

Education in Jordan: post-Covid opportunities and challenges for young people

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Introduction

In its Education Strategic Plan (2018–2022), the Government of Jordan acknowledges the economic and social challenges it faces. The Plan lays out its strategy to capitalise on its youth bulge by scaling up – and improving the quality of – the educational services provided to citizens and non-citizens alike (Ministry of Education, 2018). However, many of the Plan's priorities, including building new educational infrastructure, institutionalising international standards of teaching excellence, and preparing alternative scenarios to address risks and crises, were derailed by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic (Ministry of Education and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2023). Although the Ministry of Education provided online lessons, school closures were among the longest in the world¹ and the longer-term impacts on young people's learning are only just becoming evident (ibid.).

This report draws on mixed-methods data collected in 2022 and 2023 by the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) research programme. Designed to build on baseline findings from research conducted in 2018 and 2019, surveys were undertaken with nearly 3,000 Syrian, Jordanian and Palestinian adolescents and young adults living in Jordan. Individual and group interviews were conducted with a sub-sample of nearly 190 of these young people. Data was also collected from caregivers and key informants. The report begins with an overview of the Jordanian context, focusing on the contours of the population, labour market, and educational system. We then describe the GAGE conceptual framework and methodology. We present our findings, followed by a discussion of key actions needed to accelerate progress and ensure that all young people in Jordan have access to quality education.

The Jordanian context

Population

Approximately one-third of Jordan's estimated 11.5 million residents (up from 6.9 million in 2010) are not Jordanian (Department of Statistics, 2016, 2023). Approximately

half of non-Jordanians are Syrian (1.3 million in 2015) (Department of Statistics, 2016); of those, approximately half (653,000) were registered as refugees with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as of September 2023 (UNHCR, 2023). Nearly 80% of Syrians live in Jordanian host communities; most of the remainder live in formal refugee camps, although 15,000 are estimated to live in informal tented settlements scattered throughout the countryside (ibid.).

There is also a large Palestinian population in Jordan. Most (82%) of the 2.3 million Palestinian refugees who are registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (as of 2023) have Jordanian citizenship and are categorised as Jordanian by the census and other surveys (UNRWA, 2023). The remainder, who entered the country in the 1960s or later and lack citizenship (and its attendant rights), are concentrated in one of 10 official camps (ibid.).

Economy and labour market

Jordan's economy has struggled since well before the onset of the Syrian crisis. Annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth fell from 7.2% in 2008 to 2.3% in 2010 and has not risen above 3% since then (World Bank, 2023a). The Covid-19 pandemic further impacted the economy, with growth contracting by 1.6% in 2020 (ibid.). Although the economy is now growing again, growth was still below 3% in 2022 (ibid.). Low economic growth, coupled with high population growth, has resulted in an increase in poverty. In 2023, it was estimated that one in three of Jordan's residents were poor (Jordan News, 2023). Refugees are more likely to be poor than Jordanians. In 2022, the United Nations (UN) estimated that 83% of Syrians living in host communities lived below the poverty line (European Commission Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), 2022). With the caveat that data is now more than a decade out of date, Palestinians living in camps are also disproportionately likely to be poor. In 2011, for example, 53% of those living in Gaza/Jerash camp lived below the poverty line (Tiltnes and Zhang, 2013).

Jordan's economic struggles, and the vulnerability of refugees living in the country, are also reflected in labour market figures. At a national level, Jordan's labour force

¹ There were 148 days of school closure between March 2020 and February 2021. Schools reverted to online learning again from 9 March 2021 and did not reopen until September 2021. School closures were among the longest in the world.

participation rate² stood at 41.7% in 2021 (World Bank, 2023a).³ However, because Jordan is one of the world's least gender-equitable countries – ranking 126 out of 146 on the 2021 Global Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum, 2023) – figures must be disaggregated by gender to be meaningful. In 2021, men's labour force participation rate was 65%; the rate for women was only 15% (World Bank, 2023a). Women's labour force participation is closely related to education; those with university degrees are far more likely to enter the labour force than those with lower levels of education (Amer, 2018).

Labour force participation rates for refugees are lower than for Jordanians, partly due to the presence of a migrant workforce estimated to be as large as the Jordanian workforce and partly due to legal restrictions on the work refugees can do (they are limited to the agriculture, manufacturing, construction, food services and retail trade sectors) (Tiltne and Zhang, 2013; Razzaz, 2017; Stave et al., 2021). One feature is critical to understanding young people's educational aspirations: unemployment in Jordan – especially among men – is especially common for the most educated people, as there are fewer high-skilled jobs than there are highly skilled workers (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Centre, 2018). In 2021, more than a quarter (28%) of those with advanced education were unemployed, compared to 23% of those with basic education and 12% of those with intermediary education (World Bank, 2023a).

Education and training

Basic education in Jordan is free and compulsory for children aged 6–15 years and consists of 10 years of schooling. Upon completion, young people may choose to enter vocational training or progress to secondary school for two years of further study. After graduating from secondary school, young adults may choose between technical and vocational education and training (TVET) offered by community colleges (and lasting two years) or, if they pass the General Secondary Education Certificate examination (the Tawjihi), they can apply to a university (UNESCO, 2021). Jordanian and Syrian students are educated in government schools, which were scaled up a decade ago, in response to the Syrian crisis, by adding a second shift (in the afternoon) for Syrians. Palestinians living in camps are almost exclusively educated in UNRWA-run schools (nearly

all of which are double-shift due to overcrowding) up until grade 10. At the secondary level, students of all nationalities study together in government schools.

The most recent Jordan Population and Family Health Survey (JPFHS) (2017–2018) found that enrolment in education varies by level, gender and nationality. Unsurprisingly, enrolment in basic education (96%) is higher than enrolment in secondary school (71%) for both Jordanians and Syrians, and for girls and boys (Department of Statistics and ICF, 2019). Across educational levels, and including Jordanians and Syrians, girls are more likely to be enrolled than boys. This is partly because of boys undertaking child labour and partly because boys are educated after 3rd grade in boys-only schools, which tend to be less engaging and more violent than mixed-gender schools, driving many boys to drop out (Ripley, 2017; Jones et al., 2019a). By secondary school, the aggregate gender gap in enrolment is quite large (75% of girls versus 67% of boys) (Department of Statistics and ICF, 2019).

Rates of enrolment for Jordanian children are higher than for Syrian children. Although the gap is large (10 percentage points) even in basic education, by secondary school Jordanians are more than twice as likely as Syrians to be enrolled (74% versus 30%). This is due to Syrian boys' much higher rates of child labour and gender norms that prioritise girls' honour and marriageability (Department of Statistics and ICF, 2019; Jones et al., 2019a; Presler-Marshall et al., 2020). Recent enrolment figures for Palestinians without citizenship are not available, but in 2011 Palestinian young people living in camps were more likely to leave school before age 15 than their counterparts living in host communities (Tiltne and Zhang, 2013).

Higher education in Jordan is a relatively new phenomenon; the first public university was not established until 1962 and the first private university did not open until 1989 (Fincham, 2020). Despite high unemployment rates for graduates, university education remains highly valued because it is seen as a precursor for employment in the public sector and in better-off Gulf states (Razzaz, 2017). UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (2021) reports that one-third of young people living in Jordan enrol in tertiary education, with young women (37%) more likely to do so than young men (30%). Syrians are much less likely to access higher education than Jordanians. The West Asia-North Africa (WANA) Institute (n.d.) reports that in 2016,

² The labour force participation rate includes both those who are working and those who are looking for work but are unemployed.

³ Modelled International Labour Organization (ILO) estimate.

only 13.3% of university-aged Syrian refugees were enrolled in higher education. Barriers to access include cost (despite a fee reduction of 20% at select universities), but also documentation. Young women face the added barrier of gender norms that require them to have permission to pursue education (Sherab and Kirk, 2016; Fincham, 2020). Recent data on non-citizen Palestinians' access to post-secondary education is again not available; however, it is most likely lower than national averages because non-citizens are required to pay higher tuition fees (Tiltne and Zhang, 2013).

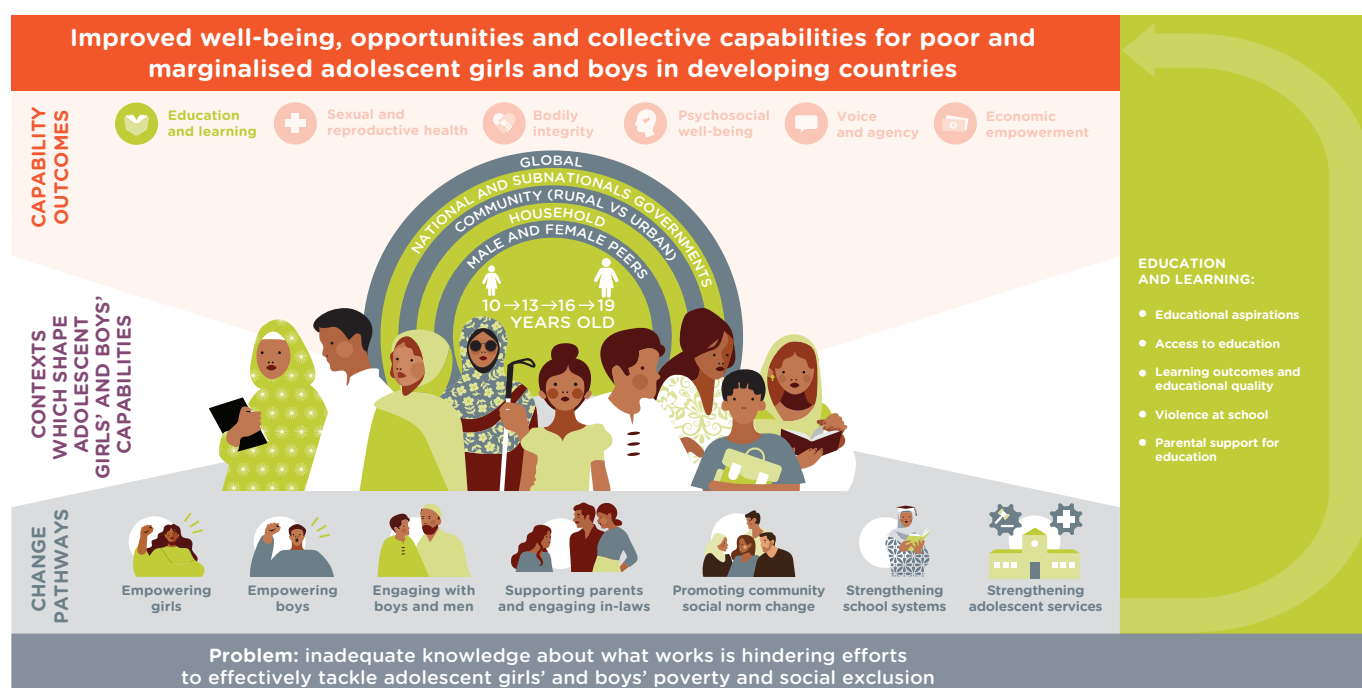
Educational quality in Jordan is very low by international standards. Indeed, the World Bank (2023b) estimates that learning levels are so low that young people are developing only half of their potential human capital. On the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test, which is administered to 15-year-olds, students in Jordan were less likely to score as proficient than their global peers on all three subjects tested (OECD, 2019). Gender gaps are uniformly in girls' favour, while learning levels vary by nationality. While one study found that students in UNRWA-run schools in Jordan outperform those in government schools – by nearly a year's worth of learning (Abdul-Hamid et al., 2014) – GAGE's baseline research underscores the need to look beyond averages. Of Palestinian boys in the sample (nearly all of whom live in Gaza camp), only 22% could read at the 2nd grade level and only 28% could subtract (Jones et al., 2019a).

GAGE conceptual framework

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

The first building block of our conceptual framework is capability outcomes. Championed originally by Amartya Sen (1985, 2004) and nuanced by Martha Nussbaum (2011) and Naila Kabeer (2003) to better capture complex gender dynamics at intra-household and societal levels, the capabilities approach has evolved as a broad normative framework exploring the kinds of assets (economic, human, political, emotional and social) that expand the capacity of individuals to achieve valued ways of 'doing and being'. At its core is a sense of competence and purposive agency: it goes beyond a focus on a fixed bundle of external assets, instead emphasising

Figure 1: GAGE conceptual framework



investment in an individual's skills, knowledge and voice. Importantly, the approach can encompass relevant investments in children and young people with diverse trajectories, including the most marginalised and 'hardest to reach' such as those with disabilities or those who were married as children. Although the GAGE framework covers six core capabilities, this report focuses on education and learning. It explores educational aspirations, access to education, learning outcomes and educational quality, violence at school and parental support for education.

The second building block of our conceptual framework is context dependency. Our '3 Cs' framework situates young people socio-ecologically. It recognises that not only do girls and boys at different stages in the life course have different needs and constraints, but also that these are highly dependent on their context at the family/ household, community, state and global levels. Within education, the key factors that we consider include household poverty, deeply entrenched gender norms, and the contours of the educational system and labour market.

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

Sample and methods

This report draws on mixed-methods data collected in Jordan in 2022 and 2023. At baseline (2018 to 2019), the quantitative sample included adolescents from marginalised households across two cohorts (aged 10–12 years and 15–17 years), with purposeful oversampling of adolescents with disabilities and those who were married as children. The baseline sample consisted of 4,095 adolescents in five governorates: Amman, Irbid, Jerash, Mafrqa and Zarqa.

At follow-up in 2022 and 2023, the GAGE Jordan midline sample included 2,923 young people – a 71% follow-up rate compared to baseline (see Table 1). Of these, just over two-thirds are Syrian refugees (2,145); most Syrian refugee respondents (56%) have lived in host communities consistently since baseline (1,195). Approximately 27% of Syrian respondents (595) have lived in refugee camps run by UNHCR since baseline, and 12% (257) have lived in informal tented settlements at any point since baseline.⁴ A comparatively small number of Syrian refugees (98, or 5%) have moved between host communities and camps in the time between the baseline and midline surveys.

The remainder of the midline sample are Jordanians (457), Palestinians (272), and a small group of individuals (49) that identified as another nationality (denoted 'other'). Almost all Palestinians in the GAGE sample live in Jerash camp; most are ex-Gazans who were displaced during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War in 1967 and who lack Jordanian citizenship and its attendant benefits. Due to the sample size, the 'other' nationality group is not included in comparisons by nationality, but is included in all other demographic group disaggregation, such as gender and age cohort.

Just over half the sample was female. Although the sample was approximately equally split between the two age cohorts (younger and older), older adolescents were more likely than younger adolescents to be lost to follow-up between baseline and midline (67% follow-up for the older cohort versus 75% follow-up for the younger

⁴ Between baseline and midline, a small minority of young people moved location. This was most common among Syrians, 10% of whom moved in the four years between baseline and midline. The bulk of movement was between UNHCR-run camps and Jordanian host communities. Because of this movement, young people are classified as camp-dwellers if they were living in a UNHCR-run camp at both baseline and midline; they are classified as 'ITS' if they were living in an informal tented settlement at either baseline or midline. Due to small samples sizes when stratifying young people by age cohort, young people who moved between camp and host were grouped in with the young people who lived in camp at both baseline and midline to form an ever camp group.

cohort). Because of this, the younger cohort is slightly overrepresented in the midline sample. At midline, on average, younger cohort adolescents were aged 15. They are referred to in this paper as adolescent girls and boys. The older cohort has transitioned to young adulthood (average age of 20) and are referred to as young women and young men.

