescents, their siblings, caregivers and community leaders
- Key informant interviews and historical process tracing
- Policy and legal analysis to understand the politics of policy and programme implementation

200*

50

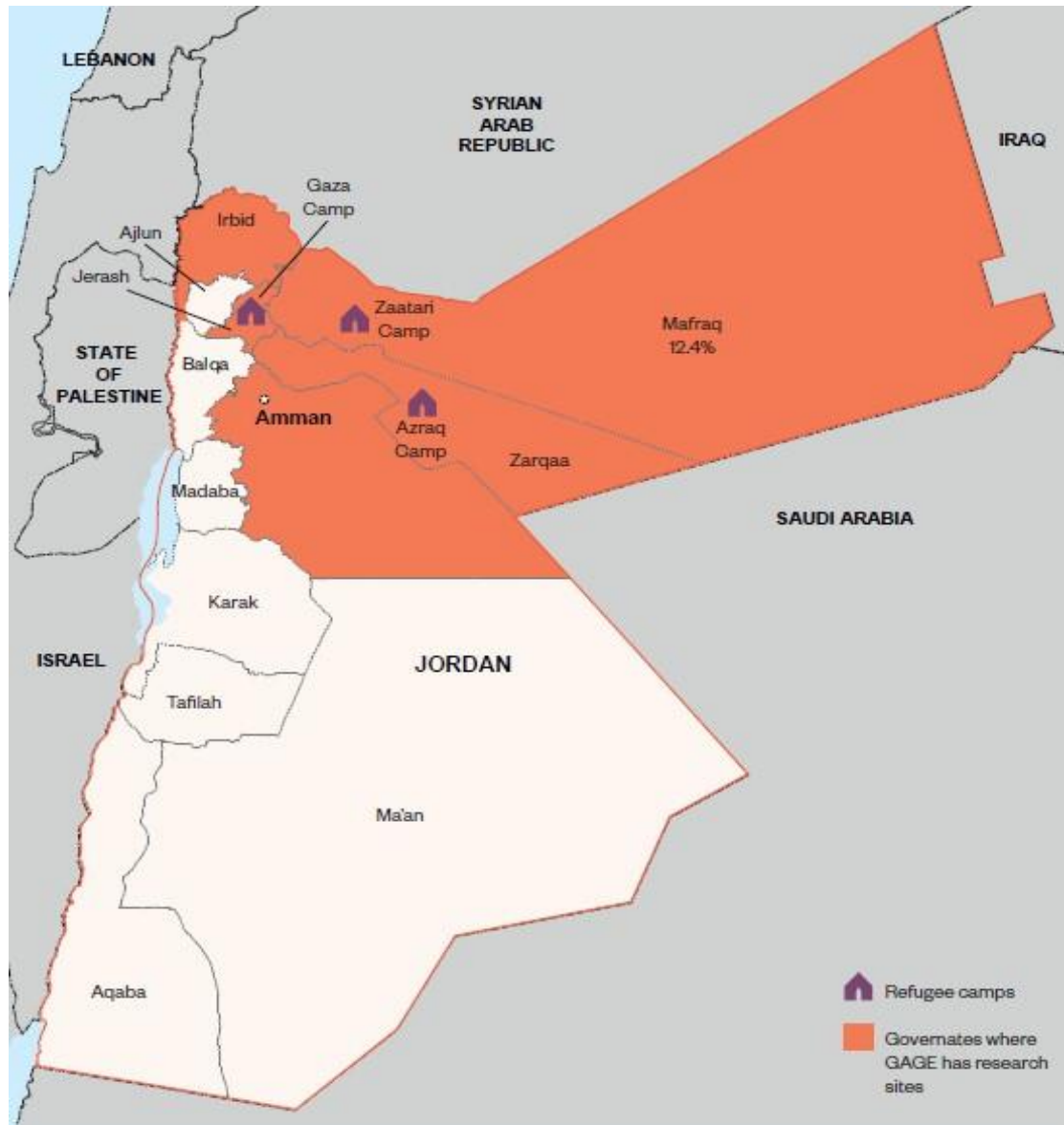


Participatory research

- Peer research and participatory photography with adolescents and their peers to better pinpoint shifts in adolescent capabilities over time
- Social network analysis to understand the evolving influence of peer groups throughout adolescence

* Rounded to the nearest 100 to take attrition into account. For the most up-to-date figures please refer to the GAGE website.

