

Identifying Opportunities for Coordination Between Violence Against Children and Violence Against Women Efforts in Jordan

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Introduction

There is a growing awareness of the different ways that violence against women (VAW) and violence against children (VAC) intersect.¹ Areas of overlap include shared risk factors, such as social norms condoning violence towards women and children, similar adverse health outcomes and co-occurrence of both forms of violence in the family.² In particular, the most common association found in the literature is between intimate partner VAW and VAC by parents or caregivers.³ Following this recognition, researchers and practitioners from both fields are increasingly aware of the importance of working together to achieve the best outcomes for women and children.⁴ Although the evidence base is growing, there is limited research on coordinated approaches in the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.⁵ This study aims to fill that gap by providing an overview of the opinions, challenges and opportunities for VAW and VAC collaborative approaches in Jordan.

Context

Both VAW and VAC are major concerns in Jordan.^{6,7} In 2023, the Population and Family Health Survey indicated that 13 per cent of married women and young girls, ages 15–49 years, had been exposed to physical violence at least once since they turned 15 years of age. Child marriage rates, that is, marriages below 18 years for males and females, remain relatively high among girls in Jordan. Figures from the Statistics Yearbook for 2018 show that 11.6 per cent of girls in Jordan were married at the age of 15–17, and results from the Jordan Population Health and Family Survey in 2023 indicate that, among women of ages 25–49 years, 16 per cent were married before the age of 18 years.⁸ However, monitoring remains a challenge in the country, with documentation of violence cases restricted to those reported to and registered with formal institutions.⁹ Challenges related to underreporting, combined with widespread social norms that consider domestic violence and other forms of violence within the home to be private matters, create difficulties in assessing the scale of the issue and in highlighting it as an urgent concern.¹⁰



CHAPTER 1

Methodology

Aim, objectives and key research questions

UNICEF's Child Protection Strategy 2021–2030 calls for a fundamental shift to the organization's work on child protection VAC prevention, including a focus on addressing the intersections between VAC and VAW. This study was undertaken as a response to that call and is intended to support greater coordination across these areas of work in the MENA region.

Specifically, this study aimed to conduct an analysis of the extent to which efforts to address VAC and VAW were coordinated. The study was conducted in three countries, namely Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. This report focuses on Jordan.

The key objectives of the study were:

- to identify existing policies, action plans and programmes that address both VAC and VAW;
- to understand the challenges that hinder collaborative efforts to address VAC and VAW;
- to identify opportunities that allow for increased collaboration between the fields of VAC and VAW.

Specific research questions included:

- To what extent do existing policies, action plans, programmes or service documents include or address both VAC and VAW?
- What are some examples of policies, action plans, programmes, collaborations, strategies or services where there is some evidence of integration of VAC and VAW (i.e., addressing both VAC and VAW at the same time)?
- To what extent and how do VAW-focused and VAC-focused stakeholders collaborate?
- What are the areas of tension or challenges (in relation to collaboration) between the work of VAC and VAW?
- What are the opportunities within the existing structures, programmes or services, where collaborative working and coordination could be introduced or enhanced?

Methodology and data collection tools

The situation analysis included the following qualitative methods:

- desk-based document analysis of plans, guidance and policy documents related to VAW and VAC; and
- key informant interviews with stakeholders working on VAW and/or VAC.

The aim of the document analysis was to identify existing multisectoral regulations and policies, services and practices where the VAW and VAC workstreams intersected. The desk-based document analysis reviewed documents published and/or adopted between 2010 and present, written in both English and Arabic. National documents containing any relevant information on VAW and/or VAC were reviewed, including national policies, national plans, protocols, reports of women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors' reports and national guidelines. Donor and NGO reports were used to identify key policies, guidelines and services. A qualitative content analysis approach was used to identify underlying themes and structures of argument used in the selected documents.¹¹

The key informant interviews aimed to help map programmes and services and activities where VAW and VAC are addressed in collaboration and to understand barriers and facilitators to implementing coordinated initiatives for VAW and VAC. Respondents were purposively selected based on their work experience on VAW and/or VAC, with interviews conducted face to face. Interview recordings were transcribed into Arabic and key quotes translated into English, with data analysis conducted using a thematic approach. Data analysis workshops were subsequently held to identify emerging themes, along with validation workshops to ensure the validity and contextual relevance of the findings.

