



How do gender norms shape adolescent trajectories in post-pandemic Jordan?

Authors: Elizabeth Presler-Marshall, Erin Oakley, Nicola Jones, Sarah Baird, Sarah Alheiwidi and Agnieszka Małachowska

Introduction

Over the past decade, adolescence has come to be seen as an age of opportunity. This is in part because of the physical transformations wrought by puberty, which are considered second only to those experienced in infancy and early childhood in terms of their scope and speed, and in part because of how children's place in the family and broader community shifts as they mature (Dahl et al., 2018; Viner et al., 2015; Steinberg, 2015; Sawyer et al., 2012; UNICEF, 2011). Many of those shifts are deeply gendered, meaning that girls and boys are typically launched on very different trajectories (Blum et al., 2017; Mmari et al., 2017; Perry and Pauletti, 2011). Alongside this reframing of adolescence, there has been a growing interest in the untapped potential of adolescents. The current cohort is the largest the world has yet seen (Sheehan et al., 2017; Ki-moon, 2016).

Capitalising on this youth bulge affords national and international actors an unprecedented chance to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (Guglielmi et al., 2022; Patton et al., 2016). In Jordan, where one-third of the population are refugees and nearly two-thirds are under the age of 30, there are widespread efforts to improve the life chances of adolescents and youth through policy and programming (Department of Statistics, 2022; UNICEF Jordan, 2022; Higher Population Council (HPC), 2021). These include government efforts, such as the National Youth Strategy and the National Action Plan to Limit the Marriage of Individuals under the Age of 18 (Jordan Ministry of Youth, n.d.; HPC, 2018), as well as donor efforts, such as UNICEF's Makani programme (see Box 1).

This brief, which draws on data collected in Jordan in 2022 and early 2023 as part of the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) research programme (see Box 2), explores the many ways in which gender norms limit young people's lives as they move

through adolescence and into young adulthood. It presents recommendations for how those norms might be shifted to reduce the risks and expand the opportunities for young people living in Jordan.

Box 1: UNICEF's Makani programme

Makani ('My Space') centres provide vulnerable young people and their families with an age-appropriate integrated package of services throughout the Kingdom of Jordan, reaching more than 100,000 young people annually. Very young children (ages 3-5) are offered courses to help prepare them for starting school. For school-aged children (ages 6-13), centres offer learning support classes and community-based child protection support. For those in early adolescence (ages 10-13), the programme provides courses in transferable life skills such as communication, critical thinking and negotiation. In mid-adolescence (ages 14+), the courses on offer are expanded to include financial and computer skills, and leadership opportunities. Makani centres also provide parenting education courses and make referrals to other services as needed.

Makani programming is highly responsive. Originally designed to help refugee children process trauma and access non-formal education in the immediate aftermath of conflict and displacement, over time Makani has evolved to provide vulnerable young people—regardless of refugee status—with an array of supports to enhance their capability development. The programme pivoted again in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, by moving learning support online and providing tablets and data packages to tens of thousands of low-income children who would otherwise have been prevented from accessing distance education. (See also: Presler-Marshall et al., 2022a; Jones et al., 2022.)

Box 2: Overview of GAGE's research approach and methodology

GAGE, which is funded by the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), is generating evidence about the diverse experiences of adolescents living in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). It explores the challenges facing adolescents at this crucial life stage and identifies what works to support them to develop their full capabilities as they transition to adulthood. The GAGE sample includes adolescents who are most at risk of being left behind, particularly girls who are (or have been) married, and adolescents with one or more disabilities. GAGE's conceptual framework (see Figure 1) is built around six capabilities: education and learning; bodily integrity and freedom from violence; physical health; psychosocial well-being; voice and agency; and economic empowerment (GAGE, 2019).

Figure 1: GAGE conceptual framework

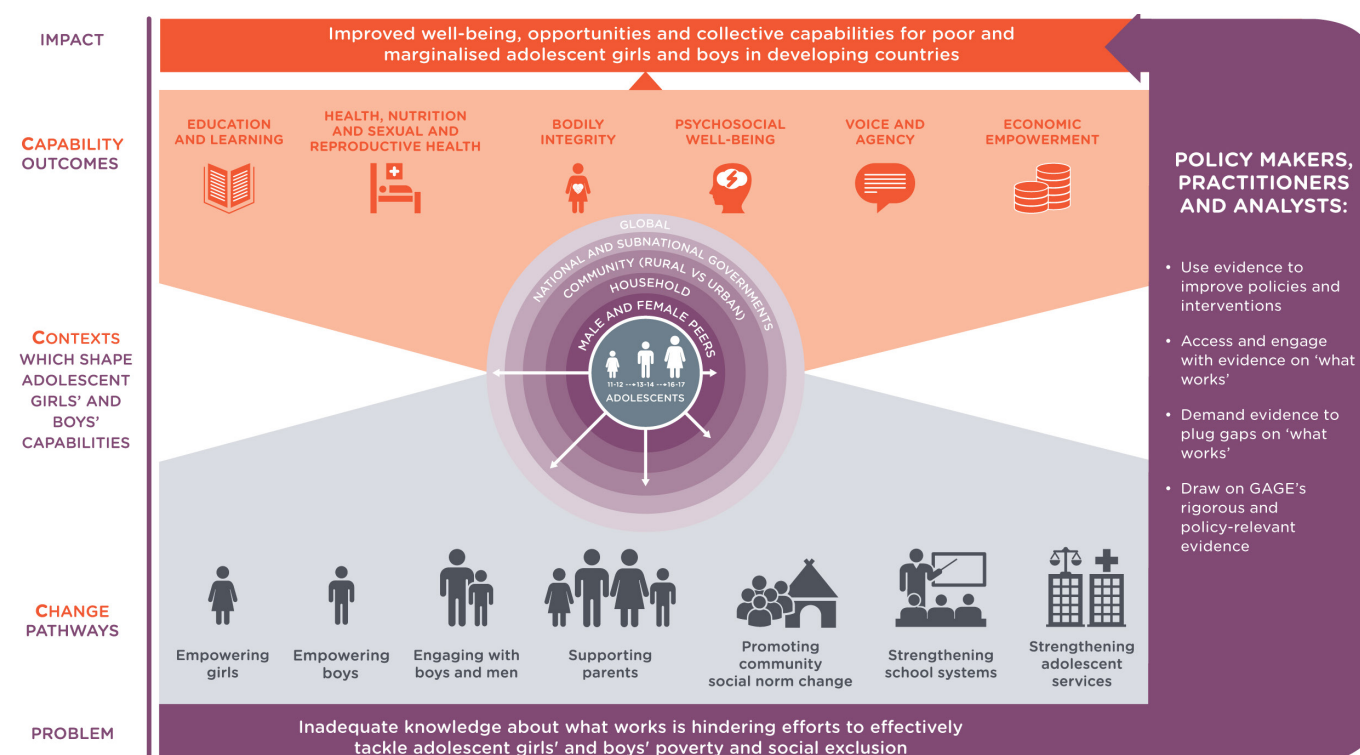


Table 1: Quantitative sample

	Syrian	Jordanian	Palestinian	Dom	Other
Total	2811	1120	275	114	47
Girls	1375	631	152	56	20
Boys	1436	489	123	58	27

This brief draws on interim data from the 2022–2023 GAGE Jordan midline survey, which included 4,367 adolescents and youth aged 10–22 years (see Table 1)¹. The sample reflects the diversity of Jordan's population. It is comprised of vulnerable young people from Jordanian, Syrian, ex-Gazan Palestinian², and Dom³ populations who live either in Jordanian host communities, formal refugee camps or informal tented settlements⁴. The mean age of the sample was 16.3 years at the time of the midline survey. The qualitative sample, of 186 adolescents and youth (see Table 2), is drawn from the larger quantitative sample.