GAGE Jordan research sites and midline sample breakdown



Nationality:

Syrian: 2,145
Jordanian: 457
Palestinian (Jerash Camp): 272
Other: 49

Age:

Adolescents: 1646
Young adults: 1277

Gender:

Females: 1528
Males: 1395

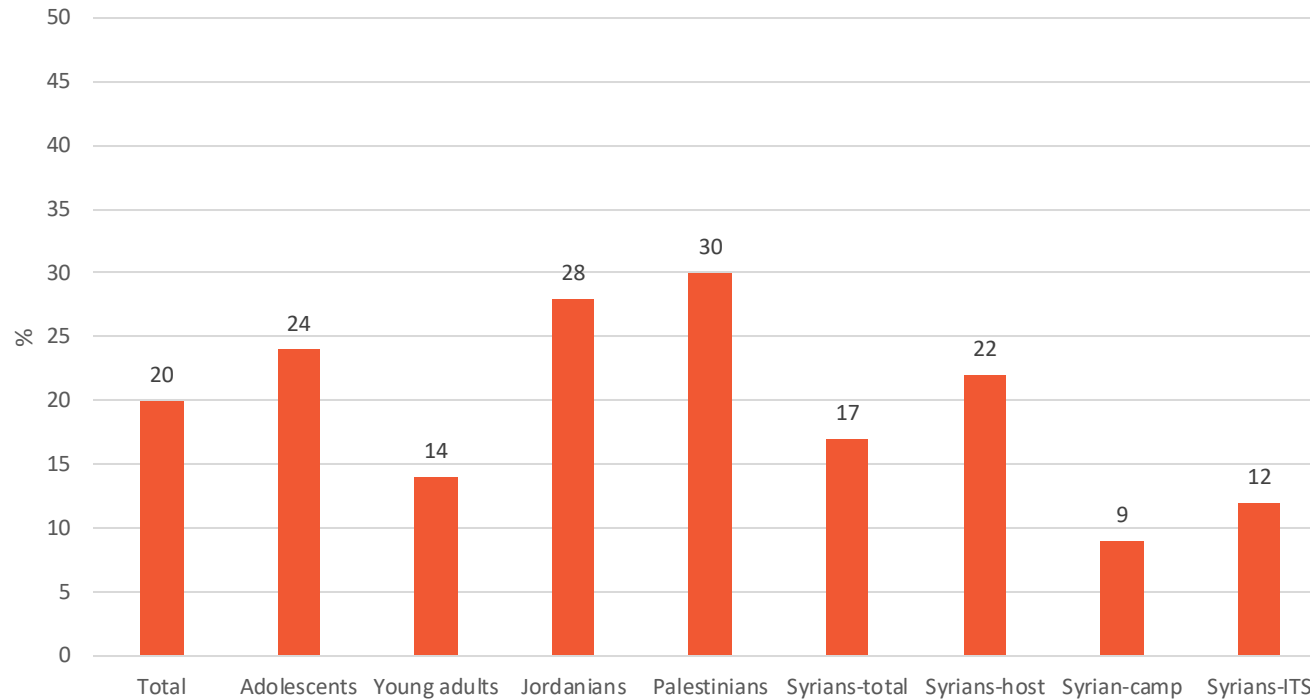
Vulnerable Groups:

Females married <18: 229
Those with disabilities: 306
Turkmen and Bani Murra
(qualitative only)



