

**Share-Net**  
Jordan

The Knowledge Platform on  
Sexual and Reproductive Health  
and Reproductive Rights



# NEWSLETTER

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The Knowledge Platform on  
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## Preamble:

The development of this publication coincides with the activities organized by HPC/Share-Net Jordan in celebration of the World Population Day on July 11th, 2019, which aims to raise awareness about population issues.

During the second half of the last century, Jordan witnessed severe demographic changes that have affected the population's age structure; the Jordanian population grew from 586 million in 1952 to 10,309 million by the end of 2018. According to population projections of individuals residing in the Kingdom for 2015 - 2050, the population is expected to grow to approximately 12.9 million by 2030 and 13.4 million by 2050.

Population growth rates have varied significantly as a result of the changes to population growth elements such as fertility, mortality, and net migration. During the 1990s and early 2000s, Jordan was able to achieve a significant decline in the population growth rate; the rate declined from 4.4% between 1979 and 1994 to 2.6% between 1994 and 2004. The population growth rate, however, increased to 5.3% during 2004-2015 as a result of the political conditions the region faces, which led to the continuous influx of hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees to Jordan since 2011.

Moreover, the age structure of Jordanian popula-

tion has undergone a significant change; the young population (under 15 years) has fallen from 50% in 1979 to 34.6% in 2015. On the other hand, the proportion of Jordanians aged 15-64 increased from 47% in 1979 to 61.2% in 2015 with the proportion of older persons (65 years and above) rising from 3% in 1979 to 4.2 in 2015.

Health services in Jordan have also significantly improved during the previous decades. This trend is reflected in the following indicators:

- The overall birth rate fell from 5.6 births for every woman aged 15-49 according to the Population and Family Health Survey of 1990 to 3.7, 3.5 and 2.7 according to the Population and Family Health Surveys of 2002, 2012 and 2017-18 respectively.
- Overall birth rates varied according to nationality in the Population and Family Health Survey of 2017/18; the birth rate for Jordanian women aged 15-49 was 2.6 births per woman, 4.7 births per woman for Syrian women and 1.9 births per woman for women of other nationalities in Jordan.
- According to the Population and Family Health Survey of 2017/18 51.8% of married women used a contraceptive method in comparison to only 40% of married women according to the Population and Family Health Survey of 1990.

- The percentage of married women who use a modern contraceptive method increased from 26.9% according to the Population and Family Health Survey of 1990 to 37.4% according to the Population and Family Health Survey of 2017/18.
- The percentage of married women who have an unmet need for family planning declined from 26.5% according to the Population and Family Health Survey of 2019 to 14.2% according to the Population and Family Health Survey of 2017/18.
- The percentage of married women who have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence declined from 23% according to the Population and Family Health Survey of 2009 to 18.9% according to the Population and Family Health Survey of 2017/18.
- The percentage of married women who received antenatal care from a skilled provider increased from 82% according to the Population and Family Health Survey of 1990 to 98% according to the Population and Family Health Survey of 2017/18.

Within the context of the World Population Day celebrations, this publication highlights the most notable achievements of the Platform's studies, policies, activities, and capacity building in the field of sexual and reproductive health. It, also, highlights the main activities on the Share-Net

Jordan website to keep researchers, decision-makers, policy-makers, program creators, service-providers, and research institutions informed about the local and international progress and endeavors in the field of sexual and reproductive health. As such, we are pleased to release issue No. 12 of Share-Net's (Knowledge Platform on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights) quarterly publication for the second quarter of 2019.

## **First: Studies and Research**

### **• The study on Social Norms and Underlying Economic Causes that Lead to Child Marriages in Jordan.**

HPC and Share-Net Jordan team collaborated with UNICEF's office in Jordan to conduct this study, which aims to address the following queries:

- What are the behavioral and social motives behind child marriage in Jordan?
- How do social beliefs and expectations among different demographics affect child marriage and under circumstances?
- What can be done to address such causes?

