



Gender and Adolescence Research Panorama

Quarter 2 2020 Edition

Authors: Sarah Alheiwidi, Megan Devonald,
Bassam Abu Hamad and Workneh Yadete



Table of contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| QUARTERLY OVERVIEW | 2 |
| Research | 7 |
| Adolescent well-being: Cross-cutting findings | 7 |
| Education and learning | 9 |
| Bodily integrity and freedom from violence | 9 |
| Sexual and reproductive health | 11 |
| Health and nutrition | 12 |
| Psychosocial well-being | 12 |
| Voice and agency | 13 |
| Economic empowerment | 14 |
| SPECIAL ISSUE CALLS | 16 |
| EVENTS | 17 |
| CONFERENCES | 18 |

QUARTERLY OVERVIEW

It has been over three months since the WHO declared the covid-19 outbreak a global pandemic. Since that time we have seen countries all over the world close down to try and slow infection rates. Although some low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) appear to be past their peak of infection, the long-term implications of the pandemic on adolescents are likely to remain for a significant time. In light of World Refugee Day on 20 June, it is also important to remember the drastic implications this virus could have on those living in refugee camps. As the first cases of the virus begin to be detected in Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, governments and humanitarian workers alike are highly concerned and are taking strong precautions to try and control the spread of the virus.

This quarter's edition of the Panorama will focus on research that relates to the current covid-19 pandemic. Our starting premise is that it is important to focus on life-course implications of covid-19 in order to highlight the specific needs of young people. While there is growing attention paid to the gender implications of covid-19, the focus on young people's experiences and voices has been more limited and in particular on their gendered experiences. This quarter we would like to highlight a series of GAGE cross-country research briefs that aim to share findings on the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on adolescents' lives in real time using qualitative data collected through phone interviews. This edition of the Panorama includes briefs from Ethiopia, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine as well as our covid-19 qualitative toolkit and phone survey modules. We have also asked some of the GAGE country researchers who have been conducting remote phone interviews to reflect on their experiences and highlight some of their interesting findings (see Boxes 1–3). We are also delighted to share a new health policy brief that draws on baseline findings with Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi host community adolescents in Cox's Bazar and a journal article on health inequalities in Ethiopia (conducted before the covid-19 pandemic).

Education and learning

In the context of the current covid-19 pandemic **the digital divide between adolescents has become even more apparent**. A recent brief by UNICEF Innocenti highlights that on average internet access is 33% higher in richer households compared to poorer households (out of 28 countries with data) ([Dreesen et al., 2020](#)). GAGE research supports this and found that- across our focal countries as education moves to remote learning, those with limited access find it difficult to continue with their education. In Ethiopia there have been some efforts to move education to online schooling but **many adolescents in our sample could not access it** – with national exams still approaching this is causing adolescents significant stress ([Jones et al., 2020](#)). In Jordan, although learning has moved to an online teaching service provided through national TV, **some adolescents face significant issues using it due to a lack of household devices and have limited support from parents and teachers** ([Małachowska et al., 2020](#)).

Policy and programming implications

- » While schools are closed, it is important to quickly increase the options for remote learning delivery with appropriate guidance given to both students and their parents and clear support systems put in place.
- » Build up teachers' capacity to manage remote and online learning through tailored remote teacher training.
- » Ensure adolescents are aware of and supported through the steps that will be taken around national exam delays.

The GAGE Research Panorama provides an overview of current research on adolescents over the most recent GAGE quarter, as well as external grey and published literature, specifically looking at articles that relate, from a gender perspective, to GAGE's key capability domains: education and learning; bodily integrity and freedom from violence; health, nutrition, and sexual and reproductive health; psychosocial well-being; voice and agency; and economic empowerment. It also aims to look at the ways specific vulnerabilities such as age, disability and refugee status further disadvantage adolescents in achieving these capabilities.

Bodily integrity

Access to the internet has allowed some young people to continue socialising and learning during the covid-19 lockdowns, however, **the increase in online activity can put many at risk of online violence such as cyberbullying, sexual exploitation and exposure to harmful content**. In particular, girls, those with disabilities and those thought to be at greater risk of contracting covid-19 are found to need the greatest protection online (UNICEF et al., 2020). Girls Not Brides and Save the Children have also highlighted **the potential impact of covid-19 on rates of gender- and age-based violence and child marriage** as a result of increased time spent at home and increased economic insecurity (Save the Children, 2020; Girls Not Brides, 2020). Additionally, a recent rapid review by Plan International of Palestinian and Syrian refugees in Jordan, found that **69% of all respondents believe that gender-based violence (GBV) has increased since the pandemic**, yet at the same time the number of registered cases of GBV has gone down, suggesting that help-seeking behaviour has also decreased (Anderson, 2020).

Policy and programming implications

- » Ensure parents, caregivers and teachers are able to support adolescents to be safe online through the provision of guidance and toolkits that educate them about online risks for children and provide clear reporting mechanisms.
- » Prioritise GBV responses during the pandemic by allowing safe spaces to remain open (with appropriate hygiene measures), improving access to online and remote services and ensuring outreach activities reach marginalised girls – such as married girls and girls with disabilities.

