

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS AND THE CAUSES AS PERCEIVED BY COMMUNITY ACTORS IN THE SOUTHERN REGION OF JORDAN-UNOCHA



Acknowledgment

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning department is very thankful to Jordan River Foundation's experts for their guidance through sharing their feedback throughout the research lifetime, starting with the terms of reference, the devised tools, and concluding with their significant input on the proposed recommendations and key findings.

The gratification is incomplete without dedicating a special gratitude message to the research key informants for dedicating some of their valuable time to conduct the interviews and enriching the findings with their extensive expertise.

A dedication to the soul of our dear colleague, Dina Al-Khrisha, for her pure soul, rest in peace.

Table of Content

Executive Summary	3
Abbreviation List	5
Introduction and Methodology	6
Sample Size Demographics	7
Key Findings	13
The Most Recurrent Risks Facing Children	14
An Analysis of the Major Risks Impacting Children and the Spread of each Across the Analyzed Governorates	24
• Child labor	23
• Bullying	27
• Child sexual abuse	31
• Technology and its impact on children	34
• School enrollment	35
• Child marriage	37
• Psychological/emotional abuse	40
• Physical abuse/violence	43
Improving National Systems and Programs Through Strengthening Linkages Between Sectors	46
Conclusion and Recommendations	48

Executive Summary

This research aims at investigating the main risks and hazards facing children residing in the Southern region of the Hashemite Kingdom, through shedding the light on the socio-economic reasons behind these risks and the adopted measures to eliminate or reduce the impact and occurrence of these risks.

Survey findings revealed that the impact of technology on the physical and psychological health of the child is the main danger when asking children and parents of children about the most prevalent risks in their society, which the child and his family are forced to deal with, followed by the risk of bullying and child labor, in addition to physical violence.

COVID-19 took its toll on the child labour cases, with the increase in child employment in order to help support the family after Coronavirus and the lockdown which drove people to lose their jobs and several businesses to shut down. The Social Development Directorate (SDD) indicated that the reason of this phenomenon was linked with the financial difficulties families encounter, and were capable of downsizing child labour cases, through enhancing the economic status of the household. Additionally, a head of a local community based organization (CBO) in Aqaba praised a successful collaboration with an international NGO where parents were reimbursed financially for enrolling their school aged children to educational institutions.

Prevalence minor girls to be married, when the minimum age of marriage for males was reported to stand at 25 years amongst over 75% of total interviewed parents residing in Karak, Ma'an and Tafileh, each. Arising from gender inequality and discriminating females from acquiring their educational certificates, living healthy and feeling protected. Child marriage will most likely drive females in particular to withdraw from school, forbidding them from acquiring a decent education and entering the workforce, additionally, pregnancy at an early age amongst adolescents will have severe consequences on both the baby and the mother, similar to premature deliveries, congenital anomalies or as known as birth defects, and not to mention death.

It was foreseen that child marriage for females was rooted for mostly by parents of adolescents, where the adoption of this phenomenon was perceived low amongst female adolescents residing in the governorates understudy, with only 5 female adolescents beneath the legal age approving getting married out of total 184 female respondents, to constitute a minor share of 2.7%.

Nevertheless, other risks are reported to take place within the analysed governorates, but are kept under the radar due to the wide spreading perception amongst all nationalities of cultural prohibition associated with sexual abuse, abusing illegal substances, and the mental health of children and parents alike.

Parents, caregivers, mentors, relatives and the society shall all support child resilience and coping ability to adapt with the psychological pressures arising from risks similar to emotional abuse and bullying in particular, along with the loss of one parent, separation or parental divorce. Through providing communications, and offering a supportive environment for the child.

Additionally, the research inspected the various set-backs and obstacles facing beneficiaries and their parents from seeking the help and support needed when exposed to any form of child and adolescents' risks. Obstacles included assessing the accessibility of service providers, awareness of their operation within the analysed governorates and the awareness of the legislations and bylaws amongst the key workers, and its reflection on the quality of service provided by each. Resulting in several complaints associated with lack of awareness of the available child protection service providers amongst the segment in need of such services.

Abbreviation List

NUMBER	ABBREVIATION	ACRONYM STANDS FOR
1	JRF	Jordan River Foundation
2	NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
3	SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
4	CBO	Community Based Organization
5	KII	Key Informant Interview
6	SDD	Social Development Directorate
7	FJPD	Family and Juvenile Protection Department
8	NDA	Non-Disclosure Agreement
9	COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
10	JD	Jordanian Dinar
11	PPS	Probability Proportional- to-Size

Introduction and Methodology

Children represent significant proportion of the population in Jordan, and despite the important progress on the rights of children and their wellbeing made by Jordan in the past years, child protection in general remain urging challenges. The prolonged Syria crisis and the COVID–19 pandemic significantly strained Jordan’s national systems including health, education, economy, and social safety net. Children were and remain the most vulnerable throughout all these crises. Child Protection forms and incidents are on the rise in Jordan. According to the CP IMS report 2020, the main types of reported concerns were violence, abuse and neglect, child labor, emotional distress, child marriage, unaccompanied or separated children, and other concerns. In 2019, UNICEF reported a higher number of marriages of girls under 15 and 18 years of age compared to previous years, where forced marriage and child marriage represented one tenth of the total GBV cases reported, this was supported by the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) and the “Child Marriage in Jordan” Study by The Higher Population Council.