Because GAGE's sample includes the most marginalised adolescents and young people, over an eighth of young people in our quantitative sample have any functional disability⁵ (513). Among those, 306 report having functional difficulties even if they have an assistive

device available (such as glasses, hearing aids, or a mobility device). Our sample also includes girls who were married as children. Of the 336 ever-married females, 229 married prior to age 18.

Most of the qualitative sample of 188 young people were selected from the larger quantitative sample, deliberately oversampling the most disadvantaged individuals in order to capture the voices of those at risk of being 'left behind' (see Table 2). The qualitative sample also included 29 young people from Jordan's Turkmen and Bani Murra communities (highly marginalised ethnic minorities)(see Annex 1), as well as 84 caregivers and 24 key informants

Table 1: GAGE midline quantitative sample

	Nationality				Sub-sample of those with disability	Sub-sample of girls married <18	Total
	Syrian	Jordanian	Palestinian	Other			
Females	1057	291	156	24	160	228	1528
Males	1088	166	116	25	146	n/a	1395
Younger cohort	1163	277	183	23	179	25	1646
Older cohort	982	180	89	26	127	204	1277
Total	2145	457	272	49	306	229	2923

Table 2: GAGE midline qualitative sample

	Syrian	Jordanian	Palestinian	Bani Murra/Turkmen	Totals
Females	37	12	13	16	78
Adolescent girls	23	6	6	6	41
Young women	14	6	7	10	37
Males	38	7	10	13	68
Adolescent boys	20	3	8	7	38
Young men	18	4	2	6	30
Married young people	34	3	3	8	48
Females	30	3	3	8	44
Females married <18	23	1	1	8	33
Males	4	0	0	0	4
Males married <18	1	0	0	0	1
Young people with disabilities	26	12	7		55
Location					
Host	37	19	23	29	108
Camp	54				54
ITS	26				26
Total young people	117	19	23	29	188
Group interviews with parents	12 (incl. 42 individuals)	4 (incl. 15 individuals)	2 (incl. 13 individuals)	4 (incl. 14 individuals)	22 (incl. 84 individuals)
Key informants					24
Totals	159	34	36	43	296

⁵ Determined by using the Washington Group Questionnaire: <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-wg-ss/>

(government officials, community and religious leaders, and service providers). This report also draws on GAGE's ongoing qualitative participatory research with 42 young people who are living in Jordan (see Table 3).

Quantitative survey data was collected in face-to-face interviews by enumerators who were trained to communicate with marginalised populations. Surveys were broad and included modules reflecting the GAGE conceptual framework (see Baird et al., 2023). Analysis of the quantitative survey data focused on a set of indicators related to sexual and reproductive health (data tables are available on request). Statistical analysis was conducted using Stata 17.0.

Qualitative tools, also employed by researchers carefully trained to communicate sensitively, consisted of interactive activities such as timelines, body mappings and vignettes, which were used in individual and group interviews (see Jones et al., 2019b). Preliminary data analysis took place during daily and site-wide debriefings. Interviews were transcribed and translated by native speakers and then coded thematically using the qualitative software analysis package MAXQDA.

The GAGE research design and tools were approved by ethics committees at the Overseas Development Institute and George Washington University. For research participants in refugee camps, permission was granted from the UNHCR National Protection Working Group. For research participants in host communities, approval was granted by Jordan's Ministry of Interior, the Department of Statistics and the Ministry of Education. Consent (written or verbal as appropriate) was obtained from caregivers and married adolescents; written or verbal assent was obtained for all unmarried adolescents under the age of 18. There was also a robust protocol for referral to services, tailored to the different realities of the diverse research sites.

Findings

Educational aspirations

Young people living in Jordan – adolescents and young adults alike – have high aspirations for education. At midline (2022–2023), nine-tenths would like to attend secondary school and three-quarters would like to attend university (see Figure 2). This is likely because, as a 15-year-old Syrian boy explained, 'Work is not useful, you make money and spend it, like fuel, but education stays in your head.' Given enrolment rates, which fall well below aspirations (especially for the older cohort, who are no longer eligible for free education), these figures suggest that aspirations for education are just that, and cannot be understood as realistic expectations. Indeed, looking only at the young people who were out of school at both baseline and midline, 75% aspired to attend secondary school and 55% aspired to attend university at midline. A 14-year-old Turkmen boy (see Box 1) captured this tension.

Figure 2: Educational aspirations, both cohorts

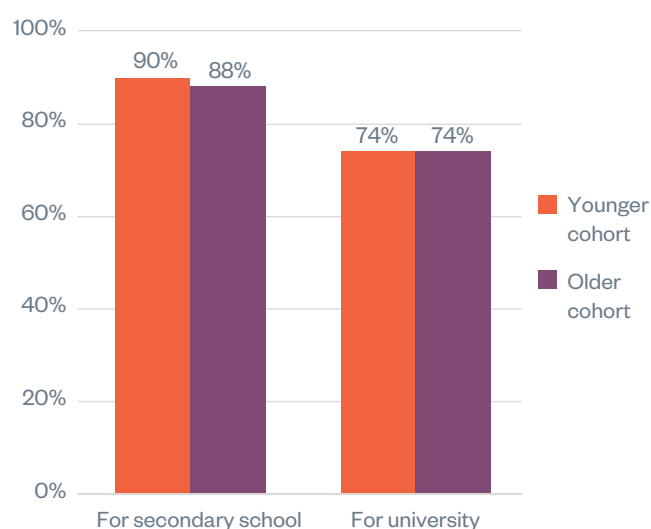


Table 3: GAGE participatory research sample

	Syrian	Jordanian	Palestinian	Totals
Females	11	3	15	29
Adolescent girls	0	1	1	2
Young women	11	2	14	27
Males	7	6	0	13
Adolescent boys	1	0	0	1
Young men	6	6	0	12
Married young people	11	0	1	12
Young people with disabilities	1	9	15	25
Totals	18	9	15	42

Box 1: Turkmen and Bani Murra adolescents are being left behind

The Turkmen and Bani Murra communities in Jordan are highly marginalised groups who face significant challenges in accessing their basic human rights. With exceptions, most Turkmen and Bani Murra groups have been historically nomadic and do not speak Arabic as a first language (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2016; Devonald et al., 2021).

GAGE's core sample does not include Turkmen and Bani Murra adolescents. However, a separate sample of 1,457 adolescents, being used to evaluate UNICEF programming, includes 114 adolescents from these communities (56 girls and 58 boys). Those evaluation findings – which are not directly comparable to GAGE midline findings because adolescents in the UNICEF sample are slightly younger than those in the core sample (mean age at midline=14 years) – highlight that Turkmen and Bani Murra adolescents, despite their Jordanian citizenship, lag behind even their Syrian peers in terms of key education and learning outcomes (see Table 4).

Table 4: Educational outcomes for Turkmen and Bani Murra adolescents

	Total	Syrian	Jordanian	Turkmen and Bani Murra
N	1457	701	637	114
Aspirations for secondary school	94%	92%	97%	83%
Aspirations for university	78%	78%	81%	62%
Literate @ 2nd grade level	71%	74%	74%	41%
Numerate @ subtraction	53%	54%	55%	31%

While nearly all Jordanian (97%) and Syrian (92%) adolescents aspire to attend secondary school, the figure for Turkmen and Bani Murra adolescents is substantially less, at 83%. Turkmen and Bani Murra adolescents' aspirations for university education lag even further behind; only 62% would like to attend university, compared with 81% of Jordanians and 78% of Syrians.

Turkmen and Bani Murra respondents reported that adolescents' access to education is limited by caregivers' lack of interest in education, as well as other factors, including social exclusion and seasonal migration. When asked how many children in his community fail to complete basic education, a Turkmen father replied, *'I swear, 80%.'* A 17-year-old Turkmen boy added that it is common for boys to complete only a few years of formal education before being sent to work: *'He becomes 8 years old, he goes to work on traffic lights. And that's it for school.'* A 14-year-old Bani Murra girl noted that while girls are afforded a few more years of education, they are often made to leave school in early adolescence. She stated, *'When a girl reaches puberty, they make her drop out of school.'*

Although adolescents highlighted caregivers' role in their school-leaving, caregivers regularly reported that young people refuse to attend school, mostly because they are bullied by other students and are discriminated against by teachers. A Turkmen mother reported that her daughter refuses to go to school because she is bullied for dressing and speaking differently from her Jordanian peers: *'She would say that the school isn't nice. "The girls beat me up".'* A 15-year-old Bani Murra girl admitted, *'The school staff aren't good to us, they don't respect us nor do we respect them.'* Caregivers also highlighted that migration interferes with continuous enrolment, as schools will not admit students unless they have academic records available.

Turkmen and Bani Murra parents reported that UNICEF-funded Makani ('My Space') centres have helped them address these administrative barriers and succeed in enrolling their children in government schools. Caregivers in the most nomadic households added that Makani centres are their children's only source of education. A Turkmen father explained, *'Our children study in UNICEF centres. Our children do not go to government schools because we do not settle in one area, we move.'*

Learning outcomes among Turkmen and Bani Murra adolescents and young people are extremely poor. While nearly three-quarters (74%) of Syrian and Jordanian students are able to read at 2nd grade level, the figure for Turkmen and Bani Murra students is only 41%. Maths outcomes are similar: around half of Jordanian (55%) and Syrian (54%) adolescents are able to do subtraction with borrowing, compared to less than a third (31%) of Turkmen and Bani Murra adolescents. Although learning outcomes primarily reflect Turkmen and Bani Murra adolescents' more limited engagement with formal education, a 17-year-old Turkmen girl noted that those outcomes are also limited by the fact that Turkmen and Bani Murra students do not speak Arabic as a first language. She explained that they start 1st grade at a disadvantage and never really catch up: *'Arabic isn't friendly to me honestly, because of Arabic grammar, essay writing and speaking... It's difficult for me.'*

When asked what he would like to be when he grows up, he replied: ‘...I want to become a doctor. But I have still never been to school... When I become big, maybe 20 or 22, I want to go to school. That is in my dreams.’

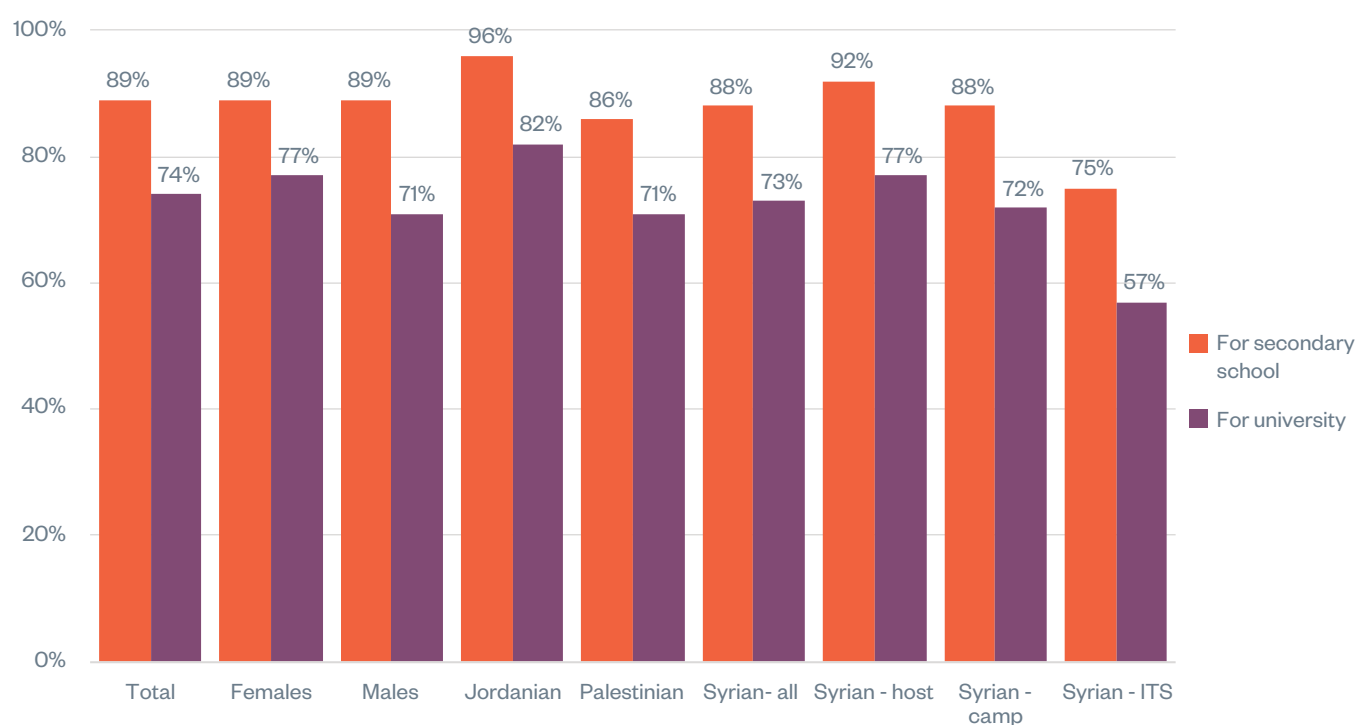
Although at midline a large majority (89%) of young people said they aspired to attend secondary school, there are significant differences (see Figure 3) between nationality groups and among Syrian locations. Jordanians (96%) are significantly more likely to want to attend secondary school than Syrians (88%) and Palestinians (86%), and Syrians living in host communities (92%) are significantly more likely to aspire to secondary education than those who live in UNHCR-run camps (88%) or informal tented settlements (75%). Differences are shaped by myriad factors, including communities’ histories of displacement; Palestinians have lower aspirations than Syrians living in host communities and UNHCR-run camps, most likely because after generations of exclusion, many have lost faith in the transformative potential of education. This is especially true of Palestinian boys, who are significantly less likely to aspire to secondary school than their female peers (79% versus 90%). A Palestinian father, whose son is currently first in his 8th grade class but is planning on attending vocational school rather than secondary school, reported that his son feels formal education will do him no good: ‘The youth in the camp are inclining themselves more towards skills rather than education due to the excess of

the problems we are suffering from... My son says that he wants to learn something that will be good for him. He says, “If I will learn a skill, I will work... and earn money.”

Differences in aspirations for secondary school are also shaped by young people’s educational histories. Qualitative data suggests that those living in informal tented settlements are most likely to have been out of school long enough that a return seems impossible. It also underscores that refugees’ aspirations are limited by the reality that fewer refugee families have the financial resources to invest in the tutorial support that successful secondary education requires. A 19-year-old Syrian young man explained that he has given up on aspiring for the future: ‘I don’t actually have ambitions, I mean I’m too tired to think of my ambitions... Because you think of it and it doesn’t happen, and the complete opposite happens, so I don’t like to think of it. I live day-by-day. For example, I now sit in front of you, and you’re interviewing me. I just think of today, and I don’t think of the next day because God knows what might happen to me.’

Aspirations for university, while lower than those for secondary school, are still high, with three-quarters (74%) of young people wishing to study at that level (see Figure 3). Jordanians (82%) are more likely to aspire to university than Syrians (73%) and Palestinians (71%), and Syrians living in informal tented settlements are least likely overall to have university aspirations (57%).