Box 1. Surprising findings: Workneh Yadete, GAGE Ethiopia

Increased vulnerability to female genital mutilation

The government's focus on protecting people from covid-19 creates a fertile ground for the practice of harmful traditions, especially female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C) in Ethiopia. During GAGE virtual interviews in May 2020, we found the expansion of FGM/C. Adolescents reported that girls had been cut in groups in the home of the circumcisers. One young adolescent boy aged 14 from the East Hararghe zone of Oromia region said, *'Yesterday three girls were circumcised. They are aged between 11 and 13 years old. One of them is a daughter of my uncle. Their mothers took them to the home of the circumciser, who is in the same village, in the evening. Since people already heard about it, a friend and I hid ourselves at the back of the house of the circumcisers and we were following what happened to the girls. The girls were circumcised turn by turn with blades. Mothers held their legs and hand tight, so they could not move. We heard that the girls were screaming for long hours. They stayed the whole night in the home of the circumciser and came back to their home on the next the morning.'*

Adolescents said that even though the local administrators knew about this practice, they did not take any action and that the religious and local leaders also support the practice. The district level officials have already stopped working around harmful traditional practices due to the covid-19 pandemic. Older adolescents said that June is the major FGM/C season in this area and they expect that many adolescent girls will face circumcision during this time.

Health, nutrition, and sexual and reproductive health

As well as the direct health impact of the covid-19 virus, the consequences of lockdown and restrictions can also have a number of indirect impacts on the health – in particular the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) – of adolescents. The Lancet has estimated that **the current covid-19 pandemic could be responsible for between 12,200 and 56,700 additional maternal deaths** (Roberton et al., 2020). In line with this, pregnant refugee girls in Jordan highlighted concerns about access to pre-natal and maternity services during lockdown (Małachowska et al., 2020). Furthermore, Plan International's online survey with professionals in 24 countries found that **81% were concerned that covid-19 would cause a lack of support for people who menstruate to meet their menstrual health needs** (Plan International, 2020).

Policy and programming implications

- » Information on menstrual health management in the context of covid-19 – including WASH and waste management and information on menstrual product distribution – should be included in online and remote learning.
- » Ensure pregnant adolescents are aware – through online and community-based information sessions – of the nearest health facilities that they can attend for regular check-ups and emergencies during the pandemic.

Psychosocial well-being

The covid-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on the psychosocial well-being of adolescents. In Lebanon, GAGE research found that **adolescents were experiencing high levels of psychosocial stress, largely due to a lack of mobility, fear about their families' health and tensions in the household** (Youssef et al., 2020). However, in Palestine, although many adolescents – particularly younger adolescents – were afraid or worried about the pandemic, some adolescents reported improved relationships with their family due to increased communication and interaction (Hamad et al., 2020).

Policy and programming implications

- » Invest in a combination of community-based and online psychosocial services tailored to the needs of the most vulnerable youth – such as those with disabilities – to address adolescents' anxieties during the pandemic.

Voice and agency

In terms of adolescents' access to information about covid-19, its symptoms, transmission pathways and protective behaviours, research by GAGE found that urban young people have better information about covid-19 pandemic than rural communities. In Ethiopia, higher levels of **connectivity levels in urban areas has resulted in a strong urban-rural divide in information**, with married adolescent girls in particular lacking information, often due to high levels of surveillance from their husbands (Jones et al., 2020). By comparison, adolescents in Gaza had high levels of knowledge,

Box 2 Surprising findings: Sarah Alheiwidi, GAGE Jordan

Challenges faced by early married girls during covid-19

Conducting remote research with early married girls was particularly challenging. It is common for married girls to live with their in-laws. There are often large families living in one residence and so some respondents found it difficult to find a confidential space for the interviews. Additionally, due to the increase in household chores, it was difficult to find time to conduct the interviews and calls were often disturbed or rescheduled. Although most married girls had their own mobile phones they often did not have an internet connection and had to borrow internet access from their husbands. Some even had to sell their phones as a result of the economic situation.

Although some married girls mentioned that their lives had not changed very much due to the pandemic because they already had restricted mobility before the curfew started, others emphasised that they felt depressed because of the lack of face-to-face communication with family members or financial problems. As an 18-year-old Syrian girl explains: *'I have the same routine as before the lockdown, the hardest thing that worries me that my husband is not working anymore, we don't receive any kind of assistance.'* Access to healthcare was a key issue. Pregnant girls usually travel to Irbid from all over to receive the free medical check-ups provided at the local hospital; however, due to lockdown they are no longer able to travel to appointments and were instead opting for expensive private healthcare for fear of infection from the coronavirus in public hospitals. As one 17-year-old Syrian girl explained: *'I am six months pregnant but since corona I couldn't go to my appointments as I can't get to Irbid.'* Additionally, adolescents living in camps did not know where they were going to give birth and were worried about the quality of healthcare provided in the camps.



Photo taken by Zeina, a member of the participatory research group in Lebanon

Zeina, a 17 year-old Syrian refugee girl who was married at 16

'Life was hard already and it is becoming even harder with this pandemic. My conditions are becoming more intolerable with time. I am struggling with my first newborn and I do not know what to do when he cries. My mother is in Syria and cannot be with me to help with the baby due to the lockdown. My husband is out of work and always fighting with me because he is stressed over our financial situation. The prices of everything have become very high and we cannot buy anything. I worry about not being able to get milk and diapers for my son. I am so tired of life and I cannot get out of my depression. Life has become a black hole and we are trapped inside it.'

particularly in older adolescents and those with high academic achievement ([Hamad et al., 2020](#)).

While young people are calling to be involved in the covid-19 response, opportunities for adolescents to engage have been somewhat limited to date. Plan International found that despite challenges, some adolescent refugees living in Jordan, Tanzania and Egypt **in the context of covid-19 are able to demonstrate resilience and have taken on leadership roles in their community**, such as disseminating information through online life skills sessions and social media (Jordan and Egypt) or collecting information on issues affecting young people through children's parliaments (Tanzania) ([Plan International, 2020](#)). In Ethiopia, some **adolescents are initiating local awareness raising but highlighted the need for the government to include them more in the pandemic response** ([Jones et al., 2020](#)).