GAGE findings on young people's risk of age- and gender-based violence

Violence in the natal home is common— and under reported



Proportion of young people reporting violence from caregivers in the past year

- One-fifth of young people report violence from a caregiver in the past year.
- Adolescents report more violence than young adults.
- Syrians report far less violence than Jordanians and Palestinians—because they are afraid of attracting attention.
- Gender differences are insignificant.
- Only 1/8 of victims had ever spoken to anyone about violence at home.
- Young adults who experience violence at home are more likely to disclose than adolescents.
- Violence from caregivers declined 30 percentage points between baseline and midline.

Violence at home is gendered

- Boys are most at risk from their fathers.

'When I see my father, I run away. Show my father, I run away !'.
(14-year-old Palestinian boy)

'We won't say we were angels ... There was an increase in violence from the fathers against the children.' (Syrian father)

- Of young people who have experienced violence at home, boys are less likely than girls to have ever told someone: 7% vs 17%.

- Girls and young women experience violence from mothers, fathers, and older brothers.

"My mother said, "I will kill you, I will tell your brother!"... She shouted at me, "Go to hell, I hope you die and I get rid of you!"'.
(21-year-old Syrian young woman)

'When a man wants to vent his anger, he takes his anger out on his daughter ... He may hit his daughter if she holds the phone ... Claiming that she is not allowed to do this.'
(Palestinian mother)

'There is no safety ... A guy killed his sister.'
(18-year-old Palestinian young woman)

Boys are at high risk of violence from teachers

- Of enrolled adolescents, boys are 10X more likely than girls to have been hit by a teacher in the past year: 21% vs 2%.
- Syrian (24%) and Palestinian (29%) boys are much more at risk than Jordanian boys (17%)
- Only 29% of victims have ever spoken to someone about violence from a teacher—primarily because they know that doing so does little good.

'My brothers are all beaten in their schools.'
(15-year-old Syrian girl)

'The teacher hits the students without care ... all teachers. Also, the principal of the school hits me.'
(14-year-old Syrian boy)

- Girls are more likely to experience humiliation—rather than physical violence—from their teachers.

'Even though my daughter is in 8th grade, she cannot write. She cannot solve, she doesn't know how to answer a question. The teacher says, "Are you a child that I will help you?" She says that to my daughter.'
(Syrian mother)

- Girls are often afraid to report because they are afraid their parents will make them leave school.

Despite declines, peer violence is common

- One quarter of adolescents and one fifth of young adults report peer violence in the past year.
- Peer violence is most common in host communities: nearly 1/3 of Jordanians and Syrians report experiencing peer violence in the past year.
- Gender matters: boys and young men are more at risk of peer violence than girls and young women.
- Only 1/3 of victims have ever spoken to someone about violence—males are less likely to have done so than females.
- Peer violence has declined as young people grow up—for adolescents, rates nearly halved between baseline and midline (42% to 22%).



Minorities and refugees experience social exclusion

'Turkmen students are mocked for the way they talk and the way they dress.'
(Makani KI)

'One of the boys told my Jordanian friend not to play with me. The boy told him, "He is Syrian, stay away. They destroyed our country" '. (15-year-old Syrian boy)

'Our children repeat what they hear ... from parents of course ... They don't come up with this on their own.' (Jordanian father)



The risk of community violence is growing

- Unemployment and easy access to drugs have made communities more dangerous for young people.

'Violence has increased now ... and the nature of violence is getting more aggressive.' (Key informant)

"Because of unemployment, they started fighting a lot with each other. Many problems, murder and crimes ... Neighbours no longer stand each other, they fight over the lamest things.' (16-year-old Palestinian girl)

- Boys and young men report that violence regularly involves weapons and can be life threatening.

