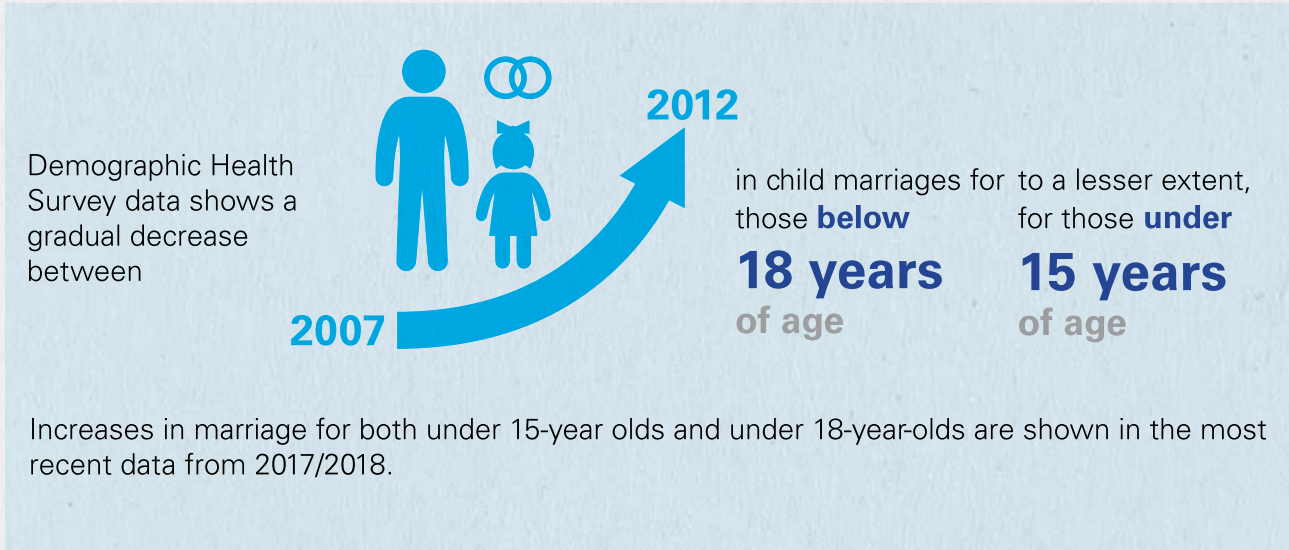


# SUMMARY



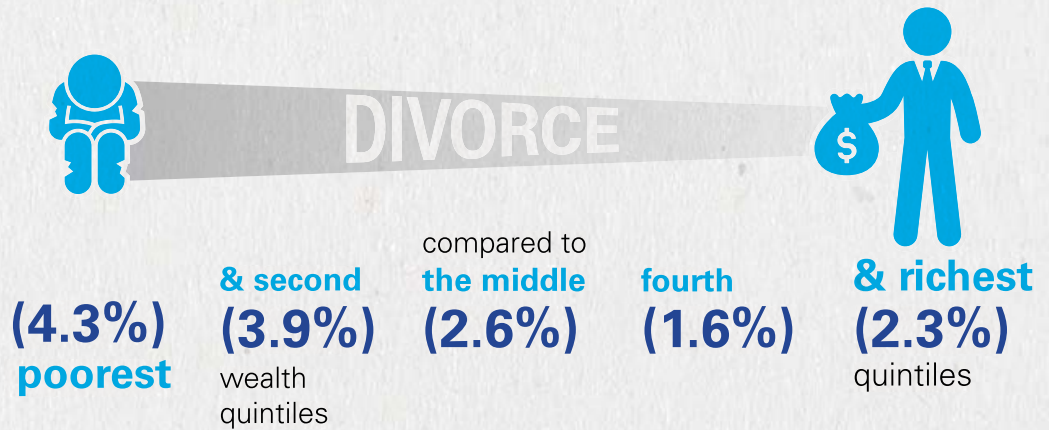
**The prevalence of child marriage is on the rise again after a decade of decline.**

Demographic Health Survey data shows a gradual decrease, between 2007 and 2012, in child marriages for those below 18 years of age and, to a lesser extent, for those under 15 years of age. Increases in marriage for both under 15-year olds and under 18-year-olds are shown in the most recent data from 2017/2018.