Policy and programming implications

- » Young people's civic engagement should be promoted and supported during the covid-19 pandemic and governments and humanitarian organisations should actively involve adolescents as leaders and mentors in their community.
- » Invest in context-relevant public awareness campaigns to educate on transmission and prevention methods, these should be provided online but also through community-based organisations that aim to reach the most marginalised communities, particularly those in rural areas.

Economic empowerment

Covid-19 has had significant economic impacts on adolescents. In Lebanon, where the already dire economic situation has been exacerbated by the pandemic, many adolescents reported that **their households were unable to buy food, medical supplies and menstrual supplies**. The responsibility of providing for the household is often placed on adolescent Syrian boys resulting in significant stress when they are no longer able to work and have little or no savings ([Youssef et al., 2020](#)). In Ethiopia, internally displaced families who were already facing food insecurity before the pandemic due to a lack of social protection support fear their issues will only worsen in light of covid-19 ([Jones et al., 2020](#)).

In Palestine, among some boys there seems to be a shift in gender norms due to their increased participation in cooking and cleaning and a greater understanding of the burden placed on girls and women ([Hamad, et al., 2020](#)). However, the burden of household chores still largely falls on adolescent girls, and a recent study of refugees in Jordan **found that 55% reported an increase in household chores and having to take care of siblings as a result of lockdown measures**. Furthermore, adolescent girls were found to be far less likely to be able to access income-generation activity or material assistance (7%) compared to boys (24%) ([Anderson, 2020](#)).

Policy and programming implications

- » Provide coordinated social protection services – such as food and hygiene parcels and cash transfers – to support the most vulnerable, in particular refugee and IDP communities.
- » In the context of the pandemic, deep-rooted gender norms need to be tackled through awareness sessions on the unequal distribution of unpaid care work and encouraging men and boys to take an active role in household and caregiving tasks.

Box 3 Surprising findings: Bassam Abu Hamad, GAGE Gaza

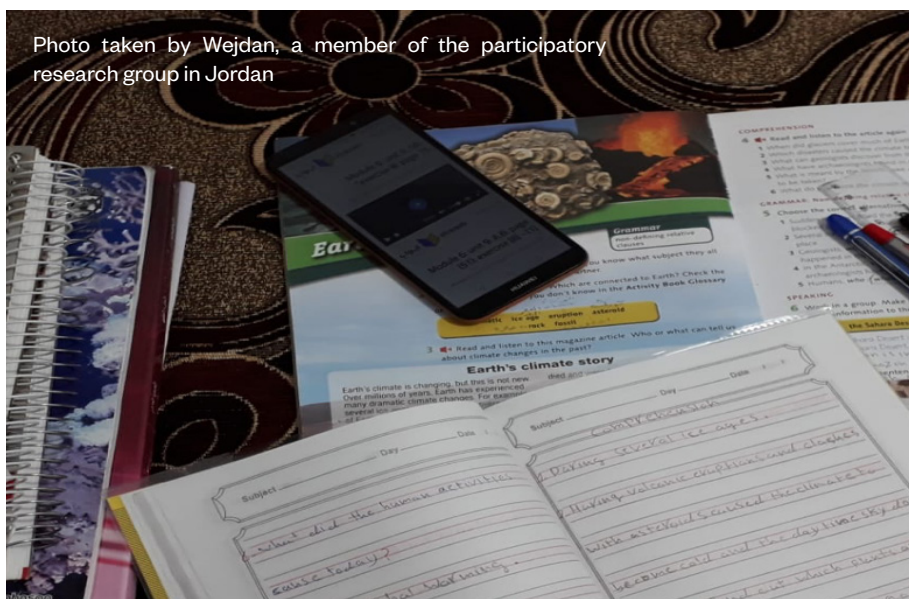
A crisis within a crisis: covid-19 in fragile settings

For many young people in Gaza this crisis is 'one of many crises' that Gaza has experienced and is therefore layered over the protracted conflict with Israel, political tensions with the government of the West Bank and a 14-year international blockade on Gaza. An 18-year-old girl, from Khanyounis Camp explains: *'People here in Gaza say, if they were able to fight the Israeli occupation and confront many challenges in their life, won't they will be able to fight corona virus?'*

Everything is political in Gaza. Adolescents' perceptions of the government response to the covid-19 pandemic are underpinned by the complex broader political context in which they reside. This was reflected in adolescents' varied responses: depending on their political sympathies they expressed agreement with the authorities' proactive approach or were critical of it. For instance, respondents who were politically affiliated with the ruling party gave more positive responses about the government's actions than those who supported the opposition, and vice versa. A 17-year-old boy from North Gaza noted: *'Palestine has responded very early and strongly to the pandemic, immediately after China.'*

Adolescents in Gaza are highly knowledgeable about the virus. They are aware of how it spreads, the symptoms associated with the disease and how to protect themselves. The high level of knowledge is attributed to the high enrolment rate in schools and good access to a wide array of information sources which adolescents can easily access through the internet. Adolescents were active in searching for information and communicating this information to their families and networks, and participated in community initiatives to disseminate the information about the virus to the wider community.