This research report is a sequel of the abovementioned former assessments and is part of a larger project known as Nationwide Response to Innovatively Strengthen and Diversify the Helpline and Online Case Management Services– funded by UNOCHA – which aims at reducing child protection threats and concerns through providing inclusive, quality, appropriate and timely child protection intervention and prevention services to the most vulnerable children in Jordan. The overarching objective of this research is to investigate the state of child protection in the Kingdom of Jordan, specifically in the four southern Governorates (Karak, Tafilah, Maan, Aqaba), therefore, the report sheds the light on the major risks facing children residing in the Southern region, as reported by adolescents with ages ranging between 14 and 18 years, and children’s parents. Additionally, the report highlights the main causes associated with these risks and the awareness level of the research targeted segments on how to mitigate these risks and their impacts, alike.

In which the research aimed at answering the below three main inquiries:

- What are the most recurrent and common child protection issues in the southern region of Jordan?
- What are program interventions that are needed to respond and address the existing child protection concerns?

- How can national systems and programs be improved to protect children in their communities, through strengthening linkages between sectors, and supporting national capacities?

It is worth noting, that we shall create a plan of the intervention projects and priorities targeting the safety and protection of children within each of the analyzed governorates, based on the findings and recommendations of the report.

Methodology

The project adopted a participatory and multi-stakeholder approach to involve key stakeholders, including policymakers, service providers, practitioners and community members of adolescents and parents, across all stages of the research. The results in this research report are drawn from 1) a mixed-method survey, 2) key informant interviews 3) primary desk review of previous assessments, and both national and international studies conducted by several Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), research institutions, and international agencies.

Throughout the research phases, a participatory approach was adopted, and two Research Reference Groups (RRG) were established to guide the full project cycle through the inception, design, and validation. It is worth mentioning, that the RRGs were composed of internal and external groups. The internal RRG were carried out with Jordan River Foundation's experts, staff and leaders of child safety and protection programs, whereas, external groups consisted of leading NGOs, UNICEF, UNOCHA and the UNHCR serving children and their rights in protection and safety.

1. Mixed-Method Survey

Two mixed-method survey tools were devised to serve the purpose of the study, in which one survey was conducted with adolescents with ages ranging between 14 and 18 years, and parents of children of the age 13 years and below, for the purpose of obtaining both perceptions each segment interpret. Resulting in a total sample size standing at 1,319 respondents. The sample size was conducted on the level of the four governorates southern the kingdom, amongst Jordanians, Syrians and residents of other nationality. In which it followed a sampling approach with confidence level of 95%, and a margin of error ranging between 3% and 5%.

Both surveys followed stratified sampling approach and the probability proportional-to-size (PPS) sampling were used for determining the total sample size, where the main variables of governorate, nationality and gender reflect the original population of each group. Snowballing

technique was injected during the data collection phase, in which this technique relies on referrals within the same targeted segments. The data collection was implemented through home-visits and phone calls between the months of April and June of 2022.

The below exhibits detail the sample size associated with each survey, disaggregated per the data collection method:

<i>Governorate</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Data Collection Mean</i>	
		visits	calls
<i>Ma'an</i>	260	57	203
<i>Karak</i>	244	71	173
<i>Tafileh</i>	262	76	186
<i>Aqaba</i>	218	79	139
Total	984	283	701

Exhibit 1: Total surveys conducted with parents of children of the age 13 years and below distribution over the data collection method

<i>Governorate</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Data Collection Mean</i>	
		visits	calls
<i>Ma'an</i>	92	34	58
<i>Karak</i>	73	20	53
<i>Tafileh</i>	72	21	51
<i>Aqaba</i>	98	19	79
Total	335	94	241

Exhibit 2: Total surveys conducted with adolescents distribution over the data collection method

2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

A total of 13 interviews were conducted with the stakeholders in the child protection and safety, including: governmental entities associated with child protection; Family and Juvenile Protection Department (FJPD), and the SDD, CBOs, NGOs, and school counselors.

The KIIs aimed at collecting facts and insights associated with the As-Is situation in terms of the most recurrent risks facing children in the governorates understudy, the socio-economic factors within households where similar child protection issues arise, and collecting insights on the current adopted program interventions. Along with the role of the key players in strengthening

the linkages between sectors operating in child protection and its reflection on improving the national system of child protection.

3. Primary Desk Research

The primary desk research composed of reviewing researches oriented on child protection and the most foreseen risks children are exposed to on both national and international levels.

Limitations

The below lists down the main limitations facing the research during the implementation phase and execution, where these limitations shall be taken into consideration in the deduction and dissemination of the research findings:

- The relatively far distance from Amman, when executing the quantitative and qualitative data collection activities in the governorates oriented to the study
- The sensitive nature of the topic and questions makes it difficult to address the inquiries
- A difficulty in obtaining the feedback of the targeted segment of nationalities other than Jordanians and Syrians, whom residing in the four governorates, in which we resolved to the snowballing technique
- The tenancy to idealize the responses of both segments; parents and adolescents, and not reflecting their genuine perceptions and their realities

Sample Size Demographics

1. Demographics of the Sample Size

The total sample size stood at 1,319 respondents; distributed over the two surveys conducted with household parents and adolescents. The below sub-section details the disaggregation of the sample size per each survey.

I. Household Surveys Conducted with Parents

The total sample size of the adults' household survey stood at 984 respondents with children of ages 13 years and below, within the analyzed governorates. Meanwhile, the total number of children amounted to 3,195, of the age 18 years and beneath, distributed over 984 households, representing an average number of 3 children per household.

a) Children Gender

Total interviewed parents whom reported having a minimum of one child of the age 13 years and below amounted to 984, distributed over 4 governorates; namely: Aqaba, Tafileh, Karak, and Ma'an. Where, parents with female children constituted 55.2% out of total interviewed parents.