The study's methodology involved an in-depth review of the previous academic studies conducted on the risk and protective factors of child marriage in Jordan and a secondary analysis of the demographic and health studies' data sets.

Furthermore, a qualitative study was conducted on 526 participants from various groups that included parents, extended family members, young people, refugees, policy makers, experts, and community leaders from the 7 different governorates (Mafraq, Zarqa, Irbid, Amman, Karak, Ma'an, Jerash).

The study yielded several findings, most notably that the main motives behind child marriage in Jordan are customs and traditions, poverty, family disintegration, lack of awareness, and virtue protection. Customs and traditions are considered to be the primary motive behind child marriage, because of inherited behaviors and beliefs and a culture of shame and intermarriage.

**• A study on the Reproductive Health Research Priorities Based on the Findings of the Population and Family Health Survey of 2017/18.**

With funding from Share-Net International, HPC/Share-Net Jordan engaged a local expert to conduct this study, which is projected to be released this July. The study aims to direct research efforts towards priority sexual and reproductive health issues to help propose policies and programs that address such issues as well as to direct research efforts to support the demographic opportunity policies and the review of health strategies, especially that of the National Strategy on Sexual and Reproductive Health. It

also, seeks to prioritize reproductive health issues and present national agendas on research priorities in the field of sexual and reproductive health to university students and funders.

**• Development of the National Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health for the Next Five Years (2019-2023)**

HPC, with funding from UNFPA, embarked on the development of the National Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health for the next five years (2019-2023) by engaging an expert specialized in health strategic planning. The strategy aims to provide a suitable and supportive environment for reproductive health issues to achieve the demographic opportunity and contribute to the well-being of citizens.

**• The study and Policy Briefs on The Declined Fertility Rates in Jordan and Determinants of Variation Between the Kingdom's Governorates.**

HPC/Share-Net developed the study's technical requirements following the review of various experts from UNFPA and USAID. The study aims to explain variations in the fertility rates between Jordan's governorates and to declines in the fertility rates at the national level. Funded by UNFPA, the study is expected to be performed during the third quarter of this year.

• **A review of the draft study prepared by the Norwegian research foundation FAFO on Early Marriage of Syrian Refugees in Jordan.**

HPC and the Share-Net Jordan team reviewed the study and forwarded their remarks to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation.

• **A position paper on Underage Marriage was Submitted to the House of Representatives and the Parliament.**

HPC and Share-Net Jordan prepared this paper to highlight the national level discussions on the issue of underage marriage and its connection to the Personal Status Law amendments that were proposed to the House of Representatives and the Parliament.

- This paper analyzes the issue of under-age marriages in Jordan, as HPC considers it to be one of the primary population issues that threaten the standard of the population characteristics and the efforts aimed at benefiting from the demographic change Jordan is experiencing. HPC, also, considers this matter to be a prominent cause of the rise of fertility rates and reduction of women's economic participation. Furthermore, underage marriages constitute a violation of many human rights for girls, including the right to an education, the right to develop individual capacities and to make informed decisions, and the right to equal marriages and

healthy family relations. The infringement of such rights reflects negatively on the quality of life and reproductive health of girls.

The paper reviews HPC's efforts in addressing this issue. HPC conducted a workshop with experts who represent relevant national institutions to discuss this issue. Based on the recommendations drawn from the workshop, HPC conducted a specialized study to identify the magnitude and temporal and geographical trends of the problem and to examine its causes and implications. Consequently, HPC produced a proposed policy brief which, together with the study, the Prime Ministry adopted. The Prime Minister, also, instructed the relevant institutions to implement their recommendations. Therefore, such institutions adopted a national action plan to reduce the number of marriages of those under 18 years of age for the years 2018-2022. The Prime Ministry, consequently adopted and disseminated the action plan.