The GAGE programme uses mixed-methods research. Quantitative data was collected via adolescent and household surveys, which were completed by young people and an adult in their household. Survey modules were diverse and covered the six capabilities set out in GAGE's conceptual framework. A subset of young people and their caregivers were selected to take part in in-depth individual and group interviews. We used a variety of interactive tools to explore young people's lives, and who or what contributes to their broader well-being. We also interviewed 24 key informants who shape and deliver the policies, services and programmes that impact adolescents' lives.

Findings

GAGE midline findings indicate that gender is key to understanding the risks facing adolescents and youth living in Jordan. Indeed, even when risks vary by age or nationality, they are often also significantly shaped by gender differences. We now explore those risks, organising our findings according to the six GAGE capability domains.

Table 2: Qualitative sample

	Syrian	Jordanian	Palestinian	Dom
Girls	68	11	11	12
Boys	50	11	11	12
Group of parents	12	4	2	4
Key informants	8	8	3	5

Education and learning

In line with government figures (e.g. Department of Statistics and ICF, 2019), GAGE midline findings underscore that boys' access to quality education lags behind that of girls. At midline, 68% of girls but only 61% of boys were enrolled in school (see Table 3). Syrian refugees had both the lowest enrolment rate and the largest gender gap, with 60% of girls but only 51% of boys enrolled in formal education. Boys are not only less likely than girls to be enrolled in school, but they also leave school earlier. Of all out-of-school adolescents in the GAGE sample, on average boys left school at age 14.4 years, after completing only 7.5 grades. Girls dropped out at an average age of 15 after completing 8.2 grades. Leaving aside out-of-school Dom adolescents (because that sample is small (n=19) and slightly younger), Syrian boys were the most disadvantaged. Out-of-school Syrian boys left school at an average age of 14.3 years after completing only 7.3 years of education. Indeed, 28% left school before completing sixth grade (compared to 15% of Palestinian boys and 14% of Jordanian boys) and 75% dropped out before completing basic education⁵ (compared to 34% of Palestinian boys and 42% of Jordanian boys).

Although three-quarters of Dom adolescents were enrolled in school at midline, those who were out of school are extremely disadvantaged. Boys had dropped out at an average age of 10.7 years, after completing only 3.6 years of schooling; girls dropped out at an average age of 12.7 years having completed 5.6 years of schooling.

The qualitative research findings underscore that boys' more limited access to education is primarily shaped by three factors, two of which are, at first glance,

1 Survey data is still being processed and cleaned. The data presented in this brief represents adolescents surveyed between 4 July 2022 and 4 April 2023 (n=4,367). Participants in the current survey include a sample from the GAGE Jordan baseline survey initially conducted in 2018–2019 (n=2,892, a 70% follow-up rate from baseline) as well as a sample from the GAGE-UNICEF baseline survey initially conducted in early 2022 (n=1,475, 87% follow-up rate from baseline). The GAGE baseline survey included two cohorts: a group of early adolescents mainly aged 10–12 at baseline and approximately 13–16 years old at the current survey; and a group of older adolescents mainly aged 15–18 at baseline and approximately 19–22 years old at the current survey. The GAGE-UNICEF baseline survey participants were aged 10–18 years at the baseline. The Dom sample is drawn entirely from the GAGE-UNICEF baseline survey and participants were younger, on average, than other nationality groups presented in this paper at mean age 14.6 years old.

2 Most of the Palestinian refugees who live in Jordan have citizenship. Ex-Gazans do not – and consequently face myriad vulnerabilities that other Palestinians do not experience.

3 The Dom minority community in Jordan is a highly marginalised group that faces significant challenges in accessing basic human rights.

4 There are also a small number of 'other nationality' adolescents in the sample; they are primarily Iraqi, Egyptian and Pakistani.

5 In Jordan, basic education, which is ostensibly compulsory, ends with 10th grade. Students may then choose to attend two years of secondary school, after which they may choose to sit the school-leaving exam—the Tawjihi.

Table 3: Indicators of adolescents' access to formal education, by nationality and gender

	Total		Syrian		Jordanian		Palestinian		Dom	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Enrolled (%)	68	61	60	51	85	89	65	60	75	74
Average age at dropout (of all out-of-school)	15	14.4	14.7	14.3	16.3	15.6	15.7	15	12.7	10.7
Average last grade attended (of all out-of-school)	8.2	7.5	7.8	7.3	9.9	9.1	9.4	9.1	5.6	3.6
% of all out-of-school adolescents who left school before grade 6	21	27	25	28	6	14	8	15	50 [#]	78 [#]
% of all out-of-school adolescents who left school before grade 10	62	70	70	75	34	42	50	34	80 [#]	100 [#]

[#]There are only 10 out-of-school Dom girls and 9 out-of-school Dom boys, so figures should be interpreted with caution.

contradictory: boys' involvement in child labour, which is driven by both household poverty and gender norms; high youth unemployment, especially among the most educated young men; and teacher violence (see below). Dom boys (who often migrate seasonally with their families) and Syrian boys (the oldest of whom were often permanently shut out of formal education by the conflict that began in 2011) are disproportionately likely to be out of school because they are contributing to household income. A 16-year-old out-of-school Syrian boy reported that he had dropped out, after a year of part-time attendance, because as a male, it was his responsibility to support his family,

I am a young man... I want to complete my studies, but there is a problem, which means that I have to attend one or two days a week... I want to help my family, there is no one to work for them.

