

GENDER & ADOLESCENCE: GLOBAL EVIDENCE

ENDLINE REPORT SERIES

Young people's bodily integrity and freedom from violence

Evidence from the GAGE Jordan endline

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December 2025

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to sincerely thank Magdalena Harrison for project coordination, Christine Khuri for publication coordination, Kathryn O'Neill for editorial support, Ottavia Pasta for design support and Jojoh Faal for layout. They are also grateful to Mindset for the quantitative data collection, especially Bana Maklaheh and Majd Masannat and to UNICEF Jordan for all their support in facilitating data collection, especially in camps and Makani centres, and for ongoing engagement over the lifecycle of GAGE, with particular thanks to Mami Kyo and Zaid Al Khairy.

Finally, we would like to sincerely thank all the adolescent girls and boys and their families for sharing their experiences. Without their participation and contributions, this study would not have been possible.

Suggested citation:

Presler-Marshall, E., Luckenbill, S., Jones, N., Alheiwidi, S., Baird, S., Leung, S., ... and Shareef, Q. (2025) *Young people's bodily integrity and freedom from violence: evidence from the GAGE Jordan endline*. Report. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence.

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Introduction

Young people's right to bodily integrity and freedom from violence is core to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is manifested in two Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Goal 16 and Goal 5 (United Nations (UN), 2025). SDG 16, Peace and Justice, aims to eradicate all forms of violence and abuse against children, reduce overall violence, and uphold the rule of law. SDG 5, Gender Equality, seeks to eliminate child marriage (under age 18) and all types of violence against women and girls. Jordan has committed to achieving these goals and, in 2022, passed a Child Rights Bill (End Violence Against Children, 2023) and, in 2025, launched a National Action Plan for the Prevention and Response to Child Protection Issues, Gender-based Violence, and Family Violence (End Violence Against Children, 2024). Despite its strong policy frameworks, Jordan is currently not on track to deliver on violence-related SDGs (Sachs et al., 2024). In fact, research indicates that young people in Jordan continue to face significant risks of violence from caregivers, educators and peers, with girls and young women also vulnerable to child marriage (under age 18) and abuse by their husband and in-laws (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA), 2021; NCFA et al., 2022; Department of Statistics (DoS) and ICF, 2024; Presler-Marshall et al., 2025a).

This report draws on mixed-methods data collected in 2024 and 2025 by the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) research programme. It aims to contribute to the evidence base that the Government of Jordan and its development partners need to meet national and international goals to protect young people's bodily integrity. Designed to build on baseline (2018–2019) and midline (2022–2023) research, surveys were undertaken with nearly 3,000 Syrian, Jordanian and Palestinian adolescents and young adults living in Jordan. Surveys were also completed by caregivers. In addition, qualitative interviews were conducted with over 750 young people (206 of whom have been followed since baseline), nearly 200 caregivers (77 of whom have been followed since baseline) and 63 key informants.

The report begins with an overview of the Jordanian context, focusing on the contours of the population and what is known about the threats to young people's bodily integrity. We then describe the GAGE conceptual framework and methodology. We next present our endline findings on violence at home, violence from educators, peer and youth violence, sexual violence, online violence, child marriage (under age 18) and marital violence, and support seeking – focusing on differences by gender, age, location, and marital and disability status. We conclude with a discussion of the key actions that are needed to protect the bodily integrity of young people living in Jordan.



Turkman girls taking a break from carrying water, Jordan © Marcel Saleh/GAGE 2025

Jordan context

Population

Jordan's population, estimated at 11.7 million (up from only 6.9 million in 2010), is very young (DoS, 2024). One-fifth (20%) of residents are adolescents aged 10–19, and nearly a third (29%) are young people aged 10–24 (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2025).

Approximately one-tenth of Jordan's residents (1.3 million people) are Syrian (DoS, 2016). Of those, 427,000 were registered as refugees with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as of December 2025 (UNHCR, 2025a). Nearly 80% of Syrians live in Jordanian host communities; most of the remainder live in formal refugee camps run by UNHCR (Zaatari and Azraq), although 15,000 are estimated to live in informal tented settlements scattered throughout the countryside (ibid.). Since the fall of the Assad regime in Syria, in December 2024, Syrian refugees have begun returning home. UNHCR (2025b) reports that over 170,000 Syrians left Jordan for Syria in the 12 months between December 2024 and December 2025.

There are also nearly 2.4 million Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) living in Jordan as of 2024 (UNRWA, 2025). Of these, approximately three-quarters have Jordanian citizenship, have full access to government services and employment, and live in Jordanian communities (Amnesty International, 2019). The remainder (some 630,000 people) – who either entered the country in the 1960s or later or are descended from those who did – lack citizenship and its attendant rights. They are concentrated in one of 10 official camps run by UNRWA, one of which is Jerash camp (Amnesty International, 2019; UNRWA, 2025).

In 2017, Jordan was reclassified from an upper-middle-income country to a lower-middle-income country. Since then, low economic growth, coupled with high population growth – alongside external shocks such as the Covid-19 pandemic and conflict in Ukraine and Gaza, and accompanying volatility of international aid – has resulted in an increase in poverty (World Bank, 2023; Hunaiti, 2024). Indeed, in 2023, it was estimated2 that the poverty rate had reached 27%, up from 16% in 2017 (Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), 2023). Refugees, who face legal restrictions on the type of employment they can do, are far more likely to be poor than Jordanians. UNHCR (2024) reports that in 2024, 67% of all refugee households under its remit were poor; American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA, 2024) adds that the poverty rate that same year among Syrian households was 80%. Of Palestinians living in camps, it is estimated that 31% are poor (UNICEF, 2021). The highest poverty rate is in Jerash camp, where 53% of households live below the national poverty line (ibid.)

Threats to young people's bodily integrity

Recent research has found that violence against young people is common in Jordan. For example, the National Study on Violence Against Children in Jordan (NSVAC) found that over half (55%) of children aged 8–17 in a nationally representative sample admitted to having experienced physical violence in the past year (UNICEF and NCFA, 2021). Boys were more likely to report experiencing physical violence than girls (60% versus 50%). In stark contrast to GAGE midline research, which found that young people with disabilities are at elevated risk of all forms of violence, the NSVAC found that rates of physical violence were slightly lower for young people with disabilities (42%)(UNICEF and NCFA, 2021). Children taking part in that research reported that the most common perpetrators of physical violence were their parents, siblings, peers, and – despite corporal punishment in schools being illegal – teachers. Children and caregivers alike reported that physical violence declines with age, with adolescents less at risk than younger children (see also Presler-Marshall et al., 2025a).

Emotional violence against children is also common, according to the National Study on Violence Against Children in Jordan (UNICEF and NCFA, 2021). Nearly three-fifths (58%) of children aged 8–17 reported having experienced emotional violence at least once in their lifetime, with peers, siblings, parents and educators most often reported as the perpetrators.

Due to cultural norms that 'normalise and justify violence against children when used for disciplinary purposes', parents do not gainsay children's reporting (UNICEF and NCFA, 2021: 39). Three-quarters (74%) of parents surveyed for the National Study on Violence Against Children in Jordan admitted to having used physical violence as a form of discipline, and two-thirds (65%) admitted to having used emotional violence against their children (ibid.). The 2023 Jordan Population and

Family Health Survey (JPFHS) also found high rates of violent discipline. Based on caregivers' reports, 50% of young adolescents aged 10–14 had experienced physical punishment in the month prior to the survey, and 11% had experienced severe physical punishment (DoS and ICF, 2024). Three-quarters (75%) of young adolescents, according to their caregivers, had experienced psychological aggression in that same timeframe (ibid.).

With the notable caveat that exposure to profane language was categorised as sexual abuse, more than a quarter (27%) of children aged 8–17 included in the National Study on Violence Against Children in Jordan reported having experienced sexual violence at least once in their lifetime (UNICEF and NCFA, 2021). Boys were more likely than girls to report having been forced to view sexual images (6% versus 4%); girls were more likely than boys to report genital touching (4% versus 2%) (ibid.).

There appears to have been little research on the incidence of sexual harassment in Jordan, where – as the Jordanian National Commission for Women (2017) notes – the issue is so shrouded in secrecy that the Penal Code uses euphemisms such as 'indecent flirting' to refer to it. A study by the Commission found that more than three-quarters of women in Jordan had experienced sexual harassment (ibid.).



A young Syrian refugee woman who works in farming
© Marcel Saleh/GAGE 2025

Because Jordan's laws include a 'loophole' that allows girls to marry at age 16 with the permission of a Shariah court, and because early marriage is seen as protective of girls' and family honour, rates of child marriage (under age 18) – a form of violence against girls – are also relatively high, especially for non-Jordanian girls (CARE, 2015; Presler-Marshall et al., 2025b; Higher Population Council (HPC) et al., 2022). The 2023 JPFHS found that of young women aged 20–24, 20% of Syrians and 8% of Jordanians had married prior to age 18 (DoS and ICF, 2024). The 2023 Shariah Judicial Council reports that 8.5% of all marriages registered in Jordan in 2023 included a bride aged 16 or 17.

Marital violence is a common experience for young brides. The 2023 JPFHS found that 17% of married young women aged 20–24 had experienced violence from their husband in the 12 months preceding the survey. Young brides who married prior to age 18 are especially likely to experience all forms of domestic violence. A study by NCFA et al. (2022) reports that of married young women aged 20–24, 23% of those who married in childhood experienced physical violence at the hands of their husband, compared to 8% of those who married when over the age of 18. Young women who married prior to age 18 were also more likely than their peers who married as adults to experience violence from their mother-in-law (21% versus 8%), their sister-in-law (15% versus 5%) and their father- and brother-in-law (5% versus 2%) (ibid.). GAGE midline research found that most young people (75%) – and especially most boys and young men (88%) – believe that wives owe their husband total obedience (Presler-Marshall et al., 2025a). In addition, the JPFHS found that marital violence is widely perceived as justifiable. Of adolescents aged 15–19, two-thirds of boys (66%) and half of ever-married girls (46%) reported that wife beating is justified for at least one reason (e.g. if a wife goes out without permission, burns food, or neglects the children) (DOS and ICF, 2024; see also HPC, 2020).

Young brides rarely seek help for marital violence. The 2023 JPFHS found that 43% of young women aged 20–24 who had experienced violence had never told anyone (DoS and ICF, 2024; see also HPC, 2020). Indeed, GAGE midline research found that 43% of young people – including 55% of boys – believe that marital violence is private and should never be discussed outside the home (Presler-Marshall et al., 2025a).

GAGE conceptual framework

Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) is a mixed-methods longitudinal research and evaluation study. It is following the lives of 20,000 adolescents in six low- and middle-income countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and is generating evidence on 'what works' to enable adolescent girls and boys to emerge from poverty and fast-track social change for young people, their families and communities. Our research explores the risks that adolescents face as they transition through adolescence and into young adulthood and identifies what supports and strategies are most effective in transforming girls' and boys' lives at specific junctures in adolescence.

Informed by the emerging evidence base on adolescent well-being and development, GAGE's conceptual framework takes a holistic approach that pays careful attention to the interconnectedness of what we call the '3 Cs' – capabilities, change strategies and contexts – in order to understand what works to support adolescents' development and empowerment, both now and in the future (see Figure 1). This framing draws on the three components of Pawson and Tilley's (1997) approach to evaluation, which highlights the importance of outcomes, causal mechanisms and contexts, though we tailor it to the specific challenges of understanding what works in improving adolescents' capabilities.

The first building block of our conceptual framework is capability outcomes. Championed originally by Amartya Sen (1985, 2004) and nuanced by Martha Nussbaum (2011) and Naila Kabeer (2003) to better capture complex gender dynamics at intra-household and societal levels, the capabilities approach has evolved as a broad normative framework exploring the kinds of assets (economic, human, political, emotional and social) that expand the capacity of individuals to achieve valued ways of 'doing and being'. At its core is a sense of competence and purposive agency: it goes beyond a focus on a fixed bundle of external assets, instead emphasising investment in an individual's skills, knowledge and voice. Importantly, the approach can encompass relevant investments in children and young people with diverse trajectories, including the most marginalised and 'hardest to reach', such as those with disabilities or those who were married under age 18. Although the GAGE framework covers six core capabilities, this report focuses on bodily integrity and freedom from violence, including: violence at home, violence from educators, peer and youth violence, sexual violence, online violence, child marriage (under age 18) and marital violence, and support seeking.

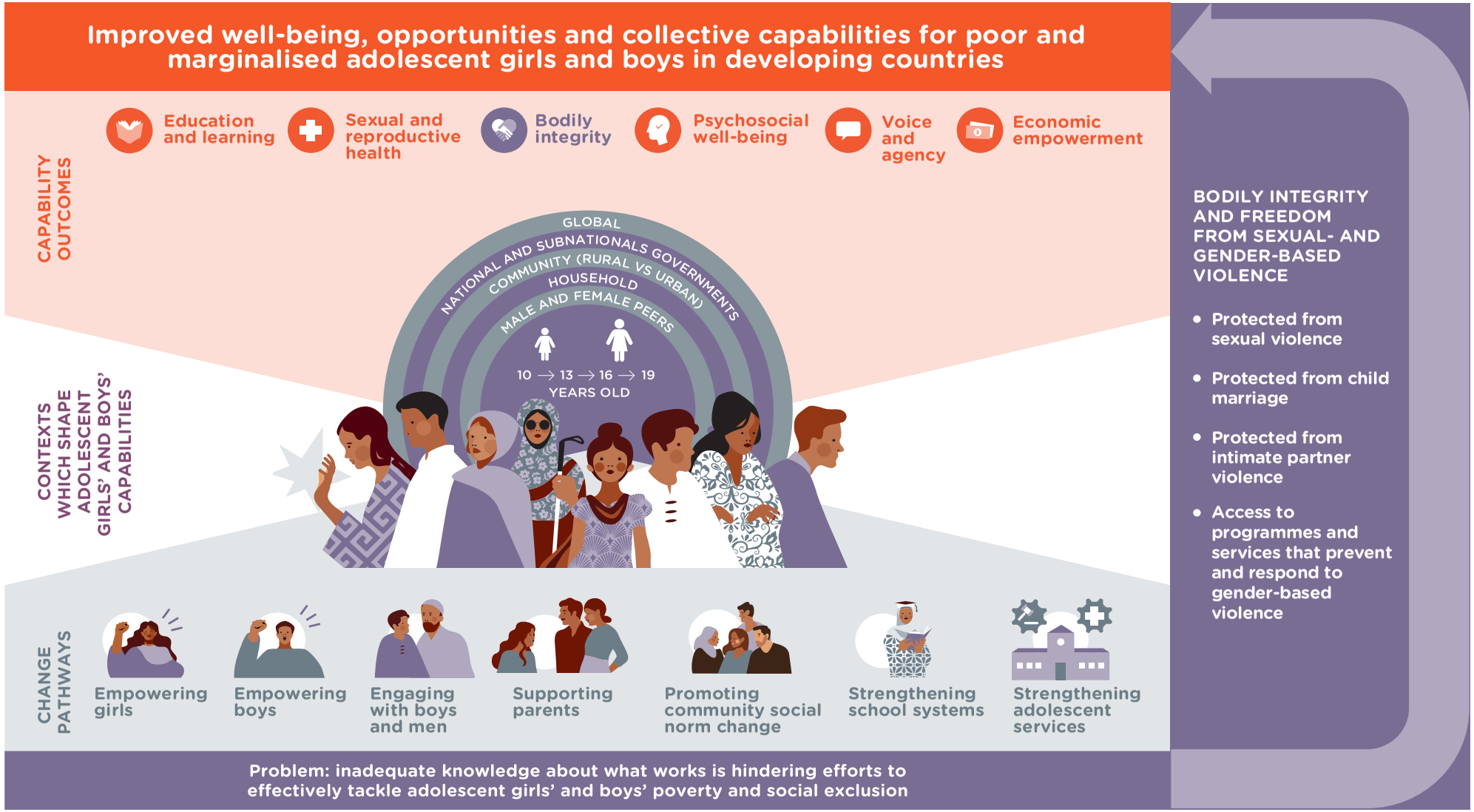
The second building block of the GAGE conceptual framework is context dependency. Our '3 Cs' framework situates young people socio-ecologically. It recognises that not only do girls and boys at different stages of the life course have different needs and constraints, but also that these are highly dependent on their context at the family/household, community, state and global levels.

The third and final building block of our conceptual framework – change strategies – acknowledges that young people's contextual realities will not only shape the pathways through which they develop their capabilities but will also determine the change strategies open to them to improve their outcomes. Our socio-ecological approach emphasises that to nurture transformative change in girls' and boys' capabilities and broader well-being, potential change strategies must simultaneously invest in integrated intervention approaches at different levels, weaving together policies and programming that support young people, their families and their communities while also working to effect change at the systems level. As noted above, this report concludes with our reflections on what type of package of interventions in Jordan could better support young people's bodily integrity and freedom from violence.