The paper emphasizes the study's key recommendations and action plan to amend the exceptions in Paragraph (b) of Clause 10 from the Personal Status Law No. 36 and to control, codify, and follow-up on the amendments

• **The Release of issue No. 11 of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Knowledge Hub (Share-Net Jordan)**

This release highlights the achievements of

Share-Net Jordan in the first quarter of 2019. The issue was uploaded on Share-Net Jordan's website.

<https://share-net-jordan.org.jo/>

## Second: Studies expected to be carried out in 2019

- A study to Analyze the Role and Geographical Distribution of Institutions Working to Raise Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness.
- The Strategic Plan for Knowledge Management in the Areas of Sexual and Reproductive Health, Gender Equity, and Women Empowerment.

## Third: Organize or participate in local and international meetings, seminars, and workshops

- **Participation in the 52nd Session of the Commission on Population and Development in New York and Presentation of the Arab States' Statement on the Regional Review of the 2013 Cairo Declaration by the Arab world.**

Represented by HPC's Secretary General, Dr. Abla Amawi, Jordan participated in the meetings of the 52nd session of the Commission on Population and Development, which took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York between (1-5/4/2019). The meetings which included representatives from Arab states and other Countries addressed the review and appraisal of the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population

and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

During a high-level interactive panel on key findings and recommendations of the regional conferences on population and development, Jordan presented, on behalf of the Arab States, a report on the Regional Review of the 2013 Cairo Declaration by the Arab world.

The regional review conceded that progress has been made but it remains insufficient as large segments of society suffer from poverty,



poor health, and isolation. Moreover, persistent inequalities, especially between rural and urban areas, compromise the Government's ability to protect the rights of individuals and ensure equality. The continued marginalization of women's economic participation, gender-based discrimination, high rates of child marriages and forced marriages high arab youth unemployment rates, among arab youth and structural and cultural impediments facing youth, older persons, refugees and persons with disabilities that limit their economic, social and political integration present obstacles to the government's initiatives.

• **A meeting to discuss the preliminary results of the qualitative study titled “Motivations behind Child Marriage in Jordan”**

On 25/4/2019, HPC conducted this meeting with participation of the Share-Net Jordan team and in collaboration with UNICEF with 75 representatives from national government institutions, civil society institutions and international organizations working in Jordan. During the meeting, participants reviewed and discussed the study’s findings. They, later on, divided into six groups to examine the prime factors child marriage.



Furthermore, a discussion took place regarding the main interventions that address the motives behind child marriages in Jordan and to what extent are said priorities consistent with the national action plan to reduce the number of marriages of those under 18 years of age for the years (2018-2022).

**A deliberative dialogue, as part of a research project on reproductive health “Translation Evidence into Better Sexual and Reproductive Health : How can we Assess improve and insitutionalize research use? (Jordan, Cameroon and Nigeria)”.**

On 22/4/2019, HPC, through Share-Net Jordan held the deliberative dialogue in collaboration with the Erasmus University of Rotterdam- Netherlands. The deliberative dialogue is part of a research project funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO / WOTRO) titled “utilization of scientific evidence and proofs for contribution to improve reproductive health in three countries (Cameroon, Nigeria and Jordan)”, with the participation of (32) relevant national stakeholders.



The workshop aimed at achieving a better understanding of the issue to strengthen the relationship between knowledge generation and utilization and to enhance the use of the evidence drawn from studies by translating them into concrete actions and applicable policies. Moreover, the workshop involved deliberation on the policy recommendations and the possible means to design sexual and reproductive health programs for young people. During the workshop, a policy brief on youth-friendly health services and the standards for these services was presented. The participants, later, split into five



groups, according to the summarized recommendations of the policy brief, to discuss the recommendations and to develop an action plan and time frame with the implementing partners.

### • A workshop to draw up the National Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health (2019-2023)

On 27/6/2019, HPC organized the first workshop with participants from the Share-Net Jordan team and relevant national entities to draft the national strategy for sexual and reproductive health and develop its conceptual framework for the next five years (2019-2023).