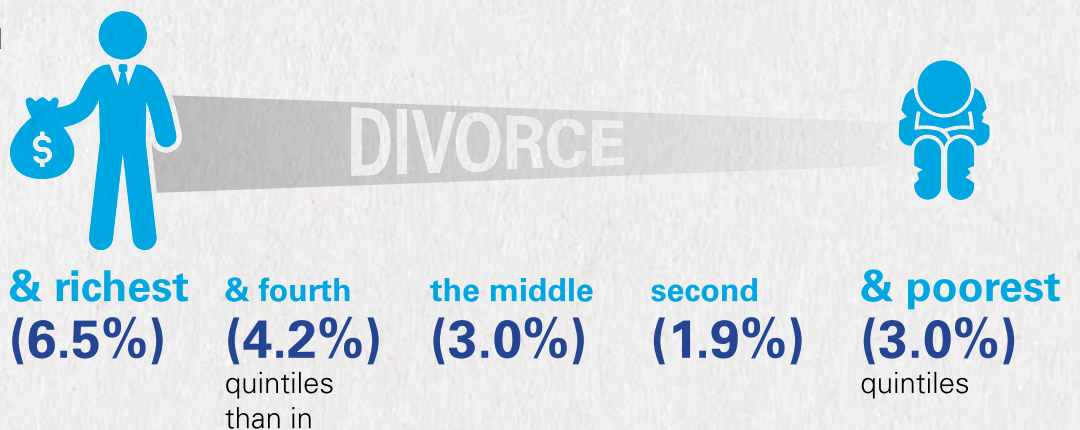


**The trend in child divorces is also changing according to the most recent DHS data.**

In 2012, divorce among those who married aged 18 years or younger was slightly more common in the



This trend changed in the 2017 findings, where child marriages were reported to end in divorce more frequently in the



## Children who marry are at an increased risk of experiencing violence within those relationships as compared to adults.

DHS trend analysis for the years 2007, 2009, 2012 and 2017 indicates that...

those who married **under the age of 18 years** were more likely **to suffer injuries** as a result of violence from their husband

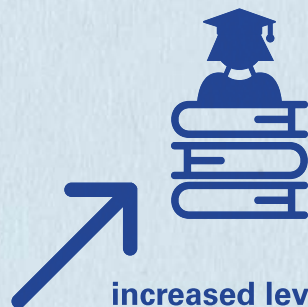


**29.9%** of those who married before **18** experienced these injuries,

compared with

**20.5%** of those who married after **18 years** of age.

**Education remains a strong preventative factor against child marriages, particularly for girls.** From a secondary analysis of DHS datasets of the prevalence of child marriage against educational attainment, a strong trend can be seen that shows that



increased levels of **educational** attainment are associated with

decreasing levels of **child marriage** for both those under 18 and those under 15 years of age.



## In qualitative findings, the five key drivers of child marriage across all respondent groups are



**(1) Custom and Tradition**



**(2) Poverty**



**(3) Broken Homes/ Family Disintegration**



**(4) Lack of Knowledge**

**(5) Sutra**



which was defined by participants in multiple ways including financial stability and security, but was more often used to describe the protection of girls' reputations).

From all the data (qualitative, literature review and secondary analysis of quantitative data) we can find the following risk and protective factors as well as drivers of child marriages:

## 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**

Additionally, participants identified the importance of



**individual beliefs**, including attitudes towards education (especially for girls)



**sutra**

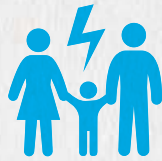


**family marriages** and the **importance of marriage**.

At the interpersonal level,



we see poverty which leads



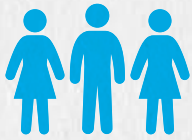
to family stress and



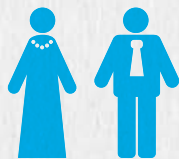
extended family interference



the size of the household



polygamy,



consanguineous marriages/  
family marriages



domestic violence



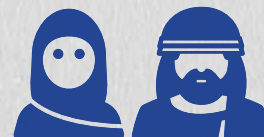
spousal conflict

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,**



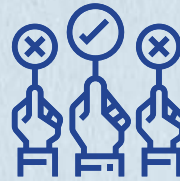
and **living in rural areas**, as key factors in the prevalence of child marriage.

## 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,

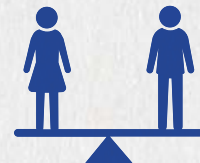


we found attitudes towards

**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 community levels)



**gender inequality** (preferential treatment of boys, the need for extra protection for girls, etc.).

## 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.

## ADVOCACY MESSAGES

### Advocacy Message 1:

**“ We must address social norms through interventions if we are to reduce child marriages.**

Social norms are behaviours that are held in place by community expectations and beliefs. An individual may not actually agree with child marriage but may still marry their son or daughter as a child because of these existing expectations, beliefs and pressures and for the perceived benefit of this as a course of action. Customs and traditions was the most frequently prioritised main driver of child marriage by focus group respondents and also a key theme from within the in-depth interviews. When asked what drives

these customs and traditions, three causes were identified and explored including: (1) Unquestioned Inherited Beliefs & Behaviour, (2) Culture of Shame / Community Expectations and (3) Tribal Culture (& Family Based Marriages). The DHS secondary analysis also highlighted a higher prevalence of children in child marriages were married to relatives and that this remained a consistently higher proportion over time. In the latest DHS data 2017, 9.5% of children married before the age of 15 reported to be related to their husband. The difference is even greater among children married before the age of 18 with 28.09% reporting being related to their husband.