'Even in schools, boys bring sharp objects, fight and beat each other.'
(15-year-old Syrian girl)

'One day, my friend and I were walking in the street at night. Four young men, aged 15, confronted us. They started throwing stones at us and also cut my friend's hand with a blade.'
(17-year-old Syrian boy)

Disability amplifies the risk of violence

Compared to their peers without disability, young people with disability are more likely to experience violence:

From a caregiver
19% vs 28%

From a teacher
9% vs 17%

From a peer
22% vs 29%

They are also less likely to know where to see support for violence:
51% vs 65%

- Violence is often physical, but adolescents with disabilities regularly report that social exclusion hurts most of all.

'I had problem with my friends at the school ... I have disability in my leg ... I used to complain to the teacher and say "My teacher, why didn't you talk to them?"' (16-year-old Palestinian girl)

'The girls in the class did not allow me to sit in the first seat.'
(15-year-old Syrian girl)

- Peer violence can result in damage to needed assistive devices — which parents can ill afford to repair and replace.

"My son faced bullying ... and they would damage his cochlear device'. (Jordanian mother)

Sexual harassment is rampant—on the streets and online

- Respondents agree that girls and young women are at risk of sexual harassment nearly every time they leave home.

'I don't feel that the girl is safe anymore in the camp, this is the main thing that I felt unsafe about in the camp ... The guys in the camp are disturbing and teasing the girls.' (Syrian mother)

- Boys and young men especially congregate around girls' schools.

'I see many guys gathering in front of school, this is a horrible phenomenon.' (Jordanian father)

- Virtual violence is rising—and often results in physical violence.

'People hack into accounts via the internet, and they take private photos and publish them ... There are some girls who were beaten by their parents because their private photos were published.'
(16-year-old Syrian girl)

- Girls and young women are afraid to report, for fear of further restrictions.

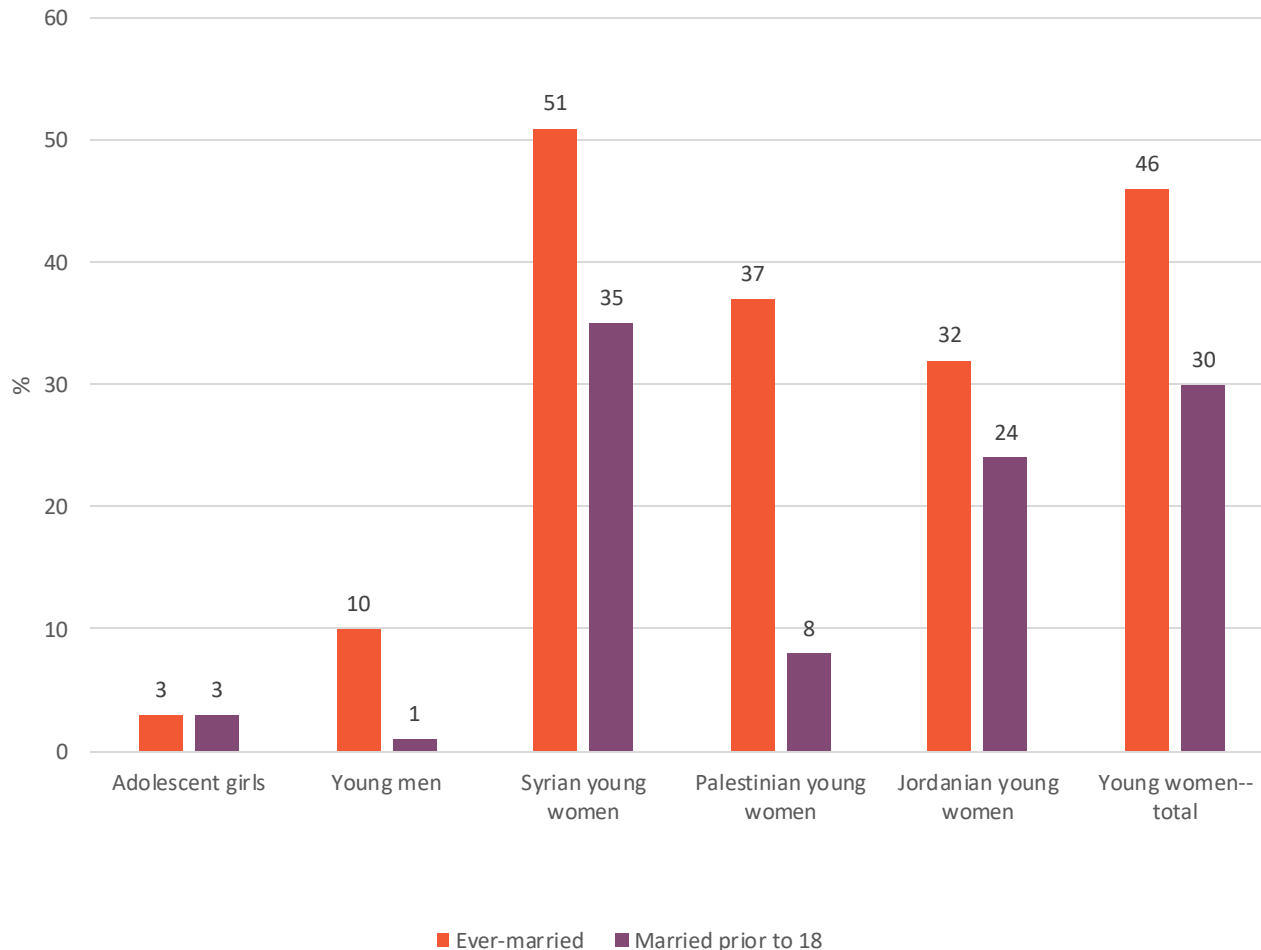
'If I tell my parents they might not let me step out of the door!'
(17-year-old Syrian girl)