A Palestinian boy walking to school © Marcel Saleh/GAGE 2025

Figure 1: GAGE Conceptual framework



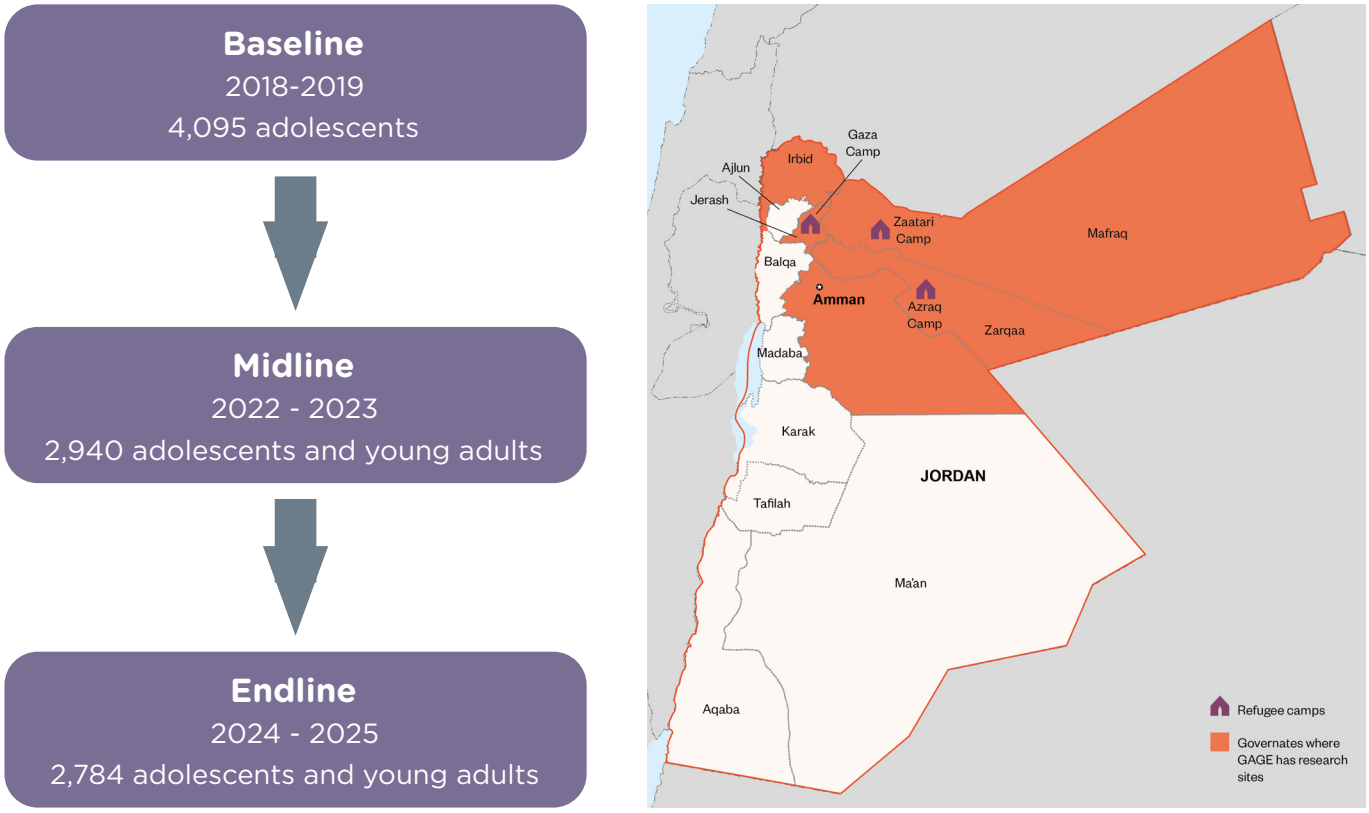
Sample and methods

This report draws on mixed-methods data collected in Jordan in 2024 and 2025, following up on two earlier rounds of research – at baseline (2018–2019) and midline (2022–2023)(see Figure 2). At baseline, the quantitative sample included adolescents from marginalised households across two cohorts (aged 10–12 years and 15–17 years, averaging 11.3 and 16.1 years respectively), with purposeful oversampling of adolescents with disabilities and those who were married prior to age 18 – recognised as particularly vulnerable groups. The baseline sample consisted of 4,095 adolescents in five governorates: Amman, Irbid, Jerash, Mafraq and Zarqa (see Figure 2). At midline, the GAGE sample included 2,940 young people (a 71% follow-up rate), with the two cohorts then averaging 15.0 years old and 20.0 years old.

The GAGE Jordan endline sample involved 2,914 total participants. This included 2,784 young people from the original baseline sample (a 68% follow-up rate since baseline and 80% follow-up since midline, see Box 1), and 130 new participants who were not included in the baseline sample. These are: (1) 96 new young people who belong to either the Bani Murra or Turkmen ethnic minority groups[1] and (2) 34 new young people previously included only in qualitative research.[2]

This report focuses on the 2,838 participants who were living in Jordan at the time of the endline survey and surveyed after the pilot (see Table 1). This omits the 43 young people surveyed as part of the pilot and the 33 young people who had moved internationally at endline but completed an abbreviated survey over the phone. Of these 2,838 participants, nearly three-quarters (72%) are Syrian refugees (2,021), just over half of whom (51%) have lived in host communities consistently since baseline (1,031). Approximately 26% of Syrian respondents (523) have lived in refugee camps (Zaatari or Azraq) run by UNHCR since baseline, and 14% (293) have lived in informal tented

Figure 2: Timeline of GAGE research in Jordan, with the distribution of the original baseline sample



1 Turkmen and Bani Murra young people typically have Jordanian citizenship. Because the new Bani Murra and Turkmen participants were identified through a different sampling strategy and have fundamentally different lived experiences, they are presented separately and not included where overall averages are presented. There were 23 individuals in the original baseline sample who self-identifying as ethnic minorities at endline, the majority of whom were classified as Jordanian at baseline.

2 These 34 individuals were included in the quantitative baseline sampling frame but were unable to be surveyed at baseline due to a variety of reasons, namely difficulties locating and scheduling interviews with the household within the baseline study period. They were intended to be surveyed at midline but due to an error were not.

Box 1: Attrition over time

Minimising attrition, or loss-to-follow up, is a key challenge for longitudinal studies where the goal is to understand changes over time. This challenge is acutely felt with the GAGE Jordan sample because many participants are migratory, including refugees leaving Jordan to return to their country of origin (especially Syrians returning to Syria after the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024), those living in Informal Tented Settlements (ITS) moving for seasonal agricultural work, young adult males leaving their communities to seek out paid work, and newly married females leaving their natal household to move into their husband's household. Further, the mandatory secondary school exam and Ramadan fell within the endline survey timeframe, creating logistical challenges with scheduling interviews. Difficulties extending the permits needed to enter the UNHCR refugee camps created additional logistical challenges at endline.

Several mitigation strategies were implemented at endline to minimise attrition:

- Offered in-person participants incentives for their time (monetary for those in host communities, ITS, or Jerash camp and snacks for Syrians in refugee camps due to UNHCR gift restrictions).
- Offered virtual phone interviews, including outside of the typical working hours, to reach young males engaged in paid work, as well as Syrians in camps.
- Created an intensive tracking protocol that utilised the qualitative team for intensive tracking to capitalise on their rapport with participants.

With these mitigation strategies in place, 68% of the original baseline sample from 2018-2019 and 80% of those surveyed at midline in 2022-2023 were re-surveyed at endline. This attrition is in-line with another longitudinal research study on Syrian refugees conducted in a similar timeframe (2019-2024), where they retained 63% of their sample, highlighting the challenges with tracking migratory samples (Alrababah et al., 2025).

settlements (ITS) at any point since baseline.[3] A minority of Syrian refugees (174, or 9%) have moved between host communities and camps in the time between the baseline and endline surveys. The remainder of the endline sample are Jordanians (425), Palestinians (273), and a small group of individuals (23) that identified as another nationality (denoted 'other', these include Iraqi and Egyptian respondents). Almost all Palestinians in the GAGE sample live in Jerash camp, which is located in Jerash governorate and is informally known as Gaza camp because most of its residents are ex-Gazans who were displaced during the 1967 Arab–Israeli war and who lack Jordanian citizenship and its attendant benefits. Due to the sample size, the 'other' nationality group is not included in comparisons by nationality, but is included in all other demographic group disaggregation, such as gender and age cohort.

Just over half (53%) of the endline sample are female. Although the baseline sample was approximately equally split between the two age cohorts (53% younger [10-12 at the time] and 47% older [15-17 at the time]), the older cohort were more likely than younger cohort to be lost to follow-up between baseline and endline (62% follow-up for the older cohort versus 73% follow-up for the younger cohort, $p<0.01$). Because of this, the younger cohort is

Table 1: Quantitative sample

	Nationality				Sub-sample of Bani Murra and Turkmen	Sub-sample of those with disability	Sub-sample of those married <18	Total
	Syrian	Jordanian	Palestinian	Other				
Females	1,043	263	150	9	50	149	307	1,515
Males	978	162	123	14	46	135	3	1,323
Younger cohort	1,119	250	174	14	69	173	93	1,626
Older cohort	902	175	99	9	27	111	217	1,212
Total	**2,021**	**425**	**273**	**23**	**96**	**284**	**310**	**2,838**

3 In the seven years between baseline and endline, a minority of young people moved location. This was most common among Syrians (18%). The bulk of movement was between UNHCR-run camps and Jordanian host communities. Because of this movement, young people are classified as 'always camp' dwellers if they were living in a UNHCR-run camp at baseline, midline, and endline. They are classified as movers if they moved from a camp to a host community, or from a host community to a camp, in the years between baseline and endline. They are classified as 'ITS' if they were living in an informal tented settlement at either baseline, midline or endline.

over-represented in the endline sample. Older cohort males were especially likely to be lost to follow-up (57% follow-up), and as such are the most under-represented at endline. At endline, on average, younger cohort adolescents were aged 17.2 years, and are referred to in this paper as adolescent girls and adolescent boys; the older cohort had transitioned to young adulthood (average age of 22.1) and are referred to as young adult women and young adult men. Where both cohorts are discussed simultaneously, they are referred to as young people. Where adolescent boys and young men are discussed together, they are called young males; where adolescent girls and young women are discussed together, they are called young females.

Because GAGE's sample includes the most marginalised adolescents and young adults, about a sixth of young people in our quantitative sample have any functional disability[4] (479). Among those, 284 report having functional difficulties even if they have an assistive device (such as glasses, hearing aids, or a mobility device). Our sample also includes adolescent girls and young adult women who were married prior to age 18. Of the 527 evermarried females, 307 married prior to 18.

The majority of the 206 young people in the qualitative sample were selected from the larger quantitative sample deliberately oversampling the most disadvantaged individuals in order to capture the voices of those at risk of being 'left behind' (see Table 2). The qualitative sample also included 84 caregivers (almost all parents) and 24 key

Table 2: Qualititative sample

		Syrian	Jordanian	Palestinian	Bani Murra/ Turkmen	Mixed nationality	Sub-sample of those with disability	Sub-sample married < age 18	Total
Individual interviews with young people	Girls	46	8	8	5		26	41	67
	Young women	36	8	6	1				51
	Boys	29	2	4	7		27	3	42
	Young men	26	8	7	5				46
Total		137	26	25	18		53	44	206
Group interviews with young people	Females	21	5	9	4	4			43 groups (306 people
	Males	18	5	6	2	5			36 groups (244 people)
Total		313	62	65	42	9			550
									756 young people
Individual interviews with caregivers	Mothers	36	5	6	0				47
	Fathers	19	6	5	0				30
Total		55	11	11	0				77
Group interviews with caregivers	Mothers	3	1	3	1				8 groups (59 people)
	Fathers	5	1	2	1				9 groups (59 people)
Total		8	2	5	2				17 groups (118 people)
									195 care-givers
Key informants		24	6	25	8				**63 key informants**

4 Determined by using the Washington Group on Disability Statistics Questionnaire, which was filled out by caregivers at baseline: www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-wg-ss/

informants (government officials, community and religious leaders, and service providers).

Quantitative survey data was collected in face-toface interviews[5] by enumerators who were trained to communicate with marginalised populations. With the exception of never-married adolescent boys, enumerators were typically the same sex as the respondent: all female respondents were interviewed by female enumerators and the majority of young men/ever-married males were interviewed by male enumerators. Surveys were broad (see Luckenbill et al., 2025) and included modules reflecting the GAGE conceptual framework. Analysis of the quantitative data focused on a set of outcomes related to education and learning (data tables are available on request). Statistical analysis was conducted using Stata 18.0. Importantly, where we present endline survey findings, we include the 2,838 young people (2,708 from the original baseline sample who were not part of the pilot or moved internationally and 130 new participants, detailed above) who completed the endline survey. Where we present change over time, however, we restrict our sample and include only the 2,289 young people who completed baseline, midline and endline surveys.[6]

These are referred to as the panel sample. For change over time for any given outcome, we also restrict to the sample who have answered that question at all rounds to ensure a consistent sample across all survey rounds. Qualitative tools, also employed by researchers carefully trained to communicate sensitively with marginalised populations, consisted of interactive activities such as timelines, body mappings and vignettes, which were used in individual and group interviews (see Jones et al., 2025). Preliminary data analysis took place during daily and site-wide debriefings. Interviews were transcribed and translated by native speakers and then coded thematically using the qualitative software analysis package MAXQDA.

The GAGE research design and tools were approved by ethics committees at the Overseas Development Institute and George Washington University. For research participants in refugee camps, permission was granted from the UNHCR National Protection Working Group. For research participants in host communities, approval was granted by Jordan's Ministry of Interior, the Department of Statistics and the Ministry of Education. 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.



A 19-year-old Syrian young man, sitting on the floor © Marcel Saleh/GAGE 2025

5 A small number of surveys (81) were completed over the phone, because respondents were unable to be interviewed in person.

6 There are exceptions to this rule, because some questions were not asked at baseline or were asked of only adolescents over the age of 15. These exceptions are carefully noted in the text.

Findings

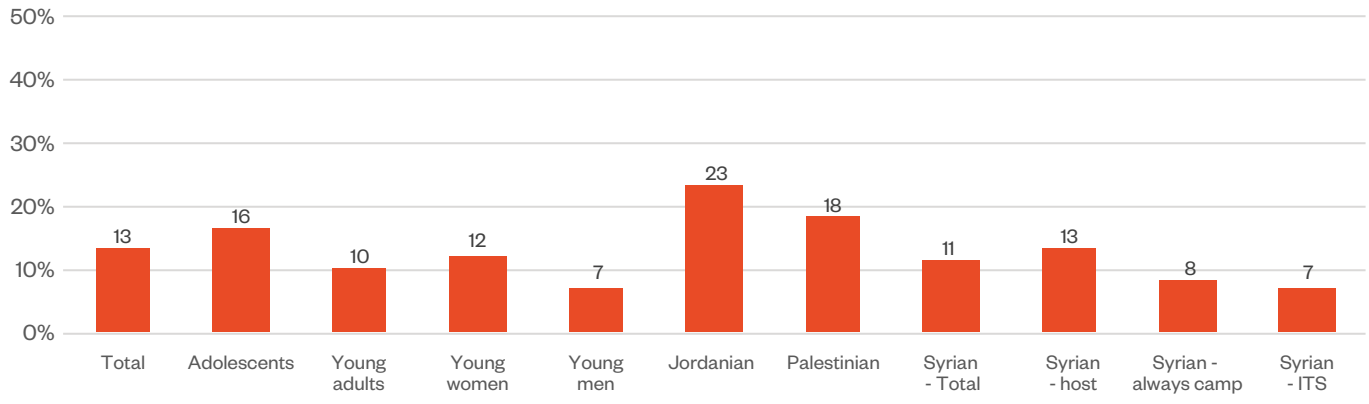
The endline findings are organised in line with the GAGE conceptual framework (see page 5). We begin with violence in the home, violence from educators, and violence from peers. We then turn to sexual violence, online violence, child marriage (under age 18), and marital violence, before concluding with young people's awareness of violence and support seeking. In each case, we first present endline survey findings, using the full endline sample, highlighting differences between groups where they are significant. When we use the word 'significant', we are referring to statistical significance at least at the 5% significance level unless otherwise indicated with an asterisk (*) to signify a significant difference at the 10% significance level. For some indicators, we then present change over time, restricting the quantitative sample to only those young people in the panel sample. In each section, we present qualitative findings after the survey findings.

Violence in the home

At endline, 13% of young people reported experiencing any form of violence[7] at the hands of a caregiver or other adult in the home in the past 12 months (see Figure 3). There were significant differences between cohorts, with adolescents (16%) – who were less likely to be married and therefore more likely to be living with caregivers and adult siblings[8] – more likely to report such violence than young adults (10%). Although at baseline (when both cohorts were under age 18), adolescent boys were more likely to report violence from a caregiver or other adult in the home than adolescent girls, this was not the case at endline. Among adolescents, there were no gender differences; among young adults, young adult women were nearly twice as likely as young adult men to report violence from a caregiver or other adult in the home (12% versus 7%). Nationality and location (for Syrians) also shaped this type of violence. Jordanians (23%) and Palestinians (18%) were significantly more likely to report having experienced violence from a caregiver or other adult in the home in the past year than Syrians (11%), especially those living in camps (8%) and informal tented settlements (7%). Qualitative data suggests the lower rate among Syrians could reflect under-reporting – or the fact that violence is normalised among the Syrian population. Violence from caregivers and other adults in the home was also reported to be especially common among young people with disabilities (see Box 2).

Unsurprisingly, given evidence that violence from caregivers tends to peak in early adolescence and then decline as young people mature, the endline survey found that violence from caregivers and other adults in the home has declined significantly since baseline (see Figure 5). Among the panel sample, it fell from 51% at baseline to 13% at endline. Declines were significantly larger for young males (from 54% at baseline to 12% at endline) than for young females (from 49% at baseline to 15% at endline).

Figure 3: Experienced violence from a caregiver or other adult in the home, in the past year (by cohort, gender and nationality/location)



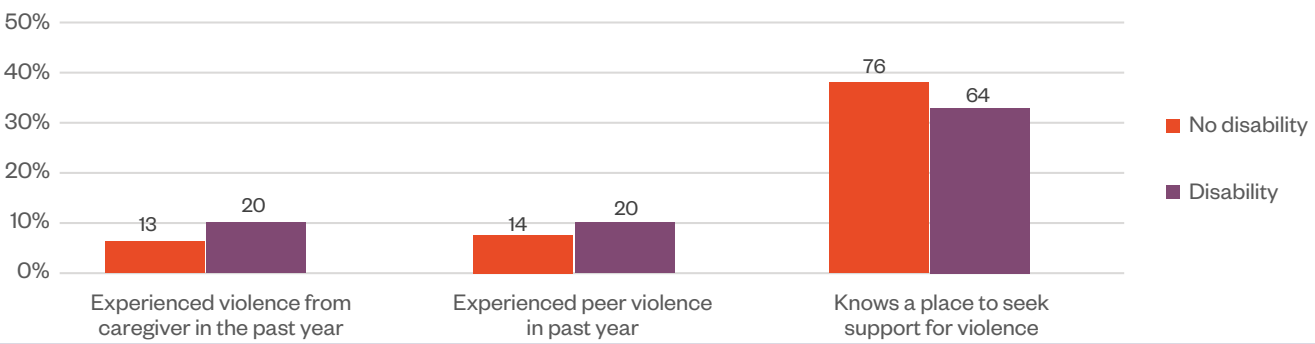
7 Three survey questions were used to capture this violence. One asked whether the respondent had been pushed, slapped, hit, beaten or otherwise physically hurt. One asked about yelling and name calling. One asked about any other form of 'poor treatment' such as food withholding. Due to the sensitive nature of these questions, young people who were only living with their spouse were excluded.