Figure 3: Educational aspirations of both cohorts, by gender, nationality and location



Respondents reported that refugees' lower aspirations are primarily due to the higher tuition fees they are required to pay. A 15-year-old Syrian girl explained that while she would love to attend university, she knows that it may not be possible because her family is poor and, *'you have to study on your own expenses'*. A 16-year-old Palestinian girl, who would like to study nutrition at university, added that while there are some scholarships available, they are targeted to only the highest-performing students: *'They require a high GPA [grade point average], you have to score over 90%'*. Refugee adolescents often added that aspiring to study any particular field was unrealistic, because of Jordanian policies that limit the majors they can enter. A 19-year-old Syrian young man in his first year at university admitted that he had not thought at all about his major: *'I didn't have any major in mind knowing that I won't get into the discipline that I want, so I didn't think of any'*. A 17-year-old Syrian girl added that professional courses of study are not just difficult to access, but impossible: *'For Syrians, [studying] medicine is forbidden, even if you get 100 out of 100 in the Tawjihi'*.

Gender differences in aspirations – or the lack thereof – require further explication. At the aggregate level, there are no gender differences in aspirations for secondary school (89% for girls and boys alike). These emerge only within age cohorts: younger girls are more likely to want to attend secondary school than younger boys (92% versus 89%), and older females are less likely to want to attend secondary school than older males (86% versus 89%).

Further disaggregation shows that older females' relatively lower aspirations for secondary school are related to marriage. Of older cohort females who have never been married, 94% would like to attend secondary school; among those who have been married, the figure is only 77% (see Box 2 on page 13). A 19-year-old Syrian mother, whose husband made her leave school in 11th grade, when they married, reported that while she would have loved to have completed secondary school, motherhood means it is no longer an option: *'I have a daughter, it is not permissible'*.

In contrast to aspirations for secondary school, there is a significant gender gap in aspirations for university at the aggregate level. Even with their higher odds of marriage, girls are more likely to aspire to university than boys (77% versus 71%). Qualitative research underscores that this gap is shaped by two factors: gender norms, and the Jordanian labour market. Girls are under very little pressure to earn. Indeed, because only a few occupations are seen as

suitable for females (such as teaching and healthcare), girls generally need a university education if they are to eventually have work and an income. A 20-year-old Palestinian young woman reported that for her, a university education is a *'weapon in my hand... even if there is a husband'*. A 14-year-old Bani Murra girl noted that she is so committed to studying nursing at university that she has distanced herself from her peers, who were distracting her from her studies: *'I decided to change myself and to stay away from my friends who distract me'*.

Expectations for boys are reversed. Boys in Jordan, and especially refugee boys, are under considerable pressure to contribute to household income, beginning in mid-adolescence. In addition, not only does higher education reduce young men's access to employment (because the Jordanian labour market is primarily generating work opportunities that require only basic education), but refugee boys are barred from professional work. A 15-year-old Syrian boy living in Zaatari camp explained, *'There is no future in the camp... One cannot become an engineer or anything'*. A 19-year-old Syrian young man commented that while he would like to attend university in the future, his short-term goal is to begin earning immediately after secondary school – to save enough money to migrate to Europe to pursue higher education and professional work there. He explained, *'If I will study in a university, I will have to spend money for 4 years' fees, transport expenses, my food and so, get exhausted and spend this time of my life like that. But during these 4 years, if I will work and save money, it will be enough'*.

Irrespective of cohort, gender, nationality or location, and noting that young people's educational aspirations are often unrealistic, aspirations for education were significantly higher at midline than at baseline (see Figure 4). Of those in the midline sample, aspirations for secondary school climbed 7 percentage points between baseline and midline (82% to 89%), with Syrians living in informal tented settlements showing the largest gains (14 percentage points). Aspirations for university climbed 4 percentage points (70% to 74%), with Palestinians showing the largest gains (8 percentage points).

Qualitative research suggests that climbing aspirations are largely due to young people's developmental maturation since baseline. A 14-year-old Syrian girl explained, *'I grew older and more aware, I started thinking about my education and what I want to become... when I see girls succeeding and becoming what they want... I developed the courage to study and become what I want...'*

I must have 95% aggregate... to get scholarship to study surgery. Climbing aspirations are also likely due to Syrians' improved access to basic and secondary education, because in-school students have more scope to aspire. A Makani facilitator reported that his staff had helped dozens of students find a pathway back into formal education: *'In cooperation with the school principal and the assistant, we contacted a group and were able to bring them back to the school to enrol in it.'*

Access to education

Because younger cohort adolescents are still school-aged, and eligible for free education (whereas the older cohort is no longer eligible), young people's access to education is highly dependent on their age. Detailed survey findings are presented accordingly – by age cohort. Before turning to those findings, however, Figure 5 provides a useful overview of the relationship between age and enrolment in formal school in Jordan.⁶ It shows that: it is not uncommon for

Figure 4: Change post aspirations since baseline, both cohorts, by gender, nationality and location

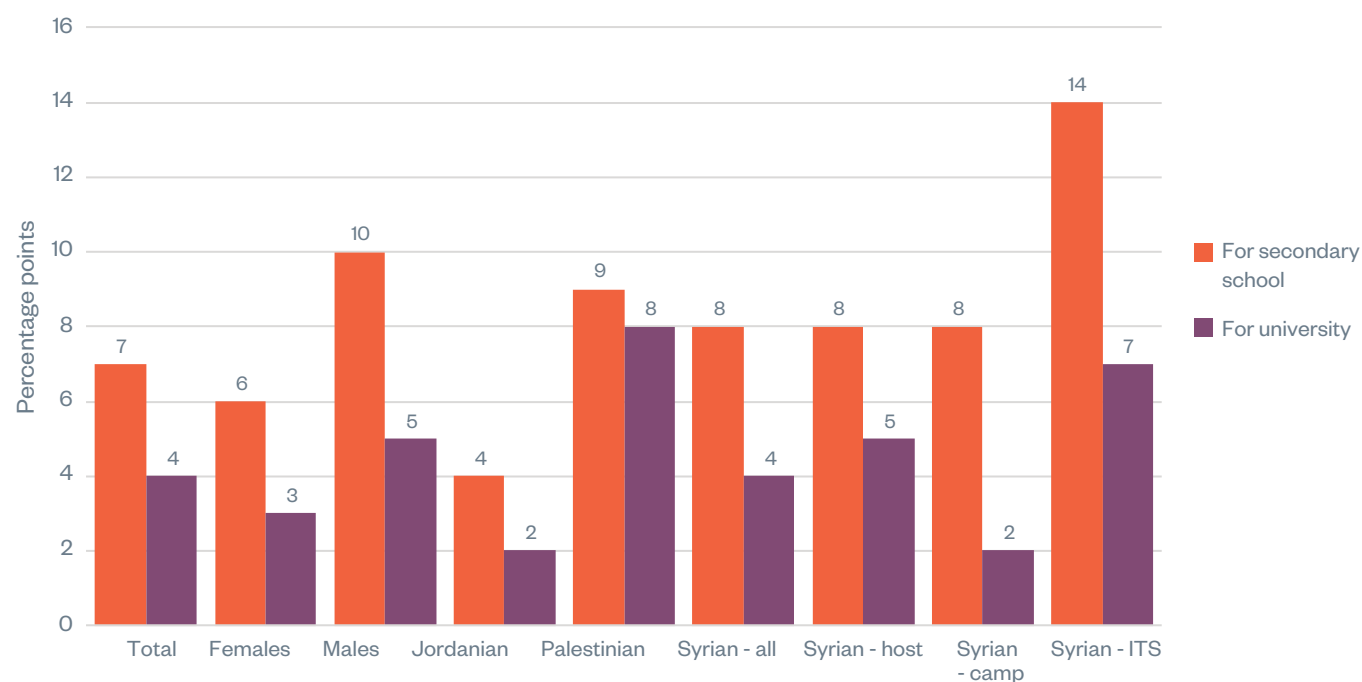
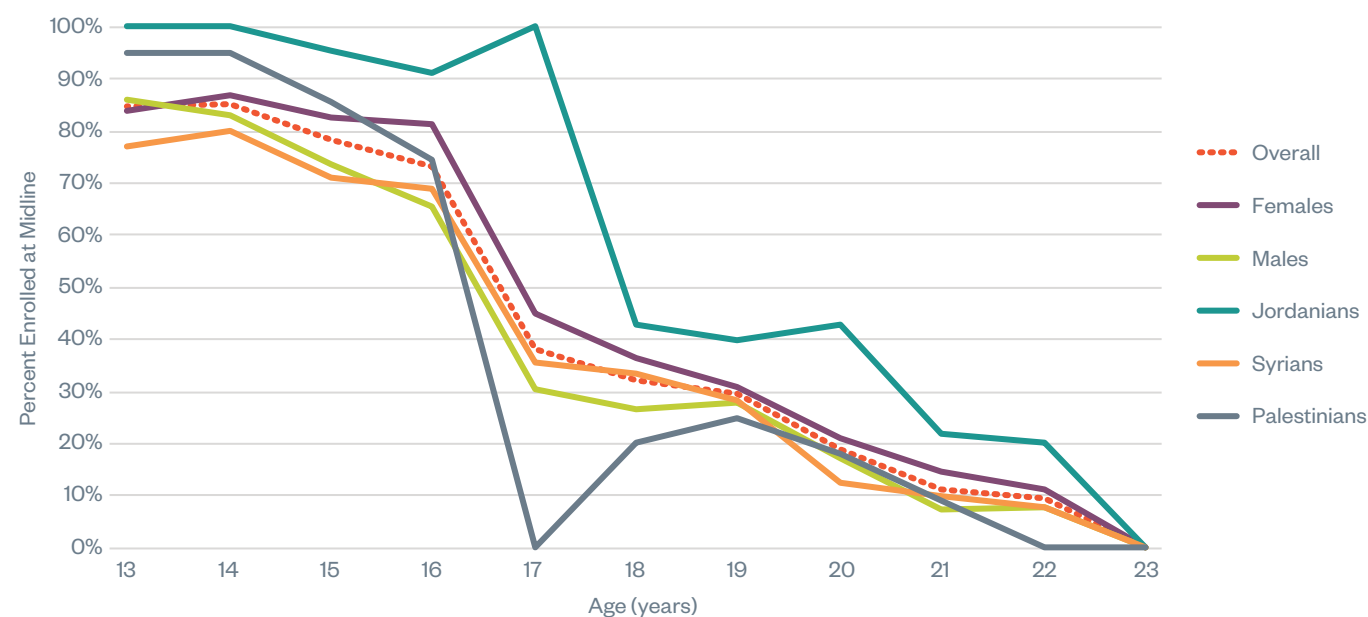


Figure 5: Current school enrolment by exact age, both cohorts, by gender and nationality



⁶ Note that our sample is clustered into two age cohorts, with most young people falling within one year younger or older than each cohort's mean.

adolescents (especially boys and Syrians) to leave school in early adolescence; there is a large drop-off associated with the completion of basic education (especially for boys and Palestinians); and young adults (especially refugees) are unlikely to pursue post-secondary education.

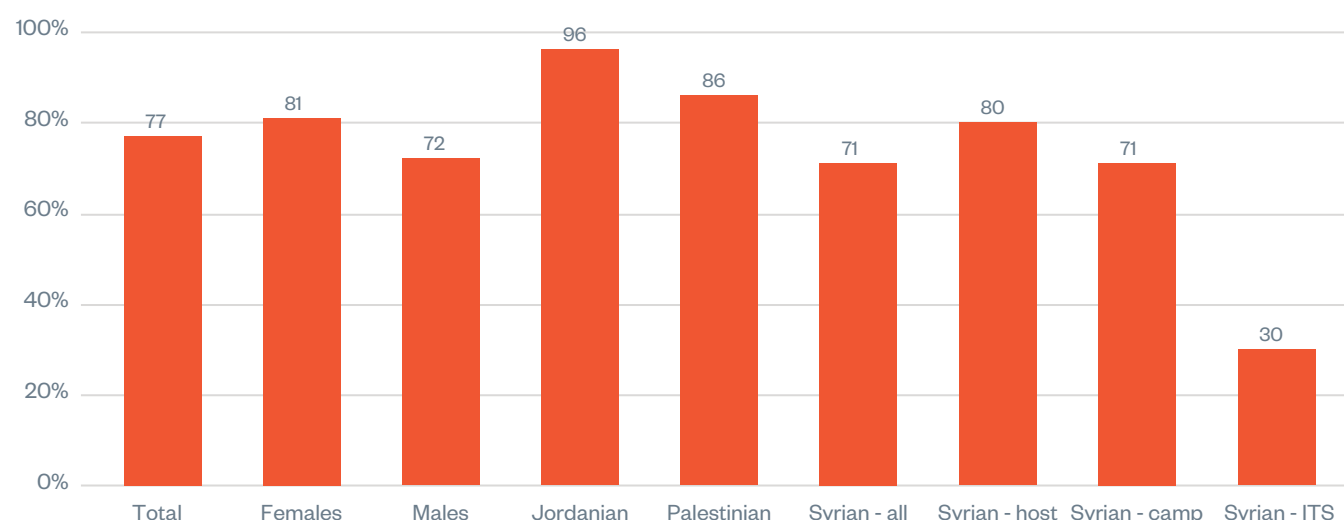
Of adolescents in the younger cohort, 77% were enrolled in school at midline (see Figure 6). Girls (81%) were significantly more likely to be enrolled than boys (72%); Jordanians (96%) were significantly more likely to be enrolled than Palestinians (86%) or Syrians (71%); and Syrians in host communities (80%) were more likely to be enrolled than those who had ever lived in camps (71%) or informal tented settlements (30%). Aggregate gender differences are driven by refugees in host communities and UNHCR camps.

Between baseline and midline, nearly a fifth of adolescents in the younger cohort dropped out of school. Overall enrolment rates fell from 94% to 77% (see Figure 7).

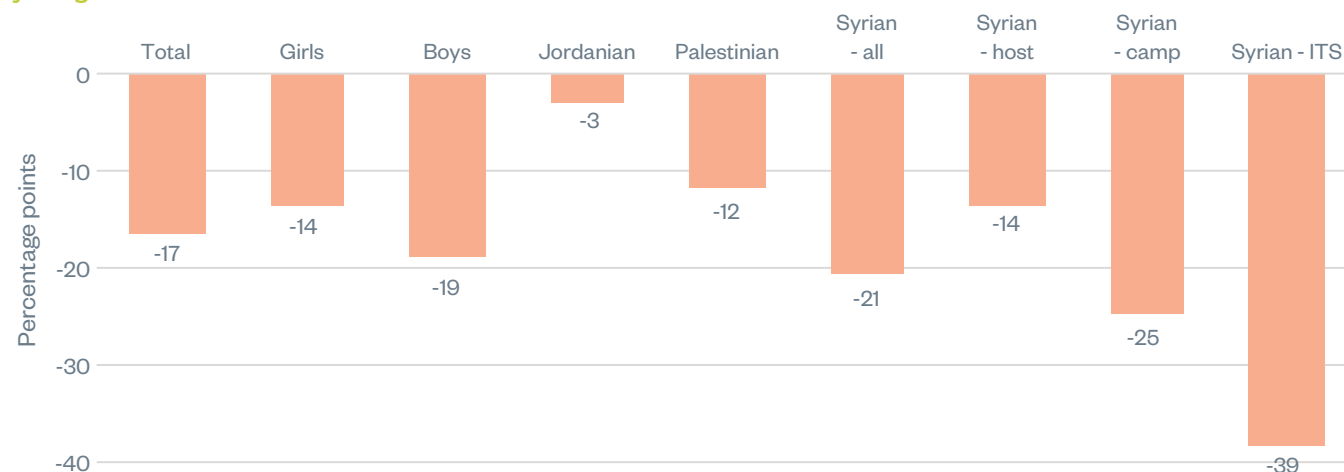
Declines are driven by refugee adolescents' school-leaving. Between baseline and midline, enrolment dropped by just 3 percentage points for Jordanians, compared with 12 percentage points for Palestinians and 21 percentage points for Syrians. Among Syrians, declines were largest among those living in informal tented settlements (39 percentage points) and smallest in host communities (14 percentage points). Across nationalities, boys were more likely than girls to drop out of school between baseline and midline (19 percentage point drop versus 14 percentage point drop). The gender difference was largest among Syrians living in host communities: a 19-point decline among boys versus a 9-point decline for girls.