Additionally, social norms were also identified as the root causes of other drivers of child marriages across all groups including poverty –where attitudinal barriers to education among both parents (especially for girl’s education) and also adolescents was identified as a root cause.

Ensuring ‘sutra’ for the girl (protecting her reputation being the main definition given by participants) was one of the five top drivers of child marriage that emerged from analysis of the data, however, interview participants did not necessarily agree that Sutra was sufficient reason for a girl to be married. Respondents from within the Dom community however were more likely to consider Sutra to be THE most important reason for child marriage.

*Since social norms was identified as the key driver, legislation and policies alone without significant social norms and life skills programming, will not reduce child marriages.*

### Advocacy Message 2:

**“ Educational transition from primary to secondary school completion, especially for girls, is important for reducing child marriages in coordination with addressing attitudinal barriers to education among parents/caregivers and adolescents.**

Education remains a strong protective factor against child marriages, particularly for girls. From a secondary analysis of DHS datasets of the prevalence of child marriage by educational attainment of the child, a strong trend can be seen that shows that increasing levels of educational attainment is associated with decreasing levels of child marriage for both being married under 18 and being married under 15 years of age. However, qualitative data highlighted the significant attitudinal barriers to education that exist among both parents/caregivers and adolescents themselves. Several of the suggested drivers referred to attitudinal barriers to the education of female children specifically, such as ‘they think it is a shame for the girl to study’. Adolescents suggested that the attitude of the individual child to education might be a barrier to completion. Both male and female adolescents suggested that a ‘lack of interest in education’ was barrier to completing education, as well as ‘not being suited to educational streams’ and that some young people might not recognise the value in education and that ‘other people who work without a qualification set the example that education might be a waste of money.’

**Advocacy Message 3:**

**“ Family Violence, in the form of intimate partner violence and spousal conflict, is both a risk factor and a consequence of child marriages. In order to reduce child marriages, we need to focus on family support and reducing intimate partner violence and addressing the root causes of family disintegration.**

Children who marry are at an increased risk of experiencing intimate partner violence within those relationships as compared to adults. DHS trend analysis for the years 2007, 2009, 2012 and 2017 indicates that those who married under the age of 18 years were more likely to suffer injuries as a result of violence from their husband, 29.9% of those married before 18 experiencing it as opposed to 20.5% for those who are not, as well as less severe forms of violence, 24.8% of those married before 18 experiencing it as opposed to 20.1% for those who are not (DHS, 2017). Children experience a higher prevalence of the following injuries as a result of intimate partner violence than do adults who are married: (1) Ever had bruises because of husband's actions, (2) Ever had eye injuries, sprains, dislocations or burns because of husband's actions, (3) Ever went to health facility because of husband's actions, and (4) Ever had wounds, broken bones, broken teeth or other serious injury because of husband's actions.

Those who report being in a child marriage more frequently report these severe forms of intimate partner violence compared to those in marriages initiated in adulthood. This trend is also consistent across the ten-year time period between the four DHS surveys. Qualitative data also showed that family disintegration and conflict was also a driver of child marriages. *In this way, family conflict and violence was found to be both a driver and a consequence of child marriage in Jordan.*

**Advocacy Message 4:**

**“ All sectors must be engaged to address the root causes of child marriage.**

The drivers of child marriages identified in the study which are mapped against several social and behavioural change frameworks, highlight that in order to address the root causes *all sectors must be involved*, including child protection, youth, social development, justice, health education, planning, etc. The findings of the study are mapped onto a multi-sectoral strategy utilising what is known to be effective in preventing child marriages (the INSPIRE framework) and corresponding with the key elements of the existing National Action Plan.

Based on the findings of the study, the National Committee to End Child Marriage will review the national framework and revise it based on the suggested strategic plan of action that has been created based on the findings of the *study to address the root causes of child marriages*.



**A Qualitative Study on the Underlying Social Norms and Economic Causes that Lead to Child Marriage in Jordan: Developing an Actionable Multisectoral Plan for Prevention**



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