Photo taken by Wejdan, a member of the participatory research group in Jordan



Wejdan, an 18-year-old Syrian refugee girl who was married at 17

'I was informed by my schoolteacher a week after the school was closed that the studying will now be done remotely. I am in tenth grade and now I find it difficult to study because it's hard to be motivated and I cannot ask about things I don't understand. Our teacher helps us, but we cannot understand anything without her. My colleagues and I help each other through a WhatsApp group and try to understand everything together.'



Research

Adolescent well-being: Cross-cutting findings

Double crisis: effects of a pandemic and economic crisis on Lebanon's most vulnerable adolescents

This policy brief is part of a cross-country series that focuses on the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on adolescents. It draws on qualitative phone interviews with vulnerable 15–17-year-old adolescents in Lebanon to explore the effects of both the pandemic and pre-existing economic and political crisis on their lives.

Download: [Youssef, S., Jones, N., Małachowska, A. with Saleh, M. \(2020\) 'Listening to young people's voices under covid-19. Double crisis in Lebanon: effects of a pandemic and economic crisis on Lebanon's most vulnerable adolescents.' Policy brief. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence.](#) [Open Access](#)

Exploring the impacts of covid-19 on adolescents in Jordan's refugee camps and host communities

This policy brief draws on qualitative phone interviews with 11–19-year-old Syrian, Jordanian and Palestinian adolescents in Jordan. It aims to highlight the gender- and age- based challenges of the current covid-19 pandemic – as well as other vulnerabilities such as disability, refugee and marital status – in order to help inform the pandemic response.

Download: [Małachowska, A., Al Abbadi, T., Al Amaireh, W., Banioweda, K., Al Heiwidi, S. and Jones, N. \(2020\) 'Listening to young people's voices under covid-19. Exploring the impacts of covid-19 on adolescents in Jordan's refugee camps and host communities.' Policy brief. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence.](#) [Open Access](#)

Exploring adolescents' experiences and priorities in Ethiopia under covid-19

This brief is part of the 'Listening to young people's voices under covid-19' policy brief series and explores Ethiopian adolescents' experiences under the current covid-19 pandemic through qualitative phone interviews. It highlights age, gender and regional challenges as well as specific issues faced by internally displaced adolescents, adolescents with disabilities and working adolescents.

Download: [Jones, N., Gebeyehu, Y., Gezahegne, K., Lyasu, A., Tilahun, K., Workneh, F and Yadete, W. \(2020\) 'Listening to young people's voices under covid-19. Exploring adolescents' experiences and priorities in Ethiopia under covid-19.' Policy brief. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence.](#) [Open Access](#)

Exploring the impacts of covid-19 on adolescents in the Gaza Strip

This brief explores the impact of covid-19 on adolescents living in the Gaza Strip to better understand the dual impact of the pandemic and the pre-existing political and economic crisis in Gaza. It draws on data from 48 telephone interviews conducted with vulnerable 11–19-year-old Palestinian boys and girls.

Download: [Hamad, S., Abu Hamra, E., Diab, R., Abu Hamad, B., Jones, N. and Małachowska, A. \(2020\) 'Listening to young people's voices under covid-19. Exploring the impacts of covid-19 on adolescents in the Gaza Strip.' Policy brief. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence.](#) [Open Access](#)

GAGE virtual research toolkit: qualitative research with young people on their covid-19 experiences

This toolkit, produced by the GAGE programme, provides an overview into the virtual qualitative data collection tools that were used for the 'Listening to young people's voices under covid-19' policy brief series. They were used to explore adolescents' knowledge, beliefs and behavioural responses in the context of the covid-19 pandemic and to understand the impact of the pandemic on six key capability domains. It also describes a number of lessons learned during virtual data collection.

Download: [Małachowska, A., Jones, N., Abu Hamad, B., Al Abbadi, T., Al Almaireh, W., Alheiwidi, S., Bani Odeh, K., Iyasu, A., Gebre, Y., Gezahegne, K., Guglielmi, S., Mitu, K., Pincock, K., Rashid, S., Saleh, M., Sultan, M., Tilahun, K., Workneh, F., Yadete, W. and Youssef, S. \(2020\) GAGE virtual research toolkit: qualitative research with young people on their covid-19 experiences. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence.](#) [Open Access](#)

Covid-19 phone survey (round 1) Adult female respondent module

This document includes GAGE's covid-19 phone survey, which aims to understand the knowledge, attitudes and behavioural changes in the context of covid-19 of adolescents aged 10–19. It also focuses on the impact of covid-19 across the six GAGE capability areas: education and learning; health and nutrition; bodily integrity; psychosocial well-being; mobility, voice and agency; and economic empowerment.

Download: [Baird, S., Małachowska, A. and Jones, N. \(2020\) Covid-19 phone survey \(round 1\). Core respondent module. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence.](#) [Open Access](#)

Covid-19 phone survey (round 1) Core respondent module

This document includes GAGE's covid-19 phone survey conducted with adolescents' primary female caregivers and aims to understand their knowledge, attitudes and behavioural changes in the context of covid-19.

Download: [Baird, S., Małachowska, A. and Jones, N. \(2020\) Covid-19 phone survey \(round 1\). Adult female module. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence.](#) [Open Access](#)

Living Under Lockdown: Girls and covid-19

In order to estimate the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on girls and young women, this report by Plan International uses studies of past crises – such as the Ebola crisis of 2014–2015 – to try and understand the potential vulnerabilities and long-term impacts this pandemic could have on their lives. It highlights challenges such as a loss of education, heightened risk of gender- and age-based violence, child marriage, early pregnancy and economic hardships and sets out a series of calls to action.

