

**Share-Net**  
Jordan

The Knowledge Platform on  
Sexual and Reproductive Health  
and Reproductive Rights



# NEWSLETTER

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**Share-Net**  
International

The Knowledge Platform on  
Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights



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## Preface

This quarterly publication of the Share-Net Jordan Hub aims to strengthen the links between research, policy and practice by sharing knowledge generation and its translation and promotion, and engaging in all key actors in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health in Jordan in order to develop better Sexual and Reproductive Health policies and practices.

In this newsletter, we are pleased to report to you the accession of the Higher Population Council to the Global Network for Health Research for Refugees launched by the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, in cooperation with the University of West Scotland and in partnership with a number of Jordanian and Ugandan institutions. The network, which includes academics from various academic disciplines around the world, aims to create a platform and network through websites to discuss refugee health, conduct joint research and develop policies in this area to provide practical solutions to help refugees and meet their health needs. This can be achieved by developing a common understanding among the network members of the refugees' health challenges and the required response. The network also aims at providing opportunities for partners to exchange information, access resources and exchange ideas and experiences in response to the health needs of refugees in humanitarian crisis situations.

This newsletter presents the platform's main achievements the form of studies, policies, events and capacity building in the field of sexual and reproductive health, and the most prominent activities on the Sher-Net Jordan website to keep researchers, decision-makers, policy makers, program developers, service providers and research bodies aware of what is new, on local and global bases, in the field of reproductive health. Therefore, we are pleased to publish the 13th issue of the Share -Net Jordan Hub Quarterly Bulletin for the third quarter of 2019. This quarter has witnessed many activities of the Share-Net Jordan project, most notably the participation in the World Population Day, the follow-up of the implementation of a number of studies, and the participation in many national and international events.

## First: Studies and Researches

- **Study of Research Priorities in Sexual and Reproductive Health based on the results of the Population and Family Health Survey 2017/18.**

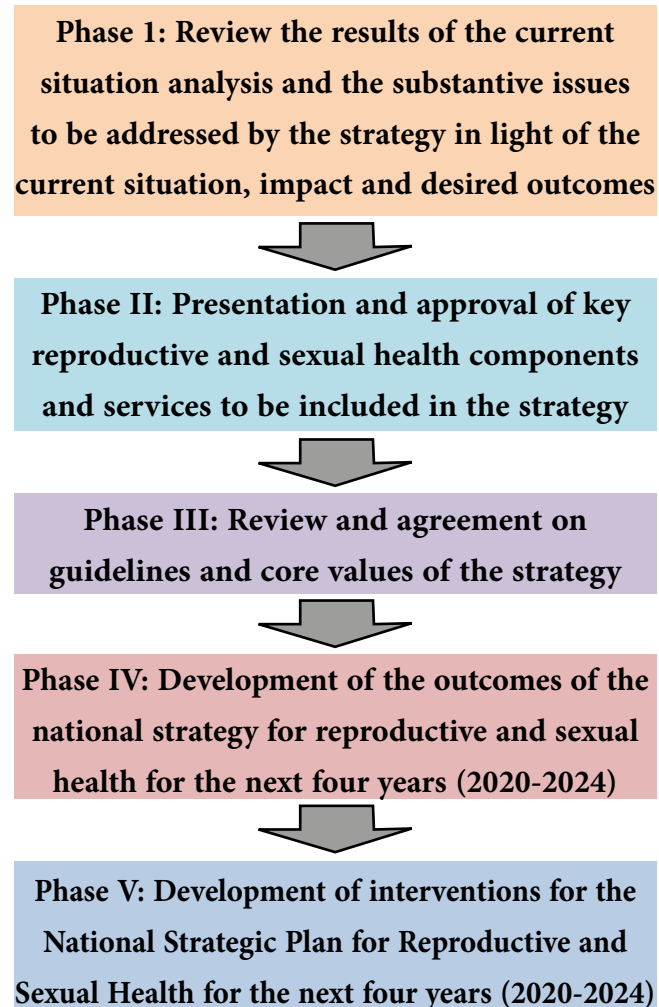
Share-Net Jordan Hub / The Higher Population Council have completed the study, which funded by the Share-Net International Foundation. This study aimed at directing research efforts towards priority sexual and reproductive health issues to serve policies and programs and address them, and support the development of the National Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health 2020-2024 with priority sexual and reproductive

health issues which coincide with the completion of this study, in addition to providing a national agenda of research priorities in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health. This study resulted in a national agenda for sexual and reproductive health research priorities consisting of 36 titles divided into two parts: The first part includes research priorities based on the results of the Population and Family Health Survey 2017/2018 (25 titles); covers policy aspects (10 titles), programs (7 titles) and services (8 titles) in order of priority; the second part includes research priorities according to the results of studies and reports from outside the scope of the survey (11 titles); covers policy aspects (4 titles), programs (4 titles) and services (3 titles) in order of priority; and a full chapter devoted to the introduction of research topics which were marked as having an average priority by partners, and were assigned 3 or more marks; these are 22 research topics. The last chapter in this study discusses the title, objectives and importance of the study.