The workshop aimed to define the strategic planning model, conceptual framework, themes, and components of the national strategy for reproductive health, to review the best practices and global models in the field of strategic planning related to reproductive health and population issues, and to determine the future steps.

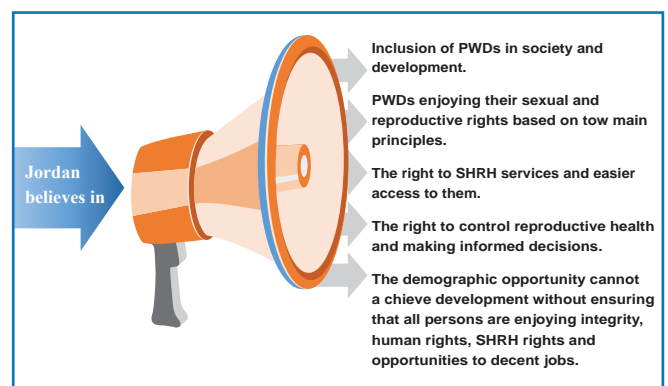
The evaluation of the results from phase three of the national plan, which were drawn from the national strategy for reproductive health/family planning for (2013-2018), the building on the lessons learned, and assessment of the impact

until the end of the period were central to developing this strategy. Maintaining previous gains and achievements as well as examining obstacles to address them were also crucial in the planning of the strategy.

The conceptual framework of this plan also relies on Jordan Vision “2025”, the family planning strategy currently being developed by the Ministry of Health for (2019-2023), the outputs of the multisectoral Arab strategy for the health of mothers, children, and teenagers that was launched and adopted by the League of Arab States, the regional conceptual framework for reproductive health that was developed by UNFPA - Regional Office and MENA Health Policy Forum, and the sustainable development goals and ICPD agenda.

### • A workshop on the Concept of Sexual and Reproductive Health for Women with Disabilities.

For workers with persons with disabilities, HPC/Share-Net Jordan presented two-days training course, organized by the Jordan National Committee for Women. HPC/Share-Net Jordan presented lectures on sexual and reproductive



health, demographic indicators, and indicators related to persons with disabilities as well as a lecture on Jordan's position paper on the rights of persons with disabilities regarding in sexual and reproductive health services. At the end of the lectures, participants were split into groups to discuss mechanisms for implementing the position paper's recommendations.

**• A meeting to develop an Executive Action Plan for the National Strategy for Demographic Media**

On 25/6/2019, HPC held its first meeting with the National Strategy for Demographic Media (2018-2022) liaison officers and representatives of different relevant national entities for the purpose of developing the strategy's executive action plan for (2019-2020) and its general monitoring and evaluation framework.

The strategy focuses on having an active Jordanian media that influences the establishment of development-supporting community attitudes and behaviors and positively impacts population and development policies. The strategy, also, seeks to promote community access to demographic information and to influence the Jordanian public's behavior and attitudes and public policies through professional media that improves the quality of life.

Moreover, during the meeting, the relevant

national entities' proposed interventions that were discussed and incorporated in the strategy's executive plan for (2020-2019). Furthermore, a general framework for the strategy's monitoring and evaluation was introduced and the post-implementation steps were agreed upon.

**• Meetings with the community of practice on the themes of Infertility and Reproductive and Sexual Rights in Fragile/ Emergency/ Conflict Settings.**

Share-Net Jordan is preparing to participate in the "Engaging in Knowledge Translation Together" meeting, which will be hosted by Share-Net International in the Netherlands between 8-10 October 2019.

A community of practice was formed for each of the conference's themes, whereby that of "Infertility" included 12 expert members and that of "SRHR in fragile/emergency/conflict settings" included 19 members.

The first meeting for each committee was conducted on 10/4/2019 to assess the challenges of and opportunities for each theme and to identify the priorities and entry points for addressing related issues. The meetings, also, aimed to identify the gaps and knowledge needs, set the work priorities, facilitate effective collaboration and making timely decisions, and provide a coordination mechanism.