8 Virtually no young people (<0.5%) were living independently of their family. Among young people who were not married, nearly all (98%) were living with their mother and/or father. Among young people who were married, 51% were living exclusively with their spouse and 42% were living with their spouse and another family member. Gender, rather than age cohort, was the primary factor dictating who married individuals were living with: married young females were significantly more likely to be living only with their spouse compared to married young males (54% versus 36%).

Box 2: Disability amplifies the risk of violence

The endline survey, like the baseline and midline surveys, found that young people with disabilities are at elevated risk of several types of violence compared to their peers without disabilities. They are also less likely to know where to seek help should they experience violence. For example, 20% of young people with disabilities reported experiencing violence from a caregiver or other adult in the home in the past year, compared to 13% of those without disabilities (see Figure 4). Young people with disabilities were also more likely than their peers without disabilities to have experienced peer violence in the past year (20% versus 14%). Disability also shapes options for reporting. Only two-thirds (64%) of young people with disabilities reported knowing where they might seek support if they are experiencing violence, compared to three-quarters (76%) of those without disabilities.

Figure 4: Disability and violence



In qualitative interviews, young people with disabilities did not speak of violence at the hands of caregivers. They did, however, discuss frequent bullying by peers, especially at school. Most young people with disabilities reported that they are verbally taunted due to their disability. An 18-year-old Syrian young man with a vision impairment recalled, '*The other boys started calling me "four eyes" and things like that*.' Other young people with disabilities reported being physically abused by their peers. A 16-year-old Jordanian girl with a hearing impairment noted that boys tend to bear the brunt of this: '*If I were a boy, the situation would be worse… There is too much bullying among them*.' Mothers were especially forthcoming about the violence their sons endured from peers. A Syrian mother, whose son has a mobility impairment, reported, '*The boys would lock him in the classroom, and he would be on his chair, and then try to reach the door crawling, and they would laugh at him, trying to get out of the classroom crawling*.' Although a few young people with disabilities noted that their teachers had successfully stemmed (at least in the short term) verbal and physical violence from peers, most reported that the stigma against disability remains strong and that teachers' efforts have limited impact. A 20-year-old Syrian young man with a hearing disability concluded: '*Society is disabled and does not accept… people with disabilities*.'

Some young people with disabilities – and their caregivers – also noted that they are reluctant to report violence, due to stigma surrounding disability. A 17-year-old Syrian boy, who was attacked on the street, stated: '*I wanted to file a complaint, but I didn't dare*.'

Young people are reticent to disclose violence from caregivers and other adults in the home. Of those who reported on the endline survey having experienced such violence in the past year, only 15% had ever spoken to someone about that violence (see Figure 6). Adolescent boys (7%) were especially unlikely to disclose, compared to adolescent girls and young adult women and men (19%). Nationality differences were also significant, with Jordanians (20%) and Syrians (14%) more likely to disclose than Palestinians (6%). With the important caveats that the proportion of young people reporting caregiver violence has declined sharply since baseline and those who experienced violence at one timepoint may not have experienced it at another, disclosure rates are largely unchanged over time. Among the panel sample, and then further limiting to the young people who reported having experienced violence at that respective survey round, the percentage reporting that they had spoken to someone about the violence they had experienced was 13% at baseline, 16% at midline and 15% at endline[9].

9 As noted above, change over time figures are reported only for young people who completed all three surveys – this means that change over time figures are sometimes subtly different from endline figures.

Figure 5: Experienced violence from a caregiver or other adult in the past year, over time (by gender)

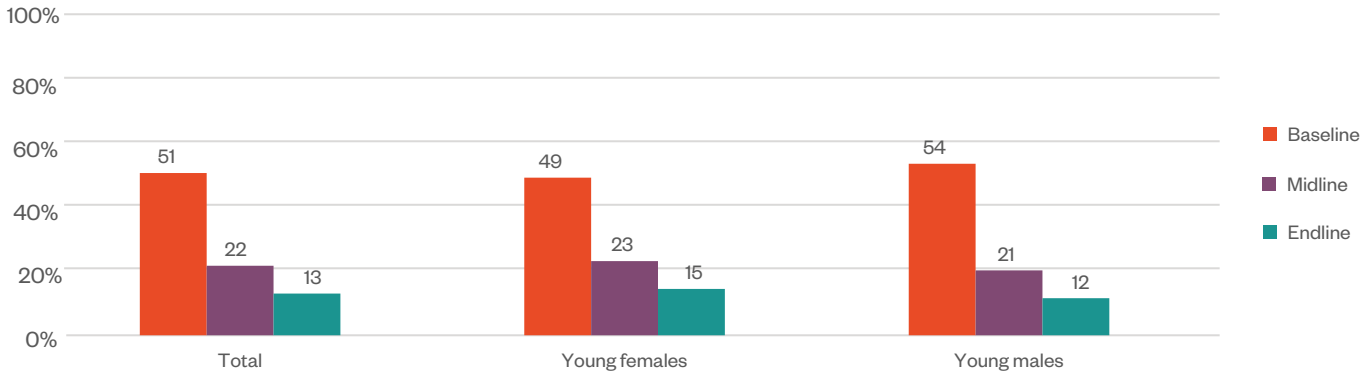
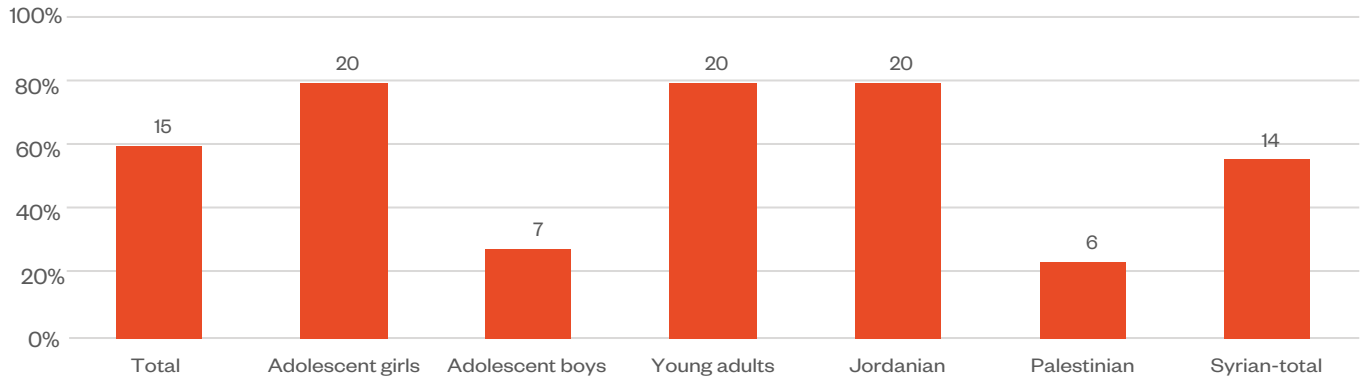


Figure 6: Ever spoken to someone about experiencing violence at home, of those reporting having experienced such violence (by cohort, gender and nationality)



Qualitative findings are in line with survey results in terms of young people's declining risk of violence in the home over time. Most respondents agreed that older adolescents and young adults are less likely to experience corporal punishment than younger adolescents, because they are better able to control themselves. A 20-year-old Syrian young man in host community explained, '*I used to be hit when I was young. … I became a better character when I got older*.'

That said, the key takeaway from qualitative endline research in regard to caregiver violence is that under-reporting is likely an issue across all groups. In some cases, this is because violence is so normalised that it is not even seen as violence. An 18-year-old young Syrian man from Azraq, when asked if he had experienced violence at home, replied, '*There is no violence…they'd hit us, but it was just discipline*.' A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from an informal tented settlement agreed that hitting is simply the way parents teach children how to behave and is not seen as a problem: '*It is my father's right to hit me if I commit a mistake… A mistake like breaking or spilling anything, … He doesn't hit me in a serious and hard way*.' In other cases, under-reporting appears due to the language used in survey questions – because respondents focused on '*pushed, slapped, hit or beaten*' and failed to consider '*otherwise physically hurt*'. A 17-year-old Jordanian adolescent girl reported that her mother does not hit her, she uses hot spoons and burns her instead. A Jordanian mother acknowledged that she chooses hair-pulling over hitting: '*The hardest beating is when you hold a girl's hair and pull it*.' Finally, under-reporting is likely shaped by young people's reticence to shame their parents. A key informant explained, '*It's rare to find someone reporting his own father*.' Another key informant added that this is particularly the case among Syrians, explaining that '*Violence within Syrian families is significantly higher… but it is often hidden and difficult to detect… because of cultural norms*.'

Although a minority of caregivers (all of whom mentioned having taken parenting classes) reported that they use words, because violence begets stubbornness – and ultimately more violence – most parents readily admitted to using violence against their children. Both mothers and fathers acknowledged resorting to violence due to their own stress levels. A Palestinian mother reported that she beats all her children indiscriminately, '*I don't mind where I hit. I'm so so nervous. This caused me irritable bowel syndrome*.' A Jordanian father explained that men's stress is related to unemployment and under-

employment: '*Fathers often take out their frustration at home after failing to find work*.' Parents also commonly agreed that violence is necessary for the proper upbringing of children. A Jordanian mother reported that she hit her son because she needed him to never again impersonate a girl online: '*I treated him harshly because he provoked me and I hit him*.'

Respondents agreed that for younger adolescents, boys tend to be more at risk of caregiver violence than girls. This is because, as a Jordanian father explained, '*Usually boys do not respond to their parents' words*.' By late adolescence, however, nearly all respondents agree that gender and age come together to leave young females at greater risk of caregiver violence than their male peers. A key informant, when asked who was most at risk of violence in the home, replied, '*Females, definitely females… If a girl makes one mistake, it's all on her*.' Another key informant added that girls are not only more likely to be blamed for mistakes, but they also have fewer options for protecting themselves, because unlike young males, they are rarely allowed to set foot outside the home without a chaperone: '*Violence against girls is more than boys I think, as the girl is sitting at home all the time and has no opportunity to go out*.'

Young females' greater risk of caregiver violence is also shaped by the fact that they are abused not only by their father (who wield fists, sticks and hoses against sons and daughters indiscriminately), but also by their mother, as it is mothers that are tasked with controlling daughters' mobility and teaching them to behave like women (with fathers responsible for disciplining sons). A Syrian mother reported that she violently disciplines her daughter if she even thinks the girl has spoken to a boy, '*I am raising my children like my father, I am affectionate with the girl, but when she makes mistakes, I am cruel.*' A Jordanian mother, on the other hand, noted that she no longer tries to control her son: '*I do not interfere between my son and his father.*' Although a few adults pointed out that violence from mothers to young females is generally verbal (compared with the physical violence meted out by fathers), young females reported that mothers' violence is often physical, although verbal violence is often more hurtful. A 16-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from an informal tented settlement said of her mother, '*She is a person of diversity… She hits with tools… such as a charger, a hose, a slipper, a broom*.' A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from Azraq camp added, '*As for me, I feel that verbal violence tortures more than beating… The beating goes away… The effect of words stays*.'

Qualitative research also underscored the role that power relations within the household play in shaping the use of violence. The findings indicate that young people are at high risk of violence from brothers (and older male cousins). A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent boy from Zaatari camp stated, '*My older brother hits me… He took a belt and hit me with it… It left marks on all my body*.' However, adolescent girls and young adult women are at much higher risk of violence from older brothers than young males, because '*we raise boys to be men*' (key informant, Azraq). Sometimes this is because young males expect to be served by their sisters. A 17-year-old Palestinian adolescent girl reported, '*My brother hit me because I was too lazy to get up for him… I'm too lazy to make him food*.' A Jordanian father explained that his son expects his older sister to treat him like an adult man: '*He dominates her when he comes home… Every time he says to her, "I'm the man!"*.' In other cases, however, this is because older brothers take on the role of surveilling and disciplining their sisters – even their older sisters and even their adult sisters – to safeguard family honour. A mother from a mixed-nationality group in a host community reported of her children, '*My son always has problems with his sister. If she goes out of the house, he hits her, if she wears short clothes, he hits her, if he sees her wearing a robe when she comes out of the bathroom, he hits her, if she wears revealing clothes at home, he hits her, if she goes to the store, he hits her.*' Although a few parents described their sons' actions towards their daughters as '*cruel*' and reported trying to stop them, others admitted that they were pleased that their sons were taking on this role. A Syrian mother, talking about her son's efforts to monitor her 13-year-old daughter's wardrobe, said: '*Honestly, I was happy*.'

Although '*honour killings*'[10] were occasionally mentioned at baseline and midline, they were more often mentioned at endline. Young people, caregivers and key informants agreed that young females are at risk of death at the hands of their brothers and uncles, '*but usually not her father, someone else, to clean his honour*' (17-year-old Jordanian adolescent girl), if they have an illicit love affair – or even if they defy orders to leave school. Several Palestinian respondents added that honour killings are

10 An 'honour killing' is the murder or a girl or woman by her own family and is justified by claims that the victim has brought dishonour upon the family name.



A woman walking down an alley in Jerash Camp © Nathalie Bertrams/GAGE 2025

more common than is reported, because young females' deaths are covered up by their families, who claim the deaths were accidental. A Palestinian key informant reported:

> *Recently, there was a girl, she was supposed to stop school in the seventh or eighth grade and stay home. She told her brother, "I don't want to stay at home. I want to continue my studies, not according to your wishes." .... That night, he shot her with a gun.... They said he was cleaning the gun, and it accidentally went off and hit her.... The mother didn't file a complaint, even though she had the right to.' At endline, some young females reported that they are not opposed to the practice of honour killing, because they believe it to be in line with Qur'anic teachings. An 18-year-old Jordanian young woman stated that honour killing is acceptable if a young female chose to enter into a relationship of her own free will: 'If a girl did it by her acceptance, then yes killing is OK, but if it wasn't based on her acceptance, then no...maybe he stole her photos, or he might have threatened her like it's compulsory.'*

In qualitative research, young people most often spoke of disclosing caregiver violence to another family member. If violence was at the hands of their mother, they tended to turn to their father. If violence was at the hands of their father, they tended to turn to their grandfather or an uncle. That said, young people rarely reported seeking support for violence, because until that violence became vicious, most saw it as their own fault and, indeed, as an act of parental love. A 15-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from Zaatari camp, when asked how parents ought to discipline their children, replied, '*If she is wrong, the girl has to be beaten, 100%.*' A Jordanian adolescent boy, the same age, agreed, '*Usually my father hits me on the face... after, he comes and apologises to me and says, "I hit you because I do not want you to do anything wrong and I just want you to do the right things"*.' Young people's urge to protect their parents is so strong that one Jordanian young adult woman, whose teachers called in the Juvenile and Family Protection Department (more simply called Family Protection by respondents) when they suspected that she was being beaten when she was younger, admitted that she lied to Family Protection employees to save her father's reputation: '*I don't complain about my father.*' Several adolescent boys and young adult men added that their own sense of masculinity further disincentivised disclosing experiences of violence. A 21-year-old Syrian young adult man from an informal tented settlement recalled that when he was younger, '*My father would beat me. With a pesticide hose, with a pipe – anything. It was normal for me. I'm tough. I don't care about these things... As soon as he finished beating me, I'd go to my tent, light a cigarette, and sit and smoke. It didn't affect me. I had no reaction, nothing.*'

Violence from educators

The endline survey found that 6% of currently enrolled adolescents had been hit or beaten by an educator in the past year – but that 18% had witnessed such violence in the same time period (see Figure 7). Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that most adolescent boys attend boys' schools taught by men and most adolescent girls attend girls' schools taught by women, gender differences were highly significant: no adolescent girls but 14% of adolescent boys reported being hit, and 3% of adolescent girls but 38% of boys reported witnessing other students being hit. For adolescent boys, nationality differences were significant in terms of witnessing violence, with Jordanian adolescent boys (51%) more likely to have witnessed educator violence than Syrian adolescent boys in either host communities (36%) or camps (28%) and Palestinian adolescent boys (35%)*.

Because of differences in the way questions were worded,[11] it is not possible to track educator violence since baseline. We do know, however, that it has declined since midline. Looking only at the adolescent boys in the panel sample who were enrolled at both rounds, those who experienced educator violence in the past year fell from 22% at midline to 15% at endline (see also Presler-Marshall et al., 2025c).

The endline survey found that few young people disclose violence at the hands of educators. Of those who reported either experiencing or witnessing educator violence in the past year, only 25% had ever spoken to someone about that violence. Differences between groups were minimal. Disclosure rates have also declined slightly over time. Among students in the panel sample who have experienced educator violence in the past year, disclosure rates fell from 33% (baseline), to 30% (midline), to 26% (endline).