- Boys and young men view harassment as a game.

"I do love my wife but teasing is something that I cannot stop to do, because it amuses me."
(20-year-old Turkmen father)

Girls—especially Syrian girls—are a high risk of child marriage

Young people often think they know their legal age of marriage—but less than half accurately identify age 18.



- Of the young women in the GAGE sample, who are an average of 20 years old, 46% have been married.
- 30% married prior to age 18.
- Early marriage (51%) and child marriage (35%) are the most common among Syrian young women.
- But Jordanian and Palestinian young women are also at risk.
- 24% of Jordanian young women married before age 18.
- 10% of young men have also been married—which is important because young men almost always marry girls 5 years younger than they are.
- 3% of adolescent girls—who are an average age of 15—have also been married

Why does child marriage remain common?

- Marriage is seen as necessary to protect ‘honour’ and reputation—of girls and their families.
- A small minority of girls are forced—usually those marrying cousins.
- A larger minority of girls are persuaded by their friends or TV that marriage is glamorous.
- Most girls readily agree to proposals, because are convinced—usually by their mothers but sometimes by their fathers—that child marriage is in their best interests.
- Out-of-school girls are seen as especially eligible—and are especially bored (and easy to convince).
- Few girls have any knowledge about what marriage entails. Many often don’t even know about sex.
- Parents also push their sons to marry early—with implications for adolescent girls—usually to ‘settle them down’ and to produce grandchildren.

‘My mother beat me too much to agree to my marriage ... I cried a lot, I hated him and refused to marry him, but they forced me.’

(16-year-old Bani Mura girl)

‘My daughter is asking me to get her married! ... If the girl’s father stops her from studying and she stays at home, that’s it, the door for marriage has opened for her.’

(Palestinian mother)

‘The main reason was the residence ... From the day we arrived, we have to eat, sleep, bathe in this one caravan ... My father told us that he will get us married and we will live separately. You know that a grown-up guy is different. Not like a young boy.’ (22-year-old Syrian father)

Most young people believe that wives must obey husbands

Three-quarters (75%) of young people agree that **'A woman should obey her husband in all things'**—with boys and young men (86%) more likely to agree than girls and young women (66%).