Parents in Aqaba whom reported having female children constituted 50%, while in Karak, parents with female children constituted the larger share with 57.4%. In Ma'an and Tafileh, parents whom reported having female children constituted 61.9%, and 50.8%, respectively, out of total parents residing in the two governorates.

Governorate	Gender of the Child		Grand Total
	Female	Male	
Aqaba	109	109	218
Karak	140	104	244
Ma'an	161	99	260
Tafileh	133	129	262
Grand Total	543	441	984

Exhibit 3: Adults' Household Surveys Sample Size Distribution per Gender

b) Nationality

Out of total interviewed parents, 71.1% were Jordanians, while, 23.6% were Syrians. Meanwhile, other nationalities (non-Jordanians, nor Syrians) constituted 5.3%, standing at 50 parents out of total sample size.

In Aqaba, of total interviewed parents; Jordanians constituted the largest share with 73.9%, meanwhile Syrians constitution stood at 19.7%. The remaining 6.4% were for non-Jordanians, nor Syrian parents (6 Palestinians, 5 Egyptians, 2 Pakistanis and one respondents reported to be from Sudan). While, in Karak, Jordanians out of total parents constituted 76.6%, while Syrians parents constituted 19.3%. The remaining 4.1% represented parents from Egypt and Yemen (7 respondents reported to be Egyptians and 3 to be Yemenis in Karak).

Of total parents whom reported residing in Ma'an; Jordanians constituted the larger share standing at 61.5%, followed by Syrians with 33.5%. Meanwhile, the remaining percentage standing at 5% was assigned to non-Jordanian, nor Syrians (8 reported to be Yemenis, 3 to be Egyptians and 2 to be Palestinians). Whereas, of total respondents residing in Tafileh; Jordanians constituted 74%, and Syrians constituted 21%, while non-Jordanians, nor Syrians share stood at 5%, and were reported to have the Egyptian and the Palestinian nationalities.

c) Average Age of Parents

The average age of total interviewed parents stood at 39 years, meanwhile, the average age of male parents residing in Aqaba stood at 40, while female parents' average age stood at 39 years. In Karak, males average age stood at 41, while females residing in the same governorate had an average age of 38. On the other hand, females average age in Ma'an amounted to 37, while the

average age of males amounted to 38. Meanwhile, the average age for both males and females residing in Tafileh amounted to 38, each.

d) Head of Household

Of total interviewed parents across the analyzed governorates, 36.2% reported being the head of the households. In Aqaba, 31.7% of total 218 interviewed parents reported being the head of the household, whereas, in Karak, 41.4% reported being the head of the household. In Ma'an, females head of households constituted 42.7% of total 75 parents whom reported being the head of the household. While, in Tafileh, 42.4% reported being the head of the household, standing at 111 parents.

e) Parents Educational Level

Of total interviewed parents, 33.1% reported to have had acquired their secondary education, while, 31%, reported to have acquired their primary education. In Aqaba and Tafileh, the highest share of interviewed parents reported secondary level of education, with 32.6% and 32%, respectively. Additionally, in Karak, the larger share was for parents with secondary educational level; constituting 37.7%, whereas, a total of 3 respondents reported having a PHD. On the other hand, in Karak and Ma'an, parents whom reported having a bachelor's degree stood at 23.8% and 15%, respectively.

II. Adolescents Surveys

The total sample size of the survey conducted with adolescents amounted to 335 respondents, distributed over the four governorates understudy.

a) Gender

Out of total 335 interviewed adolescents, 56.4% reported being females, while the remaining 43.6% reported being males. Meanwhile, female adolescents constituted the larger share in Aqaba, Ma'an and Tafileh, where the females share in Aqaba stood at 62%, while female shares in Ma'an and Tafileh amounted to 54% and 60%, respectively. On the other hand, males' constitution out of total adolescents whom reported residing in Ma'an stood at 54.3%.

Governorate	Gender		
	Female	Male	Grand Total

<i>Aqaba</i>	61	37	98
<i>Karak</i>	35	38	73
<i>Ma'an</i>	50	42	92
<i>Tafileh</i>	43	29	72
Grand Total	189	146	335

Exhibit 4: Adolescents surveys sample size distribution over gender

b) Nationality

Out of total interviewed adolescents, Jordanians constituted the larger share, standing at 63.6%, followed by Syrians, standing at a share of 32.8%, while the remaining share was assigned with adolescents of non-Jordanian, nor Syrians nationalities, with 12 adolescents out of total sample size.

In Aqaba, Jordanians constituted 68.4% of total respondents, and Syrian's share stood at 27.6%, while neither Jordanians, nor Syrians constituted 4%, and were reported to be Palestinians, Egyptians, or Sudanese.

Meanwhile, in Ma'an, Jordanians constituted 54.4% out of total 92 adolescents, while the share of Syrians residing in the same governorate amounted to 43.5%. Whereas, amongst the non-Jordanians, nor Syrians residing in Ma'an, only one reported being from Yemen and one reported being Sudanese; constituting a minor share of 1.1%, each.

In Tafileh, Jordanians constituted 58.3%, while Syrian percentage stood at 39%, with 28 respondents reported being Syrian out of total 72 residing in Tafileh. Whereas, Egyptian respondents stood at 2, to constitute 2.7% of total sample size residing in Tafileh.