A key informant added that boys typically begin leaving school for work before they have completed primary school, and that this had been exacerbated by the pandemic. He said: *'Boys drop out at an earlier age than girls... you find them after the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades. Boys started dropping out because they could work.'*

Adolescent boys also leave school because they and their families see little point in investing in education given the limited access to formal employment that is well paid. While this is true even for Jordanian boys, because the formal labour market is not growing as fast as the population, it is especially the case for refugee boys, who also face legal hurdles to work (and particular occupations). As a Palestinian father explained: *'Look around, there are those who have finished university education and college, yet all of them are unemployed.'*

As reported elsewhere (e.g. OECD, 2020), boys' learning outcomes also lag behind those of girls. At midline, 75% of girls and only 58% of boys were able to read a short story written at the second-grade level, despite being 16 years old on average (see Table 4). Again, leaving aside

Dom adolescents, Palestinian boys were least likely to be literate. Only 44% could read at that level, compared to approximately three-fifths of their Jordanian (64%) and Syrian (58%) peers. The gender gap is also largest among Palestinians. Palestinian girls were 33 percentage points more likely to be able to read at the second-grade level than their male peers. Boys' numeracy outcomes are similarly low. The midline survey found that 55% of girls and only 46% of boys were able to do three-digit subtraction with borrowing. Palestinian boys were again the most disadvantaged. Only 40% were able to subtract, compared to 60% of Palestinian girls, 45% of Syrian boys, and 50% of Jordanian boys. With the caveats already mentioned (namely that the Dom sample is small and slightly younger), Dom adolescents – particularly boys – have the lowest learning outcomes: only 29% could read at the second-grade level and only 25% could subtract.

Among youth in the GAGE sample who were aged 18 or older, young women and young men were similarly likely to sit (or be scheduled to sit) the Jordanian school-leaving exam (Tawjihi), at 43% and 36% respectively (see Table 4). However, test-taking rates vary by gender within nationality groups. The starkest contrast is observed between Palestinian young adults: 51% of female students aged 18 or older have taken (or will take) the exam, compared to just 28% of male students aged 18 or older. Among test-takers of all nationalities, boys are significantly less likely than girls to pass the exam (61% vs. 76%). Syrian boys are the most disadvantaged: only 57% of test-takers reported having passed. Interestingly, the gender gap is narrowest among Palestinian test-takers; although Palestinian girls are much more likely to take the exam, boys and girls who sit the exam tended to have similar pass rates.

Qualitative research findings identify two primary reasons for boys' poorer learning outcomes. Respondents agreed that the most important reason is that boys receive poorer instruction in the all-male schools they attend,

Table 4: Learning outcomes, by nationality and gender

	Total		Syrian		Jordanian		Palestinian		Dom	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
% can read at second-grade level	75	58	72	58	81	64	77	44	55	29
% can do three-digit subtraction	15	46	52	45	63	50	60	40	38	25
% of all adolescents/ youth aged 18 or older who have taken/ are scheduled to take the Tawjihi exam*	43	36	36	31	63	70	51	28	N/A [#]	N/A [#]
% who passed Tawjihi (among test-takers)	76	61	73	57	86	73	65	64	N/A [#]	N/A [#]

[#]Only one Dom adolescent in the GAGE sample is aged 18 or older.

*Note: This variable presents the share of adolescents who reported taking the exam at any time regardless of school enrolment status or grade attainment, among all of those who are aged 18 or older (n=1,286). A small number of adolescents under the age of 18 also reported having taken the exam (n=20).

starting in fourth grade⁶. A 21-year-old Syrian young man reported that: *'We see what the girls study and what they are taught... The teacher is paying attention to the girl students. Honestly, when we boys go to our teachers they don't care.'* A Syrian mother agreed: *'There is no teaching from the [male] teachers.'* However, boys' poorer educational outcomes also reflect fierce determination on the part of some girls to do well in school as a means of delaying marriage. This would open up the possibility of paid work, and afford them a credential that allows them to feel proud of themselves even if their futures are confined to marriage and motherhood. Whereas most boys spend hours each day socialising with their friends and playing video games, and admit to rarely studying (especially during pandemic-related school closures), girls often described education as a *'weapon in my hand... even if there is a husband'*, with one girl stating that *'there is no job without a certificate [Tawjihi]'* (20-year-old Palestinian young woman). Parents also noted boys' immaturity vis-à-vis girls'. A Syrian father reported: *'You feel the boy is not balanced... I mean that his mind is smaller than his age.'*

Although, on average, girls' access to quality education is better than that of boys, gender norms also limit many girls' access to school. In some cases, this is related to *'protecting'* girls' honour to ensure that they remain marriageable. A 17-year-old Dom boy reported that: *'My sister quit because there are boys who gather around her school.'* In other cases, girls drop out of school directly due to child marriage. Of the ever-married girls in the GAGE sample, only 3% were enrolled in school at midline. A 20-year-old Syrian young woman, who had married at age 16, explained how *'I wanted to finish my education, but my husband didn't allow me.'* Girls added that families are sometimes more willing to spend on private tutorial support and tertiary education for boys than for girls, because they discount the notion that girls might one day have a career.

A 20-year-old Syrian young woman, whose brother was provided with tutors in secondary school, recalled, of her efforts to study alone: *'I saw that all the support is towards my brother and his studies, for his future.'* A 19-year-old Palestinian young woman added that her parents were dismissive of her aspirations: *'I mean, the girl, why should she go to study at the university?'*

Bodily integrity and freedom from violence

Girls and boys in Jordan face different threats to their bodily integrity. As was the case at baseline, boys and young men are more at risk of age-based violence than girls and young women. At midline, and with the caveat that most ever-married girls are no longer living with their caregivers, 8% of boys but only 3% of girls reported that caregivers use physical violence as the main form of discipline when they do something wrong (see Table 5). Palestinian boys were most likely to report violent discipline at home (20% vs. 11% of Jordanian and Dom boys, and 6% of Syrian boys). They also experienced the largest disadvantage vis-à-vis girls: they were nearly seven times more likely to experience violence as the main form of discipline at home than their female peers (20% vs. 3%). Boys' risk of violence at the hands of teachers also far exceeds that of girls. The GAGE midline survey found that of enrolled students, 31% of boys vs. 8% of girls had experienced violent discipline at school in the past year. Palestinian (41%) and Dom (40%) boys were at higher risk than Syrian (32%) and Jordanian (28%) boys. Adolescents' risk of physical violence at the hands of peers was relatively small at midline, but boys were again at higher risk than girls (6% vs. 2%). Dom boys were most likely to experience physical bullying (13%).

Although they are at higher risk of experiencing age-based violence than girls and young women, adolescent boys and young men in the sample were far less likely than girls to have ever spoken to someone about violence. Of

⁶ Previous research has identified that male teachers tend to be less qualified and to have lower levels of job satisfaction than female teachers, primarily because culturally, teaching is considered a low-status job for males (Tweissi et al., 2014).

those who have experienced or witnessed violence at home, 21% of girls but only 11% of boys have ever spoken of it to anyone (see Table 5). Of those who have experienced peer violence, 43% of girls and 32% of boys have spoken of it to someone. Palestinian boys were least likely to disclose having experienced violence; only 8% of victims have spoken of violence at home and only 17% have spoken of peer violence.