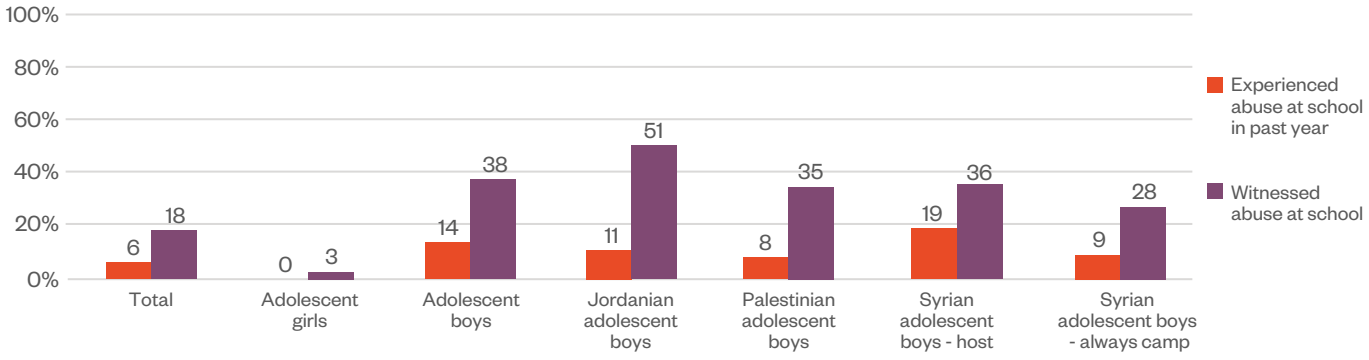
As was the case with caregiver violence, qualitative research suggests that educator violence could be under-reported in the endline survey because it is so normalised. A 19-year-old Syrian young adult man from Zaatari camp, when asked if teachers in his school were violent, replied, '*Those who make a mistake – for example, two people quarrelled… teachers discipline them, but not with that beating… Well, by beating, but not that strong beating… with a hose.*' A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from an informal tented settlement similarly answered, '*It wasn't violence, but she* [the teacher] *would hit us and scare us.*'

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that educator violence is a young male's problem. Although young females often reported that they had been treated badly by teachers when they were younger, at endline, young females did not report teacher violence. A 22-year-old Syrian young adult woman from a host community explained, '*In boys' schools, teachers hit. Female teachers don't hit.*' A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from a host community elaborated, '*They just scold, shout.*'

Adolescent boys and young adult men, on the other hand, often reported that they had been so badly abused by teachers that it had made them hate school and ultimately contributed to their dropping out. A 15-year-old Turkmen adolescent boy who dropped out after 4th grade explained, '*My teacher was worse than the devil…. I left the school.*' Boys noted that they are beaten for myriad reasons. A 15-year-old Syrian adolescent boy from a host community explained:

> *The teacher beats the student who does not do his homework. The teacher also beats the student if he is a minute or two late for school in the morning. The teacher also beats the student if he talks to his classmate. And if he asks his classmate for a pencil or eraser, the teacher beats him with a hose.*

Figure 7: Experienced or witnessed being hit or beaten by an educator in the past year, of enrolled adolescents (by gender, and for boys, by nationality/location)



11 At baseline, young people were asked if they had *ever* been hit by an educator. At midline and endline, the question was changed to 'in the past 12 months'.

Not all adolescent boys and young adult men disagreed that teachers should eschew violence. Several noted that young males do not listen and that boys' schools are so chaotic that those who want to learn cannot. An 18-year-old Syrian young adult man from Azraq camp stated, '*I agree that teachers should be allowed to hit*.' Indeed, a Syrian father from Zaatari camp observed that young males' and teachers' bad behaviour is mutually reinforcing:

> *The teacher scolds this student for his negligence, so the student waits for the teacher outside the school with a group of his bad friends and verbally assaults the teacher with bad words, and they also throw stones at him… Therefore, teachers prefer to stay in the classroom without imposing any control on the students and without caring about what the students do inside the classroom. They prefer not to ask the students about their lessons and homework.*

In qualitative interviews, young Syrian people regularly reported that teachers are cruel to them because they are Syrians. An 18-year-old Syrian young adult man from Azraq camp, who left school after 8th grade, recalled, '*I was bullied by a Jordanian teacher who insulted Syrians… He spoke badly about Syrians, saying things like "You have no dignity"*.' Some teachers admitted this is true. One stated, '*Some teachers threaten students that if they complain about him, they will send him back to Syria… The child is very afraid*.'

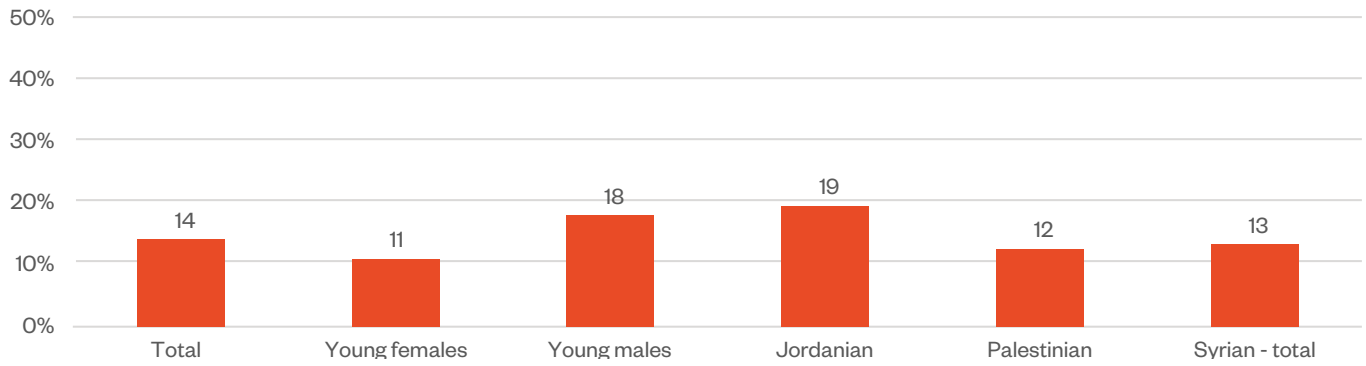
Respondents explained that educator violence is declining over time for two main reasons. Key informants focused on efforts by the Ministry of Education to reduce violence. One educator explained, '*The Ministry of Education has taken many measures at the level of national systems and laws, and prohibits these practices*.' Another educator singled out the role of teacher training, saying that, '*The rate of violence against adolescents in schools has changed because teachers have taken courses on how to deal with students in school*.' Some caregivers reported that efforts are paying off. A Palestinian mother, whose son was badly beaten by a teacher, stated that she had made an official complaint to school officials, Family Protection and the police and that the offending teacher had been fired: '*That teacher was replaced*.' Young males, on the other hand, observed that violence has declined primarily because only the most studious young people continue on to secondary school, which means there were fewer disruptions in the classroom at endline than at midline.

Young people who are hit by educators for reasons that they believe are unfair do generally tell their parents. That said, most young males noted that many parents do not take boys' side – and that reporting teacher violence does not result in consistent action. A 14-year-old Syrian adolescent boy in a host community explained that parents often favour teacher violence: '*Parents don't say anything. If the son is at fault, they* [parents] *tell him* [teacher] *to hit him* [the student].' An 18-year-old Syrian young adult man from Azraq camp stated that he and his parents had approached the principal about incessant teacher violence and that the principal had declined to take action: '*We complained about him… Nothing happened. We told the principal about him, and he told us it's a shame to cut off his livelihood*.' A teacher in a host community acknowledged that reporting rarely results in action, because '*the teacher hitting the student – it's usually for their benefit*'.

Peer violence

In aggregate, at endline, 14% of young people reported that they had experienced peer violence in the past year (see Figure 8). Cohort differences were small, but young males (18%) were significantly more likely to report peer violence than young females (11%). Nationality differences were also significant. Jordanians (19%) were more likely to

Figure 8: Experienced peer violence in the past year (by gender and nationality)



report experiencing peer violence than all other groups. Jordanian young males (24%) were especially likely to report having experienced peer violence; Palestinian young females (8%) were least likely to do so.

Between baseline and endline, peer violence declined significantly. Among the panel sample, peer violence declined from 43% at baseline to 14% at endline (Figure 9). Again, capturing the importance of early adolescence (10-14), declines were larger for adolescents (35 percentage points) than for young adults (20 percentage points).

The endline survey found that of those respondents who had experienced peer violence in the past year, only 30% had ever spoken to someone about it (see Figure 10). Although young males were significantly more likely to experience peer violence than young females (18% versus 11%), females (35%) were more likely than males (25%) to have disclosed. Disclosure also varied by location for Syrians; those living in formal camps (42%), where exposure to NGOs is higher, and informal tented settlements (42%), where nearly all community members are relatives, were twice as likely to have spoken about peer violence than their peers in host communities (21%). Cohort differences were small and insignificant. Disclosure rates have fallen over time. Among the panel sample who had experienced peer violence in the past year, disclosure rates fell from 40% at baseline, to 33% at midline, to 28% at endline.

Qualitative endline research suggests that young people under-report peer violence – with the exception of Syrian, Turkmen and Bani Murra young people, who are '*called dirty, ugly*' (15-year-old Syrian adolescent girl, Azraq) because they are Syrian, Turkmen, or Bani Murra – because they did not recognise bullying behaviours as violence (see Box 3). When asked if there is peer violence at his school, a 16-year-old Syrian adolescent boy in a host community replied, '*Violence? No. But there is bullying.*' A 25-year-old young Jordanian adult man similarly explained, '*The term "violence" is big... It isn't violence... You get beaten and beat back. It will be like that... It's just a normal thing.*' Young females also failed to recognise violence as violence. A 22-year-old Syrian young adult woman in a host community recalled of her school days, '*Violence, no. But they gossip, it's normal, they curse at me.*'

Overall, adolescent boys and young adult men reported experiencing and perpetrating different forms of peer violence than adolescent girls and young adult women. Young males reported more physical fights, while young females reported more malicious gossiping, stealing of one another's personal effects, social exclusion, and verbal insults. A 19-year-old Bani Murra young adult man explained that he had broken several bones fighting with peers when he was younger: '*I got hit, and I hit back – it's just normal... Me and my friend got into an argument over something small, like, he hit me, so I hit him back, and my hand got fractured.*' A 23-year-old Syrian young adult man living in Azraq camp, when asked if he had fought with his peers, replied that physical fights were so '*normal*' that they were '*like crocodile skin*'.

Figure 9: Experienced peer violence in the past year, over time

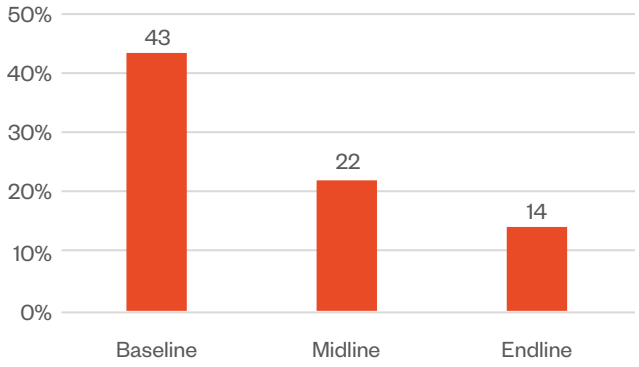
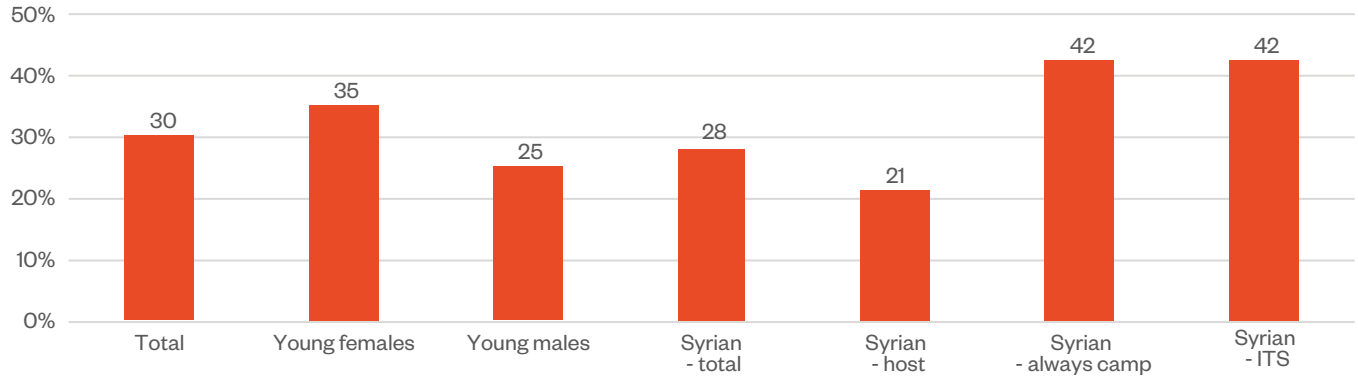


Figure 10: Ever spoken to someone about experiencing peer violence, of those reporting having experienced such violence (by gender and location)



Box 3: Turkmen and Bani Murra young people face violence on all fronts

Bani Murra and Turkmen young people reported that they are surrounded by violence, at home, at school, and in the community. As with Jordanian, Palestinian, and Syrian young people, violence at home is meted out by caregivers, older brothers, and – for young females – husbands. A 16-year-old Bani Murra adolescent boy stated that his older brothers beat him and that his parents stand by and watch, which he said was only expected given his age: '*It's normal, he is my older brother.*' A 15-year-old Turkmen adolescent girl reported, '*I was hit by my husband, and by my father and by everyone*.' Ethnic minority young people also reported violence at school, from teachers and from peers. A 20-year-old Bani Murra young adult woman stated that some teachers feel they can use violence against Bani Murra students with impunity, because teachers know that these students exist on the fringes of Jordanian society: '*The teacher, she beat the students hard, especially from our clan. She says no one will care*.' A 16-year-old Bani Murra adolescent boy, however, stated that violence from teachers often pales compared to that from other students, '*Teachers don't beat us because they hate us. But the students, I face a lot of problems with students*.' Bani Murra and Turkmen young people also reported rampant violence in the community. An 18-year-old Turkmen young adult woman stated that she is verbally abused, and assumed to be a prostitute, because she is Turkmen, '*They curse us…they say you are Turkmen!… A lot of guys would stop and say, "Get on with me and I'll give you money"*.' A 17-year-old Turkmen adolescent boy added that for young males, violence is often physical: '*I get into a lot of fights in the streets*.' Adults agreed with young people's broader narratives about community violence. Indeed, a key informant reported that Turkmen young people are at risk of violence from gangs who '*ambush Turkmen kids on the street, strip them, and beat them*.'

Adolescent girls and young women, on the other hand, spoke most often of verbal and emotional violence. A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from Zaatari camp explained, '*Verbal violence is the most common… Mostly in 8th, 9th and 10th grades*.' An adolescent girl the same age from Azraq camp added that violence does not end in secondary school: '*In high school, there's a lot of bad talk*.' Young females noted that peers' verbal violence has consequences for their physical safety, given parents' and brothers' concerns about girls' honour. A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from an informal tented settlement reported that she was relieved when her brother believed in her innocence: '*A girl spread a story, claiming I was in love with someone and skipping school hours… My brother came and told me, "This girl says you're in love and missing classes." He asked me about it, and I told him, "This isn't true, and I don't know anything about it"*.'

That said, young females taking part in qualitative research reported significantly more physical peer violence at endline than they did at baseline and midline. In some cases, they are reporting violence that happened years ago – and we speculate that it is only now that they are older that they feel safe enough to admit to having violated social norms that prohibit young females from using physical violence. A 15-year-old Palestinian adolescent girl reported (talking about her younger self), '*Girls pull each other's hair and fight*.' In other cases, however, adolescent girls reported that malicious gossiping is intertwined with physical violence, as girls desperately try to stop rumours about them from taking root. A 16-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from Azraq camp reported that girls get into physical fights at school over who has said what about whom: '*They slap each other and scratch each other with their nails*.' A Syrian adolescent girl the same age, but from a host community, similarly reported that she had used physical violence to end a classmate's gossiping about her:

> *In the eighth grade, she and I kept talking about each other. On my way to school, she and her friends were walking with me, and I hit her every day. She and her friends kept talking about me… I hit her every day, and on the last day, I twisted her arm. After that, she stayed away from me.*

What stands out in qualitative research about peer violence at endline is that it had largely segued from childhood bullying into more dangerous youth violence. Youth violence, while perpetrated by age mates, was not perceived to be peer violence because it was committed not by classmates and neighbours, but by assailants who were not personally known. At endline, adults and young people spoke often of violence perpetrated by gangs of older adolescent boys and young adult men, using rocks, knives and razor blades. A 15-year-old Jordanian adolescent boy reported a fight just outside his school: '*About two weeks ago, a problem occurred… A young man stabbed another young man in the back with a razor… A young man went to the hospital and got 85 stitches in*

his back.' A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from a host community similarly reported that, '*My friend and I were passing by and two young men were following us and the third young man stabbed him with a knife… I mean, we saw this thing with our own eyes!*' Palestinian respondents singled out Jerash camp as especially dangerous. A 21-year-old young adult man stated that there have been several murders in the past year:

> *One of my friends was murdered recently. Murder cases have been increasing… There have been three to four murder cases this year. My friend's murder was the third one… There were two killed with each other.*

Some adult respondents framed the transition from peer violence to youth violence as primarily developmental. A key informant explained that as young males' bodies grew, the risks they posed to one another and the community also grew: '*It becomes a bigger problem as they grow older because their bodies get bigger, their muscles get stronger, so the collision will naturally be more intense*.' Parents added that as older adolescent boys and young adult men begin to fight over young females, they are increasingly willing to fight harder. A Syrian father from Zaatari camp, who reported incessant youth violence inside the camp, explained that the violence is '*over girls, over girls*'.

Most respondents, however, agreed that growing youth violence is primarily driven by high and climbing unemployment and poverty rates (see also Presler-Marshall et al., 2025d). Respondents identified myriad links behind these phenomena. Some noted that young males are on edge all the time, because they have nothing productive to do with their time and no clear way to prove that they are adults. A 17-year-old Palestinian adolescent boy explained, '*Fights could be just one word. A fight occurs, then they start smacking each other, then guns are used, and one shoots the other… That's all due to lack of jobs and unemployment*.' Other respondents linked youth violence to theft, as unemployed young males turn to alternative means of meeting their material needs. An 18-year-old Turkmen young adult man reported, '*Four young men beat me… They beat me and took money from me*.' Another group of respondents – most often in Amman and Jerash camps – singled out the role of drugs, especially Captagon[12], in fuelling youth violence, as unemployed boys and young men turn to using and selling drugs. A Jordanian mother explained:

> Drug use is widespread in the area we live in, from the window, I see young people selling and buying drugs… Everyone here wants to get a lot of money, so they are willing to do any work, whether legal or illegal, to get money.