Amongst the adolescent respondents interviewed in Karak, nationalities varied to include Jordanians, Syrians, and Egyptians. Where Egyptians constituted 5.5%, while Jordanians constituted the larger share standing at 74%, and 38.9% for Syrian adolescents.

c) Average Age

The average age of the total 335 adolescents interviewed amounted to 16 years. In Ma'an and Tafileh, the average age for both males and females amounted to 16 years, each, whereas, the average age for citizens and residents in Aqaba, of both gender, was equivalent to 15 years. Meanwhile, in Karak, the average age of males stood at 15 years, while for females, the average age amounted to 16 years.

d) Marital Status

The majority of interviewed adolescents reported being single, standing at a share of 98.9%, while 4 female adolescents reported being married; two of which reported residing in Tafileh, one was living in Aqaba, and one reported residing in Karak.

e) Educational Level

Amongst all the 335 interviewed adolescents, 91% reported being enrolled in school, while two adolescents of the Syrian nationality reported dropping out of school, with the age of 14 and 15 years, while reported that they have had acquired a primary educational level. Meanwhile, 8.4% of adolescents reported some of school aged children within their household dropping out of school.

Amongst the interviewed adolescents, 65.1% reported acquiring their primary education, while 67.3% of total respondents whom reported residing in Aqaba reported acquiring their primary education level, while, the remaining 32.7% reported having secondary education. Amongst the interviewed respondents residing in Karak, 27% reported acquiring secondary education, meanwhile, amongst the 92 respondents residing in Ma'an, 61% reported acquiring primary education; 55% of which are females. In Tafilah, 60% of adolescents reported having primary education, with females constituting 56% of total adolescents whom reported having primary school education in Tafileh.

Research Key Findings

This section provides an overview of the most reported child protection concerns facing children as reported and perceived by adolescents, and parents of children of ages 13 years and below.

Additionally, listing the socio-economic factors within the households witnessing exposure to risks facing children in the understudy governorates, and highlighting the current programs, endogenous and safety measures followed by all parties starting with the child, his/her parents, decision makers and policy composer, and the service providers outreaching their services to cover the governorates analyzed.

Concluding with the obstacles limiting beneficiaries from seeking the support and help from the available service providers, and obtaining insights from key experts in child protection on the national system and the set-backs facing key players in strengthening the linkages between all sectors operating in the child protection field. The sub-sections of the research key findings are as follows:

- The Most Recurrent Risks Facing Children in the Southern Region of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

- The Current Adopted Intervention Programs and Safety Measures Followed by All the Concerned Parties
- The Availability of Child Protection Services and the Obstacles Facing Beneficiaries When Seeking to Benefit from these Services
- And the National System and Strengthening the Bonds and Linkages Between All the Child Protection Concerned Parties

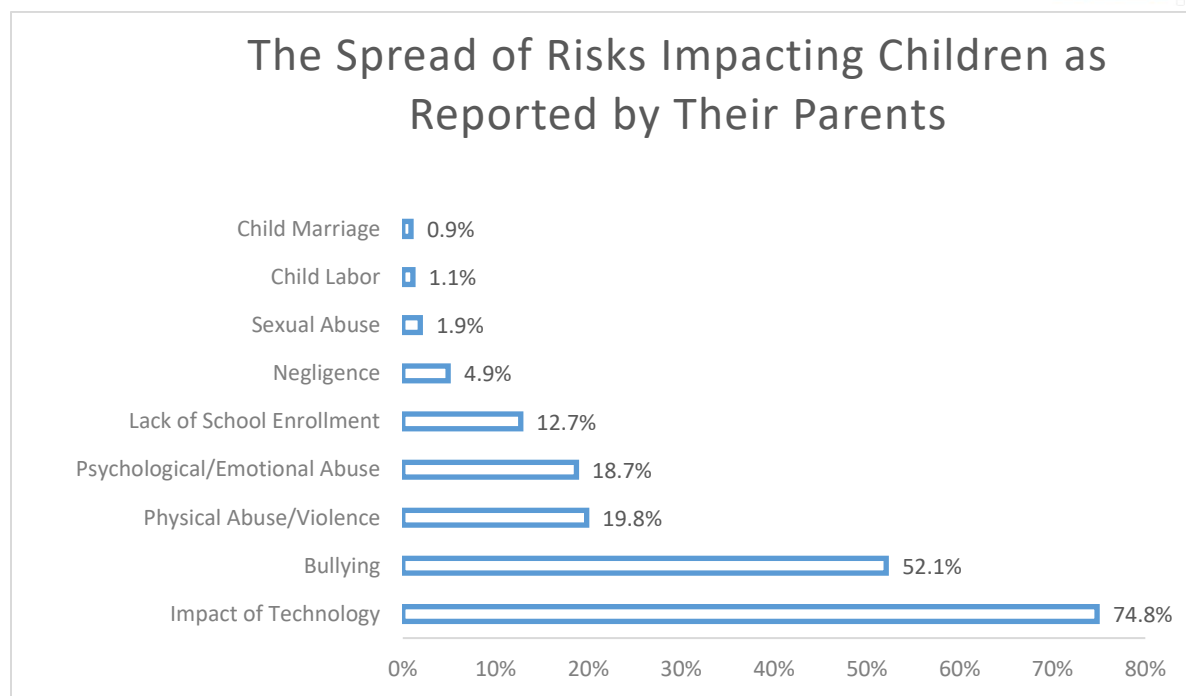
The Most Recurrent Risks Facing Children

The analysis revealed that parents reported technology and its exposure as the main risk facing children of the ages 13 years and below, while both parents and children reported bullying and lack of school enrollment as the most common risks impacting the interviewed children of all ages personally. On the other hand, children reported the spread of child marriage and child labors, occurring within their residency communities.