The first community of practice meeting for the theme of “infertility”



The first community of practice meeting for the theme of SRHR in fragile/emergency/conflict settings.



- **Meetings for Share-Net Jordan’s national steering committee**

On 8/4/2019, HPC/Share-Net Jordan held the first steering committee meeting to discuss the project’s accomplishments in 2018 and review the project’s action plan for 2019. Consequently, the committee adopted the action plan for 2019 and endorsed Share-Net Jordan’s report for 2018.

## **Follow-ups on the projects funded by NWO / WOTRO**

" On May 28, 2019 Share net Jordan met Dr. Farnaz Sabet. She is a member of the Knowledge Facilitation team appointed by NWO/WOTRO from Mannion Daniels; Ms.Yoko Akachi is the team leader, Ms. Rolla Khadduri is the Quality Advisor, and Dr. Farnaz Sabet is the Jordan Country leader. The experts have been appointed by NWO/ WOTRO to further support enhance knowledge sharing and uptake of research from the SRHR research programme, in cooperation with the SRHR project teams and Share-Net International (country hubs). This encompasses 12 projects, funded by NWO/WOTRO, across three countries(4 projects in Jordan, 3 in Burundi and 5 in Bangladesh)

<https://www.nwo.nl/en/research-andresults/programmes/sexual+and+reproductive+health+and+rights>.

The knowledge facilitation team is from Mannon-Daniels and was appointed by NWO/WOTRO. Dr. Farnaz visit to Jordan led to the sharing of insights from her interviews with the project teams in Jordan and the organizing of discussions that allowed project teams, through Share-Net's assistance, to collaborate together in knowledge facilitation and dissemination. This visit was exploratory in nature; it aimed to examine

the feasibility of the project teams and knowledge facilitation team's suggestions and to seek Share-Net's input on and support for the knowledge facilitation plans.

During the meeting Dr Farnaz discussed proposed knowledge sharing endeavors and products, such as the creation and dissemination of policy briefs, identification of cross-cutting themes, development of How-to-Guides for project peer-learning, provision of support for the final NWO programme publication, final programme conference/workshop, and production of a final video clip about the programme. Currently, multiple stakeholders, including the project teams, other Share-Net country hubs, and the governance committees of the program are evaluating the work plan, taking into account available budget.

Dr. Farnaz worked to ensure the optimal research uptake from the Jordanian research projects. She conducted interviews with the project teams in Jordan and discussed the critical role that Share-Net Jordan has played in the SRHR programme to date.

Moreover, Dr. Farnaz Sabet and Share-Net Jordan planned an event for the programme at its final phase. The event is dedicated to sharing and disseminating the findings of the four projects in Jordan to the stakeholders.

Dr. Farnaz is, also, assessing the potential of organizing relevant conferences or workshops at country, regional, and international levels."

On 26/6/2019, HPC/ Share-Net Jordan held the second steering committee meeting to discuss Share-Net Jordan's insights on Share-Net International's plan for the next five years according to the forms and questions that sent to Share-Net Jordan by Share-Net International. The steering committee's remarks and amendments were integrated into the proposed plan.

#### **Fourth: Sustainability of the Online Knowledge Platform**

The research database on the platform's website was maintained through three studies on sexual and reproductive health.