A Palestinian mother agreed:

> *Honestly, the most dangerous thing now is drugs… It's becoming widespread… and bad people… they target these young men… they start getting pulled into it little by little..*

In qualitative interviews, young people rarely discussed disclosing peer and youth violence. In the case of peer violence, this appears primarily due to young people believing that they are old enough now to solve their own problems. Youth violence, on the other hand, appears to remain under-reported for very different reasons. Although young people who experience violence (and some who witness it) do generally tell their parents, especially when injuries are significant, families are often afraid to report violence to the authorities because they fear retaliation. This is especially the case for Syrian refugees, who reported that they feel increasingly marginalised in Jordan. A Syrian mother whose son's eye was badly damaged in an attack explained, '*Someone might harm my son even more. So, we withdrew the case*…'

Sexual violence

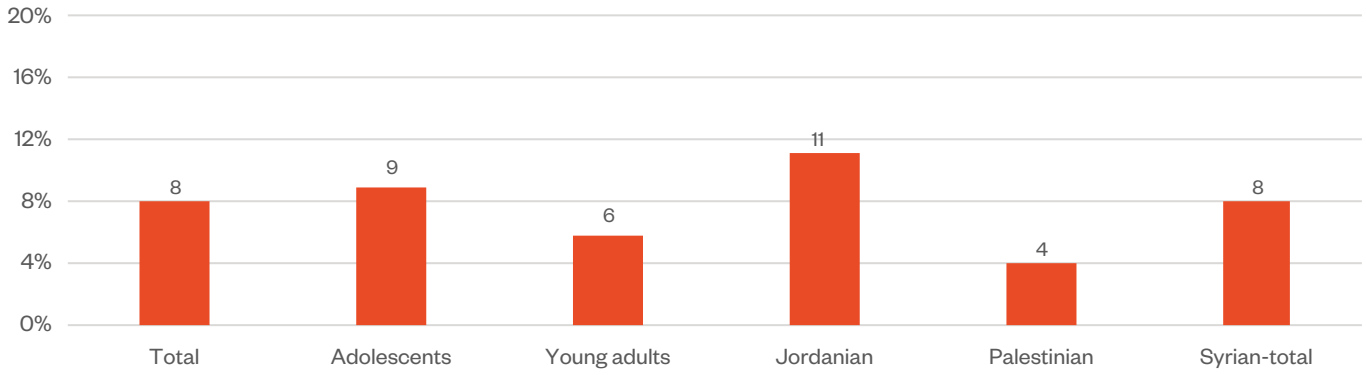
The endline survey provided young people with an option to silently report sexual violence, if they chose to do so.[13] Of young people who responded, 8% reported having ever experienced sexual violence (see Figure 11). Suggestive of under-reporting, given that the question was '*ever*', adolescents (9%) were more likely to report having experienced sexual violence than young adults (6%). Palestinians (4%), who spoke more often about honour killings in their community in the qualitative research, were significantly less likely to report sexual violence than their Jordanian (11%) and Syrian (8%) peers. There were no gender differences.

In qualitative interviews, respondents were careful to delineate between sexual harassment (which they

12 Captagon is a stimulant that has been mass produced in Syria – and exported throughout the Middle East – since the Assad regime.

13 Enumerators read young respondents' instructions which said, 'I'm going to read you a question then hand you the tablet to provide a response. Once you click an answer, I will not be able to go back and see what you answered. If this ever happened to you, then click the check mark; if this never happened to you, click the X mark; if you would prefer not to answer, click the O mark.'

Figure 11: Ever experienced sexual violence (by cohort and nationality)



reported that nearly all girls experience frequently when they leave home) and sexual violence (which, while feared, is more uncommon). Young people and their parents reported that young females are incessantly stalked, whistled at, and subjected to unwanted compliments and solicitations. A Syrian mother from Zaatari camp stated, '*Young men may say offensive words to girls, young men may also stalk girls and give them their mobile numbers so that they can talk to them at night.*' A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from Azraq camp noted, '*There are no places where a girl can be alone without young men following her.*' Although adolescent girls and young adult women rarely framed sexual harassment as violence, they were quick to clarify that it has harmful consequences because it leaves them in a constant state of fear. A 16-year-old Jordanian adolescent girl explained, '*It leads to psychological illnesses in girls*' (see also Presler-Marshall et al., 2025e).

Because young females' mobility is tightly restricted, respondents agreed that young females are most at risk of sexual harassment as they travel to and from school. A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent boy from Zaatari camp reported that not only do packs of young males congregate outside of girls' schools, but that they follow young females as they go home: '*During school days, they'd go around on bicycles, honking, catcalling, causing trouble, they wouldn't leave anyone alone.*' This is because, according to a 16-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from a host community, with jobs scarce, young males do not have anything else to occupy their time: '*They spend their time in the streets… You find them without anything to do… You find them always in the streets, flirting with girls.*'

As was the case at midline, at endline, adolescent girls and young adult women explained that they do their best to keep their families from becoming aware of the sexual harassment they are subjected to. A 16-year-old Jordanian adolescent girl noted this is because girls are blamed for inviting it, explaining that, '*If we told anyone what happened to us in the street, they would blame the girl and not the man. The blame always falls on the girls.*' A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from an informal tented settlement, referring to the violence that young females face from caregivers and brothers, similarly stated, '*The family might say, "You have no honour," and if you speak out, the situation becomes dangerous.*' Syrian and Palestinian young females often commented that they were especially afraid of losing access to education because of sexual harassment. An 18-year-old Palestinian young adult woman, who takes the bus to university, reported that she would never tell her father about being leered at on the bus because '*If I told him, he would say…there won't be university attendance for you.*' Several parents admitted that this is true. A Syrian mother from a host community reported that, '*We are afraid that the girl goes two metres outside the house, so we prefer that the boy completes his studies, and we make the girl leave school to stay close to us.*'

At endline, young females and their caregivers were extremely fearful of '*real*' sexual violence. Respondents reported that adolescent girls and young adult women are sometimes groped on the streets and on buses, and that girls as young as 12 are sometimes raped by strangers as they are coming home from school. That said, most rape cases discussed in detail in endline interviews involved incest, not rape by strangers. A key informant stated, '*Rape cases commonly occur, and the rapist is usually a family member, whether a cousin, a father, or an uncle, who rapes young girls.*' Sexual violence, like sexual harassment, is under-reported, according to respondents – especially Palestinian respondents, who '*are tribal and have secrets*' (Palestinian key informant). This is because – as illustrated by an 18-year-old Palestinian young adult woman who described encouraging her cousin to fend off the girl's father rather than report him to the authorities – the risks to the young females if they do report are simply too great.

Indeed, a 17-year-old Palestinian adolescent girl clarified, '*We fear rape as a concept, but our greatest fear is our families*.'

With the caveat that sexual violence against young males is seen as so shameful that respondents had a difficult time discussing it, respondents reported that young males are also at risk of sexual violence – both from '*strangers*' in the community and from relatives. A 25-year-old Jordanian young adult man reported that little boys are at risk from older adolescent boys and young adult men, as they play in the community: '*There are some narrow spaces/streets here. ...You get to hear it, there are problems*.' A Palestinian key informant agreed, '*Sometimes we would discover a little boy* [on the street] *with a very strange appearance, a pale face... the boy is confused*.' A key informant from a disability-related NGO, who reported that a 7-year-old boy was being raped by his uncle, added that few families report sexual violence, in order to protect family honour: '*I'm sure they won't follow up on it*.'

Online violence

The endline survey found that of young people who reported that they had been online, 13% had ever seen something that upset them (see Figure 12). Young adult men (19%) were significantly more likely to have seen something upsetting than adolescents (12%) or young adult women (11%). Nationality and (for Syrians) location differences were also significant. Jordanians (16%) were more likely to report having seen something upsetting than Syrians (13%) or Palestinians (10%), and Syrians living in host communities (16%) were more likely to report having seen something upsetting than their peers in formal camps (9%) or informal tented settlements (7%). Jordanian young adult men (27%) were the most likely to report having seen something upsetting online.

The endline survey found that of young people who had been online/had a phone, only 3% admitted to having received a sexual image in the past year and only 1% admitted to having sent such an image in the same time frame (not shown). In aggregate, however, 5% reported knowing someone who had been blackmailed into sexual activity in the past year (see Figure 14). Adolescent boys (6%) and young adults (6%) were significantly more likely to report yes than adolescent girls (3%). Nationality and (for Syrians) location differences were also significant, with Jordanians (9%) and Palestinians (8%) more likely to report yes than Syrians (4%) and Syrians in host communities (5%) more likely to report yes than their peers in formal

Figure 12: Ever been upset by something online, of those online (by cohort, gender and nationality/location)

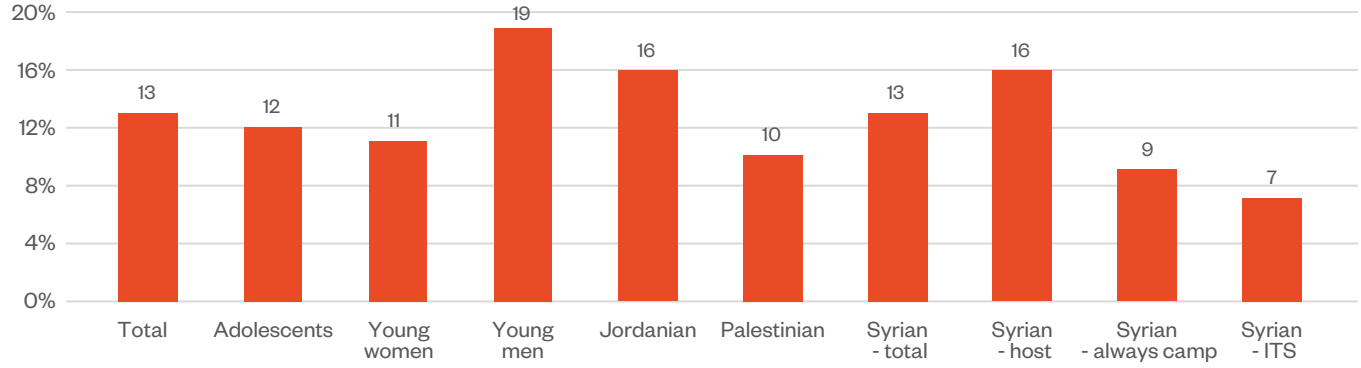


Figure 13: Has encountered online content promoting 'alpha male' masculinity, of those online or with a phone (by cohort, gender and nationality/location)

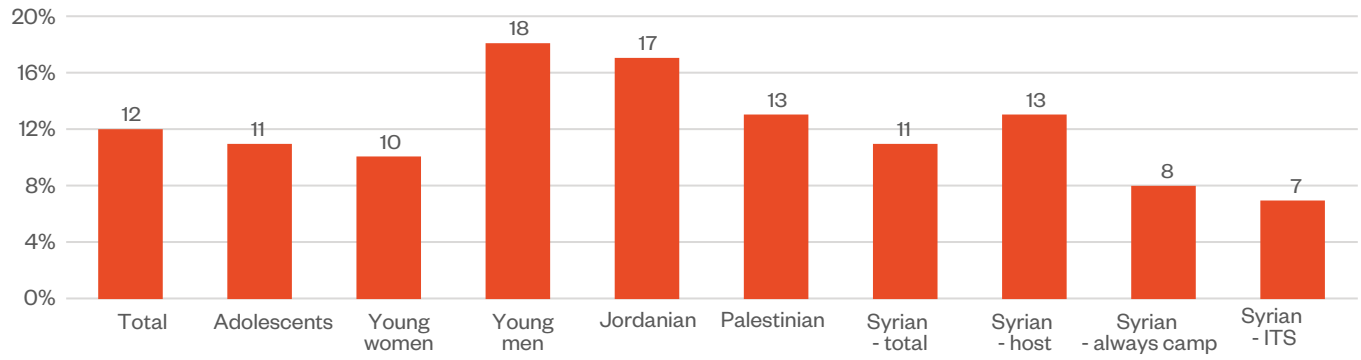
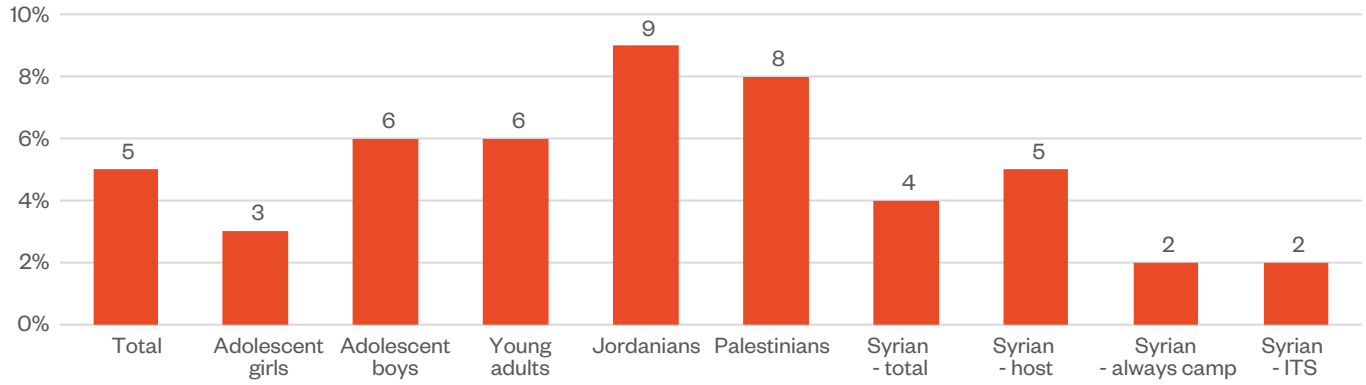


Figure 14: Knows someone blackmailed into sexual activity in the past year, of those online or with a phone (by cohort, gender and national/location)



camps and informal tented settlements (2%). Jordanian young adult men (16%) were the most likely to report knowing someone who had been blackmailed into sexual activity in the past year.

At endline – and unsurprising, given young people's increased digital connectivity (see Presler-Marshall et al., 2025e) – reports of online violence in qualitative interviews were markedly higher than at midline. A key informant from a host community observed that this violence takes many forms: '*The percentage of violence against teenagers on social media has increased… There is exploitation, fraud and deception of adolescents through social media.*' Most respondents in qualitative interviews focused on the online sexual exploitation of adolescent girls and young adult women. Some reported that young males befriend young females online and then trick them into sharing photos that are then used for blackmail. A Syrian mother from Zaatari camp explained that:

> *Sometimes people pretend to be girls when they're actually boys… And they build relationships and everything… They message girls, give them hope, make them believe, and get them to send their pictures.*

A 15-year-old Palestinian adolescent girl from Jerash camp clarified, '*They sent their photos… then these guys threatened them.*' In other cases, respondents reported that young males hack into young females' accounts and then either steal personal photos or impersonate the young female in conversations with other young males. A 15-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from Azraq camp reported that, '*Sometimes guys steal the girl's account… They take the girls' photos and threaten them.*' Respondents agreed that regardless of how their personal photos fall into young males' hands, young females are at pains – including sending more photos – to keep their families from finding out. A 20-year-old Syrian young adult man from a host community explained that this is again related to young females' fear of violence: '*Girls fear to inform any family member… so they don't kill her.*' When asked what would happen if his own sister's photos fell into the wrong hands, he answered – without irony – '*Ouf, I would kill her.*'

Entirely new at endline, several respondents reported that there is effectively nothing adolescent girls and young adult women can do to keep themselves safe from online sexual exploitation due to generative artificial intelligence (AI). A key informant from Zaatari camp explained that, '*Even normal photos can be used by bad people to blackmail girls. He uses the photos and edits them on Photoshop and makes photos of the girl as if she is naked.*' A father from that location admitted that parents are ill-equipped to deal with challenges due to technological 'progress': '*I heard this from my son, not the other way around – I didn't advise him; he advised me.*'

A few respondents also reported that adolescent boys and young adult men are vulnerable to online sexual violence. A key informant from a host community linked young males' vulnerability to video games and lack of close supervision: '*I'll never forget a case involving a child who met an older man through a PUBG game. What started as an online friendship turned into meetings, and eventually into sexual assault on the boy… The problem lies in how much supervision children receive.*' A Palestinian mother agreed about the lack of supervision and added that even young males are at risk, '*There was an orphaned child [she later stated that he was 20]….The father had died, and the mother was not around. The boy was fair-skinned and good-looking. … Yes, they exploited him in exchange for money and filmed him.*'

Respondents also reported that online economic violence had become common by endline – with young

people and their families scammed out of scarce financial resources by people promising help. A 20-year-old Syrian young adult man from Zaatari explained that being scammed had cost him not only money, but his sense of dignity, '*A charity contacted me.... They told me they'd give me a scholarship, but they turned out to be scammers. They scammed me out of 220 dinars.... It gave me a sense of failure inside*.'

Child marriage (marriage prior to age 18)

On the endline survey, 75% of young people were aware that it is illegal for girls to marry prior to age 18 (see Figure 15). Far fewer – 63% – were aware that it is illegal for boys to marry prior to age 18. Young people's awareness of the legal age of marriage was shaped by their gender. Young females were far more likely than young males to know that child marriage is illegal for girls: 81% vs 64%. Young males were far more likely than young females to know that child marriage is illegal for boys: 71% vs 54%. Interestingly, the proportion of young people who were able to correctly identify 18 as the legal age at which girls (60%) and boys (42%) may marry was lower than the proportion who were aware that child marriage is illegal.

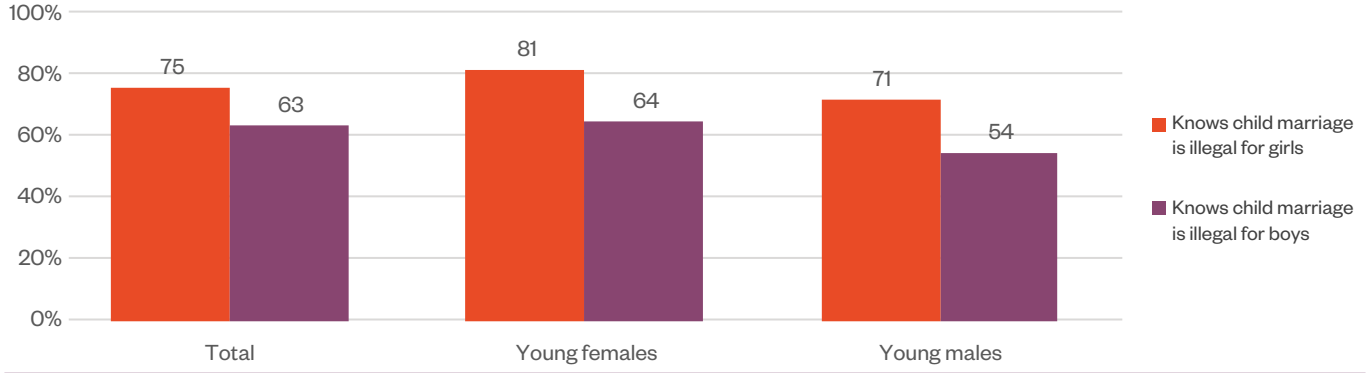
Young people's knowledge of Jordan's marriage laws has improved since midline.[14] At endline, the panel sample of young people were 10 percentage points more likely to know the correct age at which females (62% at endline versus 52% at midline) and males (43% at endline versus 33% at midline) may marry. Gains were similar across groups.