Throughout the interviewed parents the most spread of risk was associated with technology and its impact on children health, standing at a share of 74.8% of parents reporting their children being impacted by this risk, followed by bullying as stated by 52.1% of parents whom reported their children being bullied, while child labor came after; constituting 44.5% out of total interviewed parents residing in the Southern region. The spread of physical abuse was reported amongst 25.5% of interviewed parents, while share of interviewed parents reported their children being physically abused stood at 19.8% out of total interviewed parents. On the other hand, parents share whom reported their children being psychologically abused stood at 18.7%, while lack of school enrollment constituted 12.7% out of interviewed parents across the four governorates analyzed.

Parents' share whom reported their children being subject to negligence constituted 4.9% out of total interviewed parents in the Southern of the kingdom, while cases of sexually abused children constituted 1.9%, followed by the risk of child labor with 1.1% of interviewed parents reported their children enrolled in the workforce. Meanwhile, parents whom reported adopting child marriage stood at nine out of total interviewed sample across the four governorates analyzed; constituting almost 1%. The below figure illustrates the share of cases where children health was jeopardized.

Figure 1: The Spread of the Analyzed Risks Across Children in the Southern Region as Reported by Children Parents



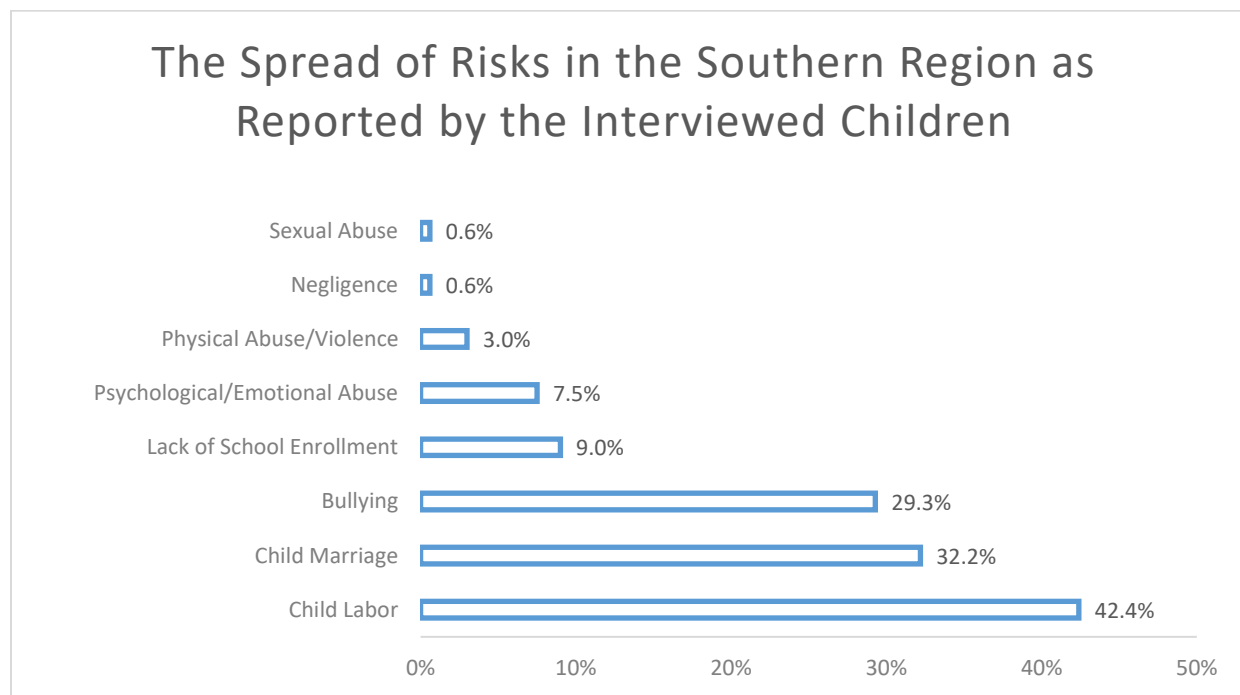
When analyzing the risks impacting children of a minimum age of 14 years, the risk with the most spread across communities in the Southern region was child labor, in which 42.4% of the interviewed children reported cases of this risk; 73.2% of which attributed the spread of this risk to poverty and financial difficulties facing head of households and forcing them to deprive children from their rights to create extra source of income, while 64.8% reported not being able to cover their financial debts as the driver behind practicing this risk, coupled with the impact of COVID-19 as stated by 45.8% of interviewed children whom reported the spread of this risk within their community. Meanwhile, 16.9% of children stated that the lack of awareness amongst parents and caregiver of their children rights, drive them to violate their mental and physical health by practicing this risk.

On the other hand, 32.2% of children reported cases foreseen within their communities of child marriage; 33.3% of which were not by choice, they were rather forced into marriage. Amongst the interviewed children, 29.3% reported being bullied; 81.6% reported being bullied by peers, while 12.2% stated being bullied by their parents, meanwhile, 9.2% reported being bullied by relatives and school staff, each. Children whom reported lack of enrollment to schools constituted a share of 9% out of total interviewed children; only two of which reported none of school-age children going to school. In which 60.7% attributed that to not being able to afford school fees, 14.3% attributed that to the low quality of education perceived by these children, meanwhile 10.7% perceived lack of school enrollment to the need for assistance at home and the help in income generation.

The share of children whom reported being psychologically abused stood at 7.5% out of total interviewed children, while the physically abused children share stood at 3%, as per the share of

sexually abused children and neglected children, it was reported minor with only two cases, per each, out of total interviewed children residing in the Southern region of the kingdom; constituting 0.6%.