Given the four years between baseline and midline – which included pandemic-related school closures – it is also important to understand at what stage during their schooling adolescents left. Survey results highlight early adolescence as pivotal. Of younger cohort adolescents

Figure 6: Younger cohort school enrolment, by gender, nationality and location



**Figure 7: Declines in school enrolment between baseline and midline, by gender, nationality and location—
younger cohort**



aged at least 13,⁷ 90% were attending/had attended 6th grade at midline (see Figure 8). Of those aged at least 15,⁸ however, only 77% were attending/had attended 8th grade. In line with established patterning, boys are disadvantaged compared to girls. They are less likely to have attended 6th grade (88% versus 91%). Also in line with established patterning, Syrian adolescents at least 15 years old – especially those living in formal camps and informal tented settlements – are less likely to have attended or be attending 8th grade. Only 70% of those in formal camps and 19% of those in informal tented settlements aged at least 15 were attending/had attended 8th grade. The gender gap between girls and boys is largest in formal camps, where 75% of girls aged at least 15, but only 65% of their male peers, were attending/had attended 8th grade.

Enrolment rates are far lower for older cohort young people, partly because their age means they are no longer eligible for free education. In addition, many young adult Syrians were pushed out of education years ago by the conflict and displacement. At midline, only 20% were pursuing formal education (see Figure 9). In line with national-level figures, young women are significantly more likely to be enrolled than young men (23% versus 17%), despite girls' greater odds of marriage and the fact that marriage effectively ends girls' access to education (see Box 2). Unsurprisingly, given that they pay the lowest university fees, Jordanians (37%) are far more likely to be enrolled than Palestinians (19%) or Syrians (17%). In contrast with younger cohort adolescents, we found no large differences in enrolment rates between Syrians living in host communities

Figure 8: Younger cohort grade attendance, by gender, nationality and location

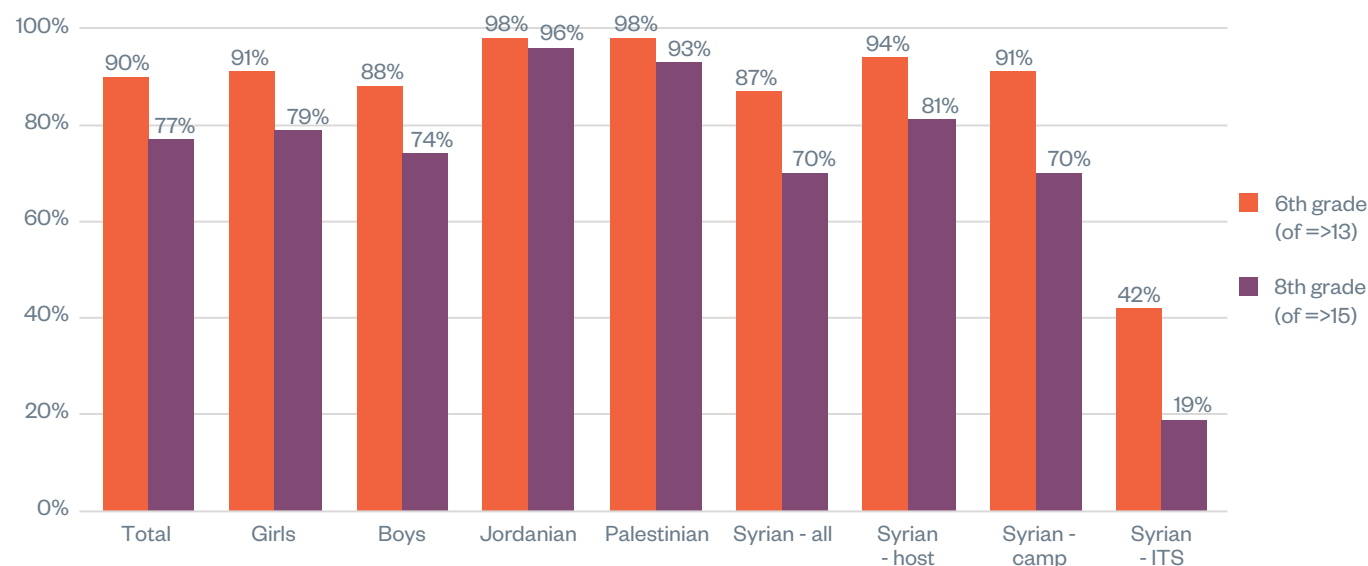
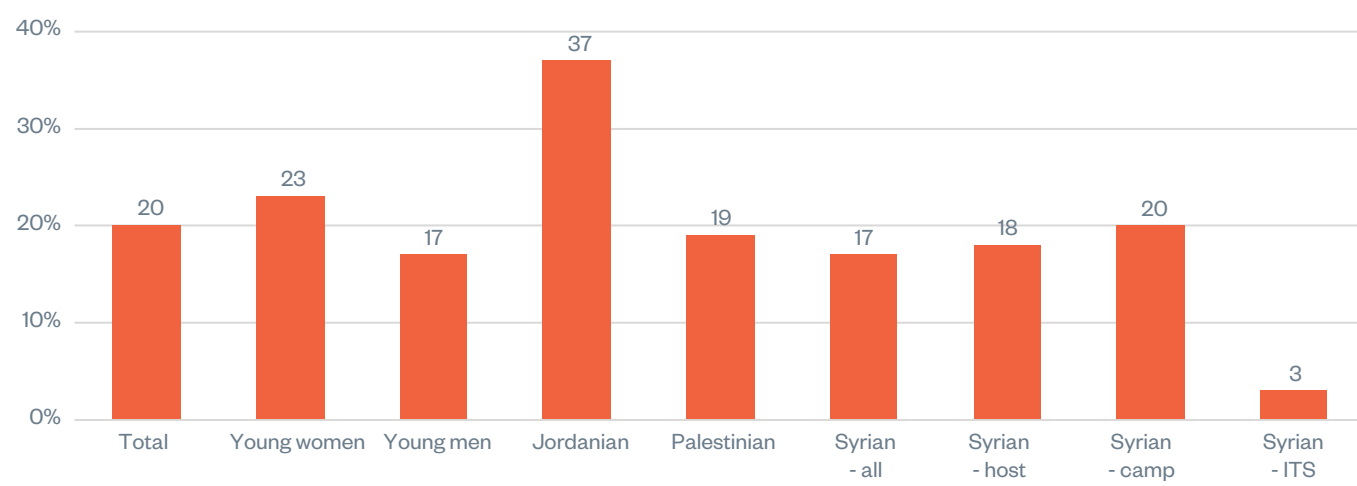


Figure 9: Older cohort school enrolment, by gender, nationality and location



⁷ By age 13, adolescents who started school 'on time' (at age 6) should be enrolled in either 7th or 8th grade.

⁸ By age 15, adolescents should be in 9th or 10th grade.

Box 2: Child marriage effectively ends girls' schooling

The GAGE midline sample includes just over 200 older cohort females who married as children. Compared to their peers who have not married, these young women are effectively excluded from formal education. They also have lower learning outcomes and limited aspirations for future education.

Only 1% of young women who were married prior to age 18 were enrolled in school at midline – compared with 39% of their peers who had not married (see Table 5). Most of the young women who married as children had been out of school for years. Average grade attainment was only 6.6 years (compared with 10.7 for those who had not married). Learning outcomes reflect early school-leaving. Only 68% of young women who married as children were literate at 2nd grade level (compared with 80% of those who had not married); and only 31% were able to do subtraction (compared with 62%).

Table 5: Educational outcomes for married girls

	Never-married older cohort girls	Older cohort girls married < age 18
Current enrolment	39%	1%
Highest grade attended	10.7	6.6
Literate @ 2nd grade level	80%	68%
Numerate @ subtraction	62%	31%

According to the qualitative data, most young married women left school before marriage because their parents prioritised their daughter's honour over her education. However, a significant minority were made to leave school by their husband-to-be (either upon engagement or marriage). For example, a 19-year-old Syrian young woman reported that her fiancé made her leave school after 11th grade, despite her wish to continue: *'I was in 11th grade... but I stopped at 12th... I would have liked to complete it, but... I got married... I told him I want to continue... and he told me to drop out.'*

Most young married women observed that their spouse's refusal to even consider the combination of marriage and education is rooted in men's jealousy. A 19-year-old Palestinian young woman explained, *'My husband didn't allow me... the man feels jealous because I am a lady and it is not OK if I have to go to and from school.'* Young wives also noted that marriage – usually quickly followed by motherhood – also leaves them with too little time for education. A 17-year-old Syrian girl reported that she had been making headway on changing her husband's mind about her pursuit of education, but that the discussion ended when she fell pregnant: *'When he told me to stop going to the school, I felt annoyed. So, I told my family and we had a fight... He told me that he will allow me to join Tawjihi [General Secondary Education Certificate] and there is an agreement to complete Tawjihi... but then this happened [pointing to her belly] and it is over.'*

Although it is unusual in Jordan for girls who are married (or have been married) to return to the classroom – due to concerns that married girls might *'sabotage the brains'* (18-year-old Syrian young woman) of unmarried girls with information about the sexual responsibilities that marriage entails (thus making unmarried girls less interested in marriage) – non-formal education (including homeschooling) offers a small minority of married and divorced girls a pathway back into formal education. A 19-year-old Syrian young woman reported that her husband had not only agreed to delay their first child until after she was out of school, but had taken over the housework so that she could study for the Tawjihi: *'My husband wouldn't let me do any of the housework, and he was the one who did it, he used to tell me "you just have to study".'* A 22-year-old divorced Syrian young woman, now at university majoring in business, explained that she went back to school to avoid being like her mother: *'I don't want to suffer like mom... I felt that for the future it is nice for a girl to graduate and go to a university... I went to the Ministry of Education and they told me that there is a school here, and I went through an exam, and succeeded.'*

(18%) and those in formal camps (20%); however, those who had ever lived in an informal tented settlement were least likely to be enrolled (3%). As with the younger cohort, the gender gap in midline enrolment is largest among Syrians who live in a formal camp: 25% of young women and 16% of young men were enrolled at midline.

Differences between baseline (53%) and midline (20%) enrolment for the older cohort are again large and shaped by nationality and gender (see Figure 10). Between baseline and midline, enrolment fell by 35 percentage points for young men, compared to 31 percentage points for young women. Nationality differences were even larger. Enrolment declined by 37 percentage points for Jordanians (from 74% to 37%), and by 47 percentage points for Palestinians (from 66% to 19%). Declines were smaller for Syrians (31 percentage points), most likely because many were already out of school at baseline. The largest overall decline in enrolment between baseline and midline was seen for Palestinian young men – from 70% to 16%.

For the older cohort, we can use grade attendance to track when young people leave school, and to determine how many are making the transition into and out of secondary school. This is complicated in Jordan, because (as noted earlier) the school system does not align with international convention (that is, in Jordan, secondary school is a two-year rather than four-year cycle). We therefore report on the attendance of 10th grade (for those aged at least 17), attendance of 11th grade (for those aged at least 18) and attendance of 12th grade (for those aged at least 19). We also report 6th and 8th grades, to facilitate comparisons with younger cohort adolescents.

At the aggregate level, only 55% of young adults in the older cohort attended 10th grade (the last year of basic education) and only 47% made the transition into a Jordanian secondary school (11th grade) (see Figure 11). As expected, the rates for girls (57% and 49% respectively) were higher than the rates for boys (52% and 44% respectively). Whereas nearly three-quarters (73%) of Jordanians attended secondary school, the percentages are substantially lower for Palestinians (53%) and Syrians living in host communities and UNHCR camps (46% and 44% respectively). Dropout rates in secondary school are high, especially given that the cycle is only for two years. Whereas 47% of young people aged at least 18 had attended 11th grade, only 40% of those aged at least 19 were attending/had attended 12th grade, with girls and Jordanians again advantaged compared with boys and other nationalities. Notably, although Palestinians (74%) are far more likely to have attended 10th grade than Syrians (52%, excluding those living in informal tented settlements), by 12th grade, Palestinians (43%) are scarcely more likely to be attending than Syrians (38%, again excluding those living in informal tented settlements).

Older cohort youth are less likely to have attended 6th and 8th grades than younger cohort adolescents. This is most likely because many Syrian young adults lost access to education when the civil war in their country broke out, and because Jordanian schools had not yet scaled to meet need in the years immediately following Syrians' displacement. Of younger cohort adolescents, 90% had attended/were attending 6th grade, and 77% of those aged at least 15 years had attended/were attending 8th grade.