Respondents taking part in midline qualitative research reported that age-based violence is primarily perpetrated against males by males as a way of asserting control and demonstrating power (see also Presler-Marshall et al., 2022b). A 14-year-old Palestinian boy explained that he refuses to come near his father, because he is tired of being hit. He said: *'When I see my father, I run away.'* A Jordanian mother made the same observation: *'The problem with the fathers is that they are too strict... Everything is only about fights... If my son is in front of my husband, my husband might hit my son with anything.'* Adolescent and adult respondents added that male teachers also use violence to keep boys in line. Boys reported being beaten with hands, hoses, sticks and pipes – which parents noted contributes to boys' dislike of school and their decision to leave. A Syrian mother explained: *'My son doesn't dare go to the school. The teacher keeps beating him.'* Dom adolescents reported that they engage in physical fights as a way to push back against those who tease and exclude them for being different. A 16-year-old Dom girl explained that everyone is *'afraid of our young men'*. While at baseline younger boys sometimes noted that experiencing violence made them sad, by midline it was not uncommon for boys to have embraced the role of *'troublemaker'* as they begin to assert their masculinity. A 15-year-old Syrian boy, for example, described his friends as *'thugs... who beat people with knives'*, and a Jordanian mother reported that her son, when asked to undertake a chore, retorted: *'Ask your spoiled daughter, tell her to do the work!'*

Although adolescent girls and young women are at lower risk of age-based violence than their male peers,

they experience near constant gender-based violence. As noted earlier, this begins with the sexual harassment that most girls start to experience at puberty. A 16-year-old Dom girl reported:

I started being harassed on the street when I was 14 years old... When I walk on the street, young men approach me with their car and tell me... "Take 20 dinars and come ride the car with us!"

A 21-year-old Syrian young man agreed that his 18-year-old sister is at risk every time she leaves home. He said, *'There are bad guys... guys harass them with words...'* GAGE's qualitative research speaks to the complexity of child marriage decision-making. Most respondents emphasised marriage as a form of protection for girls. A Dom father, for example, after first noting that harassment is extremely common, then blamed the need to protect girls (via marriage) on girls' own behaviour: *'People fear for their girls during these times, so they want to protect them... They will do it for their virtue, scared that the girl might do something scandalous or embarrassing.'* Other respondents reported that child marriage is driven by household poverty. A key informant explained, *'They would get her married to lower the financial pressures on the parents.'* Adolescent girls are typically raised to believe that marriage and motherhood are their *'destiny'* (19-year-old Syrian young woman); they report often feeling bored and lonely because they are confined to home and are used to acceding to their parents' requests. As such, they rarely object to the marriage that is arranged for them by their elders. A 19-year-old Palestinian young woman, when asked why she married at age 16, replied: *'The age was appropriate. I got engaged because I feel that I have grown up.'*

Although marriage is seen by adults as a way to protect girls' (and their families') honour, midline findings highlight that in practice, child marriage is accompanied by increased risk of other types of violence against girls and young women, namely from partners and marital families. Of the

Table 5: Age-based violence indicators, by nationality and gender

	Total		Syrian		Jordanian		Palestinian		Dom	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
% report physical violence as main form of discipline by caregivers	3	8	2	6	4	11	3	20	11	11
% ever spoken to someone about home violence (of victims)	21	11	21	11	21	11	15	8	32	17
% experienced corporal punishment at school in past year (of enrolled)	8	31	7	32	9	28	9	41	14	40
% experienced physical violence from peer in past year	2	6	2	6	3	5	3	5	4	13



A Palestinian adolescent playing football in his houseyard, Jordan © Nathalie Bertrams/GAGE 2023

Table 6: Rates of child marriage among older cohort adolescent girls, by nationality

	Total	Syrian	Jordanian	Palestinian	Dom
% girls married before age 15 (among older cohort, age 19-22)	4	5	0	0	N/A [#]
% girls married before age 18 (older cohort, age 19-22)	29	34	21	10	

Note: Responses presented in this table are restricted to those adolescents in the older cohort recruited from the GAGE Jordan baseline survey (mainly age 15-18 at baseline and currently age 19-22).

[#]Only one Dom adolescent in the GAGE sample is aged 18 or older.

married girls and young women who answered survey questions about marital violence⁷ 9% admitted to having been physically assaulted by their husband and 5% to having been humiliated by him. Tellingly, the survey also found that most adolescents – regardless of nationality – believe that a wife owes her husband complete obedience, and many older adolescents (age 15 and above) believe that intimate partner violence is a private matter and should never be discussed outside the household (see Table 7). Boys' beliefs about obedience and violence are significantly more conservative than those of girls. Two-thirds (64%) of girls but 85% of boys agreed that wives must be obedient. One-third of girls (34%) but half of boys (51%) age 15 and older agreed that intimate partner violence is a private matter.

Echoing previous research in the GAGE sample, (see Presler-Marshall et al., forthcoming b), qualitative interviews conducted at midline find that intimate partner violence is a common occurrence for many married girls and young women. In interviews, ever-married girls graphically detailed being beaten – in private and in public – by their

husband, who threatened to take their children if they sought legal redress. A 21-year-old (now divorced) Syrian young woman recalled how:

I was living like an animal... I swear to God he was cursing me and hitting me in the street... He wanted to take my children from me... He used to say if I told anyone about our problems, he would refuse anyone's interference.

Adult women added that marital violence spiked during the pandemic and remains at a high level, due to men's stress about unemployment. A Palestinian mother explained that: *'During the corona[virus] periods, the man becomes unbearable to his wife and hits her... If he does not have a job, he will take it out on his wife.'*

Physical health

Girls and boys in Jordan face different threats to their physical health, largely due to gender norms rather than biology. For example, as was the case at baseline, boys and young men are at significantly more at risk than

Table 7: Attitudes towards marital control and intimate partner violence, by nationality and gender

	Total		Syrian		Jordanian		Palestinian		Dom	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
% agrees at least in part with statement, 'A woman should obey her husband in all things'	64	85	66	86	57	82	65	84	64	84
% agrees at least in part with statement, 'A man's use of violence towards his wife is private and should not be discussed outside the household' (>= age 15)	34	51	36	53	29	44	38	58	33	36

girls of substance use (see Table 8)⁸. Of those aged 15 or older, 30% of boys and only 4% of girls have ever smoked cigarettes. Palestinian boys (50%) were most likely to have ever smoked; Palestinian girls least likely (2%). A sizeable minority of older boys (22%) admit to being daily smokers. This is especially the case among older Palestinian boys (40%). In interviews, respondents reported that girls rarely use substances, because to do so is haram (forbidden), whereas older boys socialise younger boys into smoking, and fathers were reported to have given boys pocket money to buy cigarettes. A 21-year-old Syrian young man noted that boys often try their first cigarette around age 10, because 'boys in the camp teach others to smoke'. Qualitative research participants added that adolescent boys and young men are also increasingly likely to use drugs. A community key informant explained that this has gotten worse since the pandemic: *'It is an escape from the reality now. There is drug abuse and alcohol.'* Boys themselves were less likely to blame the pandemic – and more likely to blame their inability to find stable and decently remunerated work. A 21-year-old Palestinian young man stated that: *'Most of the guys now started to take drugs... The increasing psychological stressors lead to drug usage.'*