- **Preparation of the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy for the next five years (2020-2024)**

The Higher Population Council is working on the preparation of the National Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health for the next five years (2020-2024), funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and aims to provide an appropriate and supportive environment in the field of sexual and reproductive health issues that achieve access

to population opportunity and contribute to the well-being of citizens. The strategy implements a participatory approach in the strategy development process by involving all governmental and non-governmental institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector concerned, relevant scientific and research institutions and donors working in Jordan in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health. The preparation methodology of this strategy consisted of the following stages:



- **Study and Policy Brief on “ Trends in Reproductive Levels in Jordan Variations and Determinants at the National Level and Governorates”**

Share-Net Jordan / The Higher Population Council completed the first draft of the study. This study funded by UNFPA and aims to explain the differences in fertility rates among the governorates in Jordan, and explain the declining fertility rates at the national level. The Council formed a technical committee composed of members from relevant institutions; it included representatives from the Ministry of Health, Department of Statistics, University of Science and Technology, UNFPA, and the USAID's Population and Health Program (USAID) to follow up and discuss the outcomes of this study. This committee convened to discuss the draft results of the study on 24/9/2019.

- **Issuance of the 12th issue of the Knowledge Platform for Sexual and Reproductive Health Research**, which includes the achievements of the Share-Net Jordan Hub for the Second quarter of 2019, and has been uploaded on the website of the Knowledge Platform for Reproductive Health- Jordan.

[/https://share-net-jordan.org.jo](https://share-net-jordan.org.jo)

## **Second: Studies expected to be implemented in 2019**

- **Mapping of the current situation of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights (SRH & RR) awareness programs for adolescents and youth in Jordan.**

- Identify the institutions working in the field of reproductive health awareness for the youth in Jordan and their geographical distribution, evaluate the quality of programs offered according to the topics covered an age groups, in addition to highlighting the gap in the distribution of awareness programs in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health for adolescents and youth in the Kingdom's governorates, including awareness programs for vulnerable youth groups from Syria and people with disabilities.
- Define the scope of the gap map in the subjects to be included in the manuals used in raising awareness of sexual and reproductive health for the youth.
- Identify the main areas, which will turn into the main axes in programs or manuals directed towards raising awareness in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health for adolescents and the youth.
- Identify the needs of adolescents and young people in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health awareness, which will contribute to the establishment of appropriate manuals, and support the executive plan to incorporate the curricula of sexual and reproductive health concepts in the educational environments in Jordan.



### Third: Holding or participating in local and international meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences

- **Participation in a workshop on “Health Care for Refugees in Humanitarian Crisis Situations” in Scotland**

The Higher Population Council participated in a workshop on “Health Care for Refugees in Humanitarian Crisis Situations”(4-5 / 7/2019), organized by the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. The workshop aimed at discussing the main findings of a study on “Quality of Reproductive Health Services for Urban Adolescent Refugees in Uganda and Jordan”, which is being carried out by the University of Edinburgh in collaboration with Makerere University, Uganda’s InterAid Society, Jordan’s Aman Society and Yarmouk University. The broader context of refugee health in humanitarian crisis situations is also discussed and deliberated in this study.



- **Workshop on “Investing in Population Opportunity for Economic Development and Women’s Empowerment”, with the participation of a group of relevant members of the House of Representatives**

The Higher Population Council held this workshop on September 18th, 2019 in cooperation with the European Union. This workshop aimed at promoting the knowledge of the members of the House of Representatives on population and development issues in Jordan, strengthening their role in supporting legislation regarding population issues and the allocation of financial resources to implement programs related to this area, and increasing their awareness of the importance of integrating these issues into development plans, which require identifying and addressing population factors and strategies in each economic sector systematically, analyzing population aspects by planners in their sectors, and handling plans based on relevant population issues.

- **Series of national consultative meetings to prepare for the “International Conference on Population and Development ICPD + 25 - Accelerating the Promise”**

In cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Higher Population Council implemented a series of local consultative meetings held in the North, Central and South regions with the participation of representatives from all governorates to prepare for the ICPD + 25 - Accelerating the Promise in Nairobi - Kenya in November. The consultative meetings aimed to come up with points and topics of Jordan’s position paper on population and

development issues and global commitments to be addressed by the “International Conference on Population and Development ICPD + 25 - accelerating the promise.”