Figure 10: Declines in school enrolment between baseline and midline, by gender, nationality and location—older cohort

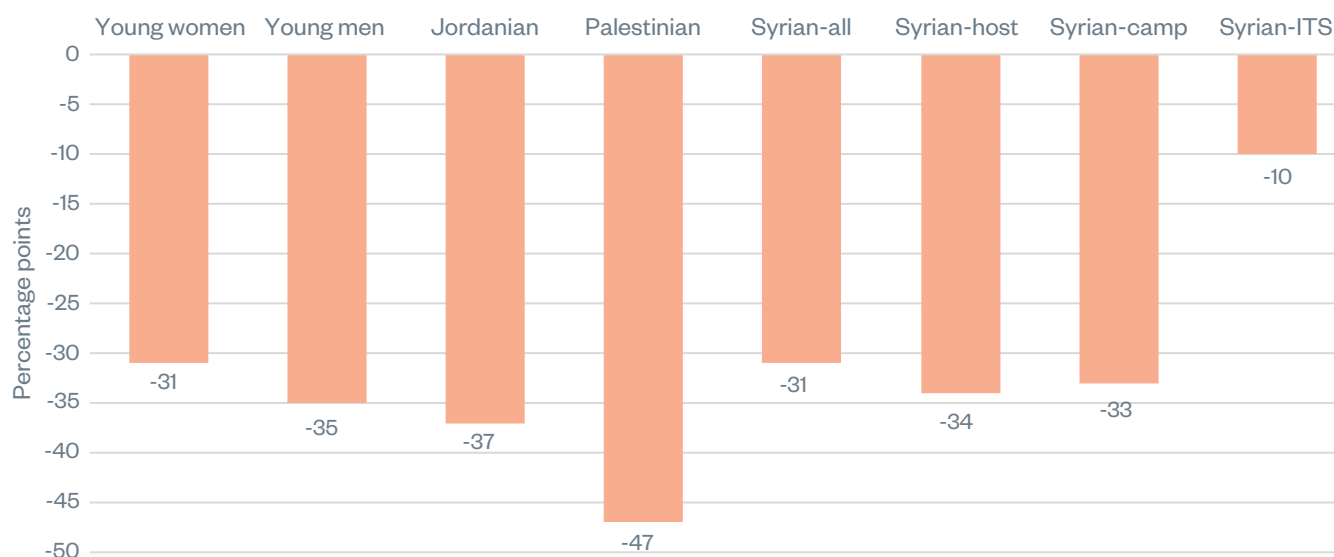
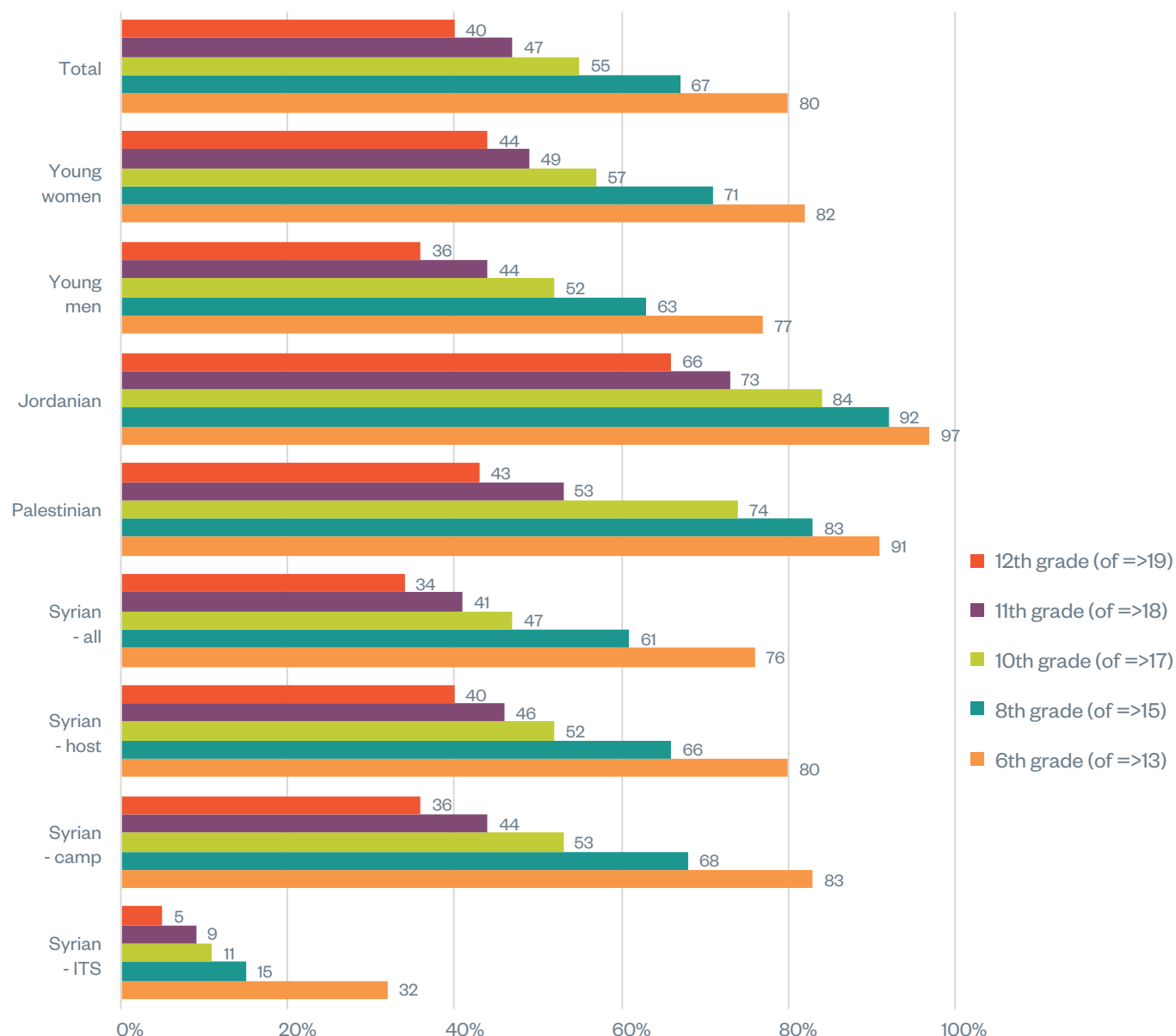


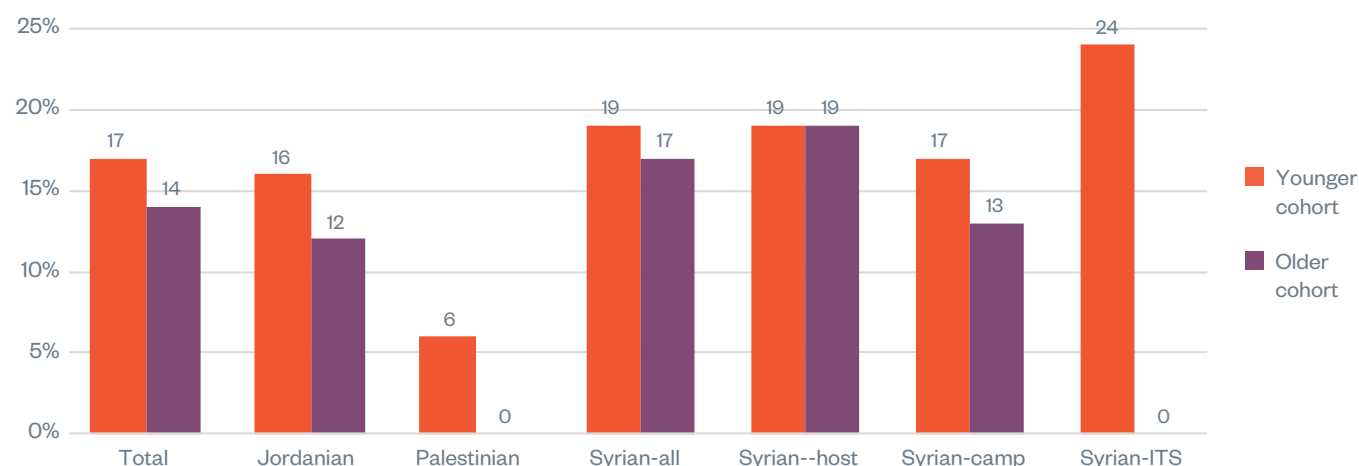
Figure 11: Older cohort grade attendance, by gender, nationality and location



Of older cohort youth, analogous figures are lower, at 80% and 67%.

The midline survey also found that enrolment is only one barrier to young people's access to education. Truancy is also common. Of the younger cohort, 17% of those enrolled in formal school had missed at least one week of school in the past year (see Figure 12). Unsurprisingly, rates were highest for Syrian adolescents living in informal tented settlements (24%), for whom distance to school is generally greater and engagement in child labour is more likely. Rates were lowest among Palestinians (6%). Among all young adults in the older cohort, 14% had missed at least one week of school. Jordanians (12%) were significantly less likely to have missed a week of school than Syrians living in host communities (19%). Gender differences were not significant in either cohort.

Qualitative research explains and extends the survey findings, by highlighting how gender norms and household poverty interact to shape young people's access to education. Boys' disadvantage vis-à-vis girls is primarily shaped by three factors, two of which are – at first glance – contradictory. These include: boys' involvement in child labour, which is driven both by household poverty and gender norms that position males as breadwinners; high youth unemployment, especially among the most educated young men; and education that is of poor quality and often involves violent discipline, which leaves boys even less interested in schooling. All these factors disproportionately impact refugee boys, and the first and third factors (as will be explored in detail below) were exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 12: Enrolled student has missed more than 1 week of school in the past year, by cohort, nationality and location

NB: There are too few older cohort Palestinians and Syrians living in informal tented settlements to be able to report on.

Boys' involvement in paid work is the largest barrier to their educational access. In line with survey findings, a key informant reported that boys begin leaving school for work in early adolescence: *'Boys drop out at an earlier age than girls... You find them after the 5th, 6th and 7th grades. Boys started dropping out because they could work.'* Syrian boys are the most likely to leave school because they are contributing to household income, due to Syrian adults' particularly restricted access to the labour market. 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.'* Another Syrian boy the same age commented that he had been unenrolled because his father insisted that he miss school regularly: *'My dad used to tell me not to go to school today. I mean, because of my dad's request, I wasn't going. My father didn't know that they might unenroll me if I didn't attend... I used to tell him that I was going to fail, and he told me, "never mind".'*

Palestinian boys often reported feeling similar pressure to earn. A 15-year-old stated: *'The situation here at the house... is not helpful. There was no money. We, as guys, grew up and it is not right that we stay unemployed.'* Refugee parents noted that pandemic-related economic shocks accelerated the transition from student to worker for many young boys. A Syrian mother, talking about her son, who was made to leave school in 8th grade when his father lost his job during lockdowns, said: *'I told him that it's not fair... but we were obliged to send him to work.'*

Adolescent boys' enrolment, like their educational aspirations, is also shaped by labour market realities. Many boys leave school because they and their families see little point in investing in education given longer-term limits on access to well-paid formal employment. Although 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 are barred from many occupations. A Palestinian father explained: *'Look around, there are those who have finished university education and college, yet all of them are unemployed.'* A Syrian father added, *'My son is in 10th grade now and I will send him to an industrial school, because even if he is a university student and gets a master's and PhD, he will not be able to get a job.'* Palestinian boys are the most likely to drop out of school because they see no value to education. A Palestinian mother reported: *'My son... wants to join as a lawyer... but there are no jobs... He will be preparing tea and coffee over there, just like a clerk.'*

Boys' enrolment – and particularly refugee boys' enrolment – is also shaped by the poor-quality and violent education that is all too often delivered by the boys-only schools that boys must attend starting in 4th grade. A 14-year-old Jordanian boy noted that poor-quality education leads boys to disengage from learning and then to drop out. He said, *'Boys leave school in the 7th grade because they are bored.'* A Syrian mother reported that her son dropped out of school in 6th grade because he was still completely illiterate. She explained, *'My son was supposed to be in 8th grade but he dropped out of school, he doesn't know how to write a single word.'* A Palestinian father added that teacher violence also pushes boys out

of school: *'I have a son in 6th grade and he hates school because of his teacher... He quit the school completely.'* Boys reported that quality deficits, and school-leaving, were exacerbated by distance learning introduced during the pandemic. As boys fell further and further behind, many decided not to continue. A 20-year-old Jordanian young man recalled of his peers in the first year of pandemic-related school closures, *'A few of my friends continued to study, [but] a lot of my friends dropped out of school.'*

Although girls have better access to education than boys, gender norms – and their intersection with household poverty – also shape girls' enrolment. As with boys, this is particularly the case for girls from refugee and Turkmen and Bani Murra communities, which tend to be both more conservative and poorer. For some girls, early adolescence marks the end of their education, because marriage and motherhood are seen as more important than schooling. A 15-year-old Palestinian girl stated that in her family, girls are not allowed to attend school once their bodies begin maturing: *'Once a girl grows up... she is not allowed to complete her education... My cousin left school because of this.'* A Syrian girl the same age agreed: *'In this retarded society, once a girl turns 15, it's shameful for her to study.'* Respondents observed that prohibitions on girls' schooling are generally aimed at protecting girls from sexual harassment and community gossip, which might damage their *'honour'* and marriage prospects. A 14-year-old Syrian girl reported that, *'When you are younger, no one disturbs you. But once you are older, they harass the girls.'* The mother of a 15-year-old Syrian girl admitted that she made her daughter leave school because the girl had been bold enough to chastise a young man who approached her on the street: *'She said that he called her and stopped. I told her that it is prohibited for her to talk or stop for anyone... I am not ready to lose my daughter like this. She is all that I have in my life.'*

Girls and their caregivers noted that sexual harassment has become more common since the pandemic. They attribute this to boys' better access to mobile phones and boys' reduced engagement with formal education – both directly related to distance education. A Syrian mother explained, *'Corona[virus] started in 2020 and schools were closed... When he [my son] got the phone for himself, he considered himself as a grown-up... This paved the way for awareness in a wrong direction... When he went back to the school, the child felt at a loss. He was behind. And what did he do? He went to the street.'* As noted in Box 3, a minority of

girls reported that they had to leave school not to protect their honour and marriageability, but because they were getting married. A 17-year-old Syrian girl recalled suddenly dropping out in 8th grade: *'I was studying and my life was regular, I suddenly got engaged and quit school... We don't have married girls who go to school.'*

Household poverty interacts with gender norms to further reduce girls' access to education. In some cases, girls drop out because they – or their caregivers – are embarrassed that they cannot afford new uniforms, school bags and school supplies. A Bani Murra mother noted that her daughter refuses to attend school when she feels at risk of being bullied for dressing shabbily. She stated, *'I swear by Allah, my daughter didn't go to school yesterday just because her trousers were torn.'* A Syrian father reported that he made his daughter leave school at age 13 because he was ashamed: *'I stopped her from studying... I spoke with her... "I am not able to buy for you, this means you go untidy to school in front of people"... I mean, this will not happen.'* More commonly, girls have to leave school because families are unable to afford the school transport that reduces girls' risk of sexual harassment. As a 15-year-old Syrian girl, who had to leave school in 8th grade, said, *'The bus needed fees.'* A Turkmen mother, when asked why her adolescent daughter was not enrolled in school, replied similarly: *'My daughter cannot pay for the everyday transport as our financial situation isn't so strong.'*

While poverty shapes adolescents' access to even basic education, starting in early adolescence for boys, young people's transitions into, through and out of secondary school are especially sensitive to the real costs of education. Respondents most often spoke of the extra tutorial support that is required in order to do well in secondary school, given the quality deficits. A 15-year-old Syrian boy reported that it is not possible to do well in Jordanian secondary school unless one has outside tutoring: *'Anyone who wants to learn should go to private teachers. You need to pay if you want to learn.'* A UNICEF Makani programme key informant added that this often pushes the poorest students out of school, because their parents *'have no money to make private premiums'*. Respondents noted that most private tutors are school teachers who are supplementing their government salaries, offering both in-person and online fee-based support. A Makani facilitator explained, *'It is rare to find a teacher who does not give private lessons... They give sessions either with him at home or home visits, and... there is a price for the session.'* A 19-year-old Syrian young woman added

that, *'The best teachers teach through paid websites, it's a business.'* Although a few young people reported accessing free high-quality tutorial support through non-governmental organisations (NGOs)⁹, most of those who cannot afford support just do without it, and instead study on their own, using free online tools. An 18-year-old Syrian young woman explained that this is extremely stressful, given that the stakes are high:

'I don't have private tuition, I study at home... I spent 2 hours studying on YouTube... 12th grade is difficult – it differs from all previous levels... It determines my destiny, whether I continue my education or fail and stop studying.'