Boys and young men are also disadvantaged compared to girls in terms of access to puberty education (see also Presler-Marshall et al., forthcoming a). At midline, and regardless of nationality, less than three-quarters of boys (71%) but nearly all girls and young women (93%) reported having a source of information about puberty (see Table 8). Boys were particularly unlikely to have had a class on puberty. Half of girls (50%) and only a third of boys (34%) reported having had such a class. Dom (29%) and Syrian (31%) boys were especially unlikely to have had a class on puberty – perhaps because they were disproportionately more likely to have left school very early (and, in the case of Dom boys, were a little younger than the rest of the sample).

Qualitative evidence suggests that gender norms drive differences in access to puberty education. Whereas mothers and female teachers discuss menstruation with girls (albeit not always before girls' experience menarche), fathers' conversations with boys are not only rarer (because fathers are less involved in child-rearing) but often limited to admonitions to avoid masturbation. Talking about her experience of puberty, a 19-year-old Syrian young woman recalled:

I didn't know that what was happening to me was the menstrual cycle, I felt scared. I went and told my mother and she told me that this is the menstrual cycle and she explained to me about it.

A Jordanian father explained that he warns his sons that *'masturbation exhausts the body and weakens mental powers'*.

Boys and young men were also less likely than their female peers to be able to name a form of family planning – though this lack of contraceptive knowledge tends to have more harmful consequences for girls than boys given reproductive biology and gender norms that grant men primary authority over sex and fertility. The midline survey found that a quarter (25%) of Syrian, Jordanian and Palestinian boys aged 15 or older were able to name a form of contraception, compared to 42% of girls (see Table 8). Girls' greater knowledge about contraception reflects their higher odds of child marriage. Of ever-married girls in the sample, 75% could name a form of contraception (compared to 33% of their unmarried peers aged 15 or older) (see Table 9). Married girls' knowledge about contraception, however, rarely translates into uptake: at midline, only 22% of married girls were using a modern method of contraception and 81% had already been pregnant. The majority of married girls explained in interviews that they did not learn about contraception until they were already pregnant (see Presler-Marshall et al., forthcoming b). Indeed, because of concerns that if girls know about sex they will be disinclined to marry, it was not

⁸ Only 4% of Dom boys, and 27% of Dom girls, could name a form of family planning. This disparity may be partially because the Dom sample is slightly younger (mean age 14 compared to overall mean age in the sample of 16).

Table 8: Health-related indicators, by nationality and gender

	Total		Syrian		Jordanian		Palestinian		Dom	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
% have ever smoked cigarettes (>= age 15)	4	30	4	30	6	26	2	50	0 [#]	8 [#]
% are a daily smoker (>= age 15)	1	22	1	22	2	19	1	40	0 [#]	4 [#]
% had a source of information about puberty	93	71	92	70	94	74	98	75	88	48
% had a class on puberty	50	34	45	31	60	42	57	43	57	29
% can name a form of family planning (>= age 15)	42	25	43	26	40	24	35	25	27	4

[#]In the sample, there are only 33 Dom girls and 26 Dom boys over the age of 15.

uncommon for married girls to report that they did not know how pregnancy happens until they were already pregnant. A 16-year-old Dom mother recalled:

I knew that there will be a marriage and God will bless me with a child... I was too young and didn't understand anything... even my mother... she told me nothing.

Economic empowerment

Restrictive gender norms leave girls and boys (and young women and men) with quite different risks in regard to paid work and economic empowerment. Boys, as already noted, are extremely vulnerable to child labour, because of beliefs that males are responsible for breadwinning. Girls and young women, on the other hand, are largely prohibited from doing paid work. This is evident in midline survey findings (see Table 10). Of boys and young men in the sample, 44% had worked for pay in the past year, but only 8% of girls had worked for pay. Because poverty is more widespread – and deeper – in Syrian households, Syrian boys (50%) were more likely to have worked for pay than their Palestinian (40%) and Jordanian (31%) peers. This patterning holds for girls as well; 11% of Syrian girls had worked for pay in the past year (compared to 6% of Palestinian girls and 5% of Jordanian girls). The lower rates among Dom adolescents (21% of boys and 4% of girls) may be a factor of their age.

Qualitative evidence indicates that most adolescents and young people capitulate to expectations regarding employment. A key informant reported that: *The boys*

believe that they have a responsibility and need to work... You will rarely see a girl working.' Indeed, with exceptions, boys noted that they are proud to be covering their own expenses and contributing to household income. A 15-year-old Syrian boy explained how:

My mother said to me, 'You have become a young man and you must work and rely on yourself and get money'... It's a wonderful feeling... I felt that my family knew that I had become a man and that I should rely on myself.

Many boys feel so strongly that they are responsible for helping to support their families that it is unemployment – not employment – that they find crushing. A Syrian mother reported that when her son lost his job during pandemic-related lockdowns: *'He reached a level of anger so big that he broke everything in front of him.'* Girls, by contrast, learn from an early age that paid work is not for them. A 13-year-old Dom girl, when asked what she wanted to be when she grew up, replied: *'Males, like my father and brothers, are the only ones who work... I am a girl and I must not work.'* A 17-year-old Palestinian girl agreed: *'I would like to work, I wish... but they [the girl's parents and brothers] don't like a girl to work... so that's it.'* Where girls do work for pay, it is primarily because households are extremely poor and need girls' wages. Most working girls are Syrian and work in agriculture alongside their families, who can vouchsafe their honour (and confiscate their wages to contribute to household expenses). A 19-year-old Syrian explained: *'I work in agriculture, I work now in*

Table 9: Indicators of married girls' sexual and reproductive health, by nationality

	Total	Syrian	Jordanian	Palestinian	Dom
% can name a form of family planning*	75	75	73	70	N/A [#]
% currently using modern method* [±]	22	21	33	12	
% ever been pregnant	81	81	91	65	

*Note: These two responses exclude 1 married girl in the midline sample who was age 14 at the time of the survey.

*Note: This variable is drawn from interim data pending final data cleaning, and currently represents 85% of the sample of ever-married girls in the GAGE sample (273 of 323).

[#]Note: In the current sample, less than 5 Dom adolescents have ever been married.



Syrian family members who live in Al Mafraq, Jordan © Nathalie Bertrams/GAGE 2023

greenhouses, I work in vegetable farms...I started working when I was 11 years old.'