#### **Fifth: The most recent reports and publications on demographic issues**

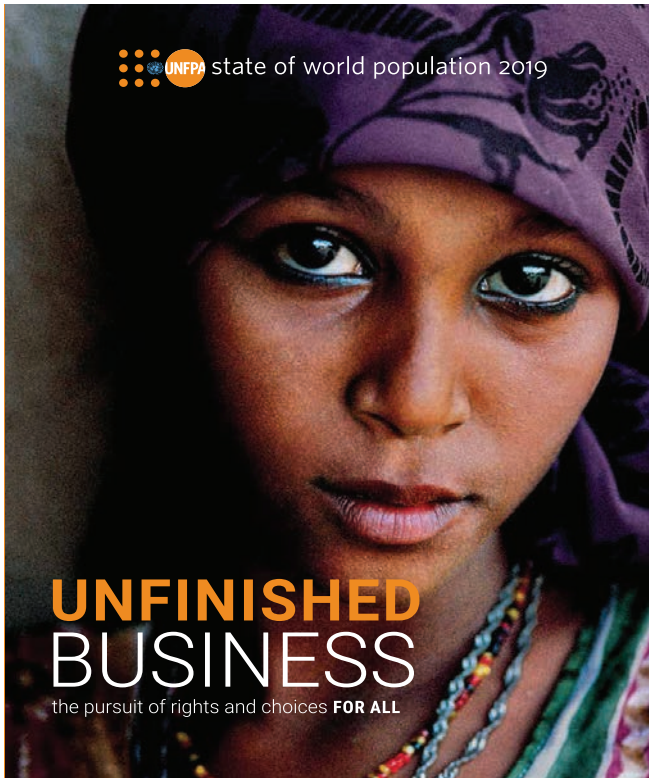
##### **State of the World Population 2019: Unfinished Business - The Pursuit of Rights and Choices for All.**

This report was issued by UNFPA on UNFPA's 50th anniversary and ICPD's 25th anniversary.

The report in Arabic:

[https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA\\_PUB\\_2019\\_AR\\_State\\_of\\_World\\_Population.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA_PUB_2019_AR_State_of_World_Population.pdf)

The report included nine chapters; the struggle for rights and choices is an ongoing one (Chapter 1), six women, six decades, six journeys (Chapter 2), rights at risk in times of population growth (Chapter 3), available but inaccessible (Chapter 4), the obstacle underlying all others (Chapter 5), when services collapse (Chapter 6), institutions and funding to ensure rights and choices (Chapter 7), more than my mother, less than my daughter (Chapter 8), realizing rights and choices for all: If not now, when? (Chapter 9). The report's main findings can be summarized as follows:



- The report tracks progress in the field of reproductive health at UNFPA's 50th anniversary and ICPD's 25th anniversary, most notably:

- The total fertility rate in the world dropped from 8.4 per women in 1969 to 2.9 child per woman in 1994 and 2.5 child per woman in 2019.
- The fertility rates in the least developed countries declined from 6.8 child per woman in 1969 to 5.6 child in 1994 and 3.9 child in 2019.
- The global maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births) declined from 369 in 1994 to 216 in 2015.
- The contraceptive prevalence rate for women aged 15-49 for any method was 63% globally, 62% for the less developed regions, 68% for the most developed regions and 42% for the least developed countries.
- The contraceptive prevalence rate for women aged 15-49 for modern methods increased from 24% in 1969 to 52% in 1994 and 58% in 2019.
- The proportion of demand satisfied with modern methods for women aged 15-49 increased from 42% in 1969 to 72% in 1994 and 78% in 2019.

- For the first time, the report included data on the ability of married women aged 15-49 to make decisions in three main areas: sexual intercourse with their partner, use of contraception, and their healthcare. In all 51 countries where such information is available, only 57% of married women can make their own decisions in all three areas.

- For many women, including more than 200 million women who wish to use contraceptive methods but cannot access the information and services related to modern contraceptive methods, reproductive rights remain a goal yet to be reached. Women face economic, social and institutional obstacles that prevent them from making their own reproductive decisions. Furthermore, the unmet needs for reproductive health services among marginalized groups including ethnic minorities, young people, persons with disabilities and the poor have increased.
- Additionally, more than 800 million women alive today were married when they were children and more than 500 women and girls in countries with emergency settings die during pregnancy and childbirth.
- Sexual and reproductive health inequalities are deeply affected by income inequality, the quality and reach of health systems, laws and policies, social and cultural norms and people's exposure to sexuality education. Within most developing countries today, access to critical sexual and reproductive health care is generally lowest among the poorest 20 per cent of households and highest among the richest 20 per cent.

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