Download: [Plan International \(2020\). Living Under Lockdown: Girls and covid-19. Woking: Plan International.](#) **Open Access**

Close to contagion. The impacts of covid-19 on displaced and refugee girls and young women

This brief by Plan International highlights the specific challenges faced by girls and young women who have been displaced, bringing to light challenges in their education, livelihoods, violence and sexual and reproductive health rights, and provides key recommendations for response plans to meet the needs of refugee and displaced girls.

Download: [Plan International \(2020\) Close to contagion. The impacts of covid-19 on displaced and refugee girls and young women. London: Plan International.](#) **Open Access**

EDUCATION AND LEARNING

School closure and management practices during coronavirus outbreaks including covid-19: a rapid systematic review

This rapid systematic review aims to identify the current research on the effectiveness of school closures or other school-based social distancing measures on the control of the covid-19 pandemic. Data from the SARS epidemic in China, Hong Kong and Singapore suggest that school closures offer little contribution to the control of an epidemic and modelling studies produced mixed results, with recent modelling predicting that school closure would reduce 2–4% of covid-19 deaths in the UK.

Download: [Viner, R. M., Russell, S. J., Croker, H., Packer, J., Ward, J., Stansfield, C., ... Booy, R. \(2020\). School closure and management practices during coronavirus outbreaks including covid-19: a rapid systematic review. The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health, 4\(5\), 397–404. \[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\\(20\\)30095-X\]\(https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\(20\)30095-X\)](#) **Open Access**

Promising practices for equitable remote learning: Emerging lessons from covid-19 education responses in 127 countries

This brief by UNICEF Innocenti aims to explore key challenges and opportunities in remote learning from 217 countries. It uses household survey data – such as MICS and DHS – on access to technology and data gathered by UNICEF staff on national education responses to school closures. It highlights the digital divide as a key issue and urges governments to use multiple delivery methods for remote learning.

Download: [Dreesen, T., Akseer, S., Brossard, M., Dewan, P., Giraldo, J., Kamei, A., Mizunoya, S., Ortiz C., Javier S., \(2020\). Promising practices for equitable remote learning Emerging lessons from covid-19 education responses in 127 countries, Innocenti Research Briefs no. 2020-10, UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti, Florence.](#) **Open Access**

BODILY INTEGRITY AND FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE

Young Marriage, Parenthood and Divorce: A Comparative Study in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Zambia

This new research report by Young Lives is from their longitudinal mixed-methods data with married and cohabitating adolescents, as well as young mothers and fathers in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Zambia. It highlights a number of cross-cutting themes from these diverse contexts.

Download: [Crivello, G., and Mann, G. \(2020\) 'Young Marriage, Parenthood and Divorce: A Comparative Study in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Zambia', research report, Oxford: Young Lives.](#) **Open Access**

Covid-19 and its Implications for Protecting Children Online

This joint report from UNICEF and its partners aims to highlight the heightened risks children and young people face – of cyberbullying, sexual exploitation, online-risk taking and exposure to potentially harmful content – as a result of increased time spent online due to the covid-19 pandemic. It urges governments, parents, schools and other organisations to take steps to mitigate these risks and help support young people to be safe online.

Download: [UNICEF, Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, International Telecommunication Union \(ITU\), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\), UN Office on Drugs and Crime \(UNODC\), WePROTECT Global Alliance, World Health Organization \(WHO\), and World Childhood Foundation USA \(2020\). covid-19 and its implications for protecting children online. New York: UNICEF](#) **Open Access**

Married very young adolescent girls in Niger at greatest risk of lifetime male partner reproductive coercion and sexual violence

This journal article uses data from rural Niger to understand the impact of age of marriage on reproductive health (RH), gender equality attitudes and intimate partner violence (IPV) by comparing outcome among married very young adolescents and married older adolescent girls and young women. It found higher levels of reproductive coercion and sexual IPV in the younger sample and found that use and knowledge of contraception increased with age.

Download: [DeLong, S. M., Brooks, M. I., Aliou, S., Lundgren, R., Corneliess, C., Johns, N. E., ... Silverman, J. G. \(2020\). Married very young adolescent girls in Niger at greatest risk of lifetime male partner reproductive coercion and sexual violence. PLOS ONE, 15\(4\), e0231392. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0231392](#) **Open Access**

Covid-19 and child, early and forced marriage: An agenda for action

This policy note from Girls Not Brides is designed for policy makers and programmers and provides information on how best to support adolescents, particularly those at risk of early marriage or who are already in marriages or informal unions, during the covid-19 outbreak. It provides key recommendations based on: immediate and long-term impacts of covid-19, health and sexual and reproductive health, education, gender based-violence and the protection of children and economic impacts.

Download: [Girls Not Brides \(2020\) Covid-19 and child, early and forced marriage: An agenda for action. London: Girls Not Brides.](#) **Open Access**

Adolescent girls and covid-19: GBV risks and response

This brief by Save the Children outlines the key risks for adolescent girls in terms of gender-based violence during the covid-19 pandemic and urges key actors in the field to ensure that the unique needs of adolescent girls are visible during the response to covid-19.

Download: [Save the Children \(2020\) Adolescent girls and covid-19: GBV risks and Response. London: Save the Children.](#) **Open Access**

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

How are girls in Nigeria and Ethiopia experiencing A360, and what factors affect whether they continue or discontinue contraception?