As was the case at baseline, the midline survey found that boys and young men (26%) are significantly more likely than their female peers (19%) to have controlled the money they earn in the past year (see Table 10). The gender gap is largest among Palestinians, with 30% of boys and only 17% of girls reporting control over spending. Qualitative research suggests that boys' greater control over cash is related not just to their greater participation in paid work, but also to girls' more limited mobility. A 16-year-old Dom girl explained that: 'Girls are not allowed to go to the shop alone.' It should also be noted that boys' greater control over cash does not solely speak to boys' advantage; boys, and not girls, are expected to earn their own pocket money.

Autonomy and psychosocial well-being

Adolescent girls and young women have far less autonomy over their own lives than do adolescent boys and young men. Our midline survey captures this by comparing girls' and boys' access to information and communications technology (ICT). Girls (35%) were significantly less likely than boys (50%) to have a mobile phone for their own use (see Table 11). Although Dom girls (20%) were least likely to have a phone (perhaps in part because they were younger, on average, than other girls in the sample), the gender gap was largest among Syrians: 33% of girls and 52% of boys reported having a phone. Girls' relative disadvantage was slightly smaller (40% vs. 53%) when the question was reframed to also include tablets, which were distributed by UNICEF during pandemic-related school closures to facilitate vulnerable students' access to distance education. Access

Table 10: Health-related indicators, by nationality and gender

	Total		Syrian		Jordanian		Palestinian		Dom	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
% have done paid work in the past year	8	44	11	50	5	31	6	40	4 [#]	21
% have controlled spending of cash in the past year	19	26	16	23	26	34	17	30	16	25

Table 11: Access to ICT, by nationality and gender

	Total		Syrian		Jordanian		Palestinian		Dom	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
% have a mobile phone for personal use	35	50	33	52	42	46	34	49	20	25
% have a device for personal use	40	53	37	55	46	50	41	50	38	36

to a device (38%) vs. a mobile phone (20%) was particularly notable for Dom girls.

Qualitative evidence underscores that limits on girls' and young women's autonomy are extensive and, as noted earlier, are driven by restrictive gender norms meant to protect girls' (and families') honour. A Dom mother explained that: *'The virtue of a girl is much more important than the virtue of a boy.'* A key informant agreed: *'Parents take too much care about the girl... The girl is under the microscope.'* Girls spoke at length of the things they are not allowed to do. A 16-year-old Syrian girl, for example, reported that she rarely leaves home, because *'My parents don't allow me to go out.'* A 17-year-old Palestinian girl added that she does not have a phone because it is considered *'forbidden and shameful for a girl to carry a phone.'* A 14-year-old Syrian girl, who used to be passionate about playing football, added that puberty not only cost her access to healthy exercise but also a source of entertainment, as she is no longer allowed to even watch others play: *'My mother tells me to leave, she says, "You are not a boy!"'* Dom girls were particularly expressive about the limits on adolescent girls' lives. A 12-year-old stated that: *'Wearing trousers is considered a defect'* and a 14-year-old said: *'If a girl went out for two days in a row... they would call her a floozy girl!'* Respondents largely agreed that whereas girls lose any autonomy they may have had once they enter adolescence, the reverse often happens with boys, who begin to assert masculine independence in earnest – often to their longer-term detriment. A 16-year-old Syrian girl explained: *'A guy can do whatever and the society won't hold him accountable for it.'* Indeed, although mothers were aware that their sons are using mobile phones primarily to play video games – and to watch the pornography they believe is contributing to their sons' *'sexual abnormality'* (Syrian mother) – they freely admitted that they are unable to set limits on their

sons' behaviour. A Dom mother stated: *'I am not able to tell my son "no".'*

Restrictions on girls' physical mobility and digital connectivity limit their access to the peer interactions that are critical to healthy adolescent development (see also Presler-Marshall et al., 2023a, 2023b). The midline survey found that 62% of girls and young women, vs. 68% of boys and young men, have a trusted friend (see Table 12). An 18-year-old Syrian young woman explained that she has lost contact with her former friends because she is no longer allowed to leave home without an escort:

When I was young... my life was sweet... When we were girls, we used to take a walk and go together to the shops, to amusement parks, wherever we wanted... But now we have separated and each one of us has become our own country.

A 16-year-old Dom girl added that even when girls have friends, girls' options are constrained. She stated that: *'My relatives are my only friends... I don't go out of the house much.'* Parents are not unaware of the impacts of these stringent restrictions on girls. A Syrian mother admitted that she had *'deprived my daughter of her friends.'* Despite the time that boys spend with their peers, they also commonly reported lacking close friends – for reasons also shaped by gender norms. Many, for example, noted that they do not trust their peers, only relatives, because they are afraid of appearing weak. A 20-year-old Syrian young man explained that regardless of the challenges he faces, he keeps his problems to himself: *'I don't talk to anyone... Complaining to others other than God is considered humiliating.'* A 19-year-old Dom young man added that after experiencing years of social exclusion, he decided to protect himself by not making friends with others: *'I don't like befriending outsiders.'*

Table 12: Indicators related to psychosocial well-being

	Total		Syrian		Jordanian		Palestinian		Dom	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
% have a trusted friend	62	68	61	67	65	72	66	75	66	57
% have a trusted adult	72	71	71	70	72	2	74	78	73	55
General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) scores indicative of psychological distress	43	39	46	42	46	42	37	45	55	36

Although the midline survey found that most young people had a trusted adult in their lives (72% of females vs. 71% of males) (see Table 12), qualitative research found that adolescents' relationships with adults were often strained, for gendered reasons. For girls, parental limits on daughters' autonomy leave them feeling that they are not respected and loved. A 15-year-old Palestinian girl explained that:

After I wore the hijab... my parents would say, "You are a hijab-clad girl, you are grown up, you cannot go out alone and so"... I would feel that my family didn't care about me.

For boys, as noted earlier, interactions with fathers and teachers often involved violence and one-way lectures to 'be careful about yourself... and avoid doing something wrong' (Dom father). Sons' interactions with their mothers tended to become less close, again due to boys assuming adult male roles and behaviours. A Jordanian boy explained that: *My mother no longer exists... I communicate with her, but a little.'*

Many young people (43% of females vs. 39% of males) reported symptoms suggestive of emotional distress on the midline survey module that included questions from the GHQ-12 (see Table 12). Qualitative findings suggest that girls' distress is driven by sexual harassment, loss of autonomy, and social isolation. Dom girls (55%) singled out sexual harassment and noted that their clothing and

their tents set them apart for abuse. A 16-year-old Dom girl explained how 'Young men say bad things to us, they don't respect us because we live in tents.' Syrian (46%) and Palestinian (37%) girls spoke at length of feelings of loneliness. A 16-year-old Syrian girl who began self-harming reported that her life effectively ended when she was caught using social media by her parents:

I became very alone... I was very social and I used to love my life. Now I am thinking about what I did in my life. Why shouldn't I commit suicide!... When I used to slash my arm, I would feel that all the negative things are flowing out with the blood.