Conceptualizing coordination and integration of laws, policies, systems, services and programmes

When thinking about bringing together the fields of VAC and VAW, collaboration can take place at various levels and can range from minimal to active coordination through to full integration.

A coordinated approach means promoting, recognizing and ensuring alignment and synergies between laws, policies, systems and/or services, and programmes to meet the needs of both victims/survivors of VAC and victims/survivors of VAW, while recognizing that there will be times when specialized prevention and response efforts are justified and preferable. In some instances, it may be feasible and

desirable to promote integration of efforts to address VAW and VAC. An integrated approach would mean that laws, policies, systems and/or services, and programmes are merged together to address both VAW and VAC.

It is likely that a combination of coordination and integration may be needed in different settings, depending on the availability of resources and other characteristics. For the purposes of this study, we focused on identifying opportunities for coordination of efforts, understanding that these would need to precede any attempt to integrate laws, policies, systems, services and programmes.



CHAPTER 2

Findings

Extent to which VAW and VAC intersect at the policy level

Jordanian legislation and policies over the past two decades reflect the government's recognition of the importance of a comprehensive approach to VAW and VAC. The government has developed policies and strategic frameworks and has implemented various measures to prevent and respond to both forms of violence. Over 35 policy documents were reviewed, but only a few addressed VAW and VAC within the same document. Findings of the document policy review are summarized in Table 1.

The document analysis identified six policy and guidance documents (five policy documents and one procedural guideline) where both forms of violence were addressed jointly – though mostly partially. The documents selected mostly used the generic term 'gender-based

violence’ to refer to VAW, while, across the documents, the term ‘family violence’ was used frequently for domestic violence against any family members (including children). In the documents, ‘child protection from violence’ was also often used to encompass child abuse and protection of children from violence.

Collaboration among different sectors is a key component of the comprehensive approach towards addressing VAW and VAC in Jordan. Government agencies, NGOs, law enforcement staff, healthcare providers, educators and community leaders work together to share information, coordinate interventions and provide holistic support to survivors. This multisectoral collaboration strengthens the overall response to violence and allows for a more comprehensive and effective approach. For instance, the 2016 National Framework for Family Protection Against Violence (NFFVP) outlines prevention and protection processes against family violence at the national level and specifies the basis for coordination among all partners (roles and responsibilities for all agencies) to ensure a survivor-centred multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach.

Table 1: Summary of policy documents

DOCUMENT TITLE	MAIN AIM	MENTIONS OF VAW AND VAC
Policy level		
National Framework for Family Protection Against Violence (2016)	The document acts as a national reference to protect the family, particularly children, from violence.	- Addresses women and children. - Only defines family violence. - Mentions survivor-centred and multisectoral approach.
Executive Plan for the National Priorities for Strengthening the Response to GBV, DV and CP (2021–23)	- The plan reflects the government’s will to address all forms of violence against women and girls in an integrated way. - It highlights key interventions for each responsible sector (health, social services, police and justice).	- Addresses gender-based violence, domestic violence and child protection. - Mentions multisectoral coordination for gender-based violence. - No details given on how services could coordinate to address VAW and VAC jointly.

DOCUMENT TITLE	MAIN AIM	MENTIONS OF VAW AND VAC
Strategic Plan of the Public Security Directorate (2022–23)	- The plan expands the competencies of the Family Protection and Juvenile Department to include all aspects of protection of women and children. - It develops reporting mechanisms (an app) for the protection of women and children.	- Works with women and children. - Has created a hotline and online WhatsApp facility for reporting on VAW and VAC.
The National Strategy for Women 2020–2025	- The strategy is a national road map on gender equality and includes the key pillars that the Jordanian Government (through the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW)) has identified as key priorities. - The JNCW has identified gender-based violence as one of the four pillars of the national strategy.	- Recognizes gender-based violence as a problem faced by both women and female girls/children. - Mentions sexual exploitation of women and children within the family and outside. - When discussing interventions for ensuring women's access to justice for gender-based violence, it mentions enhancement of justice equity within the family and guaranteeing the best interests of the child.
Action Plan for the National Strategy for Women 2023–2025	- This action plan – launched in 2023 and an advanced iteration of the national strategy – lays out key interventions (funded and unfunded) for collaboration between VAW and VAC. - Projects and interventions for Pillar 2 on combatting violence against women and girls amount to nearly 11 million JD.	- Includes a Strategic Goal 2: “Women and girls enjoy a life free of all forms of violence.” - Some of the new initiatives and projects related to violence within the family include: - strengthening mechanisms to prevent violence within the family; and - creating an early-detection system for gender-based violence, family violence and child protection cases (though not available yet).