Young people noted that with the Tawjihi costing 20 Jordanian dinars (JOD) to register and 10 JOD for each exam – already impossible for the poorest households – resitting exams is often out of the question. As a 20-year-old Syrian young woman, who married after failing to pass the Tawjihi, explained, *'I failed in three subjects. I did not re-study them. I mean, I didn't pay to retake the test. I did not pay for each subject.'* For girls, transport costs are an additional barrier at secondary school level, given that secondary schools are fewer and the distances to them longer (and, for Palestinian girls, this requires moving from in-camp UNRWA-run schools to out-of-camp government schools). A Syrian mother, whose adolescent daughters completed basic education and are now at home, explained, *'You have to have transport. Ok? My daughters are sitting idle, they have no schools. I don't have money to pay.'*

Access to post-secondary education is even more sensitive to the real costs involved, given that it entails higher tuition and transport costs than secondary education, especially for refugee adolescents. A 14-year-old Syrian boy reported that despite passing the Tawjihi, his sister is out of school because their family cannot afford to send her to university: *'My sister finished Tawjihi, but she is financially unable to pay the university fees.'* A 15-year-old Syrian girl explained that for non-citizens to access post-secondary education, a scholarship is required. She said, *'If you did not have a scholarship, you would be unable to study.'* Palestinian and Syrian

respondents added that competition for scholarships is fierce, with even the highest-performing students often unable to secure the funding that would allow them to access university. A Syrian mother reported (of the scholarships offered by DAFI¹⁰): *'This scholarship comes for two nationalities, Syrians and Palestinians, but they don't take anyone other than the highest scorers – only 90% and above.'* A 21-year-old Syrian young man, whose sister was a high scorer and yet was not offered a scholarship, added that this is because good academic results must be coupled with *'personal connections'*, which their family lacks. Young people also noted that scholarships rarely include transport costs (which can be expensive depending on the distances involved), and that some scholarships have repayment clauses that threaten to trap families in debt. A 21-year-old Syrian young woman explained, of her brother:

'My brother goes to the university... One semester costs 5,000 JOD, we have 5 JOD out of those 5,000... They gave him a scholarship for 2.5 years... One of the conditions was that he finishes the course, and that if he quits, he has to pay 20,000 JOD... because he has taken someone else's chance.'

Learning outcomes and educational quality

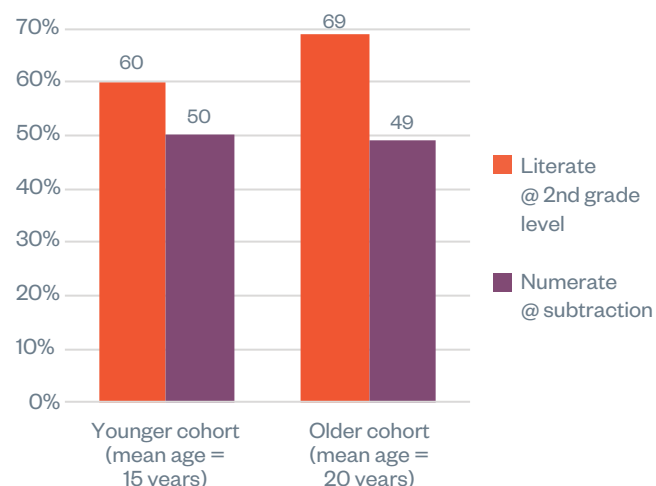
Our survey included modules aimed at measuring young people's basic literacy and numeracy. Using tools pioneered in India by the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), we found that a large minority of younger cohort adolescents (40%) and older cohort youth (31%), despite averaging 15 and 20 years old respectively, were not able to read a short story written at the 2nd grade level (see Figure 13). Highlighting that literacy levels can improve with age, regardless of school enrolment, but that numeracy is highly dependent on formal education, only half of younger and older cohort young people were able to successfully do subtraction with borrowing.

Among younger cohort adolescents, girls are significantly more likely to be literate at the 2nd grade level than boys (67% versus 53%). Jordanians (70%) and Syrians living in host communities (67%) have similar literacy levels, which are much higher than those of Palestinians (60%),

⁹ Note that Makani centres regularly provide learning support in Arabic, maths, science and sometimes English up to 6th grade level. In some centres, depending on demand, learning support services are provided up to 9th grade.

¹⁰ The DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) scholarship programme offers qualified refugee and returnee students the possibility to enrol in an undergraduate degree in their country of asylum or home country. See: <https://www.unhcr.org/us/what-we-do/build-better-futures/education/tertiary-education/dafi-tertiary-scholarship-programme>

Figure 13: Learning outcomes, by cohort



and Syrians living in formal camps (53%) and informal tented settlements (30%). The gender gap in favour of girls is significant for all groups except for Syrians living in informal tented settlements, where girls and boys are equally unlikely to be literate (30%). The literacy gender gap at midline is largest among Palestinians. Over three-quarters (78%) of younger cohort Palestinian girls can read at the 2nd grade level; for boys, the proportion is less than two-fifths (37%).

Patterning in younger cohort numeracy largely mirrors literacy at first glance. Girls are significantly more likely than boys to be able to subtract (53% versus 47%). Jordanians (62%), Palestinians (57%) and Syrians in host communities (56%) are more numerate than Syrians in camps (40%) and those in informal tented settlements (23%) (see Figure 14). However, within some nationalities and some locations, the gender gaps are reversed. In host communities, Jordanian and Syrian girls (67% and 61% respectively) outperform their male peers on subtraction (55% and 51%). This is not the case for Syrians in camps and informal tented

settlements, where boys (44% and 25% respectively) outperform girls (35% and 21%). Key informant interviews suggested that in camps this may be due to lower experience and motivation levels among teachers assigned to camps (either fresh graduates and teachers brought out of retirement), and a widespread perception that investing in secondary education has limited value given that scholarships to attend university are so scarce. In the case of ITS, girls' underperformance was explained as being at least in part due to highly conservative gender norms that under-value girls education. The gender gap in girls' favour is again largest among Palestinians. Nearly three-quarters (71%) of Palestinians girls can subtract; among boys, the proportion is less than two-fifths (39%).

Although midline learning outcomes speak to Jordan's continued learning crisis, the midline survey found that adolescents have made progress – especially in terms of literacy – since baseline. At baseline, only 39% of adolescents in the younger cohort were able to read at 2nd grade level; by midline, 60% could do so. Looking only at the adolescents who had ASER test scores at both baseline and midline, literacy gains were highest among those in Syrian camps (28 percentage points) and among Palestinians (27 percentage points) (see Figure 15); they were lowest among Syrians living in informal tented settlements (15 percentage points).

Numeracy gains were approximately half the size of literacy gains. At baseline, 41% of adolescents were able to subtract with borrowing; at midline, only 50% could do so. Gains were similar across groups, except for Syrians living in informal tented settlements (4 percentage points), who effectively made no progress since baseline, presumably because so few were still enrolled in school.

Figure 14: Younger cohort learning outcomes, by gender, nationality and location

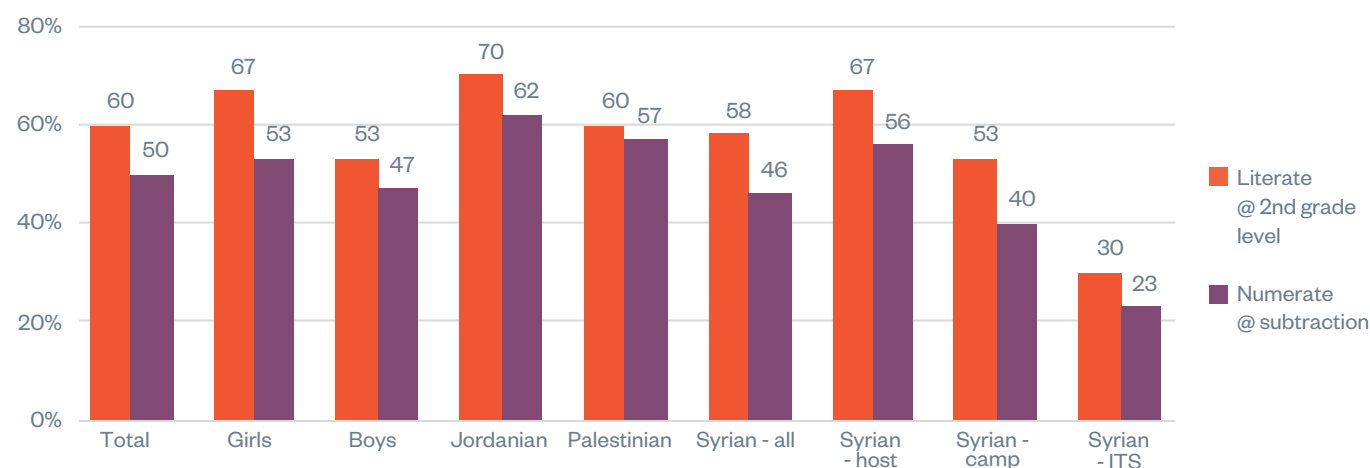
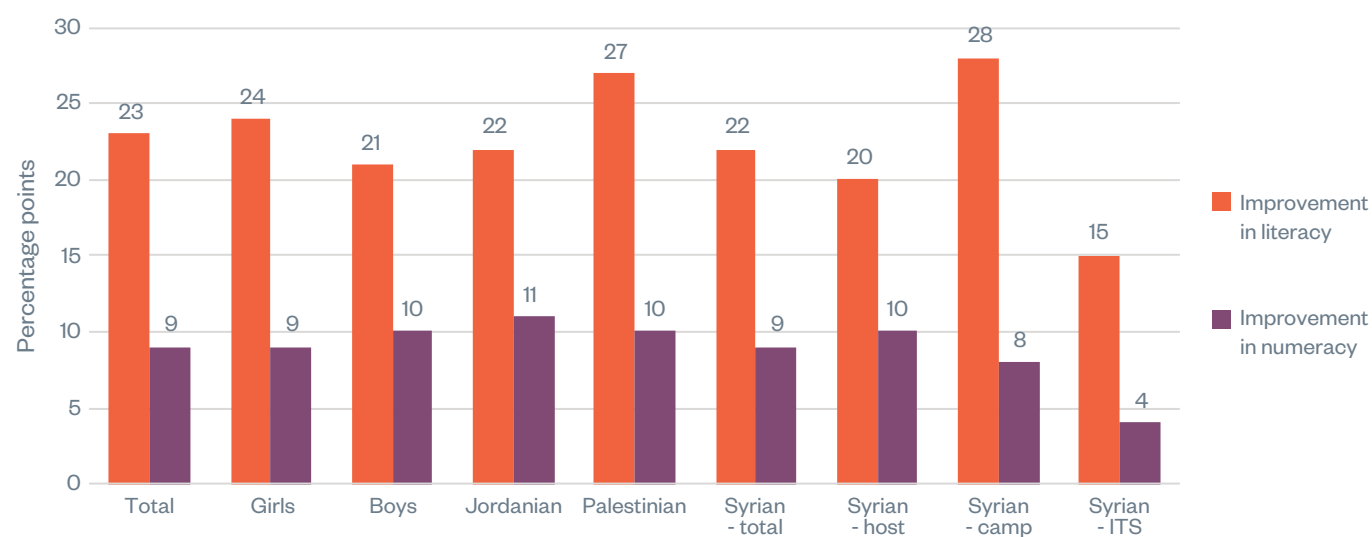
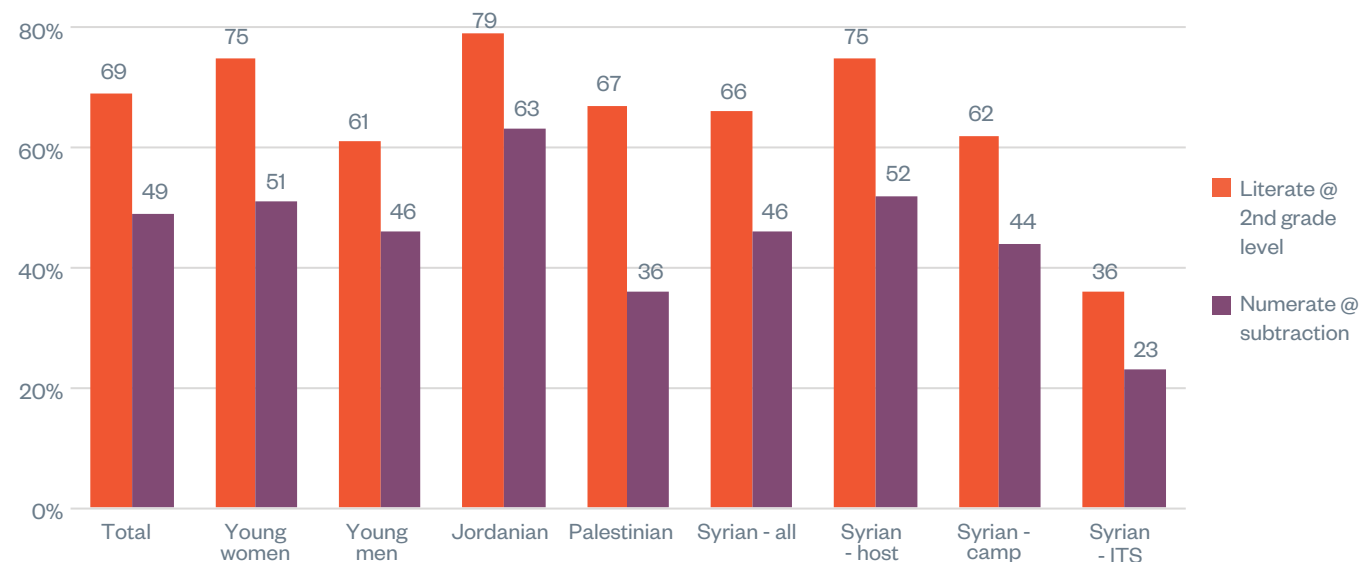


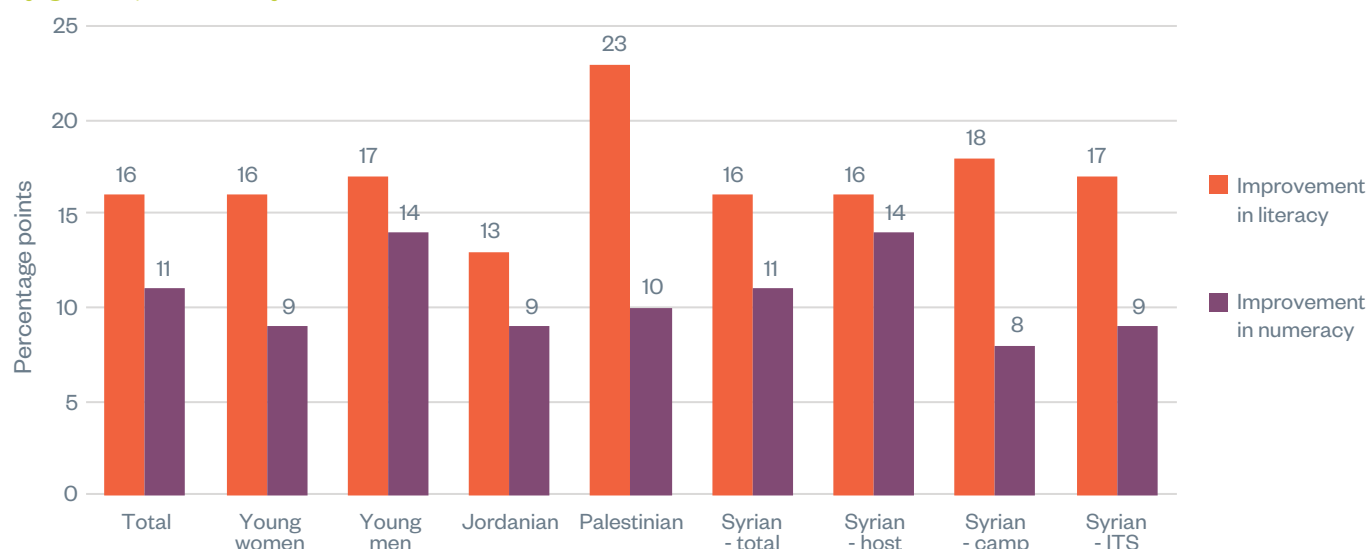
Figure 15: Improvement since baseline in the percentage of younger cohort adolescents able to read and subtract, by gender, nationality and location**Figure 16: Older cohort learning outcomes, by gender, nationality and location**

Among older cohort youth, females are again significantly more likely to be literate at 2nd grade level than males (75% versus 61%) (see Figure 16). Jordanians (79%) and Syrians in host communities (75%) are more literate than Palestinians (67%) and Syrians living in camps (62%) and in informal tented settlements (36%). The gender gap at midline is again insignificant among Syrians in informal tented settlements, but largest among Palestinians. Over three-quarters (78%) of Palestinian young women are literate at 2nd grade level; among young men, the proportion is just over half (51%). Patterning in older cohort numeracy is similar, though gender gaps are smaller, and Jordanians' advantage is larger. Young women are more likely to be able to subtract than young men (51% versus 46%). Jordanians (63%) are more likely to be able to

subtract than Syrians in host communities (52%), Syrians in formal camps (44%), Palestinians (36%) and Syrians in informal tented settlements (23%).