This report outlines the findings from Itad's A360 Participatory Action Research which explored the impact of two interventions 'Smart Start' in Ethiopia and '9ja Girls' in Nigeria on rates of contraceptive continuation or discontinuation. The report found, among other factors, that fear and misconception about possible side effects and pressure from spouses or other family members were key reasons for adolescents discontinuing their use of contraception.

Download: [Itad \(2020\) Adolescents 360 Evaluation. How are girls in Nigeria and Ethiopia experiencing A360, and what factors affect whether they continue or discontinue contraception? A360 Evaluation Findings Synthesis: No 3. Brighton: Itad. Open Access](#)

Early estimates of the indirect effects of the covid-19 pandemic on maternal and child mortality in low-income and middle-income countries: a modelling study

This paper by The Lancet Global Health provides early estimates of the impacts of the covid-19 pandemic on maternal and child mortality across low and middle-income countries. It estimates that the least severe scenario would result in 12,200 additional maternal deaths, which increases to 56,700 additional maternal deaths in the most severe scenario.

Download: [Roberton, T., Carter, E. D., Chou, V. B., Stegmuller, A. R., Jackson, B. D., Tam, Y., ... Walker, N. \(2020\). Early estimates of the indirect effects of the covid-19 pandemic on maternal and child mortality in low-income and middle-income countries: a modelling study. The Lancet Global Health. \[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\\(20\\)30229-1\]\(https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(20\)30229-1\) Open Access](#)

Periods in a pandemic. Menstrual hygiene management in the time of covid-19

This report by Plan International draws on an online survey with 61 professionals in 24 countries along with qualitative evidence to understand how the covid-19 pandemic has impacted menstrual health management. It finds that 75% of those included in the survey believe that the current covid-19 pandemic may increase indirect health risks for people who menstruate due to resources such as water being prioritised for other needs.

Download: [Plan International \(2020\) Periods in a pandemic. Menstrual hygiene management in the time of covid-19. London: Plan international. Open Access](#)

Daring to ask, listen, and act: a snapshot of the impacts of covid-19 on women and girls rights and sexual and reproductive health

This rapid assessment by UNFPA Jordan in coordination with Plan International and the Institute for Family Health (IFH)/Noor Al Hussein Foundation aims to measure the impact of the current covid-19 pandemic on gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health rights for adolescent girls and young women in Jordan. It uses data from 360 remote and telephone surveys, 28 key informant interviews and two focus group discussions and found that the rights of girls and young women are dramatically impacted by the current pandemic.

Download: [Anderson K. \(2020\) Daring to ask, listen, and act: a snapshot of the impacts of covid-19 on women and girls rights and sexual and reproductive health. Amman; London: UNFPA Jordan; Institute for Family Health/Noor Al Hussein Foundation; Plan International. Open Access](#)

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Intersecting inequalities, gender and adolescent health in Ethiopia

The journal article uses baseline data from the GAGE study in three regions of Ethiopia (Afar, Amhara and Oromia) to explore the gender-and age-related health inequalities in adolescents from differing locations, socioeconomic status, migration and disability status. It highlights that social identities impact adolescents' access to health information and structural disadvantages such as poverty intersect with gender to create distinct health inequalities.

Download: [Jones, N., Pincock, K., Baird, S., Yadete, W. and Hamory Hicks, J. \(2020\) 'Intersecting inequalities, gender and adolescent health in Ethiopia.' *International Journal for Equity in Health* 19\(1\): 97. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-020-01214-3>](#) **Open Access**

Adolescent Girls' Nutritional Status and Knowledge, Beliefs, Practices and Access to Services: An Assessment to Guide Intervention Design in Nepal

This article aims to feed into the design of nutrition programmes for adolescents in Nepal by understanding girls' nutritional status and access to information and services, and by quantifying by age. It found that younger adolescents have the highest levels of underweight and have less access to mobile phones or radio, and highlights that heterogeneity among adolescents should be taking into account when designing interventions.

Download: [Cunningham, K., Pries, A., Erichsen, D., Manohar, S. and Nielsen, J. \(2020\) Adolescent Girls' Nutritional Status and Knowledge, Beliefs, Practices and Access to Services: An Assessment to Guide Intervention Design in Nepal. *Current Developments in Nutrition*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdn/nzaa094>](#) **Open Access**

'We didn't come here to eat. We came here to save our life': Health and nutrition challenges facing adolescents in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

This policy brief draws from baseline data from the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence study and the Cox's Bazar Panel Survey. It highlights the age- and gender-specific challenges faced by adolescents in Rohingya refugee and Bangladeshi host communities in relation to their general health, food security nutrition, and sexual and reproductive health. It then provides a number of key recommendations in order to address these challenges.

Download: [Guglielmi, S., Jones, N., Muz, J., Baird, S., Mitu, K. and Ala Uddin, M. \(2020\) "'We didn't come here to eat. We came here to save our life": Health and nutrition challenges facing adolescents in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.' *Policy Brief*. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence.](#) **Open Access**

PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING

Building Emotional Resilience in Youth In Lebanon: a School-Based Randomized Controlled Trial of the FRIENDS Intervention

This article measures the impact of the FRIENDS programme – a universal school-based mental health intervention in Lebanon – on reducing psychosocial symptoms such as anxiety and depression. The sample included a total of 280 11–13-year-olds from 10 different schools and found that the programme was effective in reducing depressive and emotional symptoms.