Jordanians were less likely to believe that women owe total obedience than Syrians or Palestinians (64% vs 78% vs 74%).

Intimate partner violence is often believed private

- A large minority of young people believe that intimate partner violence should never be discussed outside the home.
- Boys and young men are more likely to believe this than girls and young women.

More than two-fifths (43%) of young people agree that **'A man's use of violence against his wife is private and should not be discussed outside the home'**.



- Adolescent boys are especially likely to support men's use of intimate partner violence.
- They are also especially likely to believe that it should be kept private.

Over one-quarter of adolescent boys agree that **'It is acceptable for a man to beat his wife to mould her behaviour'...**

27%

...and over half agree that **'A man's use of violence against his wife is private and should not be discussed outside the home'**.

55%



Intimate partner violence is common—and survivors poorly supported

- Women and girls reported that IPV is effectively universal—because men are frustrated that they cannot find decent work and take their stress out on their wives.
- Men admitted that they see violence against their wives as ‘their right’.

‘All wives are beaten and insulted.’
(Palestinian mother of an adolescent)

‘I was living like an animal... He would leave me and the children alone and I was forced to put up with everything like lack of money, insults, beatings... No one knew about it, and if I told anyone about our problems, he would refuse anyone's interference.’
(21 -year-old divorced Syrian mother)

- Parents and parents-in-law too rarely intervene until violence is severe.
- They are often focused on family reputation rather than young wives’ safety.

‘She has no right to complain about him. Let him beat you. No problem. The important thing for them is that people do not talk about you.’
(Palestinian mother of a married girl)

‘My brothers thought that it was a private issue between us and they think my husband has the right to do what he wants.’
(22 -year-old Jordanian young woman whose husband broke her arm—and eventually stabbed her brother when he tried to intervene)

Policy and programming implications



To address violence in the home

1

Continue and scale up parenting education courses (including at Makani centres) that teach alternative discipline strategies and address gender norms and how these impact expectations and violence over the life course. Courses should also address sibling violence, particularly older brothers' violence towards their younger sisters.

2

Provide parents with stress-reduction programming that includes attention to gender norms and how these impact parents' stress levels and stress reactions.

3

To tackle the culture of silence that surrounds violence, continue and scale up efforts to raise young people's awareness of their rights and how to report various forms of violence, through Makani centres and other community-based programming as well as at schools.

4

Provide teachers, school counsellors, and health care providers with training on how to recognise the signs of child abuse, and on when and how they should bring in protection services.

5

Improve access to social protection to reduce household stress levels, proactively targeting young people with disabilities and setting benefit levels to reflect added disability-related costs as necessary.

6

Use mass media and social media campaigns to encourage those adolescents and young people who are experiencing violence at home to seek help.

7

Establish hotlines that can be anonymously accessed via the phone and internet, so that those who are experiencing violence can access support and information at the times and locations that best suit them.

To address violence at the hands of teachers and peers

1

- Continue and scale up programming for young people – at Makani centres and other community venues – aimed at fostering social cohesion across ethnicities and nationalities and reducing disability-related stigma.

2

- Develop and scale programming for boys and young men, perhaps using near-peer mentors, aimed at supporting the adoption of non-violent masculinities.

3

- Provide parents with parenting education courses that address gender norms, and how these impact children's risk of perpetrating and experiencing peer violence, as well as how to support children to become resistant to bullying.

4

- Provide teachers with training on how to prevent and address bullying at school.

To address violence at the hands of teachers and peers

5

- Improve policing in the most at-risk areas during the most at-risk hours – and pair this with efforts to develop trust between communities and the police.

6

- Use mass media and social media campaigns to encourage the reporting of violence, especially in marginalised communities (e.g. the Turkmen or Syrians living in ITS).