As with younger cohort adolescents, young adults' learning outcomes have improved since baseline. Literacy gains were again larger than numeracy gains. At baseline, 55% of young adults in the older cohort (who were then adolescents) could read at 2nd grade level; by midline, this had climbed to 69%. At baseline, only 39% of young adults could subtract with borrowing; by midline, this had risen to 49%. Looking only at the young adults who had ASER test scores at both baseline and midline, literacy gains were largest for Palestinians (23 percentage points) and smallest for Jordanians (13 percentage points) (see Figure 17). Numeracy gains were limited across all groups.

Figure 17: Improvement since baseline in the percentage of older cohort youth able to read and subtract, by gender, nationality and location



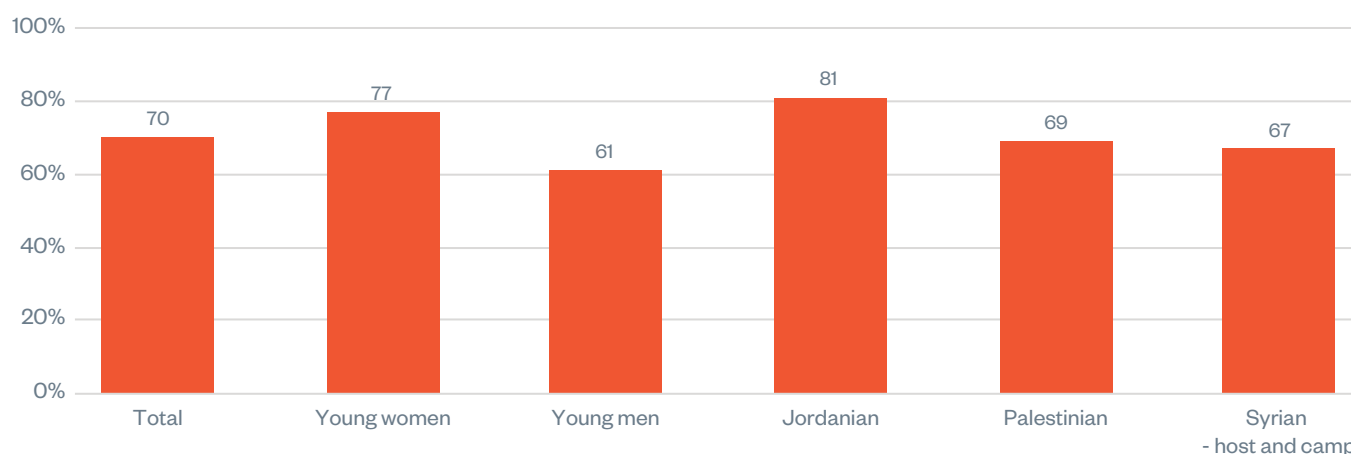
Of the young adults who took the Tawjihi, only 70% passed the exam (see Figure 18). There were marked differences in pass rates across nationalities and between young women and young men. Jordanians (81%) were more likely to pass than Palestinians (69%) and Syrians living in host communities and formal UNHCR camps (both 67%). Young women were significantly more likely to pass than young men (77% versus 61%).

Qualitative research highlights that poor learning outcomes – while also reflecting young people’s early school-leaving and challenging financial and social environments – are primarily the result of poor-quality instruction. A Jordanian father, whose children attend school in the morning, reported that the educational system is failing: *‘The situation in education is bad... The teachers are not strict, not good education, no homework... In their current public school, my children say: “We have*

nothing to do, we learnt nothing, they didn’t give us anything, the teacher was absent.” There is frequent absence of public schools’ teachers.’

Syrian parents in host communities added that quality deficits are even larger in the afternoon shift, which their own children attend, because the shift runs for fewer hours per day (three instead of five hours), because classrooms are more overcrowded, because teachers are already tired, and because teachers discriminate against Syrians. A Syrian father stated, *‘There is neglect to the extent that there is no interest in teaching the Syrian.’* Syrian adolescents in host communities also noted that schools (especially toilets and canteens) are dirty in the afternoon, and that they are sometimes required to give up instructional time to clean the building. A 15-year-old girl reported, *‘The school is always dirty. They ask us, the Syrians, to clean the school.’*

Figure 18: Proportion of young adults who passed the Tawjihi (of test takers), by gender and nationality



NB: There were too few test-takers among Syrians living in informal tented settlements to report on.

Respondents in UNHCR-run camps identified different quality deficits. A UNICEF Makani programme key informant noted that many schools have had only temporary and underqualified staff for years: *'This is the problem we face in schools – we don't have enough permanent additional teaching staff and they are completely unqualified.'* Although a few Palestinian adolescents who had attended both UNRWA and government schools reported that the former delivers better instruction, a Makani facilitator observed that in his experience, this is not true:

'There are no good services in UNRWA schools... The student's academic level remains the same and he must be kept in the same stage or grade, but he is automatically promoted to the next stage or grade because he has failed one year. This is the prevailing system in the UNRWA schools. Sixth-grade students used to come to our centre, who could neither read nor write.'

With some exceptions, respondents were especially scathing about the quality of education provided by boys' schools. Across nationalities, they reported that male teachers are more likely to be physically absent from the classroom, less likely to use engaging pedagogies or even to answer students' questions, and more likely to be violent (see below). A 21-year-old Syrian young man stated 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.'* Other respondents did not gainsay boys' reports. Although a few girls reported that it is not uncommon for female teachers to focus only on the most successful students ('toppers') and sideline the learning needs of girls who are struggling or failing to shine, most girls agreed with a 14-year-old Syrian girl, who observed, of her brothers' experiences, that: *'Male teachers don't explain and teach students well, they have some kind of neglect.'* Indeed, it was not uncommon for parents to report that when they went to school, to follow up on their sons' academic progress, teachers were not even in the classroom. A Syrian mother recalled, *'I went to ask about my son in the school and found the teacher sitting outside... He is not doing anything but smoking a cigarette outside along with another teacher.'*

Respondents also observed that girls' better learning outcomes are not solely the result of them having better teachers. They admitted that boys spend more time playing with their friends – both on the streets and online – and that girls are far more diligent students. A Syrian

father, describing the differences between his sons and daughters, said, *'You feel the boy is not balanced... I mean that his mind is smaller than his age.'* Girls and young women noted that their academic diligence is partly due to limits on their lives, as they are not allowed to play on the streets, and they have more limited access than boys to digital devices. However, girls and young women were also more likely than their male peers to value education for how it might transform their lives. A 15-year-old Syrian girl explained that she studies for hours a day in the hope of attending university and having her own job: *'I felt that education is the help for a girl... Because your future lies in studying and you can decide on your work, get your own income and live. You don't need anyone to pay for you or feed you from his money...'*

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on educational quality and learning outcomes cannot be overstated, according to GAGE respondents. Distance education – which not all students were able to access because the poorest households could not afford devices and data packages, and because internet access was often unreliable even for those who could afford it – was universally judged a failure, by students and their parents. A 15-year-old Syrian girl explained, *'Honestly, this thing [distance education] destroyed me... I couldn't understand the teacher's explanation... If I opened a video, I would stay all day trying to finish it and not understand anything because the internet network was weak. Also, I had one mobile phone for my siblings and me.'* A Palestinian father agreed: *'Two years of the student's life were lost and he stopped understanding anything.'* Syrian respondents – thousands of whom were given tablets, data packages and online learning support by UNICEF's Makani centres (see Box 3) – reported that distance education was especially bad for Syrians, in part because of their poorer access to devices and data packages, but in part because of school policies that allowed teachers to further deprioritise them. A Syrian mother stated that she had begged the school to fail her daughter, who had learnt nothing in 8th grade, but that she was rebuffed: *'I asked them to make her fail, they said they won't do it as they don't allow anyone to fail.'* A 16-year-old Syrian boy, in 10th grade at the time of midline, added that he had been placed in 10th grade despite not having attended much of 8th grade or any of 9th grade: *'During the online education period, I was not studying... Because of the internet problem... I did not study 8th or 9th grade... I just went back to school and studied 10th grade.'*

Box 3: Makani centres support learning

Participants in qualitative research uniformly agreed that UNICEF-funded Makani centres were and are critical to young people's learning. Centres not only handed out more than 10,000 internet-connected tablets during school closures, and provided students with distance tutorial support via WhatsApp, but are working now to help young people catch up and recover from learning losses resulting from distance education. A Palestinian father noted that the centre in Gaza camp had supported his children through school closures: *'The Makani centre was a blessing from God... It had a very huge role during the corona[virus] days... They provided the device for the children... They were following up with the children online and if the student doesn't attend the classes, they will inform me.'* A 15-year-old Syrian girl added that when schools and centres reopened after lockdowns, Makani staff immediately began helping young people catch up. She recalled, *'There were remedial lessons and skills, that's what we were learning.'* Makani staff observed that centres' efforts during and immediately after the pandemic increased parents' enthusiasm for Makani programming and has resulted in higher enrolment. A facilitator in a host community explained, *'Parents used to think that we play with their children, but during the corona[virus] period, the parents found out that we adopt recreational activities as a way of learning. During the corona[virus] period, we cared a lot and were constantly communicating with students... This had a role in increasing the role of Makani centres in the region.'* Adolescents, all of whom reported having now aged out of Makani learning support, noted that they wished this programming was still available.

A Syrian mother noted that learning losses are marked even for the highest-performing students, who are no longer scoring as highly on the Tawjihi: *'The ones who scored above 90% can be counted on the fingers of one hand!'* Across nationalities, respondents also observed that the pandemic further widened gender gaps in learning outcomes. In part, they attributed this to female teachers' greater efforts to keep girls engaged, by setting up WhatsApp groups and sending students supportive messages during school closures. In part, however, they admitted that boys had been more likely to use the digital devices that were meant for education to play video games. A 15-year-old Syrian girl explained, *'The teachers made groups on WhatsApp, and they sent us messages... We were committed and we adapted to the situation.'* A Syrian mother added, *'Boys' educational level has declined... The children were spending a lot of time using the mobile phone. We thought they were studying remotely, but they were using the mobile phone to play.'*

Violence at school

Despite laws and policies that prohibit violence in school, and despite reductions since baseline, violence remains common in Jordanian schools. Violence at the hands of teachers is especially common for adolescents with disabilities (see Box 4) and for boys, particularly refugee boys. The midline survey found that violence from teachers is 10 times more likely for younger cohort boys than younger cohort girls (21% vs 2%) and is especially common for Palestinian boys (29%) and Syrian boys living

in host communities (24%) (see Figure 19). A Palestinian mother, whose son left school at age 13, recalled, *'He was afraid of being hit!'* A 16-year-old Syrian boy, who dropped out of his second-shift school in the middle of 7th grade, admitted that he was beaten so badly by his teachers that he sometimes had nightmares: *'There was beating. Anyone who doesn't do their homework or acts out, they beat him! The teacher brings a stick or a hose with him.'*

Students in Jordan also report high levels of bullying at school. The midline survey found that of younger cohort adolescents, 25% report experiencing peer violence in the past year (see Figure 20). Boys (29%) are more likely to experience peer violence than girls (22%). In addition, adolescents in host communities – regardless of whether they are Jordanian (32%) or Syrian (29%) – are more likely to report bullying than those who live in communities with less diversity. Qualitative research suggests that this is partly because Jordanian and Syrian students begin attending school together at the secondary level. A 17-year-old Syrian girl reported that because the Jordanian girls in her 11th grade class have known each other for years, she feels left out: *'Ever since I started going to school here, I stopped caring about my studies... I stopped attending that much... If the other girls have a secret, they don't talk about it in front of me, they talk about it alone.'* An 18-year-old Syrian young man, the only Syrian in his 12th grade class, added that the other students work to make him uncomfortable: *'In school there is bullying... They talk about Syrian girls, that most Syrian girls are cheap.'*

Box 4: Disability increases students' risk of violence and limits their aspirations and learning

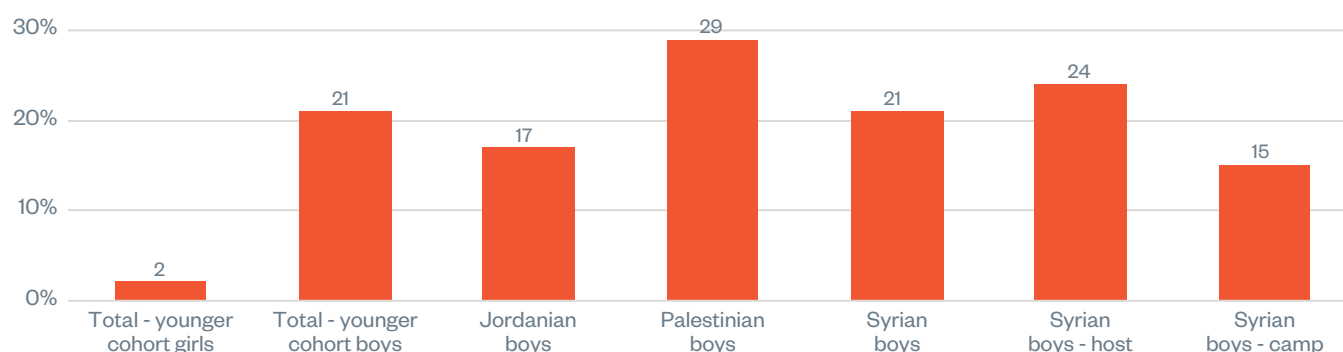
The midline survey found that young people with disabilities are doing well in terms of access to education. They are equally likely to be enrolled, no more likely to have been absent from school for more than a week in the past year, and have completed the same number of age-appropriate grades as their peers without disabilities. However, their learning outcomes are lower, they are less likely to aspire to university and to feel safe going to and from school, and they are more likely to have experienced teacher and peer violence in the past year (see Table 4). As was the case with the overall sample, boys are at especially high risk of violence from a teacher. Of boys and young men with disabilities, 36% had experienced violence from a teacher in the past year (compared with 3% of their female peers).