DOCUMENT TITLE	MAIN AIM	MENTIONS OF VAW AND VAC
Service level		
Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Prevention of and Response to Cases of Violence (2018) The SOPs include two parts/guides: a) Policies and guiding principles b) Procedural guide for management (see below a & b)	• The standard operating procedures develop the general framework for the policies and programmes for the prevention of violence (gender-based violence, family violence and child protection). • They lay the foundations of multisectoral coordination. • They find a common language and establish a common understanding between all the specialists and workers in the field of protection.	• Mentions ‘violence against women and children’, and mentions male or female children, though often the terminology in English is neutral and uses ‘survivors’. Additionally, this guidance covers all nationalities living in Jordan in need of protection, not only Jordanians. • Multisectoral collaboration: achieved through the consolidation of an integrated response plan to ensure multisectoral services provided to victims/survivors. • No rationale for the need to address both forms of violence jointly.
a. Policies and Guiding Principles for the Prevention of and Response to Violence	• These describe the policies, guiding principles, procedures and responsibilities pertaining to the prevention of, and response to, cases of violence as covered in the SOPs.	• Covers gender-based violence, family violence and child protection.
b. Procedural Guide for the Management of Family Violence Cases	• This guide is designed to facilitate case management procedures. • It maps out frameworks, policies, guiding principles and work methodologies for responding to cases of violence. • It defines the roles and responsibilities of agencies that deal with cases of family violence across different sectors, with the aim of enhancing cooperation, coordination and ongoing follow-up.	• Addresses family violence. • Mentions principles for multidisciplinary response and details sequential actions. • No specificity in relation to linked cases of violence against mothers and children – it takes a survivor’s approach but does not distinguish between women and children.

Services for women and children who have experienced violence

Efforts to address VAW and VAC in Jordan involve a range of governmental and non-governmental programmes and services. These initiatives aim to both prevent violence and respond effectively to cases of violence. A network of diverse stakeholders collaborates to address VAW and VAC, ranging from government ministries, such as the Ministries of Social Development, of Education, of Health and of Interior, to the Judicial Council. NGOs and civil society organizations also provide services and contribute expertise in training and intervention.¹² Collaboration extends to international entities, such as USAID, UNFPA and UNICEF, Save the Children, International Medical Corps and International Rescue Committee, for training and financial support and monitoring.

At governmental level, there are examples of coordinated approaches across ministries. The Ministry of Health, for example, operates Family Protection Committees within hospitals and health centres. These committees play a crucial role in identifying and providing care for cases of domestic violence, including those involving children.¹³ The findings also identified some examples of prevention programming led by NGOs, including family advocacy programmes, parenting programmes and education campaigns.

Views on VAW and VAC collaboration

The findings from the interviews conducted revealed a nuanced understanding of the collaboration needed between efforts targeting VAW and VAC, while also considering societal norms and values. Participants acknowledged the interconnected nature of domestic violence, which encompasses various forms affecting women, children and men. Many participants recognized VAC as a component of domestic violence, emphasizing the necessity for collaboration in addressing both, as parents often play a role in both realms. These insights shed light on the complexities involved in addressing domestic violence comprehensively. Some stakeholders advocated for the integration of prevention and response efforts for VAW and VAC, highlighting the interconnections within the broader spectrum of domestic violence.

The findings also highlighted strong support for a comprehensive family-centric approach, treating the family as a unified entity rather than separate individuals (such as women versus children). The family-centric approach underscores the collaborative theme by emphasizing unity in addressing various forms of violence within a family. It was recognized that disrupting this cohesion could pose risks for children, particularly in cases involving abused women, where maintaining the safety and unity of women and children was prioritized. No stakeholder mentioned the risk to women or children of continuing to live in a violent and abusive home environment.