The endline survey also found that it is unusual for young people to believe that very early marriage (before age 16) is acceptable. In aggregate, 80% of respondents agreed – at least in part – that girls should never marry before age 16. Differences between groups were small and insignificant except for Syrians living in informal tented settlements, among whom very early marriage is common; in those locations, only 67% of young people agreed that girls should never marry before age 16. Among the panel sample, young people were 4 percentage points more likely to agree that very early marriage is never acceptable at endline than they were at midline (80% at endline versus 76% at midline).[15]

With the caveat that the incidence of child marriage (under age 18) has fallen sharply in recent years, in part due to the efforts of the National Council on Family Affairs (see Box 4), 11.3 % of adolescent girls were married prior to the age of 18 by endline (see Figure 16). Nationality differences were significant. Syrian adolescent girls (14.6%) were more likely to have been married prior to age 18 than their Palestinian (7.5%) and Jordanian (0.7%) peers. Adolescent boys were very unlikely to have been married as children (0.1%).

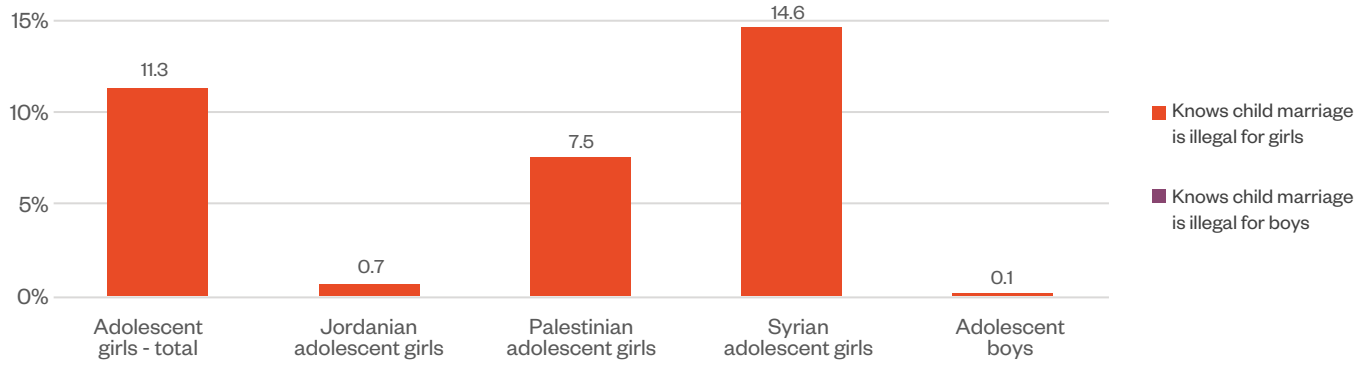
Interpreting child marriage among young women is complicated by the fact that many were selected into the sample at baseline because they had already been married. Because of this, Figure 17 shows both the prevalence of child marriage (e.g. all young women married prior to age 18, regardless of when they were married) as well as the incidence of child marriage since baseline (e.g. only those young women who married prior to age 18 in the seven years between baseline and endline). In aggregate, 31.6% of young women had ever married as children, and 14.0% had done so since baseline. Syrian (35.1%) and Jordanian (28.3%) young women were more likely to have ever married prior to age 18 than their Palestinian (9.1%) peers—but sample construction means that this finding cannot be generalised. In the seven years between

Figure 15: Knowledge of the marriage law



14 Questions about legal knowledge were only asked to the older cohort at baseline.
15 This question was not asked at baseline.

Figure 16: Adolescents married prior to age 18 (by gender and for girls, by nationality)

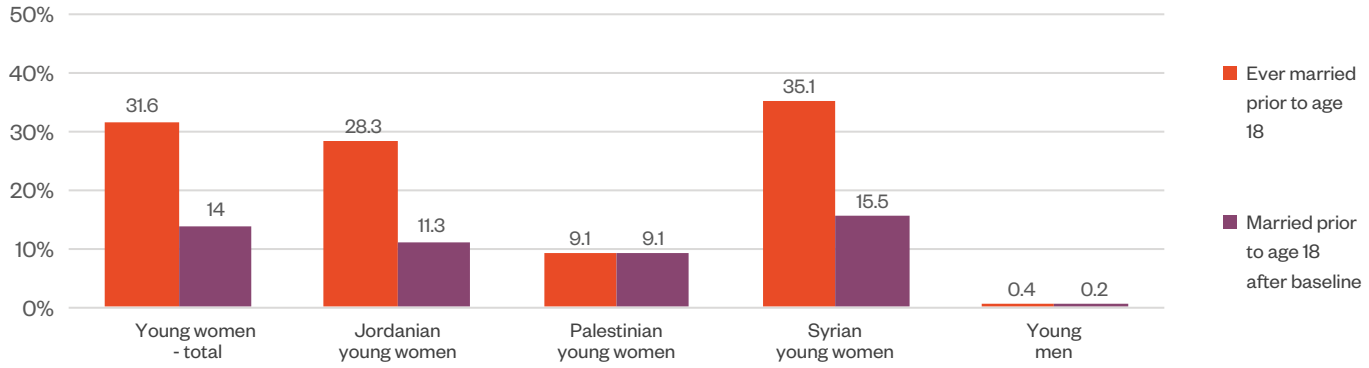


Box 4: The National Council for Family Affairs and the National Family Protection Team

The National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) was established in 2001 to strengthen families, including by working to tackle the norms and practices that leave children and women at risk of myriad forms of violence. The National Family Protection Team (NFPT), which meets monthly, operates under the NCFA umbrella and coordinates 35 agencies – including the country's social welfare workforce, the Shariah court system, the police, and NGOs – to reform the legislation and develop the policies and services that prevent violence and support survivors. In the past decade, the NFPT has been responsible for the development of the National Framework for Family Protection from Violence (2016), the Domestic Violence Protection Law (2017), the Child Rights Law (2022), and the National Plan for Family Protection, Gender-Based Violence, and Child Protection (2026-2030).

A key informant from NCFA explained that the NFPT has been very active addressing violence: '*Violence is a culture… We work on strengthening the protection system at a national level, coordinating with all relevant stakeholders…At the same time, we work on setting national priorities.*' The informant added that due to the committee's work, '*There has been a change in marrying those under 18.*' She also added that with most young people spending hours each day online, the NFPT is now prioritising online violence: '*Electronic violence is a priority that must be worked on and must be studied and understood.*'

Figure 17: Prevalence and incidence of young adults married prior to age 18 (by gender and for young women, by nationality)

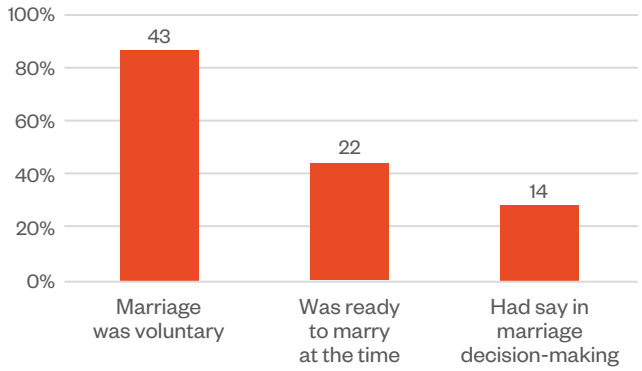


baseline and endline, 15.5% of Syrian young women, 11.3% of their Jordanian peers, and 9.1% of their Palestinian peers were married prior to age 18; however, this nationality difference was not statistically significant. Young men were very unlikely to have ever married as children (0.4%).

Of all young females married prior to age 18, nearly all (95%) reported that their marriage had been voluntary (see Figure 18). Most reported that they had been ready to marry at the time (68%) and that they had had a say in marriage decision-making (67%).

In line with existent evidence, qualitative research participants reported that child marriage – which typically involves girls in mid adolescence and young adult men 5 to 7 years older – remains common in Jordan. A 17-year-old Turkmen adolescent girl explained that this is because girls are considered too old to marry by the time they are adults, saying that, '*When your age is 17, they say that you*

Figure 18: Marriage indicators for young females married as children



become a pickle at the house and no one would propose to you.' Indeed, most respondents were clear that while 18 might be the legal age at which girls may marry without permission, marriage at age 16 or 17 is not considered to be child marriage. A 22-year-old Syrian young adult woman from Zaatari camp, who married at age 17, said, of her own marriage timing, '*Early marriage is at 12 or 14. I feel my age was suitable*.'

During qualitative interviews, respondents reported that preferences for child marriage are shaped by a confluence of social and economic factors. A 16-year-old Syrian girl from Azraq camp noted that once girls leave school, parents prefer to see them safely married so that they can stop worrying about their honour: '*They think they have a girl sitting and doing nothing. They marry her and end worry*.' Girls themselves are not immune to these forces. A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from an informal tented settlement reported that she married the first young man who proposed to her, just to silence malicious gossiping about her honour: '*I said to myself, "The first person who proposes to me, I will marry him and get rid of the people's words"*.' Refugees reported that unemployment and poverty amplify interest in (or acquiescence to) child marriage. A 19-year-old Palestinian young adult woman explained that as economic pressure builds on parents, social pressure builds on girls. She stated, '*Each day it becomes more pressure on my parents, and the more pressure on my parents, means more pressure on us girls*.' A 23-year-old Syrian young adult man from Azraq camp noted that economics also shape young men's interest in marriage, because with unemployment rampant, it is the only way they can demonstrate that they are adults. He explained, '*He is no longer able to complete his education. He goes out and works. He cannot find a job. He now wants to get married*.'

Adding nuance to survey findings, participants in qualitative research clarified that although few young females report being forced to marry, and nearly all report that their marriages are voluntary, young females have extremely limited input into marriage decision-making. Indeed, a young female's input is almost always limited to either accepting or rejecting a formal proposal that her parents have already agreed is acceptable. A 22-year-old Syrian young adult woman from Azraq camp, who married at age 15, recalled, '*It was my family's decision*.' A 17-year-old Palestinian adolescent girl, whose cousin recently married at age 15, agreed and added that parents work hard to convince girls to agree: '*It was her family's decision. She is young... so they can convince her with a few words*.' Although grooms typically have years more life experience than brides – as well as the advantage of having not been socialised into compliance – young males often added that they too are shut out of marriage decision-making. A 25-year-old Syrian young adult man from Azraq camp, who married the previous year, reported that he had given up the love of his life when directed by his parents to do so:

> *I wanted a girl. I talked to my mom and dad about her... My father was completely against the idea because her family was from the north of Syria and told me to choose any other girl, but don't marry this girl... My family chose a girl for me and I married her.*

Although several respondents reported that there are some girls who marry before the age of 16, by allowing a sheikh to conduct a religious ceremony but not registering the marriage with civil authorities until the bride turns 16, this appears to have become markedly less common since baseline. In part this is due to parents' awareness that very early marriage is more likely to result in divorce. A Syrian father from an informal tented settlement explained:

> *Early marriages for girls and boys often don't last. Many couples get divorced within a week, a month, or at most a year. They aren't mature enough. They are still children who don't fully understand what marriage entails.*

Jordanian law has also played a role in the sharp decline of very early child marriage. Mothers under the age of 16 are not eligible to receive free maternity care at government-run health facilities. Shariah Courts have very publicly fined some families of young mothers (up to 600 JOD) when they seek to register their marriage, and Family Protection has occasionally taken young mothers and their newborns into protective custody. A 19-year-old Syrian mother of 3,

who married and became a mother at age 14, recalled: '*I was 14 … Once I gave birth, action started… the delegation came, and it was clear that they were police…From the hospital…they took us out of the hospital.*'

For myriad reasons, it is also becoming less common for girls to marry at age 16 or 17. For example, respondents reported that girls and parents have been targeted for classes that teach them about the risks of child marriage. A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from Zaatari camp recalled having had a class taught at school by a religious teacher, '*I learned about early marriage, parenting while you are underage, pregnancy below 18… I am convinced not to marry young!*' Respondents also reported that when families seek permission from a Shariah court to allow adolescent girls of 16 or 17 to marry despite the law, adolescent girls and their fiancés are required to take a class that covers the responsibilities of marriage. A 23-year-old Palestinian young adult woman stated, '*There are marriage classes for girls under 18, before they sign a contract. The partners must attend it together.*' A key informant elaborated:

> *Premarital counselling typically includes a comprehensive focus on health and sexual issues. During the case study, there are sessions with both parties separately – one with the doctor and the groom, and another with the doctor and the bride. At the beginning, for someone who is getting married at the age of 16 or 17, they need to be informed about what marriage entails. This includes understanding the sexual aspects and having knowledge about what is right and wrong, what should and should not happen, and the potential consequences. The counselling will assess their understanding and provide the necessary information to ensure they are well-prepared.*

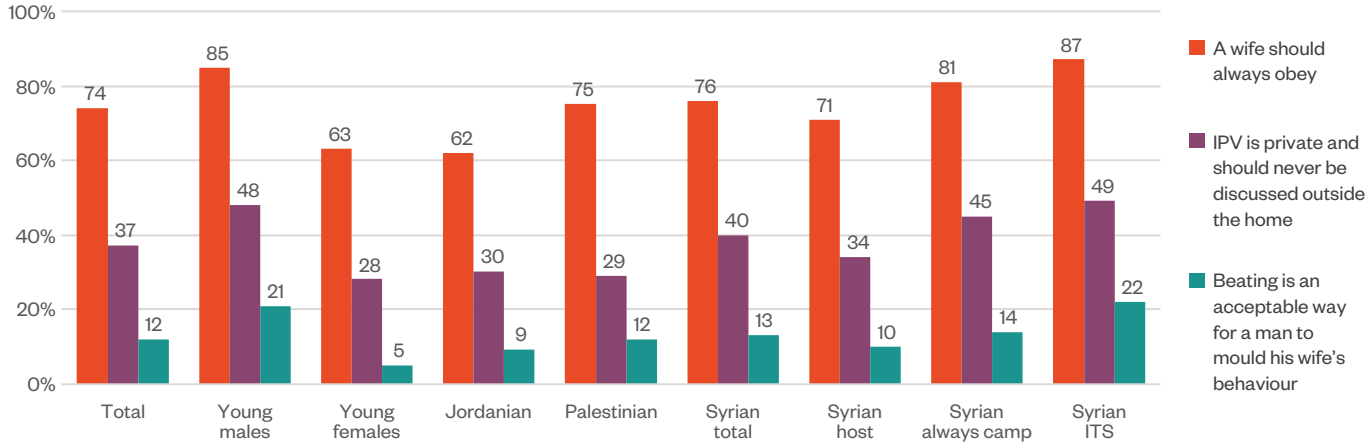
UN policy has also played a role, in that if a compensated volunteer at UNHCR or UNICEF is found to have engaged in child marriage (under age 18), they immediately lose their position. A key informant from Azraq camp noted that this policy has helped most of all:

> *UNHCR implemented an item that prevents parents who allow early marriage for their daughters from working at NGOs [non-governmental organisations]… That's considered breaking the policy… That's the only law item that actually reduced early marriage.*

Marital violence

The endline survey found that beliefs about marital violence vary by gender and nationality/location, but not by age cohort. In aggregate, 74% of young people reported that they agreed (at least in part) that a wife owes her husband total obedience (see Figure 19). Young males (85%) were significantly more likely to agree than young females (63%). Syrians living in informal tented settlements (87%) and formal camps (81%) were more likely to agree than Palestinians (75%), Syrians living in host communities (71%), and Jordanians (62%). A large minority (37%) of young people also agreed (again, at least in part) that marital violence is private and should never be discussed outside the home. Young males (48%) were again significantly more likely to agree than females (28%). Syrians living in informal tented settlements (49%) and formal camps (45%) were more likely to agree than Syrians living in host communities (34%), Jordanians (30%), and Palestinians (29%). A minority of young people (12%) agreed (at least in part) that beating is an acceptable way for a man to mould his wife's behaviour. Young males (21%) were more than four times as likely to agree as young females (5%), and Syrians living in informal tented settlements (22%) were far more likely to agree than

Figure 19: Beliefs about marital violence (by gender and nationality/location)



Jordanians (9%), Palestinians (12%), and Syrians living in host communities (10%) and formal camps (14%).

Beliefs about marital violence also vary by marital status, with young brides and young grooms more likely to espouse conservative views than their unmarried peers. Of young females, 57% of those who have never married but 74% of those who have married agreed (at least in part) that a wife owes her husband total obedience (see Figure 20). Of young adult men,[16] analogous figures were 86% and 93% respectively. Young wives (33%, versus 26% of unmarried young females) and young grooms (61%, versus 45% of unmarried young adult men) were also more likely to believe that marital violence is private and should never be discussed outside the home. For young females, marital status does not affect beliefs about the acceptability of physical violence. However, this is not the case for young adult men; 29% of those who were ever-married agreed (at least in part) that beating is an acceptable way for a man to control his wife's behaviour, compared with 17% of unmarried young adult men.

At baseline and midline, only the older cohort (now young adults) were asked questions about marital violence. This means that change over time can be explored only for young adults. Of young in the panel sample, views were generally less conservative at endline than at baseline. Differences, however, are primarily due to changes in young adult women's beliefs – not young adult men's. For example, at baseline, 71% of young adult women agreed that a wife owes her husband total obedience; this fell to 64% at midline and then 63% at endline (see Figure 21). For young adult men, the percentages were 87%, 83% and 86% respectively. A similar, albeit less stark, pattern emerges in terms of beliefs about marital violence being a private matter. Declines between baseline and endline for young adult women (25 percentage points, from 52% to 27%) were larger than those for young adult men (17 percentage points, from 64% to 47%). Beliefs about the acceptability of beating significantly decreased over time for young adult women (3 percentage points, or a 43% reduction compared to baseline), but not for young adult men.