Figure 2: The Spread of the Analyzed Risks Across Children Residing in the Southern Region



Gender

Male children were foreseen subject to child labor, lack of school enrollment and physical abuse more than female children, meanwhile, female children were more exposed to sexual abuse and child marriage when compared with male children exposure rate within the four analyzed governorates.

When investigating the risks associated with gender, it was foreseen the lack of school enrollment amongst children of both genders as reported by their parents, with the larger share of children impacted being males, standing at 14.1% out of total interviewed male children. Additionally, male children whom reported not enrolling all of school-age children to educational institutes constituted 8.2% out of total interviewed male children. Parents of male children attributed that to not being able to afford school fess (52.9%), followed by the urge for extra income generating member (23.5%), while 5.9% attributed it to the low quality of education at their school. While, children also attributed this phenomenon to not affording school fees (50%), and having medical

conditions (20%), while the remaining attributed it to low quality and the long distance from home to school.

Meanwhile, parents with female children whom reported lack of enrollment to educational institutes amongst school-age children within the households constituted 11.6%, out of total interviewed parents with female children, and 9.7% of female children reported the same lack of enrollment to school. In which both females and parents attributed it to not being able to afford school fees, followed by the need of help at home with 17.1% as perceived by parents, and the low quality of education with 16.7% as reported by female children.

Additionally, the exposure level of bullying amongst male and female children was close as reported by both children and parents, standing at a share of (53.9% for females out of interviewed parents with female children, and 50% for males out of total interviewed parents with male children) and (28.6% of female children out of total interviewed female children, and a share of 30.1% of male children reported being bullied out of total interviewed male children). The aforementioned applies on cyber bullying, where its spread had an impact on females; constituting 31.1% out of interviewed parents with females reporting their female children being cyber bullied, while the spread of this risk amongst male children stood at a share of 27.9% out of total interviewed parents with male children.

Amongst the interviewed parents whom reported their children being either physically or emotionally abused, male children were foreseen subject to both physical and emotional abuse more than female children, to stand at shares of 21.3% and 20.4%, respectively, out of total interviewed parents with male children. Meanwhile, and according to male children readings, they were more subject to physical abuse and neglects standing at 4.1% for physical abuse out of total interviewed male children and 1.4% for neglect.

On the other hand, female children were subject to the risks of sexual abuse and child marriage more than males; constituting shares of 2.4% and 18.6%, respectively, out of total interviewed parents with female children. As per children readings, it was noticeable that psychological abuse had the major impact on female children rather than male, standing at a share of 9% out of total interviewed female children.

Analysis per Governorate

During obtaining responses from the interviewed segments, certain risks were limited to parents, in which children will not be able to provide an unbiased response, similar to the exposure of technology. The aforementioned applies on parents where inquiries associated with child marriage occurrence could raise parents' resistance towards providing genuine responses. On the other hand, certain risks were addressed concerning their impact on the interviewed children and parents of the children understudy, while other risks were associated with the span rate within the governorate or local community.

The below section lists down the spread rates of the risks which were taken based on the experiences of the targeted segments being subject to these risks, similar to: impact of technology as reported by parents of children understudy, bullying, cyber bullying, school enrollment, sexual abuse, and psychological abuse. While, other included child marriage from children perspectives, child labor, and physical abuse as reported by the interviewed parents.

When inquiring on the most common risks encountering children in their residency area, both parents and children in Ma'an, perceived bullying as the major risk, standing at shares of 74% out of total parents and 86% out of the interviewed children in that governorate, which comes in line with the exposure rates of the interviewed children subject to this risk. On the other hand, child marriage and child labor were perceived amongst the least perceived risks facing children in Ma'an; contradicting with the spread rates of these risks as reported by both children and parents in that governorate.

Meanwhile, in Aqaba, the most perceived risks by both targeted segments were bullying and physical abuse/violence, where when compared with the spread of these risks within the interviewed households, only bullying was foreseen consistent with the collected perceptions, meanwhile, the spread of physical abuse/violence was relatively modest when addressing children and parents if their children were exposed to this risk, which can be attributed to interviewees tenancy to idealize their responses reflecting their realities.

In Tafileh, the major risks perceived by both targeted segments were psychological/emotional abuse along with bullying, and when compared with the spread of these risks internally, findings revealed consistency, bearing in mind variations in the shares subject to the conservative nature of responses aiming at beautifying the reality. Additionally, in terms of the risk with the least spread both perceptions and actual readings reported sexual abuse as the risk to be the least concerns amongst parents and children alike.