7

- Provide teachers with regular training on how to control classrooms using non-violent discipline strategies. Ensure that this training includes a component on inclusion, integration and non-discrimination toward young people with disabilities.

8

- Develop and monitor accountability systems that let students and parents (anonymously) report teachers who are violent, and principals who fail to act on such reports.

To address sexual harassment and child marriage

1

- Continue and step up policing around girls' schools during the hours that girls are arriving at and leaving school.

2

- Using in-person sessions and mass media and social media campaigns, work with girls and young women, their parents and communities to raise awareness that sexual harassment is not the fault of victims, to support reporting, to shame perpetrators, and to encourage bystanders to intervene.

3

- Develop and scale programming for boys and young men aimed at fostering alternative masculinities and encouraging them to become protectors rather than harassers.

4

- Enforce the law, with perpetrators of sexual harassment first fined and then imprisoned for repeat offences.

To address sexual harassment and child marriage

5

- Use all measures to keep girls in school as long as possible, including awareness-raising sessions with girls and their parents, increasing the number of years of compulsory education (and enforcing the compulsory education law), tutorial support, transport allowances, and cash transfers.

6

- Provide girls with gender-focused empowerment programming that teaches them their rights, raises their aspirations, strengthens their voice, and encourages reporting and help-seeking.

7

- Continue efforts with adolescent girls, their parents and the parents of young men to raise awareness about the risks of child marriage and the advantages of adult marriage. For girls, this should include instructions on what marriage actually entails.

8

- Eliminate the legal loophole that allows girls to marry at 16 with the permission of the religious court—and better publicize the legal age of marriage.

To address intimate partner violence

1

- Provide engaged and newly married couples with programming (perhaps at religious institutions) aimed at teaching communication skills, raising awareness about gender norms and how these impact relationships, and ensuring that young couples know their rights and responsibilities and how and where to seek help should they need it.

2

- Develop and scale programming for young wives, providing them with access to caring mentors and peers and a venue for reporting should they need one. To make such programming palatable to gate-keepers (e.g. husbands and in-laws), courses could provide practical instruction on housekeeping, cooking and childcare.

3

- Develop and scale programming for young husbands aimed at fostering alternative masculinities; this might be made more palatable by linking it to fatherhood courses.

4

- Ensure that parents are made aware (through parenting education courses and mass media and social media campaigns) that their obligations to their daughter do not end when their daughter marries.

To address intimate partner violence

5

- Establish hotlines that can be anonymously accessed via the phone and internet, so that those who are experiencing violence can access support and information at the times and locations that best suit them.

6

- Scale up medical, legal and psychosocial survivor services, working to reduce the stigma and shame that surrounds divorce.

7

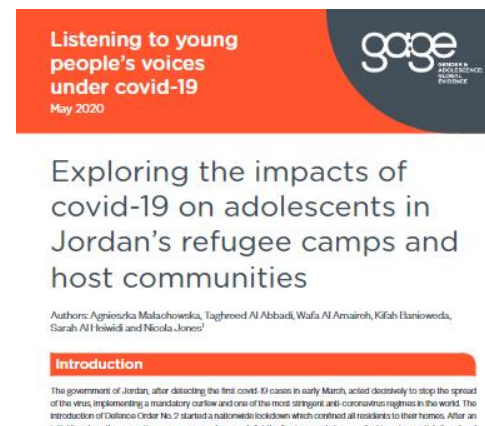
- Use mass media and social media campaigns to encourage non-violent masculinities.

8

- Lower the legal burden of proof required by survivors.

Questions?





For more resources see:
<https://www.gage.odi.org/countries/jordan/>

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www.gage.odi.org

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GenderandAdolescence

About GAGE:

- Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) is a nine-year (2015-2024) mixed-methods longitudinal research programme focused on what works to support adolescent girls' and boys' capabilities in the second decade of life and beyond.
- We are following the lives of 20,000 adolescents in six focal countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