It should be noted that the main commitments of the Nairobi Conference are to intensify efforts for the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the ICPD Program of Action 1994 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to integrate a comprehensive package of reproductive health interventions into national strategies, policies and programs to achieve health coverage, end child marriage, end all forms of discrimination against women and girls, end gender-based violence, and harness the demographic dividend by investing in family planning information and services, investing in health, education and employment opportunities for young people, and seeking zero preventable maternal mortality.



- **Participation in a conference on Inequality and Urban Integration in Jordan**

On 29 July 2019, the Higher Population Council participated in the conference organized by the University of Jordan in cooperation

with UNESCO on “Inequality and Urban Integration in Jordan” within the program of managing social transitions organized by UNESCO in several countries, the aim of which is to strengthen the capabilities of researchers specialized in the subject of the conference and support Long-term sustainable development in this area through the promotion of debate and dialogue between experts, specialists and young researchers in the field of social sciences. The Secretary General of the Higher Population Council, presented two lectures; one on “Inequality from the Perspective of Population Opportunity”, and the second on “Equality from the Perspective of Sustainable Development Goals”.



- **Participation in a symposium on “Refugee Health in a changing landscape – Emerging Evidence and Implications of Practice”**

On July 23, 2019, the Higher Population Council, in collaboration with the Institute for Family Health / Noor Al Hussein Foundation, the University of Edinburgh, Scotland and the University of West Scotland, held this symposium to provide an in-depth insight into the experiences of refugee women

and adolescents in Jordan's urban areas, and to provide a greater insight into these experiences by discussing the topics with speakers specialized in scientific practices and policies.

The symposium included a presentation of two studies, one on "Quality of Reproductive Health Care for Adolescent Refugees in Jordan and Uganda" and the second on "Improving the Quality of Care for Refugee Women Facing Gender-Based Violence." (GBV)

During the symposium, the Secretary-General of the Higher Population Council, Dr. Abla Amawi inaugurated an innovative audio-visual exhibition entitled "Living in a Forgotten World", which shows the living experiences of asylum seekers and refugees living with HIV in the face of a changing world in Scotland. The exhibition aims to explore the strong links between forced migrants and society, and showcase complex human stories behind the phenomena of immigration, asylum and coexistence with HIV. It is worth noting that Dr. Dina Sidhva from the University of Western Scotland utilized a methodology of participatory research in the innovative exhibition to express the influential stories of forced immigrants in Scotland against the backdrop of UK policies to support asylum seekers and refugees.



### • Celebration of World Population Day

The Higher Population Council (HPC), in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), held a series of events organized by the Council in cooperation with partners during the period (11-18 / 7/2019) on the occasion of World Population Day, which came this year under the slogan "25 years of the International Conference on Population and Development: Accelerating the Promise."

The most prominent events that implemented during this period included a drawing competition on the theme of "Youth and Unemployment", which was carried out in cooperation with the Faculty of Arts and Design at the University of Jordan, in addition to holding a workshop in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth on "National Standards for Youth - Friendly Reproductive Health", with the participation of the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Youth, which aimed to familiarize participants with national standards, and to develop mechanisms for the application of standards within relevant national institutions.



During the closing ceremony, the document “National Standards for Youth-Friendly Reproductive Health Services” was launched, which establishes a framework for the application of standards at centers wishing to provide youth reproductive health information and services on a national level. These standards aim to provide efficient and quality reproductive health services to young people and assist policy makers and health planners to improve the quality of provided health services in order to facilitate access by this category, and protect and improve the quality of their lives. Moreover, the Performing Arts Center/ King Hussein Foundation gave a theatrical presentation entitled “Mesh ‘Eib”, which emphasizes the need of the youth to attain reproductive health services and information.