Download: [Maalouf, F. T., Alrojolah, L., Ghandour, L., Affi, R., Dirani, L. A., Barrett, P., ... Becker, A. E. \(2020\). Building Emotional Resilience in Youth in Lebanon: a School-Based Randomized Controlled Trial of the FRIENDS Intervention. Prevention Science. https://doi.org/10.1007/s1121-020-01123-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s1121-020-01123-5)

Depressive symptoms as predictors of sexual experiences among very young adolescent girls in slum communities in Nairobi, Kenya

This article uses data from 606 young adolescent girls (aged 10–14) from Nairobi Kenya to examine the relationship between depressive symptoms and sexual experiences. It found that girls who experience depressive symptoms are more likely to be sexually experienced than sexually naïve.

Download: [Maina, B. W., Orindi, B. O., Osindo, J., and Ziraba, A. K. \(2020\) Depressive symptoms as predictors of sexual experiences among very young adolescent girls in slum communities in Nairobi, Kenya. International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 25\(1\), 836–848. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2020.1756861](https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2020.1756861) **Open Access**

Effects of interventions to reduce adolescent depression in low- and middle-income countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis

This systematic review and meta-analysis examines the impact of interventions implemented in low- and middle-income countries on levels of depression in adolescents. It found that in the studies included, interventions that use cognitive-behavioural therapy were more effective at reducing depressive symptoms than other treatments.

Download: [Davaasambu, S., Hauwadhanasuk, T., Matsuo, H., and Szatmari, P. \(2020\) Effects of interventions to reduce adolescent depression in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Journal of Psychiatric Research, 123, 201–215. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2020.01.020](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2020.01.020)

VOICE AND AGENCY

Associations Between Agency And Sexual and Reproductive Health Communication in Early Adolescence: A Cross-Cultural, Cross-Sectional Study

This cross sectional study uses data from the Global Early Adolescent Study of 10–14-year-old adolescents in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ecuador and China to assess the levels of SRH communication and how far this can be influenced by agency in voice and decision-making in adolescents. It found that voice is linked to SRH communication in the DRC and Ecuador but not China. In the DRC, the relationship between voice and pregnancy communication is stronger for girls than boys.

Download: [Koenig, L. R., Li, M., Zimmerman, L. A., Kayembe, P., Lou, C., Mafuta, E., ... Moreau, C. \(2020\). Associations Between Agency and Sexual and Reproductive Health Communication in Early Adolescence: A Cross-cultural, Cross-sectional Study. Journal of Adolescent Health https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.02.026](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.02.026) **Open Access**

Dreaming of a Better Life Child Marriage Through Adolescent Eyes

This volume from YoungLives provides insight into the lives of early married adolescents in diverse urban and rural settings in Bangladesh, Cote D'Ivoire, India, Mali, Niger, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal, Togo and Zambia and explores adolescents'

agency both within decision-making and teenage motherhood. It also describes key policy and programmes aimed at reducing child marriage.

Download: [Crivello, G., and Mann G. \(Editors\) \(2020\) Dreaming of a Better Life: Child Marriage Through Adolescent Eyes, Oxford: Young Lives/Ottawa: International Development Research Centre](#) **Open Access**

Believe in better: a working paper on young people's inclusion in national follow up, review and accountability processes of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development

This working paper developed by ActionAid, the Office of the UN-Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and supported by partners aims to provide case studies on young people's lived experience of being involved in the review and accountability process of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. It is designed for governments, UN agencies, civil society and youth led organisations and it includes recommendations for young people and youth-serving organisations.

Download: [ActionAid, the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, the Major Group for Children and Youth, and Restless Development. \(2020\). Believe in better a working paper on young people's inclusion in national follow up, review and accountability processes of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. London: ActionAid](#) **Open Access**

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The Role of Graduation Programming in Promoting Early Childhood Development: an Overview of the Evidence

This journal article reviews the current evidence on the role of graduation programming in supporting early childhood development in low-income countries. It found that there are some positive effects on nutrition and health-related outcomes; however, there is a significant lack of data on the impact of these programmes on responsive caregiving, safety and early learning.

Download: [Roelen, K., Sherer, M. and Himmelstine, C.L. \(2020\) 'The Role of Graduation Programming in Promoting Early Childhood Development: an Overview of the Evidence,' Journal of the British Academy, 8\(s2\), 133–161](#) **Open Access**

Child labor, sex and mental health outcomes amongst adolescent refugees

This study of South Sudanese refugee adolescents living in Uganda explores the prevalence of child labour and the corresponding impacts of this on their mental health. It found high levels of child labour in this cohort (37% significant child labour and 34% moderate) and the odds of adolescents experiencing symptoms of depression were significantly higher in working adolescents.

Download: [Meyer, S. R., Yu, G., Rieders, E., and Stark, L. \(2020\). Child labor, sex and mental health outcomes amongst adolescent refugees. Journal of Adolescence, 81, 52–60. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2020.04.002>](#)

Socioeconomic Predictors of Transactional Sex in a Cohort of Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Malawi: A Longitudinal Analysis

This longitudinal study in Malawi analyses the relationship between socioeconomic status and transactional sex in 15–24-year-old adolescents and young women. It found that those who were divorced or widowed, food insecure, living in

a home without electricity or running water and having fewer assets were more likely to be involved in transactional sex, whereas those with higher education attainment were less likely to be.

Download: Gichane, M. W., Moracco, K. E., Pettifor, A. E., Zimmer, C., Maman, S., Phanga, T., ... Rosenberg, N. E. (2020). Socioeconomic Predictors of Transactional Sex in a Cohort of Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Malawi: A Longitudinal Analysis. *AIDS and Behavior*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-020-02910-5>

Flying with both wings: empowering adolescent girls through transformative social protection

This journal article highlights the need for a 'transformative social protection' approach for adolescent girls in low-income countries in order to support human capital accumulation and inclusion. It discusses current designs of social protection programmes and lays out key elements that are needed for a transformative approach such as the need for 'cash plus' and on ensuring successful graduation in cash transfer programmes.