The importance of adopting a comprehensive and nuanced approach to addressing the multifaceted challenges of domestic violence was also highlighted, particularly the need for collaborative efforts in tackling these complex issues. While some participants suggested that case managers should receive training to handle both forms of violence, others supported vertical approaches and the importance of coordination.

Some interviewees highlighted the association between dominance, control and societal notions of masculinity and certain attitudes towards violence within the family. Some stakeholders discussed social norms in relation to men's role as providers (fathers) responsible for leading the family. Some participants suggested that any deviation from these expectations might be interpreted as a departure from expected norms around masculinities. More than one respondent mentioned that the ultimate goal in their work was to protect the family, as defined by prevailing social norms, and also captured in national legislation and documents.¹⁴

Understanding barriers to implementing coordinated models of care

The family protection framework has emerged as the predominant model adopted by governmental, semi-governmental and local NGOs to address violence occurring within families, apart from some international NGOs where collaborated approaches have been implemented across VAW and VAC fields. Most participants highlighted generic challenges related to working on either VAW or VAC, and only a minority reported specifically on challenges related to collaborative efforts across the two forms of violence. These barriers to collaboration, as reported by respondents, are listed below.

Lack of specificity in legislation regarding domestic violence and statutory rape

- Findings highlighted that existing legislation on domestic violence lacked specificity. For example, the domestic violence law does not have a specific definition of what acts can be considered under domestic violence¹⁵ and there is also a lack of firm enforcement to effectively protect against violence.

Funding trends

- Many reported that funding trends largely shaped national priorities, with a predominant emphasis on response interventions over the past 23 years. Prevention programmes had been overlooked due to their long-term nature, which was often perceived as unattractive to funders.

Gaps in training, supervision and skills

- Some respondents felt gaps existed in social workers' skill sets, especially regarding how to address violence perpetrated against children within the family. While participants highlighted generic deficiencies in training and supervision skills in relation to either VAW or VAC, the unavailability of feedback reports after referring violence cases to other service providers was highlighted as a particular barrier that further complicated supervision of cases and collaborative efforts.

Reconciliation consequences*

Some reported that referring cases of violence happening within the family (particularly intimate partner violence) to the Family Protection Department and the subsequent reconciliation process (through the signing of contracts and pledges between spouses) typically resulted in varied outcomes, potentially mitigating or exacerbating violence within the family.¹⁶

Awareness among religious and community leaders

- The need for increased understanding among religious and community leaders of the consequences and risk factors of domestic violence offers an opportunity for collaboration between VAW and VAC initiatives.

Social norms reinforcing acceptance of violence

- Deeply entrenched societal norms pose a significant challenge and contribute to the normalization of violence. Perpetrators often justify violent discipline against children, while women endure spousal abuse. Changing these ingrained norms is a time-consuming process that adds complexity to collaborative efforts. For example, participants shared how societal norms influenced the naming of violence service centres to increase acceptance and prevent destabilization of the family unity within households. Additionally, social and gender norms discourage or reduce the reporting of violence due to anticipated stigma, as women may face societal rejection for reporting violence from their husbands, which involves attending the Family Protection Department, which is often seen as a 'police station'.

* Global guidance and evidence do not support the use of mediation or reconciliation processes in addressing intimate partner violence. Mediation is deemed inappropriate for domestic violence cases as it assumes equal bargaining power and decision-making voices, potentially increasing the risk of further abuse against women.

- Striving to ensure family unity and seeking to make sure that mothers and children stay in one shelter can sometimes become a barrier to survivors seeking help. Most shelters do not allow boys over 12 years to be housed with their mothers. Women survivors may become reluctant to seek help.¹⁷

Limited prevalence data on VAW and VAC intersections

- Limited data exist on the intersections of VAW and VAC.^{18,19} The challenges in determining the prevalence of violence stem from a lack of coordinated efforts and inadequate monitoring systems. A lack of prevalence data on gender-based violence cases and data sharing was reported by some NGOs, including limited dissemination to the public and other regional entities.