- **Workshop to discuss the priorities of sexual and reproductive health issues and studies based on the Population and Family Health Survey 2017/1**

Share - Net Jordan / The Higher Population Council hold the workshop funded by the

Share-Net International on 15 September , 2019 , by 51 participants from governmental, civil society and related international institutions, the workshop aimed to:

1. To present and discuss the main SRH issues as reported by JPFHS 2017-2018 and other relevant SRH reports and studies.
2. To review, discuss and validate the draft document of SRH research agenda to address the issues that were revealed from the JPFHS 2017-2018 and other relevant resources.
3. To suggest other appropriate SRH research topics to be added to the above agenda to reflect the different perspectives and experiences of the participants.
4. To rank and prioritize the validated and suggested research topics according to a specific criteria using Likert Scale



- **Preparing to participate in the “Engaging in Knowledge Translation Together” conference to be held in the Netherlands from October 8th to 10th, 2019.**

Share-Net Jordan continued its series of meetings to prepare for the conference through two committees as follows:

- Local Community of Practice (CoP) on Infertility: Two meetings were held in the third quarter from this year, the second was held on 30/6/2019, A team leader was selected and presented the main tasks of his head, in addition to a presentation of the current reality of infertility in Jordan, and a presentation of the achievements and statistics prepared by some member. The third meeting discussed the final report of infertility in Jordan and the comments of the committee members. In addition to a meeting through Skype Call with the appointed expert in the Netherlands for this purpose.
- Local Community of Practice (CoP) on Reproductive and Sexual Health Rights in Fragile Situations / Emergencies and Conflict. Two meetings were in the third quarter from this year; The second was held on 1/7/2019, where a team leader was selected and presented with the main tasks and the current reality of reproductive and sexual health rights in fragile situations/ emergencies and conflicts in Jordan. The third meeting was held on 12/9/2019, during which the Committee discussed amendments and suggestions to the report prepared by the Council entitled sexual and reproductive health in fragile environments/ emergencies/ conflicts.

Moreover, a meeting through Skype Call was held with an expert appointed in the Netherlands for this purpose.

#### **Fourth: Sustaining the electronic knowledge platform.**

The research base was maintained on the platform site with four researches in the field of sexual and reproductive health.

#### **Fifth: Latest reports and bulletins related to population issues.**

##### **A qualitative study on Social Norms and Underlying Economic Causes leading to Child Marriage in Jordan.**

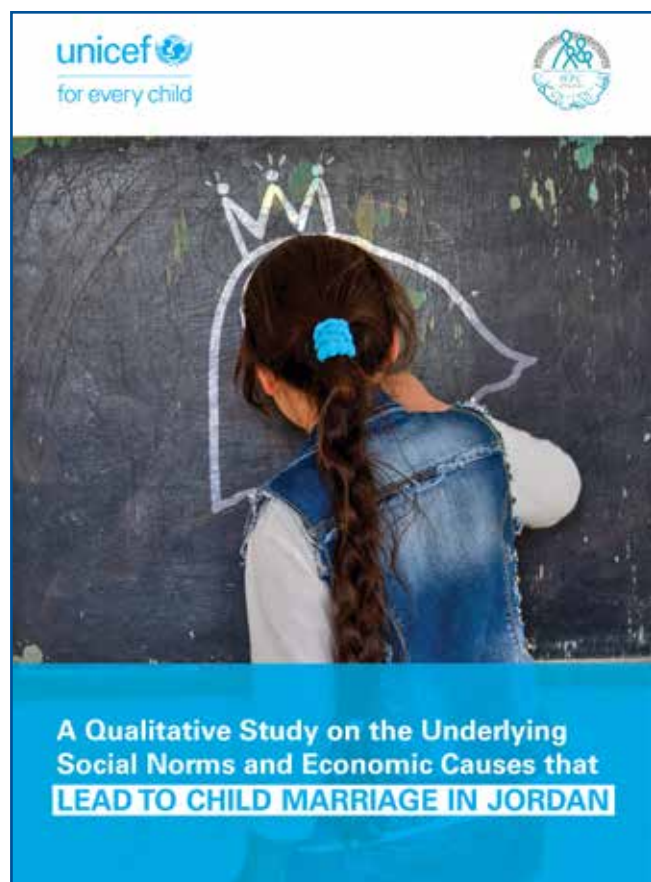
This study was prepared by Dr. Deborah Fry, Zain Kurdi and Tabitha Casey of the University of Edinburgh, commissioned by UNICEF and led by the Higher Population Council.

This study aimed to answer the following main research questions:

- What are the social and behavioral motivations and economic causes that lead to child marriage in Jordan?
- How do beliefs and expectations affect child marriage among different population groups and under what circumstances?

What can be done to address these causes?