Syrian girls also emphasised child marriage as a cause of distress. A 21-year-old (now divorced) Syrian young woman recalled of her marriage (which involved violence at the hands of her husband and in-laws): 'I was devastated and my psyche was greatly destroyed.' For boys, emotional distress is almost universally attributed to lack of economic opportunity. This is especially the case for Palestinian boys (45% of whom indicated experiencing psychological distress on the GHQ-12), who, after decades of their families facing legal barriers to work, reported feeling hopeless about their future. A Palestinian woman reported that her adolescent nephew is suicidal because he cannot find decent work: 'He tells me every day... "I want to commit suicide. I want to die... There is no job, there is no need to live!"'



Adolescent workers, Amman, Jordan © Nathalie Bertrams/GAGE 2023

Conclusions and implications

Midline findings from GAGE mixed-methods research underscore that gender norms are central to shaping the experiences and trajectories of adolescents and young people living in Jordan – regardless of whether they are Dom, Jordanian, Palestinian or Syrian. Boys are jeopardised by norms that position them as family breadwinners and value their becoming independent and ‘tough’, while girls are jeopardised by norms that limit their worth and their future to marriage and motherhood. For different reasons, gendered norms prevent boys and girls from accessing quality education, from forming meaningful connections with peers and supportive adults, and from embarking on their preferred career trajectories. Gender norms also leave young people vulnerable to different forms of violence and to varied health risks.

As the GAGE conceptual framework recognises, successful transitions through adolescence and into early adulthood require that young people be supported to develop a broad array of capabilities. This means that no one intervention – or even simple set of interventions – can be considered a ‘magic bullet’. Indeed, GAGE midline findings underscore that supporting adolescents to overcome gendered risks and develop their full capabilities will require an interwoven package of interventions, delivered at individual, household, school, community, and policy levels, and involving a wide range of actors, from religious leaders to media professionals. While we acknowledge the costs and difficulties involved in implementing such a package, we suggest that the Government of Jordan and its development partners work to maximise Jordan’s demographic dividend by investing in the following areas:



To improve access to quality education

- Continue and scale up efforts to address violence and quality deficits in boys’ schools.
- Continue and scale up efforts to raise parents’ awareness about the importance of, and the need to support, education for their daughters and sons.
- Work with boys, beginning in early adolescence, to raise their aspirations and make them aware of how education can help them fulfil those aspirations.
- Invest in labelled cash transfers to support education, with amounts large enough to offset the opportunity costs of boys’ work and of transport costs for girls.
- Continue and scale up efforts to provide students with tutorial support, ensuring that support is provided through the end of secondary school.
- Better publicise the ways in which out-of-school young people can continue learning, and expand the pathways

through which those young people can re-join formal education.

- Enforce compulsory education through the end of basic education, with exceptions granted on a case-by-case basis in only the rarest circumstances
- Eliminate the legal barriers that trap refugees in occupations that do not require higher education.



To reduce age-based violence

- Expand parenting education courses, making special efforts to include more fathers, addressing not only the importance of non-violent discipline and open parent–child communication but also how gender norms shape parenting and parent–child interactions.
- Redouble efforts to eliminate corporal punishment and reduce bullying at schools.
- Work with boys, beginning in middle childhood, to encourage them to recognise, eschew and seek support for violence. By early adolescence, include direct attention to gender norms and alternative masculinities.
- Work with broader communities, including schools, through mass and social media campaigns and using religious leaders, to improve social cohesion among communities from different nationalities.



To reduce gender-based violence

- Continue and scale up efforts to raise parents’ awareness that girls are not to blame if they experience sexual harassment, about the multiple and intersecting ways in which child marriage puts girls at risk (in the short term and longer term) due to gender norms, and about parents’ continued responsibility to protect girls even after marriage.
- Continue and scale up efforts to empower girls with knowledge of their rights and how gender norms shape their lives, giving them a sense of self more expansive than their reproductive capacity, and the skills they need to resist pressure from family and peers to marry, and to seek help if they need it.
- Engage with boys and young men to tackle the gender norms that drive sexual harassment and intimate partner violence. Ensure efforts also address the gender norms that drive men’s preferences for adolescent girls, rather than adult women, as marriage partners. Invest in community awareness-raising campaigns, including partnering with religious leaders. These should focus on: encouraging bystanders to intervene when they witness sexual harassment, shifting the cultural norms

that blame girls for inviting harassment, tackling men's (and marital families') preferences for child brides, and addressing the widespread beliefs about obedience and violence within marriage. Adopt a zero-tolerance position on sexual harassment and expand the mandate of police officers to intervene whenever they receive reports of sexual harassment.

- Eliminate legal loopholes that allow marriage under the age of 18 years.



To improve young people's physical health

- Work with boys, starting in early adolescence, to raise awareness about the risks of substance use, how gender norms and peer pressure put boys at risk, and where to seek help for quitting.
- Provide young people with comprehensive sexuality education, ensuring that information is timely, accurate, age-appropriate, and without fail delivered before marriage.
- Work with parents (especially fathers) to raise their awareness about substance use and the importance of healthy exercise for girls and boys, and to equip them with the skills they need to feel comfortable discussing personal development (including sexuality) with their adolescent children.



To economically empower young people

- Step up efforts to raise parents' and boys' awareness about the trade-offs between child labour and immediate earnings vs. education and higher earnings over time.
- Work with parents (and boys and young men, as future and current husbands) to improve their tolerance of and support for girls' and young women's aspirations for paid work.
- Invest in awareness-raising campaigns, including through mass and social media, aimed at improving broader support for women's employment.
- Expand refugees' access to higher occupations and ensure that their costs for tertiary education are in line with those of Jordanian citizens.



To improve young people's psychosocial well-being

- Continue and scale up efforts to provide safe spaces for girls and boys, and young women and young men, to interact with peers and caring adults, ensuring that spaces are also open to girls who are (or have been) married and that young people (especially boys) are

supported and encouraged to talk about their concerns and aspirations.

- Continue and scale up efforts to educate parents about the importance of open parent-child communication and how gender norms shape (and limit) family relationships and young people's broader well-being, especially in regard to girls' autonomy and access to friends, and the responsibility boys feel to be stoic and earn to relieve household financial pressures.
- Expand formal and semi-formal psychosocial support services, including investing in more school counsellors. Publicise not only service availability, but also -to reduce stigma and promote uptake- the advantages of using services.