CHAPTER 3

Key considerations

The results showed that most stakeholders favoured a family protection approach (also promoted in national strategies), which focuses on the family unit, over vertical approaches, which focus separately on the children or the women in the household, to address VAC and VAW. However, it is important to acknowledge that both approaches might be needed depending on the context, services, programmes' availability and circumstances. For instance, in some conservative societies, there could be a risk that treating women and children as similar under the umbrella of family protection could make women 'invisible'.

Findings have also highlighted the focus on multisectoral collaboration, which is enshrined in key national policies on family protection and exemplified by working groups and bodies such as the National Team for Family Protection, the National Council for Family Affairs and the Interagency Protection Working Group.

Additional recommendations for establishing and enhancing cohesive

strategies between child protection sectors and organizations and services dedicated to supporting women facing violence are provided below.

- **Strengthen multisectoral collaboration** efforts at service level. Inter-departmental meetings and workshops facilitate networking and collaboration among field officers at service level. These collaborative efforts enhance coordination and resource-sharing, ultimately improving the effectiveness of collaborative interventions.
- **Leverage community engagement and prevention programmes** that discuss societal norms perpetuating violence to also address VAW and VAC intersections. Existing efforts to strengthen positive social values and correct misconceptions regarding issues like child marriage and societal norms could provide new avenues for interventions on the intersection between VAW and VAC. Pre-marital youth programmes on healthy marriage and parenting also offer opportunities to address VAW and VAC simultaneously, fostering a culture of prevention within communities.
- **Strengthen capacity of VAW and VAC** case managers. Local NGOs addressing violence are proactively looking to strengthen the capacity of existing professionals and seeking individuals with specialized backgrounds in addressing both VAC and VAW, indicating a growing recognition of the interconnectedness of these issues.
- **Establish a common referral database** of organizations active in both VAW and VAC. There is a need for a unified national referral database for existing services that is accessible to institutions and providers working on either VAW or VAC to prevent service duplications and establish a unified national referral framework.

Points of concern and opportunities

Table 2 outlines critical concerns and opportunities identified through discussions with stakeholders and UNICEF. Certain recommendations are considered within the context of existing global evidence and guidance. Though not comprehensive, these points are intended to stimulate discussion on particular issues.

Table 2: Key points of concern and opportunities

POINTS OF CONCERN	OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Intersections of VAW and VAC in policies	
• Lack of specificity: The legislation lacks specificity regarding domestic violence (e.g., no definition of what acts are considered domestic violence), exacerbated by the absence of dedicated laws for women’s protection and contradictions between laws. The focus on family protection in legislation could obfuscate women’s rights and protection.	• Advocate for legislative reviews and reforms to ensure that existing laws are harmonized to eliminate contradictions, fostering an integrated approach to addressing VAC and VAW.
• Collaborative processes: The JNCW has identified gender-based violence as one of the four pillars of the Action Plan for the National Strategy for Women in Jordan (2023–2025). The plan mentions specific activities involving women and children (e.g., service procedures, early warning systems) but some activities still need to be developed.	• Ensure the establishment of a National Action Plan (NAP) that addresses VAC and VAW through an integrated approach, promoting collaborative processes that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of different sectors. • Ensure all sectors, including health, justice, social services and the education sector, develop collaborative processes to implement some of the activities under the Action Plan. • Update and sign memoranda of understanding among all service providers to clarify the roles, responsibilities, coordination mechanisms and services required of each party in dealing with cases of violence against women and children within the same household.
• Service-level guidance: Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for multisectoral coordination are broad and lack specificity, particularly regarding cases involving mothers and children.	• Revise the existing SOPs for multisectoral coordination to include specific guidance for cases involving mothers and children, ensuring clear and actionable steps for an integrated VAC and VAW approach. • Integrate information about adverse impacts of VAW and VAC within the guidance manual for Islamic religious leaders to raise awareness on violence prevention.

POINTS OF CONCERN

OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Systems training and delivery

- **Training:** Deficiencies in training, supervision and skills among all providers, including those in law enforcement, educators, social and health workers, in addressing violence cases.