To answer these questions, a multidisciplinary study was carried out, which included:

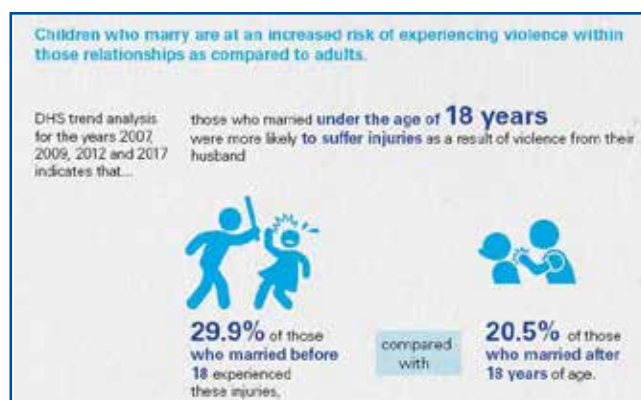


- 1) Systematic review of previous academic studies on underlying causes, risk factors and prevention of child marriage in Jordan.
- 2) Secondary analysis of population and family health survey data sets in order to triangulate these data with the results of the review of previous studies on risk and prevention factors contributing to child marriage.
- 3) A qualitative study on the behavioral and social motives of child marriage for 526 members from various groups (parents, extended family members, adolescents, refugees, marginalized Jordanian minorities, policy makers, specialists, community leaders, etc.) from 7 different governorates (Mafraq, Zarqa, Irbid, Amman, Karak, Ma'an, and Jerash), who were selected in

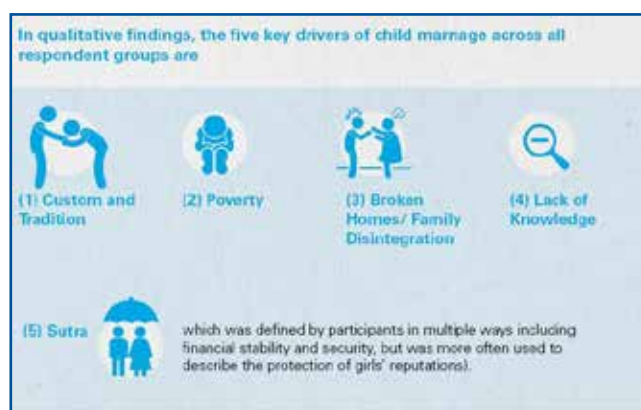
consultation with the National Committee for the Reduction of Child Marriage. A short quantitative survey of social norms was conducted and discussed within specific focus groups and interviews.

The most prominent results of the study:

- The prevalence of child marriage is rising again after a decade of decline, according to population and family health surveys prepared by the Department of Statistics.
- Attitudes towards child divorce are changing according to the population and family health surveys prepared by the Department of Statistics.
- Married children are at greater risk of violence in these relationships than adults.



- Education remains a key protective factor in child marriage, especially for girls.





From all qualitative data results (literature review and secondary analysis of quantitative data) we can find the following risk and protection factors in addition to marriage drivers.

**At the individual level, several factors emerged including....**

- educational attainment** (both of the children and their parents)
- ethnicity** (including membership of the Dom community)
- gender** (girls being more at risk)
- refugee status**
- individual beliefs**, including attitudes towards education (especially for girls)
- sutra**
- family marriages** and the importance of marriage.

Additionally, participants identified the importance of

**At the institutional level**

- are the set of laws and policies surrounding child marriage, including**
- new legislation** but also some of the practices (such as delayed registration, etc.) identified by participants as allowing child marriage to continue
- Other institutional factors** emerging from the qualitative study include the varying definitions and beliefs among institutions around the terminology and definitions related to child marriage.

**At the structural level,**

- we found attitudes towards**
- poverty** and the underlying causes of poverty emerged as a key driver,
- as did the **lack of educational opportunities** (and beliefs around the importance of education—also a risk factor at the interpersonal and
- gender inequality** (preferential treatment of boys, the need for extra protection for girls, etc.).

**At the interpersonal level,**

- we see poverty** which leads
- to **family stress** and
- extended family interference**
- the size of the household**
- polygamy,**
- consanguineous marriages/ family marriages**
- domestic violence**
- spousal conflict**

**Several sociological drivers also emerged—including**

- The concept of Sutra and the associated community pressure** that was also tied to the **high social value of marriage (especially for girls)**, and the resulting potential for community gossip when Sutra was not protected. According to participants, gender norms, particularly around the age of marriage, underpinned each of the main causes of child marriage.
- The influence of extended family members and family marriages were also prominent themes in this area.** Finally, there were conflicting opinions on the importance of religious beliefs as a cause of child marriage but all participants did highlight the importance of the influence of religion in whether child marriage would decline or be allowed to continue.

**At the community level,**

- we found attitudes towards**
- the high value and gender norms** around marriage,
- tribal and cultural beliefs** around family marriages,
- religious beliefs and customs,**
- and living in rural areas** as key factors in the prevalence of child marriage.



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