Download: Lahiri, A. (2020) Flying with both wings: empowering adolescent girls through transformative social protection. *Policy Design and Practice*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25741292.2020.1747720> **Open Access**

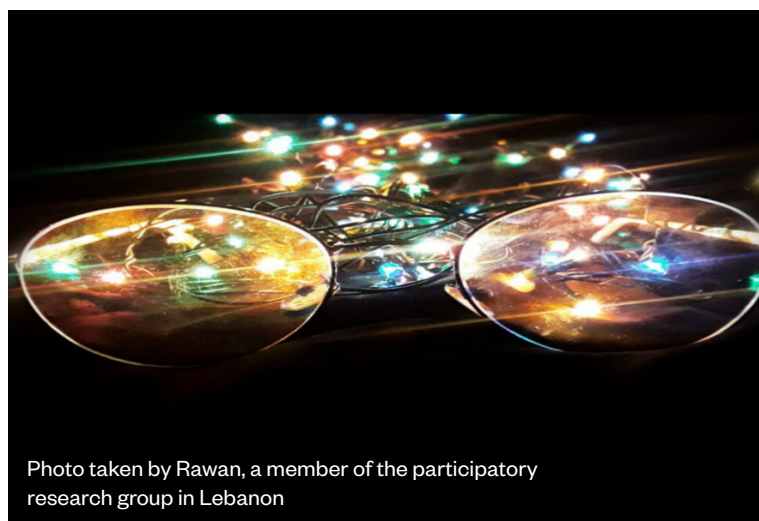


Photo taken by Rawan, a member of the participatory research group in Lebanon

Rawan, a 19 year-old Palestinian refugee girl from Syria

'Since the quarantine started and my school closed, I have nothing to do during the day. I study in a vocational school that has not been giving us online lessons. The tension at my home increased due to the stress over our financial situation, especially with the increase in the price of food and vegetables. My father and brother are not working and my parents keep fighting over buying food. My mother is angry all the time because she cannot get enough food for us. To escape these tensions, I sleep all day and stay up all night to enjoy some quietness alone.'

SPECIAL ISSUE CALLS

Coronavirus: Sociological and Social Policy Perspectives

International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy

This journal is seeking papers that explore social policy or sociological topics that relate to the impacts and long-term implications of the current covid-19 pandemic. This can include reflective articles on the implications of the pandemic.

Abstract deadline is 31 July 2020.

Further information can be found [here](#).

Call for Papers: Covid-19 Pandemic

The Journal of Applied Psychology

This journal is inviting papers to aim to enhance our understanding of work-related phenomena associated with the covid-19 pandemic. It is primarily interested in research that directly informs our scientific understanding of the pandemic.

Abstract deadline is 31 August 2020.

Further information can be found [here](#).

Innovative Initiatives in Child Development

Children and Youth Services Review

This call for papers is for both a special issue and conference, and is focused on innovative initiatives on child development. It will accept interdisciplinary and empirical analyses of initiatives from all kinds of organisations, including governments, private companies, non-governmental organisations. **Abstract deadline is 31 August 2020.**

Further information can be found [here](#).

Person-Centered Analytic Strategies to Highlight Atypical Developmental Processes During Adolescence

The Journal of Adolescence

This special issue aims to highlight innovative ways that typological statistical approaches can improve our understanding of atypical development in adolescence for example studies that document the unique histories of groups of adolescents during normative age-graded developmental transitions and use this to investigate atypical development processes.

Abstract deadline is 1 October 2020.

Further information can be found [here](#).

A Planetary Health Perspective on Covid-19

The Lancet

This call for submissions to *The Lancet* and *The Lancet Planetary Health* focuses on interdisciplinary research that contributes to knowledge of, causes and socio-economic impact of covid-19, as well as public understanding, responses and prevention intervention. **Submission is ongoing and can be submitted through their online system.**

Further information can be found [here](#).

EVENTS

MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

Date: 12 May 12 – 15 July 2020

Location: Online

Event outline: This series of webinars by devex aims to highlight the multiple challenges faced by girls and women due to the covid-19 pandemic including a rise of gender-based violence, reduced income-generating activities and a lack of access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH).

More information can be found [here](#)

THE SPOTLIGHT: A NEW WEBINAR SERIES FROM MARIE STOPES INTERNATIONAL

Date: Multiple dates

Location: Online

Event outline: This webinar series by Marie Stopes International aims to discuss the key issues in sexual and reproductive health rights. Future webinars topics include: contraceptive access during the current covid-19 pandemic and how to centre marginalised women in programme design.

More information can be found [here](#)

CONFERENCES

4TH INTERNATIONAL CONVERNCE OF GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY ACHIEVING LOCAL AND GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY: AT WHAT COST?

Date: 6–9 December 2020

Location: Montpellier, France

Conference outline: Achieving zero hunger through achieving food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture is Goal 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals. This conference aims to address the types of trade-offs and synergies that may occur when attempting to achieve this goal and how to guide its holistic implementation.

More information on the conference can be found [here](#) (**Early registration deadline is 1 September 2020**)

Send us your UPDATES!

Please send us details of upcoming events, publications or opportunities which you would like featured in subsequent editions of the digest. You can email the details to Megan Devonald (m.devonald.gage@odi.org.uk).