Figure 20: Beliefs about marital violence (by gender and marital status)

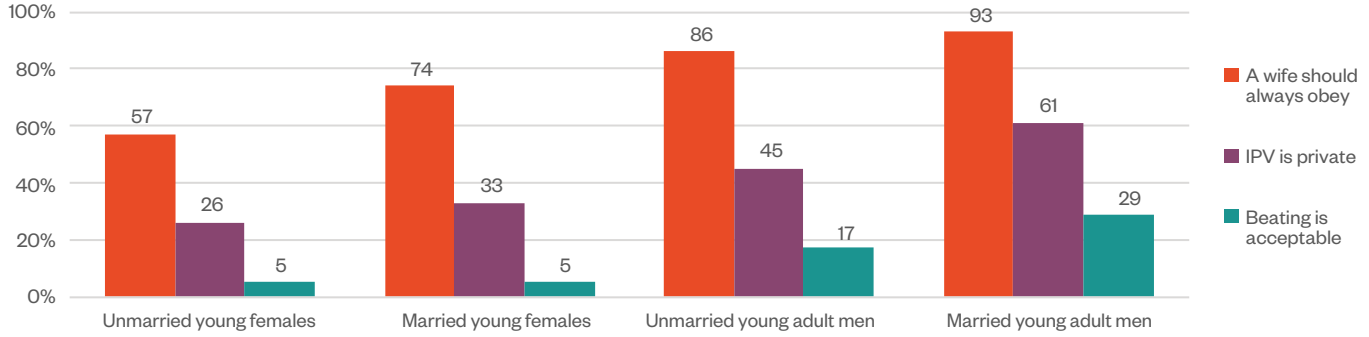
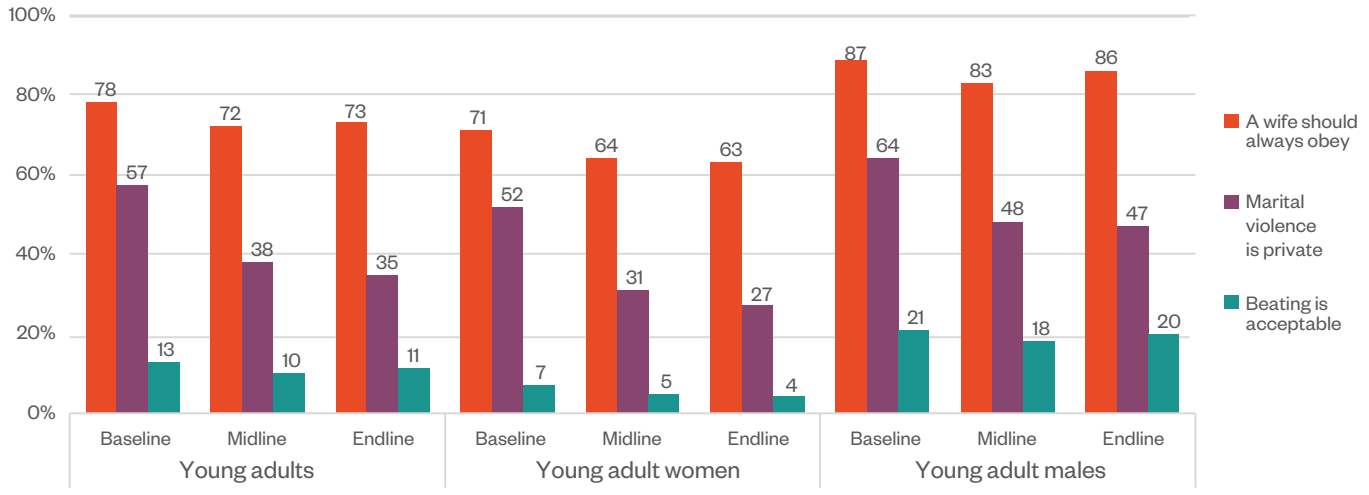
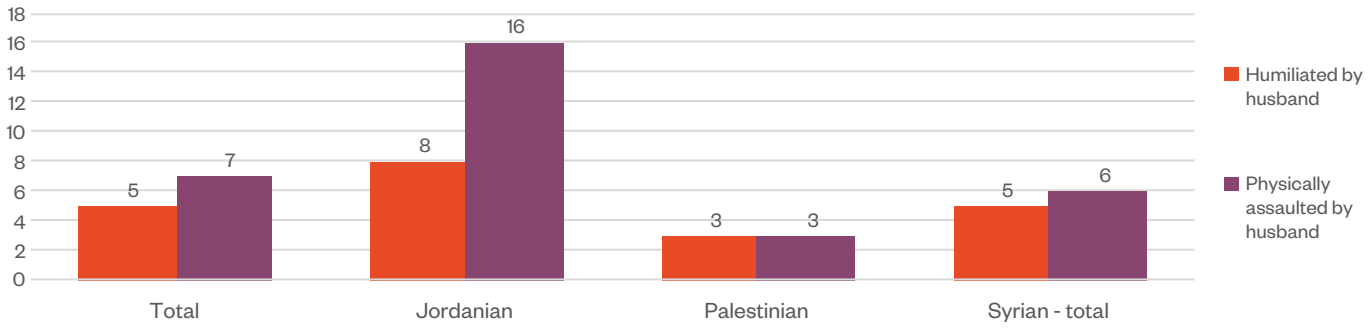


Figure 21: Beliefs about marital violence, over time (by gender)



16 Too few adolescent boys had ever married to include boys alongside young adult men.

Figure 22: Have experienced marital violence, of married females (by nationality)



The endline survey found that of currently married young females, 5% admitted to having been publicly humiliated by their husband, and 7% admitted to having been physically assaulted by him (see Figure 22). Nationality differences suggest under-reporting, with Jordanian brides (16%) over twice as likely to report physical violence as Syrian (6%) and Palestinian brides (3%).

In qualitative endline research, young wives reported being insulted, hit (including with objects) and kicked, even while pregnant, for reasons ranging from using a mobile phone or leaving home without permission, to failing to meet their husband's needs in a timely manner, to being unable to keep children calm and quiet. A 21-year-old now-divorced Palestinian young adult woman recalled that she was beaten for not making dinner: '*He even used to beat me up for not cooking. How was I supposed to cook it? I didn't have money to buy food!*' A 21-year-old Syrian young adult woman stated that she was beaten because she wanted to sleep, rather than have sex with her husband: '*I said no, I want to sleep… at that time he beat me up, he caused bruises on my arm.*' A 24-year-old Jordanian young adult woman explained that her children are her protectors: '*My children hold their father and tell him "Don't hit our mom"*.' Key informants, caregivers and unmarried young people agreed with the accounts of young wives that marital violence is rampant. A 22-year-old single Jordanian young adult man stated, '*It* [marital violence] *exists, and in large numbers too. Like our neighbour – God bless him – every day, his wife and daughter are screaming.*'

Respondents offered varied reasons for wives' silence about marital violence. A key informant from Azraq camp explained that they are afraid of making the violence worse:

> *The first time a woman is beaten by her husband, and she goes to the Family Protection, this will be a deterrent, but she is afraid that it will increase the second time, so she remains silent in the situation.*

A 22-year-old Syrian mother from a host community stated that she had moved on from fearing her husband's violence, but was terrified of losing her children: '*I didn't fear losing him and wanted to protect my children… I tried many times, but he refused to divorce me. His condition was that I release custody of my children.*' A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from an informal tented settlement said that divorce can cost young wives not only their children, but their place in the community: '*People talk about her and blame her for everything… She says she will bear it for her whole life, rather than losing everything.*' Young wives' hesitancy to report marital violence to authorities is also shaped by the way that such violence is normalised and even seen as being the wife's fault. A key informant from Azraq camp noted that many adolescent girls and young adult women do not even tell their parents, because they know they will be blamed, saying that, '*Many times, her family does not support her. They tell her she is at fault and should stay with her husband.*' A Bani Murra mother agreed that this is true, '*If my daughter is not good… he has the right to hit her.*'

In line with survey findings, husbands were most likely to normalise marital violence. This is because, as explained by a key informant from a host community, '*It's a masculine society.*' A 19-year-old Bani Murra young adult man stated that marital violence is simply part of marriage: '*It happens, it's normal… There are reasons, I mean, in marriage, it's known that no house is without problems.*' A 23-year-old Syrian young adult man asserted that marital violence cannot even be considered a form of violence, stating that, '*These are family disputes, but there is no violence.*' Adult men (male caregivers and community key informants), although more likely to acknowledge marital violence as violence, were more likely to frame violence as being a wife's own fault. A Syrian man from Azraq camp, for example, stated that men beat their wives because women keep insisting that their husbands buy things that

they cannot afford: '*When wives require so many things from their husbands who can't afford everything… When wives keep insisting, the husband just violates them.*' A Syrian man from Azraq camp similarly reported that wives are beaten when '*the mom doesn't respect the dad*'.

Although marital violence remains under-reported, endline findings suggest that young wives are increasingly aware of their rights, and that more and more are choosing to speak up for themselves. A key informant reported that due to the efforts of NGOs and donors, '*Women have become aware that they have rights.*' A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from Zaatari camp, who was engaged, explained what she had learned: '*God says, "Obey your husband," but that doesn't mean you have to obey when it goes against your will!*' In some cases, young females' growing awareness has translated into reduced violence. A 21-year-old Syrian young adult woman from a host community stated that her husband hit her only once: '*He only hit me one slap – I told him "Never use your hand on me".*' In other cases, awareness enables young wives to seek help. A 21-year-old Palestinian young adult woman reported that when her ex-husband had stolen their son and called her trash for pursuing a divorce, she climbed through a window, stole the child back, and replied, '*If you want to take him, do it in court… Yes, I'm the kind that gets divorced, and I'll show you who the real trash is!*'

In qualitative interviews, respondents also reported that violence from in-laws is common. Although some young wives reported physical violence from their father-in-law (most common when young couples are cousins and the fathers-in-law are also uncles), most reported emotional abuse from their mother-in-law. A 24-year-old Jordanian mother reported that her mother-in-law insults her and her family, '*She shames me about things that are personal between me and my family.*' A 21-year-old divorced Palestinian young adult woman stated that her mother-in-law had encouraged her son to engage in marital violence, saying that, '*She was the one instigating him against me.*' A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from a host community reported that mothers-in-law also regularly overwork young brides, and insult them for not being able to successfully manage women's work: '*They take the girl and treat her like an object… They then abuse her, telling her, "You don't know anything. Why aren't you doing this? You're not a woman!"*' Key informants and the mothers of young wives also spoke at length about mother-in-law violence. A key informant from Azraq camp estimated that half of young wives live completely under the thumb of their mother-in-law. Indeed, a Syrian mother from Zaatari camp acknowledged that she continues to turn down proposals for her younger daughter, who was 19 years old at endline, because she is afraid of what her daughter might then experience:

> *The house is usually managed by the mother-in-law and not the husband… The mother-in-law controls her son's wife; it is common in the camp. I have a 19-year-old daughter – many people come to propose marriage, but I do not agree. I am afraid for her from her mother-in-law and what she will do to her.*

Awareness of violence, and support seeking

When relieved of having to admit to violence perpetrated against themselves, three-quarters (74%) of young people – with no cohort differences – agreed on the endline survey that violence against children is a problem in their community (see Figure 23). Gender differences were significant, with young males more likely to agree than young females (76% versus 72%). Nationality differences were not significant, but (for Syrians) location differences were. Syrians living in mixed-nationality host communities (79%) were most likely to agree, while their peers living in informal tented settlements were least likely to agree (58%). In aggregate, and with only minimal differences

Figure 23: Agrees that violence against children is a problem in the community (by gender and location)

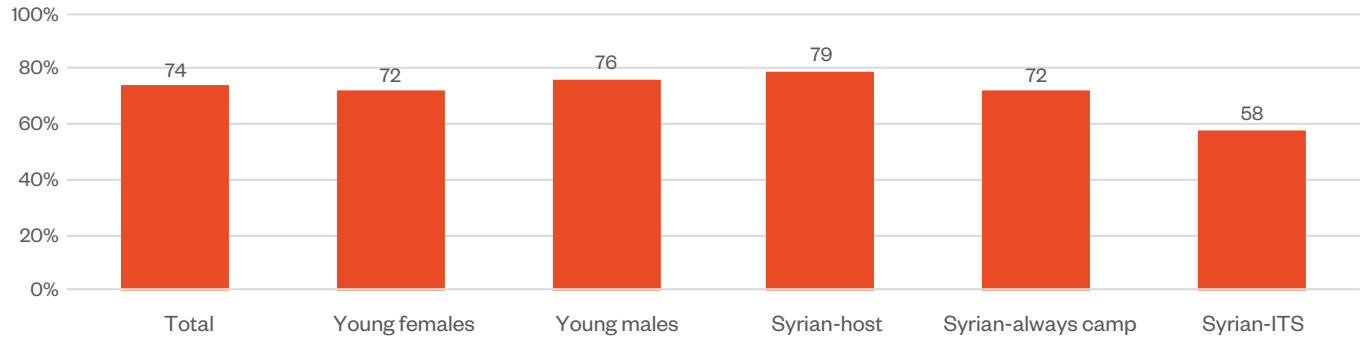
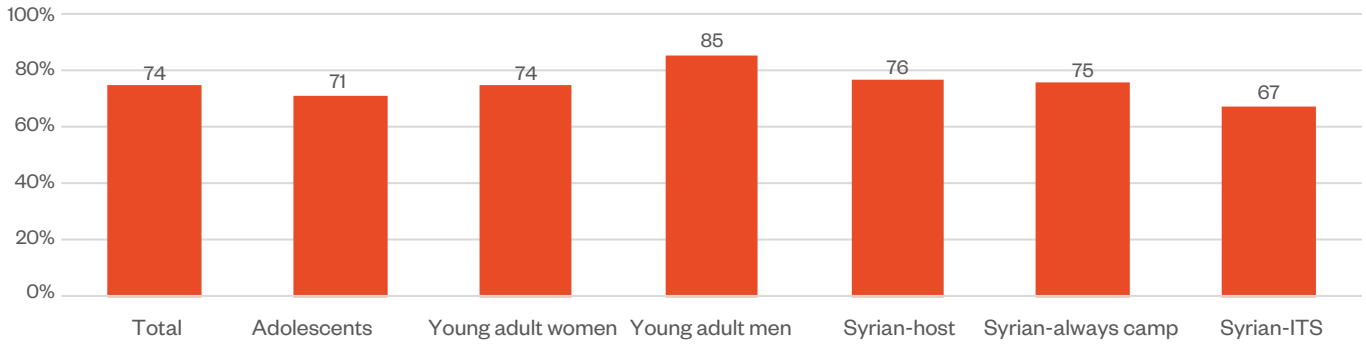


Figure 24: Knows a place to seek support if experiencing violence (by gender, cohort and nationality/location)



between groups, 91% of young people also agreed that they have a right to be protected from violence. Young people's awareness of violence is slowly growing over time. Among the panel sample[17], respondents were 5 percentage points more likely at endline to agree that violence against children is a problem in their community (74% versus 69%) and 3 percentage points more likely to agree that they have the right to be protected against violence (92% versus 89%).

At endline three-quarters (74%) of young people reported knowing where they could seek support if they were experiencing violence (see Figure 24), a finding that could be in part due to the efforts of UNICEF-supported Makani centres (see Box 5), Gender and cohort differences were significant, with young adult men (85%) more likely to know a place than young adult women (74%) or adolescents (71%). Nationality differences were not significant, but for Syrians, location differences were, with Syrians living in informal tented settlements (67%) – especially young females in those locations (61%) – less likely to know a place than their peers. Young people's knowledge of where they might seek support if experiencing violence has improved as they have matured. Among the panel sample, the proportion with knowledge of where to seek support has climbed from 45% at baseline to 63% at midline to 75% at endline.

Although most young people know where they might seek support if they are experiencing violence, it was rare for them to have done so. Of those who reported knowing a place, only 11% had ever sought help for themselves (see Figure 25). Interestingly, adolescent boys (16%) and young adult men (19%) were three times more likely to have done so than adolescent girls (5%) and young adult women (6%). Syrians living in informal tented settlements (7%) and Palestinians (5%) were less likely to have sought support than their peers. Among the panel sample who knew where to seek support, young people were slightly more likely at endline to have sought support for violence than they were at midline[18]; there was a three-percentage point improvement (9% to 12%).

The majority of young people reported on the endline survey that if they had a problem with violence, they would be willing to seek the help of the police (69%) or Family Protection (58%) (see Figure 26). There were significant gender, cohort and nationality differences. Adolescent boys (70%) and young adult men (81%) were more likely than adolescent girls (62%) and young adult women (66%) to report that they would seek help from the police. Adolescent girls (59%) and young adult women (67%) were correspondingly more likely than adolescent boys (50%) and young adult men (54%) to report that they would seek help from Family Protection. Interestingly, Syrians in all locations were far more likely than Jordanians to report that they would seek help from official sources. Palestinians were the least likely to report that they would approach either the police (53%) or Family Protection (38%).

In qualitative interviews, young people and caregivers evidenced broad awareness of the avenues through which they could seek support and redress if experiencing violence. A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from an informal tented settlement, when asked where violence might be reported, replied, '*There is Family Protection, police stations, and state security.*' A Syrian adolescent boy, the same age, from Zaatari camp, similarly replied, '*You can also go to Child Protection. There's Family Protection, everything exists.*' When specifically queried,

17 This question was not asked at baseline.
18 This question was not asked at baseline.

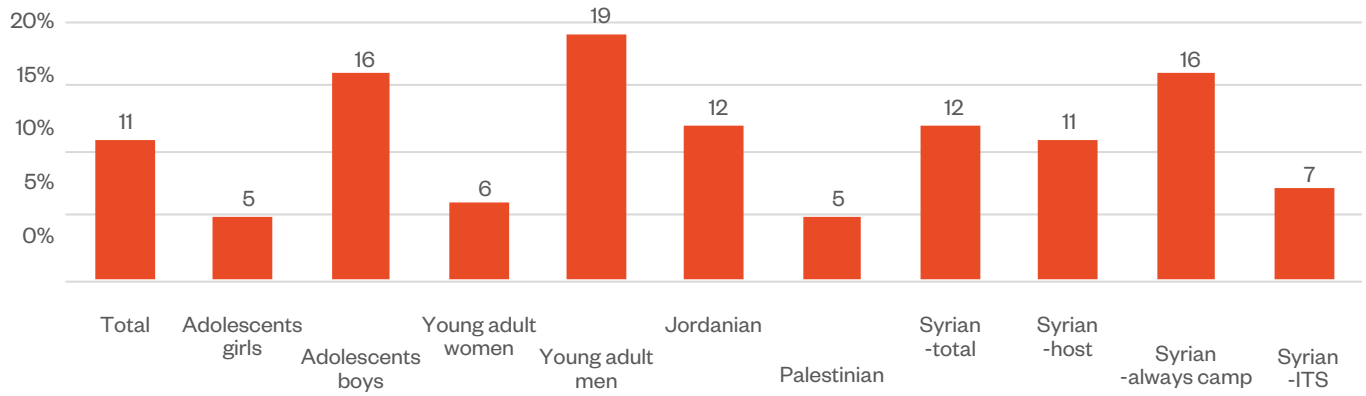
Box 5: Makani centres help protect young people from violence

UNICEF-supported Makani ('My Space') (مكاني) centres, which provide young people and their families with an array of age-tailored programming (including life-skills courses for adolescents and parenting education courses for caregivers), have played an important role in raising children's and adolescents' awareness of their rights, and protecting young people from myriad forms of violence.