	No disability	Disability
Literate @ 2nd grade level	65%	53%
Numerate @ subtraction	51%	40%
Aspires to attend university	75%	67%
Feels safe traveling to and from school	90%	81%
Been hit or beaten by a teacher in the past year	9%	17%
Experienced peer violence in the past year	22%	29%

Qualitative evidence suggests that equitable access to education among young people with disabilities is the result of proactive parents. Because we recruited young people with disabilities through disability-related NGOs, those in our sample necessarily have parents who have actively sought services for their children. A Jordanian mother, for example, explained that she had been forced to make the local school accept her daughter, who has a hearing impairment: *'They say they're scared the girl might run away from school or leave at any time, and that they're not responsible for her. They're worried she might hit her schoolmates or her friends, I told them that it's nothing like that, that my daughter only has a problem with hearing, nothing else... We went to the Ministry of Education and they called the principal and told her she had to accept my daughter.'*

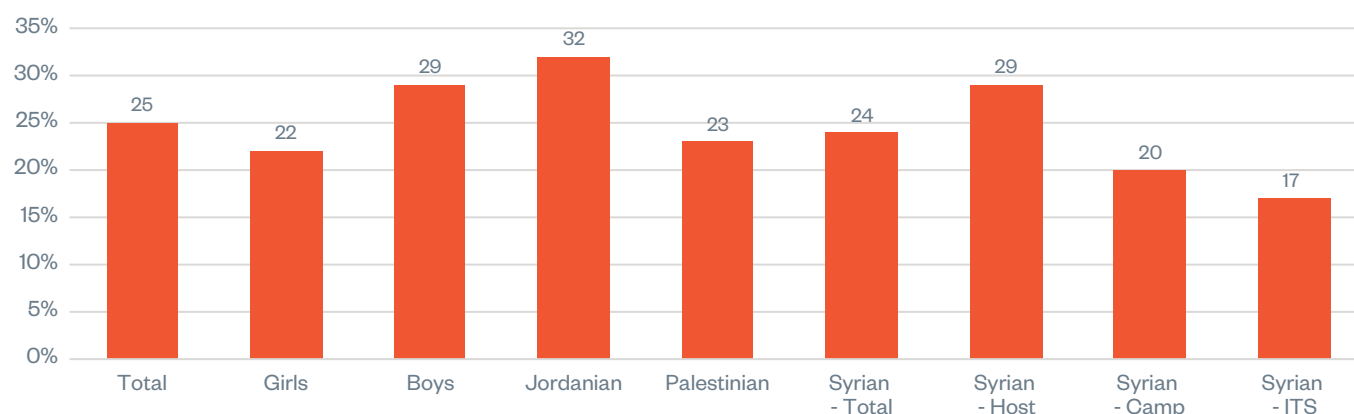
Although respondents reported that parents are spending their limited resources purchasing corrective eye glasses and hearing aids, and taking their children to centres for tutorial support and recreation, parents are less able to influence their children's learning outcomes or reduce their risk of violence. A 14-year-old Syrian girl with a visual impairment reported that she fails exams because the teacher refuses to read the questions out loud to her. She explained, *'She tells me that I am not smart!'* The mother of a Syrian boy the same age added that her son learns little in school because the teacher does not acknowledge his hearing impairment: *'She teaches the students who don't have hearing impairment.'* Young people with disabilities also reported that other students exclude and taunt them, and sometimes refuse to support them with necessary accommodations to facilitate their learning. A 15-year-old Syrian girl, out of school because her hearing aids broke, recalled that the other girls in her class refused to let her sit close enough to the teacher to hear what was being said: *'The girls in the class did not allow me to sit in the first seat.'*

Figure 19: Younger cohort, has been hit or beaten by a teacher in the past year, by gender, nationality and location



NB: There were too few test-takers among Syrians living in informal tented settlements to report on.

Figure 20: Younger cohort, has experienced peer violence in the past year, by gender, nationality and location



Parental support for education

With the caveat that parents are usually behind adolescents' school-leaving – due to pressures on boys to contribute to household income and demands on girls to isolate at home prior to marriage – parental support for children's education is generally high. This is particularly true for Syrian parents, who see education as critical to their children's longer-term success. A Syrian mother explained, *'I was deprived of education and I do not want to deprive my daughter of education. I want to see all my children educated.'* A Syrian father agreed: *'All I want for my children is to complete their education. I work all day and night so that my children can continue their studies.'* Syrian parents regularly reported interfacing with teachers and principals to address poor learning outcomes and violent discipline. A Syrian mother explained, *'I went to the school to complain. I complained more than once. My son is in 8th grade and cannot read.'*

A Syrian father added that after a year of trying to get better instruction for his children, he tried to have them moved to a morning shift – but failed: *'We would like to register them in the morning school. They did not accept to register them. We went to the Education Directorate and tried by all means, but they did not accept to register us.'* Syrian students – aware of what their parents are sacrificing to afford education – sometimes downplay their own efforts and attribute their success solely to their parents. A 19-year-old Syrian young man, who recently passed the Tawjihi, reported: *'I didn't want to study... My mother wanted me to study very much, and here I studied for her.'*

Although girls and young women are more likely to be enrolled in school than their male peers, several reported that parents are more likely to support boys' education than girls. A 19-year-old Syrian young woman who is

tutoring younger children in maths noted that this begins in childhood, when boys are more encouraged to be clever than girls: *'Boys are smarter than girls... I teach them the multiplication tables, the boys reached the 5th one in almost one week... The girls are still in the 2nd one and they aren't able to memorise it... This is due to her parents, that's the biggest reason... They support the boys more than the girls.'* Girls and young women added that gender differences in parental support become more apparent in middle and late adolescence, when parents 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. They said, "he is a boy and he has a 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?'*

Respondents also noted that mothers, despite their good intentions, undermined boys' learning during distance education. Unable to make their sons focus on online classes, some mothers completed their son's homework and sat the exams. A Jordanian mother confessed, *'When school was online, I used to solve everything instead of him.'* A Makani facilitator added: *'Some mothers were solving questions... instead of their sons... Parents used to send their sons to play in the street and take the exam instead of them.'* Although a few girls admitted that *'we even were cheating the answers out of the book'* (15-year-old Jordanian girl), none of the girls in our sample reported that their mother did their schoolwork.

Conclusions and implications for policy and programming

GAGE midline research underscores that the Government of Jordan and its partners have a long way to go if they are to deliver on their commitment to provide equitable, inclusive, quality education to the country's young people. Although a large majority of adolescents and young adults aspire to complete secondary school and university, these aspirations are unrealistic, given enrolment rates. Of adolescents, who are an average age of 15, one-quarter are already out of school. Of young adults who are an average age of 20, only one-half have completed basic education and only one-fifth are still enrolled.

Enrolment rates among Jordanians are higher than those for refugees, partly because refugee boys are especially likely to work for pay and refugee girls are especially likely to be subjected to mobility restrictions that preclude education. It is also partly because refugees are less able to afford private tutorials, must pay higher fees for post-secondary education, and have more limited access to the segments of the labour market that require higher education. Enrolment rates for girls and young women are higher than for boys and young men— despite high rates of child marriage and the fact that marriage effectively ends girls' access to education. It is also because boys' schools are less engaging and more violent than girls' schools; because boys and not girls are typically pushed into child labour; and because 'acceptable' work for young women generally requires higher levels of formal education, whereas the most educated young men are the most likely to be unemployed.

Access barriers are twinned with quality deficits that result in dire learning outcome deficits. A large minority of adolescents and young adults are not able to read at 2nd grade level and only half can do subtraction with borrowing. Boys and young men lag behind girls and young women, and those living in host communities tend to out-perform those living in formal camps. Respondents overwhelmingly blame teachers' absenteeism and disengagement for poor learning outcomes, with Syrian respondents also noting that they attend school only three hours per day and regularly experience active hostility from teachers. Although teachers at the secondary level are generally perceived to be better than those at the basic education level, less than three-quarters of students who sit the school-leaving exam receive passing scores.

If Jordan is to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals and achieve the policy objectives laid out in its Education Strategic Plan, our research suggests the following priorities for policy and programming.

Invest in efforts to improve teacher–pupil ratios, teacher contact hours and teacher quality in both governmental and UNRWA schools:

- Build more schools and hire more teachers, so that classroom headcounts drop and students can have full-day instruction.
- Invest in teacher training, especially for men, including on child-friendly pedagogies that make learning fun, as well as effective approaches to classroom control, and non-violent discipline strategies. Especially in formal camps, ensure that teachers are adequately equipped with content knowledge.
- Develop and monitor accountability systems that let students and parents (anonymously) report teachers who are violent or failing to teach, and principals who fail to act on such reports.
- Pair stringent enforcement of policies on teacher absenteeism, violent discipline and bullying with incentives for teachers and schools that are identified by students and parents as using best practices.

Pay attention to gender gaps and invest in gender-responsive measures:

- Scale up policing around girls' schools to reduce risks of sexual harassment, which heightens risks of school dropout for girls.
- Work with NGOs, including UNICEF-funded Makani multi-service centres, to scale up adolescent empowerment programming that teaches boys about alternative masculinities, directly addresses restrictive gender norms, and supports young people's aspirations, self-confidence and voice.
- Work with NGOs, including UNICEF-funded Makani centres, to scale up parenting education courses that raise awareness about the importance of education and directly tackle gender norms. Such efforts should include intentional outreach to fathers as well as mothers.
- Especially at the secondary level, provide girls with vouchers for school transport and invest in cash transfers for education.

Prioritise measures to address the educational disadvantages of the most marginalised young people:

- Invest in media campaigns for parents and adolescents, especially boys including in the Turkmen language, to raise awareness about the importance of education to young people's futures. These should include directly addressing the gender norms that contribute to school-leaving.
- Scale up efforts to enrol married girls, working to attract girls – with homeschooling programmes or free childcare – and also to address the concerns of their marital families.
- Invest in measures to improve learning outcomes for adolescents with disabilities.
- Work with donors to lower the costs of public universities for non-citizens and to expand the availability of scholarships and educational loans.
- Remove the barriers that limit Syrians' and Palestinians' access to the labour market, including by hiring a large cadre of Syrian and Palestinian teachers who could serve as role models for young people.

Provide targeted support to adolescents to facilitate education transitions:

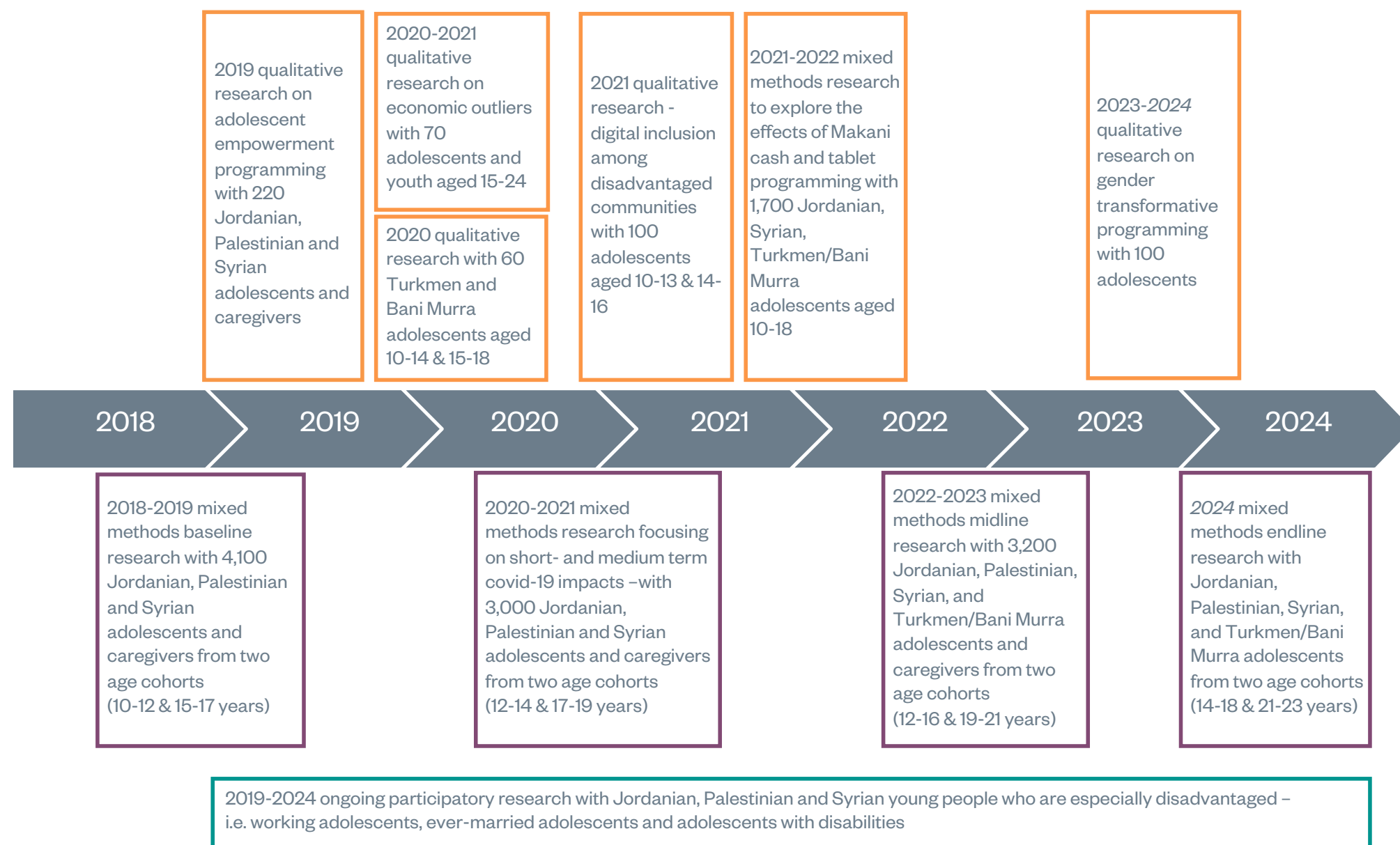
- Provide adolescents, starting in early adolescence, with educational and career counselling services that help them optimise their educational trajectories for the resources and opportunities available to them, including opportunities related to technical and vocational training.
- Work with NGOs, including UNICEF-funded Makani centres, to scale up free tutorial support through the end of secondary education at least until schools can provide full-day instruction.
- Invest in curating free tutorial online support sites so that they are easy for students to find and are vetted as being aligned with the curriculum and exams.
- Eliminate exam fees or provide vouchers for students from low-income households.

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Annex 1: GAGE Research timeline





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About GAGE

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

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Front cover: A 16-year-old Jordanian girl poses for a photo in school
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