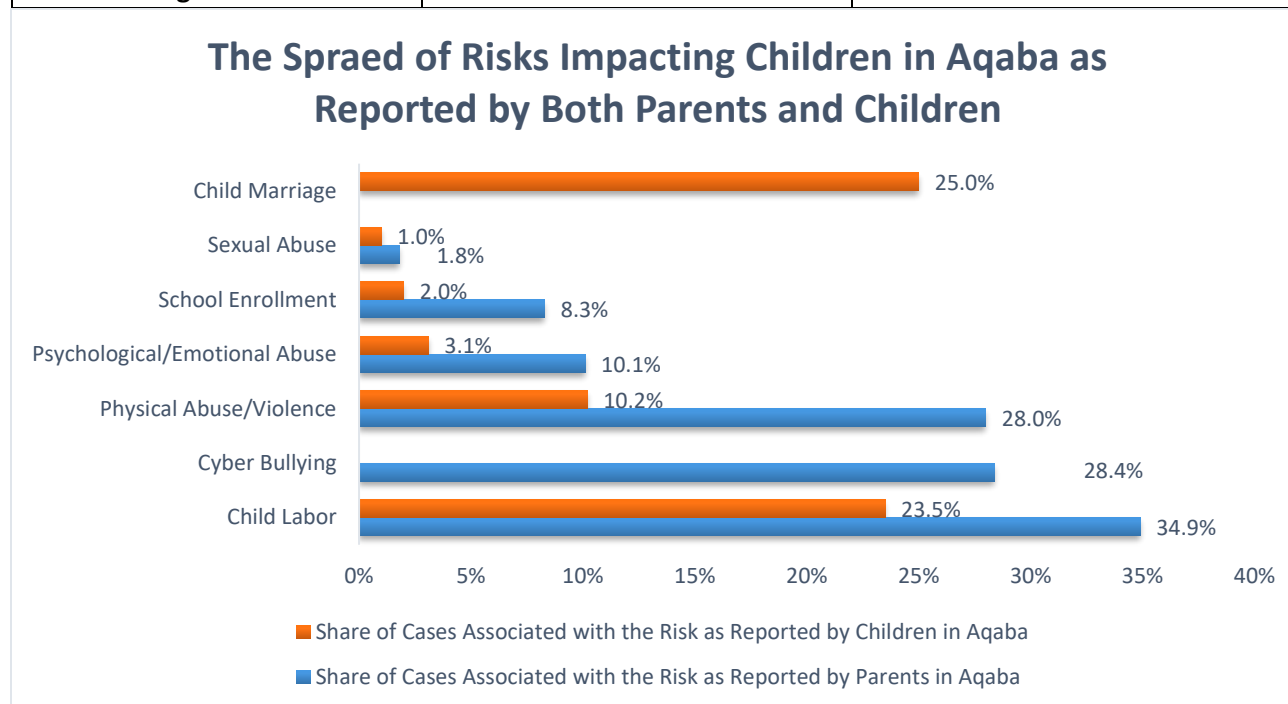
Bullying and child labor led the risks in their spread as reported by children and parents of personally abused children in Karak, meanwhile, the most concerns associated with the interviewed sample in that governorate were bullying, physical and psychological abuses, where physical and psychological risks come as a package as stated by a key informant operating as a school counselor in Aqaba. Which justifies the shy shares when compared with the percentages of respondents whom reported being concerned with these risks.

In Aqaba, the most reported risks amongst both children and interviewed parents were the exposure to bullying amongst children within the interviewed segments, in addition to the spread of child labor risk within the communities of the interviewed sample. On the other hand, parents in Aqaba reported the major impact influencing their children physical and mental health -of ages 13 years and below- was the exposure to technology, standing at 72% out of total interviewed parents in that governorate, whereas, 25% of children reported the spread of child marriage

amongst their local community. The below figure details further. When assessing the perception of interviewed parents and children,

Figure 3: The Spread of the Analyzed Risks Across Both Parents and Children Residing in Aqaba

The Risk/Concern	Share of Cases Associated with the Risk as Reported by Parents in Aqaba	Share of Cases Associated with the Risk as Reported by Children in Aqaba
Impact of Technology	72.0%	-
Bullying	46.3%	24.5%
Child Labor	34.9%	23.5%
Cyber Bullying	28.4%	-
Physical Abuse/Violence	28.0%	10.2%
Psychological/Emotional Abuse	10.1%	3.1%
School Enrollment	8.3%	2.0%
Sexual Abuse	1.8%	1.0%
Child Marriage	-	25.0%