- **Ensure development of comprehensive training programmes** tailored to the local context and involving collaboration among stakeholders to enhance the abilities of all providers in addressing violence cases. This includes developing tailored training programmes focused on the intersections of violence against women and children, promoting cross-sector collaboration through supervision, evidence-based practices, on-the-job training and coaching.
- **Train and educate all providers working on VAW and VAC** (e.g., health staff, educators, religious leaders, legal officers) on **VAW/VAC intersections** and ensure they are aware of the SOPs on case management of VAW and VAC (e.g., for health professionals and MoH educators).

Global evidence and guidance

- Long-term sustainable improvements in violence prevention require changes across whole systems and institutions. Investments in systems and workforce strengthening have been shown to make a difference in a range of contexts.²⁰
- Given the lack of specificity within the law on what counts as intimate partner violence and marital rape, child protection officers should be provided with extra training to identify and respond to cases of intimate partner violence against women, in line with the LIVES approach recommended in the WHO Clinical and Policy Guidelines on Responding to Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence.²¹ Conversely, healthcare workers and NGOs should be ready to address the needs of children whose mothers are experiencing intimate partner violence. This entails an understanding of reporting laws, navigating interactions with child protections systems and facilitating access to shelter and other services, such as those offering parenting support.

POINTS OF CONCERN

- **Data management systems:** Incidents of VAW are primarily documented at security centres and the Family Protection Department, underscoring the lack of a unified data management system. To address this issue, UNICEF has been collaborating with the National Council for Family Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Development, the Family Protection Department and the Jordan River Foundation to develop and pilot a digital tracking system for managing cases of domestic violence. Once piloted, this system has the potential to provide a unified database for all cases. While initially focused on domestic violence, there is potential for its scope to be expanded in the future to encompass other protection concerns.

OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Ensure all government institutions and NGOs are aware and use the digital case management system** once scaled up.
 - **Expand the scope of the system** to also include other child protection types.
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- **Referrals:** Ensure the effective implementation of national SOPs and the availability of essential services to facilitate proper referrals and communication between partners.
 - **Strengthen communication between services and referral services** to ensure providers receive feedback (which should be shared within certain limits to ensure confidentiality and privacy are maintained).
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- **Risk associated with reconciliation approaches to domestic violence:** Referring cases to the Family Protection Department and the subsequent signing of reconciliation contracts or pledges often result in further violence within the family unit. While in Jordan the reconciliation process seems to present a potential avenue for family conflict resolution, it is crucial to address the shortcomings that participants highlighted. While reconciliation may not always pose immediate risks to the survivor, the absence of effective follow-up mechanisms post-reconciliation poses significant concerns. This lack of accountability for perpetrators and the subsequent disappointment felt by women, who may perceive reconciliation as a last resort, undermines the efficacy of the process.
 - **Ensure that the Family Protection Department conducts thorough assessments and follow-ups** of each case before recommending or facilitating reconciliation contracts or pledges. This assessment should consider factors such as the severity of the violence, the willingness of all parties to engage in mediation and the safety of the survivor.
 - It is important to acknowledge the **global dearth of evidence on the effectiveness of reconciliation processes**, especially as it is discouraged in high-income countries. This highlights the need for rigorous evaluation and adaptation of reconciliation practices to suit the cultural and social context of Jordan. Furthermore, recognizing the socioeconomic factors that may deter women from seeking separation underscores the need for comprehensive support systems. This includes financial assistance, access to legal resources and psycho-social support tailored to the needs of survivors. By addressing these systemic challenges and refining the reconciliation process accordingly, Jordan can create a more supportive and effective framework for addressing domestic violence.

POINTS OF CONCERN

- **Shelters:** The majority of shelters do not allow boys above 12 years to be housed with their mothers. Maintaining family unity and ensuring that victims/survivors, such as mothers and children, remain in one shelter was therefore identified as a challenge. Concerns surrounding separation can be a significant challenge for survivors, who might hesitate to seek help out of fear of being separated from their children, which may lead to underreporting of abuse.

OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Review and update the systems and instructions for the admission** of cases of domestic violence to shelters and safe houses to ensure that services are provided to all victims/survivors according to their needs by law.
- **Shelters should collaborate with child protection authorities in addressing the needs of older boys** (above 12 years old), possibly identifying alternatives through kinship care. It is essential that shelters provide an alternative option to accommodate mothers with their children, including older children (boys and girls), to enable women to seek refuge without separation from their children.