References

- Blum, R.W., Mmari, K. and Moreau, C. (2017) 'It begins at 10: how gender expectations shape early adolescence around the world' *Journal of Adolescent Health* 61(4): S3–S4
- Dahl, R., Allen, N., Wilbrecht, L. and Ballonoff Suleiman, A. (2018) 'Importance of investing in adolescence from a developmental science perspective' *Nature* 554: 441–450 (<https://doi.org/10.1038/nature25770>)
- Department of Statistics (2022) Department of Statistics website. Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (<http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo>)
- Department of Statistics (DOS) and ICF (2019) Jordan Population and Family and Health Survey 2017–18. Amman, Jordan, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: DOS and ICF (<https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR346/FR346.pdf>)
- GAGE consortium (2019) Gender and adolescence. Why understanding adolescent capabilities, change strategies and contexts matters. Second Edition. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence. (<https://www.gage.odi.org/publication/gage-conceptual-framework-second-edition/>)
- Guglielmi, S., Neumeister, E., Jones, N., Finnie, A., Motivans, A., Samman, E., Gallinetti, J. and Temin, M. (2022) 'Capturing adolescent realities in the global data revolution' *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health* ([https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\(22\)00222-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(22)00222-X))
- Higher Population Council (2018) National Action Plan for implementing the recommendations of the "Child Marriage in Jordan" study to limit the marriage of individuals under the age of 18 in Jordan. Amman: Higher Population Council (www.hpc.org.jo/sites/default/files/marige%20work%20plane%20book%20english%20final.pdf)
- Higher Population Council (2021) National Population Strategy 2021–2030 (www.hpc.org.jo/en/publications/60)
- Jones, N., Alabadi, T., Alheiwidi, S., Al Amaireh, W., Shareef, Q., Alshammari, F., Małachowska, A. and Presler-Marshall, E. (2022) Tackling digital exclusion among disadvantaged adolescents in Jordan: what difference does access to devices and online platforms make? London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence
- Jordan Ministry of Youth (n.d.) National Youth Strategy 2019–2025. Amman: Ministry of Youth, Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (http://moy.gov.jo/sites/default/files/jordan_national_youth_strategy_2019-2025_english_compressed_1.pdf)
- Ki-moon, B. (2016) 'Sustainability – engaging future generations now' *The Lancet* 387(10036): 2356–2358 ([doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)30271-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)30271-9))
- Mmari, K., Blum, R.W., Atnafou, R., Chilet, E., de Meyer, S., El-Gibaly, O., Basu, S., Bello, B., Maina, B. and Zuo, X. (2017) 'Exploration of gender norms and socialization among early adolescents: the use of qualitative methods for the Global Early Adolescent Study' *Journal of Adolescent Health* 61(4): S12–S18
- OECD (2020) 'Girls' and boys' performance in PISA'. In PISA 2018 Results (Volume II): Where All Students Can Succeed. Paris: OECD Publishing (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f56f8c26-en>)
- Patton, G.C., Sawyer, S.M., Santelli, J.S., Ross, D.A., Afifi, R., Allen, N.B., Arora, M., Azzopardi, P., Baldwin, W., Bonell, C., Kakuma, R., Kennedy, E., Mahon, J., McGovern, T., Mokdad, A.H., Patel, V., Petroni, S., Reavley, N., Taiwo, K., Waldfogel, J., Wickremarathne, D., Barroso, C., Bhutta, Z., Fatusi, A.O., Mattoo, A., Diers, J., Fang, J., Ferguson, J., Ssewamala, F. and Viner, R.M. (2016) 'Our future: a Lancet commission on adolescent health and wellbeing' *The Lancet* 387(10036): 2423–2478
- Perry, D.G. and Pauletti, R.E. (2011) 'Gender and adolescent development' *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 21(1): 61–74
- Presler-Marshall, E., Jones, N., Małachowska, A. and Oakley, E. (2022a) 'UNICEF Jordan's Makani programme: supporting students, building resilience'. Policy brief. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence
- Presler-Marshall, E., Oakley, E., Abu Hamad, Sh., Diab, R., Jones, N., Abu Hammad, B., Alheiwidi, S., Yadete, W., Seager, J. and Baird, S. (2022b) 'Adolescent girls' and boys' experiences of violence: evidence from Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE)'. Policy brief. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence
- Presler-Marshall, E., Jones, N., Abu Hamad, B., Małachowska, A. and Al Amaireh, W. (2023a) "'I want someone to ask me why I'm sad and to listen to me": adolescent psychosocial well-being in Jordan'. Policy Brief. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (www.gage.odi.org/publication/i-want-someone-to-ask-me-why-im-sad-and-to-listen-to-me-adolescent-psychosocial-well-being-in-jordan/)
- Presler-Marshall, E., Jones, N., Abu Hamad, B., Małachowska, A. and Al Amaireh, W. (2023b) 'Psychosocial well-being of adolescents in Jordan: the intersecting role of nationality, gender and disability'. Policy brief. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence
- Presler-Marshall et al. (forthcoming a) Tackling 'taboo' culture to improve adolescent sexual and reproductive health in Jordan.
- Presler-Marshall, E., Oakley, E., Jones, N., Alheiwidi, S., Mitu, K., Yadete, W., Youssef, S., Guglielmi, S., Baird, S. and Małachowska, A. (forthcoming b) 'There should be some freedom in our lives': exploring adolescent girls' experiences of child marriage. Report. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence
- Sawyer, S.M., Afifi, R.A., Bearinger, L.H., Blakemore, S.J., Dick, B., Ezech, A.C. and Patton, G.C. (2012) 'Adolescence: a foundation for future health' *The Lancet* 379(9826): 1630–40
- Sheehan, P., Sweeny, K., Rasmussen, B., Wils, A., Friedman, H.S., Mahon, J., Patton, G.C., Sawyer, S.M., Howard, E., Symons, J., Stenberg, K., Chalasani, S., Maharaj, N., Reavley, N., Shi, H., Fridman, M., Welsh, A., Nsofor, E. and Laski, L. (2017) 'Building the foundations for sustainable development: a case for global investment in the capabilities of adolescents'

The Lancet 390(10104): 1792–1806 ([https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(17\)30872-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(17)30872-3))

Steinberg, L. (2015) Age of opportunity: lessons from the new science of adolescence. New York: Eamon Dolan/Mariner Books

Tweissi, A., Abu Lebdi, K., Ababneh, I. and Hamed, S. (2014) Gender gap in student achievement in Jordan study report. Monitoring & Evaluation Partnership (MEP) Project (www.nchrd.gov.jo/assets/PDF/Studies/En/179.pdf)

UNICEF (2011) Adolescence: an age of opportunity. New York: UNICEF

UNICEF Jordan (2022) Youth: a successful transition to adulthood for every child (www.unicef.org/jordan/youth)

Viner, R., Ross, D., Hardy, R., Kuh, D., Power, C., Johnson, A., Wellings, K., McCambridge, J., Cole, T.J., Kelly, Y. and Batty, D.G. (2015) 'Life course epidemiology: recognising the importance of adolescence' Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health 69(8): 719–720