Young people reported being taught to solve problems with words, rather than fists, and when and how to report violence. For example, a 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from Zaatari stated that she learned to calm herself down rather than react in anger: '*If I quarrelled with someone without knowing what the problem was or what the reason was. I do not give a strong reaction. On the contrary, I think and solve the issue calmly*.' A 16-year-old Syrian adolescent boy from Zaatari camp reported that he had learned about the national violence hotline, which is staffed 24 hours a day: '*They told us about these numbers, they told us that if you encounter any problem, call 110 or 911*.' Mothers were especially laudatory about Makani's efforts to teach young females how to protect themselves from sexual harassment. A Syrian mother from a host community recalled, '*When my daughter took the protection lesson at Makani centre, her personality became stronger, and she became able to defend herself. A mother cannot stay by her daughter's side all the time when she leaves the house, and when she goes home, so the girl must have a strong personality and be able to defend and protect herself*.' Some adolescent girls and young adult women also reported that they had learned about early marriage through Makani programming. A 16-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from Zaatari recalled: '*I used to see many young girls who were married very early, so I thought it was normal if they got married, but when I came and registered* [at this Makani Centre] *I knew how dangerous this was*.' Many mothers also spoke highly of Makani's parenting courses, which they felt had helped them understand that violence begets violence. A Syrian mother from Zaatari camp explained, '*If we walk with them from the beginning wrongly, screaming and hitting, by God, we will not benefit anything. When they grow up, they will remind us of these things*.'

Makani key informants have also played a central role in helping young people who are experiencing violence get the help they need. Facilitators reported helping students and caregivers approach principals to intervene in classroom violence, sitting with young females while they tell their parents about sexual harassment, and calling Family Protection to stop violence in the household. One, from a host community, reported that, '*At the Makani centre, we immediately report it to the Protection* [Protection] *Department via email. We take all necessary measures with full confidentiality, and they conduct the investigation*.'

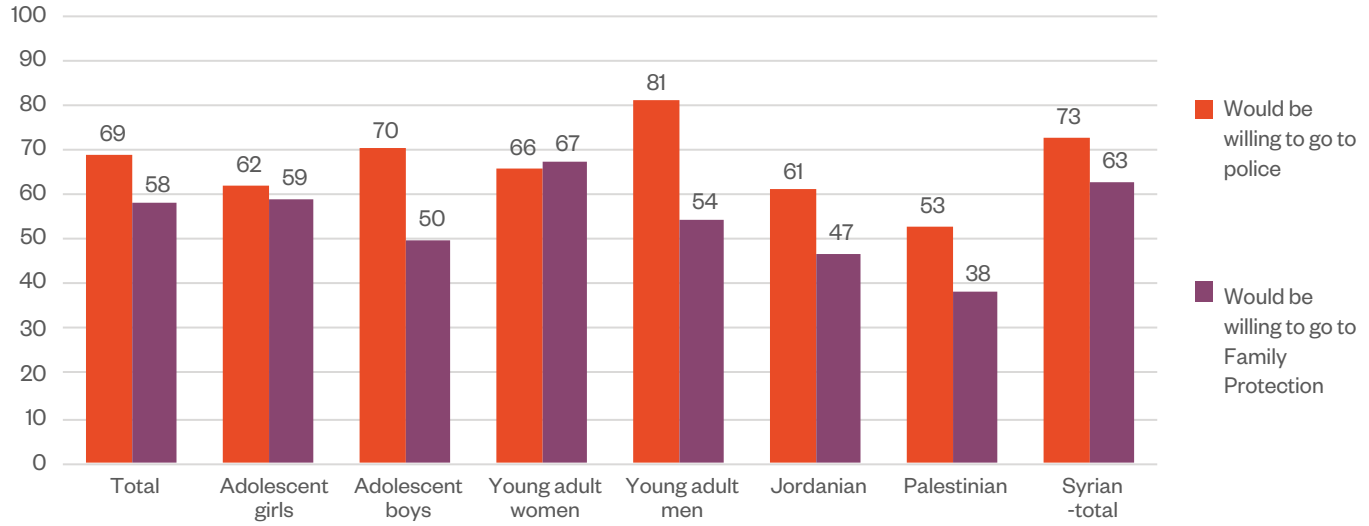
Figure 25: Has ever sought support for self, of those who know a place (by gender, cohort and nationality/location)



many young people were also able to recite the phone number for the national violence hotline.

The minority of qualitative respondents who reported seeking support for violence generally agreed that services are good. Respondents were especially complimentary of the police. A Palestinian mother, whose son was badly beaten by a teacher in the 9th grade, explained that while the school principal refused to act, the police took her seriously and immediately referred the child to Family Protection: '*When we went to the police, they referred me to the Family Protection*.' A 23-year-old Syrian young adult woman from Azraq camp, who used to attend secondary school in a host community, noted that the police take young females' and families' complaints about sexual harassment seriously, and post guards outside girls' schools: '*Now there are police that stay near the schools*.'

Figure 26: Would be willing to approach police or Family Protection in the event of violence (by gender, cohort and nationality)



Although several Syrian respondents mentioned that fear of retaliation leaves them afraid to officially report, the mother of a 21-year-old Syrian young adult man with a hearing disability, who was hit by a co-worker in a café, reported that Jordanian police are professional and respectful. She stated that, '*We have a phobia of the police in Syria, while here we can go to the police and file a complaint against anyone, and the police treat us with respect.*'

With the caveat that relatively few young people had directly interacted with Family Protection, due to concerns about damaging family honour, several spoke highly of the services provided by that Unit. For example, a 26-year-old Syrian adult woman, who tried to commit suicide four years earlier when she was denied permission to marry the young man she loved, stated that even today, '*They call me nearly every month, to check on me or see if I was attacked by anyone.*' A 21-year-old Syrian young adult woman, who was helped by a friend to report marital violence to Family Protection after her parents declined to get involved, described similar long-term follow-up and careful attention to her feelings:

> *When I went to complain to Family Protection… The officer asked me first… "Why didn't you complain to your mother?" I told him, "Because my mother would just tell me to go back." They considered my feelings… It helped, because they started taking me seriously.*

A 21-year-old Syrian mother of three, whose one-year-old child was badly burned last year in a kitchen accident, added that she was very grateful for Family Protection, despite the fact that she and her husband were under investigation: '*The police and Family Protection came, they visited me more than three times at home… Honestly, it was good.*'

As highlighted earlier, however, most respondents reported at endline that they do not see Family Protection as a useful ally. For young people, this is due to concerns about family honour. A 17-year-old Syrian adolescent girl from an informal tented settlement, when asked why not, answered, '*How can I embarrass my family in front of the community?*' Caregivers, on the other hand, reported being wary of Family Protection due to concerns that it will meddle with their right to raise their children as they see fit. A Jordanian father stated, '*Family Protection has destroyed the family.*' A Syrian father from a host community clarified, '*We are very careful with [the Protection Unit] because it stands with the child against the parents… They tell the child not to let the father hit you, and if he hits you, come and tell us.*' A Jordanian mother admitted that because she wishes to ensure that Family Protection will never get involved with her family, she takes care to only beat her daughter in ways that are invisible to neighbours and teachers: '*When I hit, I know where to hit… I know… because if my daughter is exposed to harm, this will harm me… I beat her on her back.*'

Conclusions and implications for policy and practice

GAGE endline research found that young people living in Jordan are at risk of myriad forms of violence. Risks are shaped by young people's gender, age, nationality and – for Syrians – whether they live in host communities, formal refugee camps or informal tented settlements.

Despite improvement over time, largely driven by young people's evolving maturity, violence in the home remains common, due to parents' stress levels and social norms and beliefs that corporal punishment is required for proper child-rearing. Adolescent girls and young adult women – who are at risk of violence from fathers, mothers, and brothers and male cousins (who are tasked by parents with surveilling girls' and young women's behaviour) – are more likely to experience such violence than adolescent boys and young adult men. This is primarily due to family concerns about young females' '*honour*' and how it reflects on the family. Despite improvement over time, young people are extremely reticent to report violence in the home, both because it would shame their family and because it risks further violence. Concerns about reporting are amplified for young Syrians, who do not want to attract any official attention that might jeopardise their legal status.

Especially for adolescent boys, violence from educators remains a concern at endline, primarily because some teachers use violence as a means of maintaining control over their classrooms. Young males, particularly refugee and ethnic minority males, report that violence is so common and can be so extreme that it is a leading driver of adolescent boys' school drop-out. That said, there has been marked improvement since baseline, with some students and parents more willing to report and some principals and Ministry of Education officials more willing to intervene.

Endline research found that peer violence – including the malicious gossiping that can put young females at risk of violence from family members – remains common, especially for those with disabilities. Critically, as young people have moved through adolescence and are approaching (or have entered) young adulthood, peer violence has segued from childhood bullying, which is perpetrated by age-mates who are classmates and neighbours, into more dangerous youth violence, which is perpetrated by male age-mates who are not personally known. Youth violence, according to respondents, frequently involves gangs and weapons, is driven by high unemployment and drugs, and leaves young people (and their caregivers) afraid to move throughout the community. Fear is generally higher in Jerash camp and Amman.

Sexual harassment and violence was a major concern at endline. Adolescent girls and young adult women risk sexual harassment most of the time they leave home, but particularly as they travel to and from school. This harassment, while primarily verbal and viewed by the adolescent boys and young adult men who perpetrate it as 'harmless flirting', not only results in severe restrictions on young females' mobility, but also exposes them to community gossip, increases violence from caregivers and brothers, and risks them being married prior to age 18. Physical forms of sexual violence are also relatively common – for both young females and young males. Qualitative research found that perpetrators of this violence are often family members.

Due to young people's growing access to digital devices and online spaces, online violence emerged as a significant concern at endline. Adolescent boys and young adult men, who are more likely to play violent video games, are more likely than girls and young women to have been exposed to disturbing content. Adolescent girls and young adult women, on the other hand, are more likely to have been stalked and sexually harassed online – which again has implications for their real-world safety from family members. Generative AI has the potential to mean that no young female is safe.

Child marriage (marriage prior to age 18) had become less common at endline, but was still a major risk for girls from the most conservative families, as early marriage is believed to protect girls' (and families') honour. Indeed, marriage at age 16 or 17 is rarely believed '*too early*' – by girls, their parents, or young grooms—and most young brides, having been carefully socialised by their caregivers, report that they chose to marry. Efforts by the Jordanian government and its development partners to improve community members' knowledge of the law and awareness of the risks of child marriage are paying off, and marriage prior to age 16 appears to have become rare.

Due to patriarchal gender norms that position females as subservient to males, marital violence was common at endline – albeit likely underreported (especially by



A 23-year-old Syrian man looking into a broken mirror © Marcel Saleh/GAGE 2025

Palestinians) on the survey. Many young brides are hit by their husbands, humiliated by their husbands and mothers-in-law, and effectively abandoned by their own families to cope with this alone, due to widespread beliefs that wives owe their husbands total obedience, that husbands do not need consent from their wives to have sex, and that marital violence is private and should never be discussed outside the marital home. Although girls and young women are more aware of their right to bodily integrity at endline than in previous years, due to the efforts of NGOs, young males' beliefs about their own authority and 'right' to perpetrate violence remain effectively unchanged over time.

Young people's awareness of violence at endline was generally high, which could be in part due to the efforts of UNICEF-supported Makani centres. Most acknowledge that violence against children is common in their community, and most report that they are aware of where they might seek support should they experience violence. Indeed, with the caveat that reporting remains unusual, the police and Family Protection are widely recognised as providing high-quality services.

Based on our research, we suggest the following key policy and programmatic actions to accelerate progress in eradicating the different forms of violence outlined in this report:

To address violence in the home:

- Continue and scale up parenting education courses for parents of adolescent-aged children (including at Makani centres) that teach alternative discipline strategies and address gender norms and how these impact expectations (including about young females' behaviour) and violence over the life course. Courses should also address sibling violence, particularly brothers' violence towards their sisters – and how caregivers can reduce rather than encourage this. To improve outreach to fathers, Makani centres might consider partnering with religious institutions and teaching father-only classes at mosques, workplaces (see e.g. Bogart et al., 2013) and/or in sports for development programmes.
- Provide parents with stress-reduction programming – either stand-alone or as part of parenting education courses – that includes attention to gender norms and how these impact parents' own stress levels and stress reactions. Ensure that parents of young people with disabilities, who are often under extreme stress, are actively included in this programming.
- Target boys with programming, beginning in childhood, aimed at helping them to understand gender norms and how these broadly disadvantage their sisters – and how they can support their sisters to break the

mould and thrive, rather than enforcing limits on their sisters' lives. Such efforts could draw on gender norms change curricula piloted by UNICEF Jordan (see Jones et al., 2025b) or the *Act with Her* programme, which simultaneously engages with adolescent girls and adolescent boys, as allies in gender change (Hamory et al., 2024).

- To tackle the culture of silence that continues to surround 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.
- In line with Jordanian national law that requires providers of education and health services to report suspected child abuse, 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.
- 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.
- Use mass media and social media campaigns to further publicise the national violence hotline and encourage those adolescents and young people who are experiencing violence at home to seek help. Ensure that responders have training in disability-specific bodily integrity risks.

To address violence at the hands of educators:

- Provide teachers – especially male 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.
- Strengthen and monitor accountability systems that let students and parents (anonymously) report teachers who are violent, and principals who fail to act on such reports. Pair this with incentives for schools that achieve zero tolerance.

To address peer and youth violence:

- 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. Programming should proactively address all forms of violence in the community and ensure that young people know how to avoid, reduce and report violence. Given that the police are increasingly respected, including officers in programming might work to encourage reporting.
    - Develop and scale programming for boys and young men, perhaps using near-peer mentors, aimed at supporting the adoption of non-violent masculinities. Pair this with increased access to recreational spaces and opportunities, including those that can be used after dark (such as floodlit football fields).
    - 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.
    - Provide teachers with training on how to prevent and address bullying at school.
    - 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).
- Improve policing in the most at-risk areas during the most at-risk hours – working to reduce the volume of drugs available on the streets, to confiscate weapons, and to identify and imprison violent offenders.
    - Invest in efforts to reduce youth unemployment –providing boys and young men with training and credit that helps them find, create, and keep work.

To address sexual violence:

- Develop and scale programming for boys and young men – at school, at mosques, in the community, and via mass and social media – aimed at fostering alternative masculinities and encouraging them to become protectors rather than harassers.
- Continue and step up policing around girls' schools during the hours that girls are arriving at and leaving school.
    - Using in-person sessions, 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.

- Enforce the law, with perpetrators of sexual harassment first fined and then imprisoned for repeat offences.
- Encourage young survivors of sexual violence and their families to seek help and justice, even when perpetrators are family members. This will require multi-pronged strategies, including via media and social media, health professionals, teachers, religious leaders and celebrity champions. For example, media announcers such as Lorance Almansi, who is well-known on social media and proactively speaks out about respecting women, has been mentioned by multiple young people in the GAGE sample as a potential champion.

To address online violence:

- Provide young people and caregivers with courses aimed at building awareness about the risks of online violence and disturbing content – encouraging open parent-child communication about the need for limits (generally more for boys and less for girls).
- Work to raise community awareness about the risks of generative AI, e.g. all images may be potentially fake.
- Strengthen the Cyber Crimes Unit, which is a dedicated police unit capable of digital forensics, and raise awareness among the public about the role of the CCU.

To address child marriage (marriage prior to age 18):

- Use multi-pronged 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.
  - Provide girls with gender-focused empowerment programming that teaches them their rights, raises their aspirations, strengthens their voice, and encourages reporting and help-seeking (when needed).
  - Continue efforts with adolescent girls, their parents and the parents of young men to raise awareness about the risks of child marriage (under age 18) and the advantages of adult marriage – at Makani centres and schools and through other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and religious institutions. For girls, this should include instructions on what marriage actually entails.
  - Eliminate the legal loophole that allows girls to marry at 16 with the permission of the religious court, moving the minimum age for marriage to 18. Pair this with stepped-up enforcement, using mechanisms already in existence, prosecuting parents and husbands as needed.

To address marital violence:

- Ensure that boys and young men are exposed to programming and social media campaigns – even prior to engagement and marriage – that make them aware of gender norms, how these disadvantage girls and women, and how they can be part of the solution, rather than the problem.
- Provide engaged and newly married couples with programming 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.
  - 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 gatekeepers (e.g. husbands and in-laws), courses could provide practical instruction on housekeeping, cooking and childcare.
  - Develop and scale programming for young husbands aimed at fostering alternative masculinities; this might be made more palatable by linking it to fatherhood courses.
  - Ensure that parents are made aware that their obligations to their daughter do not end when their daughter marries - (through parenting education courses and mass media, and social media campaigns)
  - 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. Raise awareness about these services at health clinics, religious education centres, markets, and other localities that women frequently visit.
  - Scale up medical, legal and psychosocial survivor services, working to reduce the stigma and shame that surrounds divorce.

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Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) is a decade-long (2016-2026) longitudinal research programme generating evidence on what works to transform the lives of adolescent girls in the Global South. Visit www.gage.odi.org for more information.

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This document is an output of the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) programme which is funded by UK aid from the UK government. However, views expressed and information contained within do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies and are not endorsed by the UK government, which accepts no responsibility for such views or information or for any reliance placed on them.

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Front cover: A young, unmarried Syrian refugee woman who works in farming
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ISBN: 978-1-917476-26-3

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