Violence prevention and community engagement programmes

- **Social and traditional gender roles,** which position men as dominant and women as caregivers, are widespread within communities and help reinforce family violence by normalizing male dominance.
- **Increase engagement of religious leaders in efforts to prevent violence against women and violence against children** through a guidance manual and existing training programmes (organized by the National Council for Family Affairs and supported by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs) and work collaboratively to raise community awareness of violence in the family.
- **Organize community dialogues and workshops** aimed at ensuring community involvement and participation in promoting gender equality, non-violent conflict resolution and positive parenting practices.
- **Use pre-marital youth programmes on healthy marriage (which use child marriage as an entry point for discussion) and parental awareness programmes** (supported by relevant ministries, such as the Ministries of Education, Health, Social Development and Islamic Affairs) as an opportunity to address intersections between VAW and VAC.
- **Global evidence and guidance:**
 - **Parenting programmes:** Global evidence indicates that community-based parenting programmes can reduce intimate partner violence and violence against children, but they often neglect the gendered aspects of parenting and the caregiving burden on women.²² These programmes can be improved by addressing violent child discipline and intimate partner violence through components on gender norms and non-violent conflict resolution within families.

POINTS OF CONCERN

OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Faith-based organizations** could have significant influence within the communities they service, particularly with families. Evidence from interventions involving faith-based organizations²³ is limited and highlights the intricate nature of partnering with these groups. They need to collaborate with local communities and honour local customs, all while confronting cultural norms that perpetuate gender-based violence. Further research is essential to comprehend the potential role of faith-based organizations in addressing VAW and VAC.

- **Health awareness programmes in secondary schools** by MoH offer information about violence, but could benefit from information on impact of VAW and VAC intersections and also offer information for parents and caregivers.
- **Integrate information about intersection between VAW and VAC** and exposure to intimate partner violence within the home **in secondary school programmes**.
 - **Global evidence:** School programmes provide opportunities to integrate the prevention of VAC and VAW into general education systems, especially through whole-school approaches, which have proven to be effective in reducing violence within schools,²⁴ though the evidence on how school programmes address violence perpetrated by caregivers (outside schools) is limited.²⁵

Build research evidence

- **Community-based initiatives:** Some community-based initiatives are tackling both VAW and VAC concurrently, yet there is a scarcity of evidence regarding their outcomes.
- **Evaluate and document lessons learned from existing community-based programmes** implemented by NGOs that are jointly addressing gender-based violence and child protection.
- **Identify funding to develop and test new integrated approaches** to addressing VAW and VAC.
- **Limited information on how hospitals and health centres** in which protection committees have been formed address the intersections of VAW and VAC, through the family unit framework.
- **Review the work of family protection committees in hospitals and health centres** to assess whether and how they also address adverse impacts of VAW and VAC intersections.
- **Limited data on frontline workers:** There is paucity of data on views and experiences of frontline workers in health, police and child protection sectors involved in VAW and VAC collaboration.
- **Conduct research to document and examine the attitudes, views and barriers** of frontline workers on collaborative efforts when working on family protection approaches in social, health and police sectors.

POINTS OF CONCERN

- **Mandatory reporting** of domestic violence or violence perpetrated against a child (by their parent/family member) can deter women from seeking care and support from services. Women often hesitate to report domestic violence cases due to fears of further retaliation within their homes. Similarly, in cases of sexual violence, which also require reporting to the Family Protection Department of Jordan, both women and men often refrain from seeking assistance out of fear of stigma. This fear is particularly acute for women and girls, who may face stigma and the threat of honour killings. Consequently, many women and girls find themselves seeking refuge in shelters operated by the Ministry of Social Development for their protection, as their families and communities may refuse to accept them.

OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Conduct research on the impact of mandatory reporting on women and children** (and on their **help-seeking** behaviour).
- **Conduct research on how providers are engaging with mandatory reporting** and explore barriers to and fears about reporting.

Endnotes

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UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight

Via degli Alfani, 58

50121, Florence, Italy

Tel: (+39) 055 20 330

Email: innocenti@unicef.org

Social media: @UNICEF Innocenti on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube

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