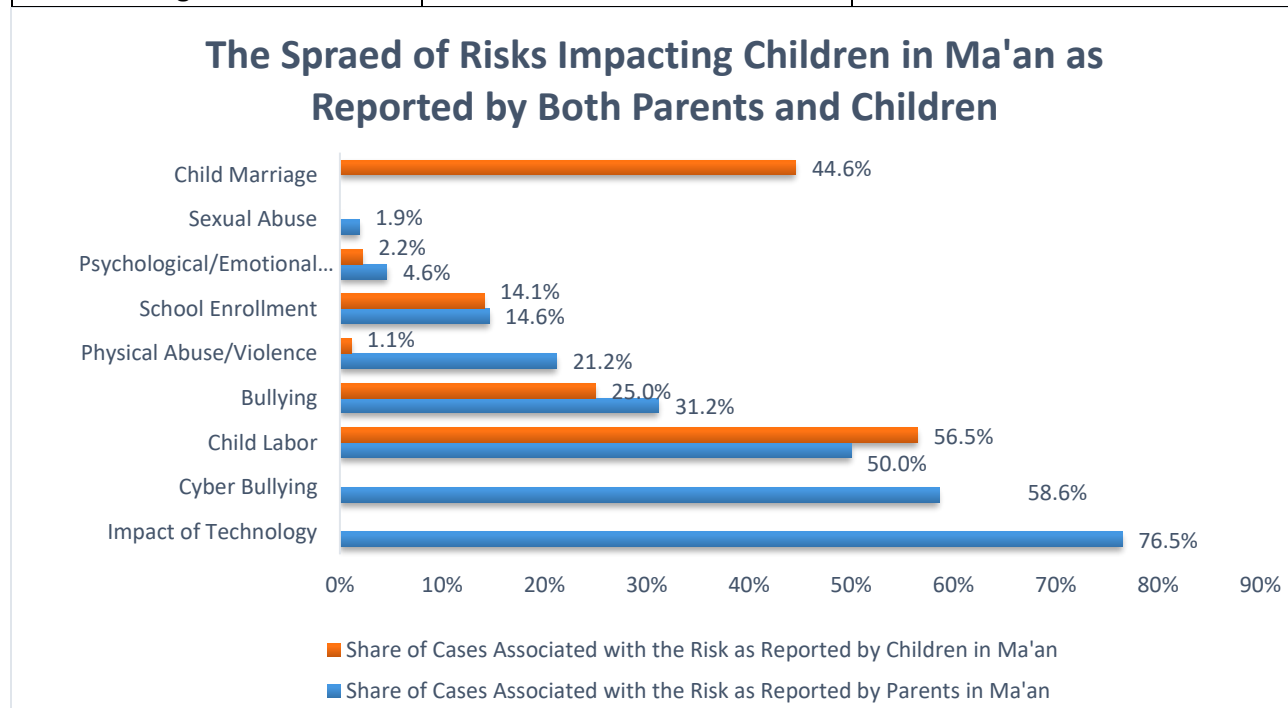


Child labor cases taking place within the community in Ma'an were reported by both interviewed parents and children with shares of 56.5% out of interviewed children and 50% out of total interviewed parents interviewed in that governorate. Followed by bullying, where both interviewed segments reported children being impacted personally by this risk. Again, the exposure to technology has been reported as the major risk; constituting a share amongst

children of the age 13 years and below of 76.5%. Meanwhile, the least reported risk amongst children and parents was sexual abuse, which can be attributed to the stigma and social norms forbidding discussing this matter publicly.

Figure 4: The Spread of the Analyzed Risks Across Both Parents and Children Residing in Ma'an

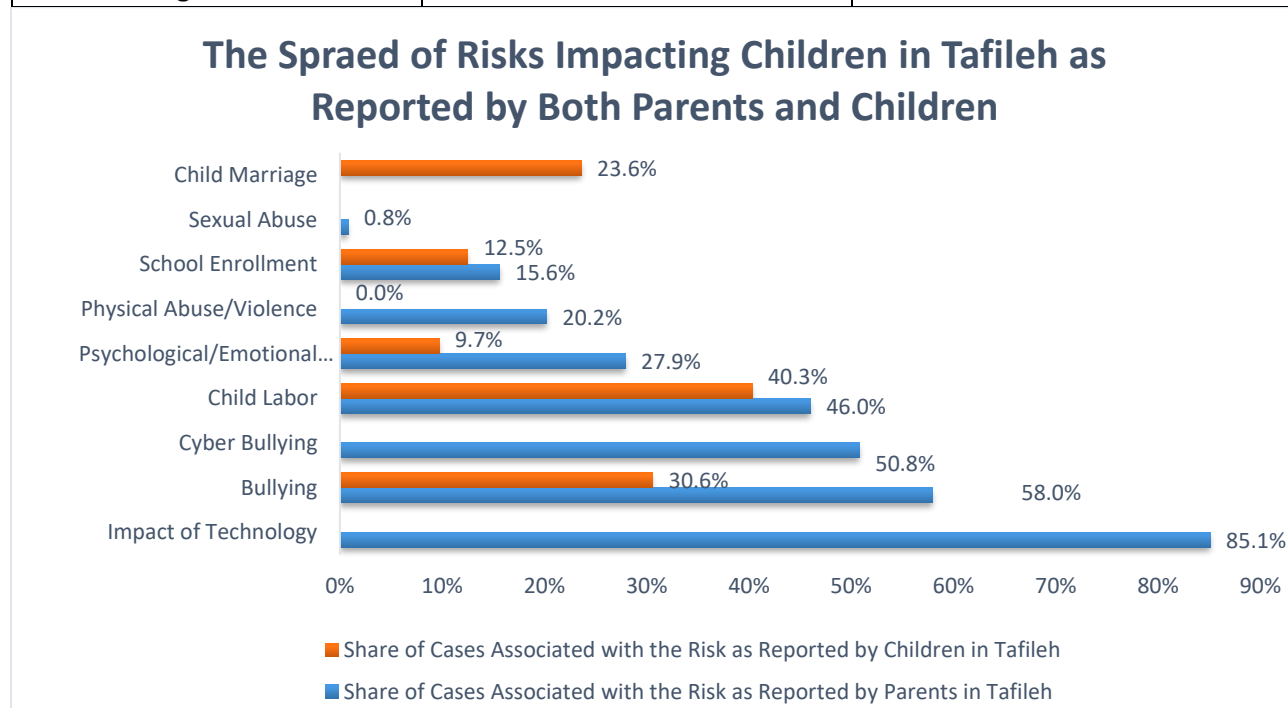
The Risk/Concern	Share of Cases Associated with the Risk as Reported by Parents in Ma'an	Share of Cases Associated with the Risk as Reported by Children in Ma'an
Impact of Technology	76.5%	-
Cyber Bullying	58.6%	-
Child Labor	50.0%	56.5%
Bullying	31.2%	25.0%
Physical Abuse/Violence	21.2%	1.1%
School Enrollment	14.6%	14.1%
Psychological/Emotional Abuse	4.6%	2.2%
Sexual Abuse	1.9%	0.0%
Child Marriage	-	44.6%



Interviewed children in Tafileh reported cases of child marriage, to constitute 23.6%, while parents across Tafileh stated the risk with the major impact on their children was the impact of technology exposure. Meanwhile, both children and parents added child labor and bullying as the risks with the most spread within the local community in Tafileh. On the other hand, none of the interviewed children reported being subject to physical abuse nor sexual abuse.

Figure 5: The Spread of the Analyzed Risks Across Both Parents and Children Residing in Tafileh

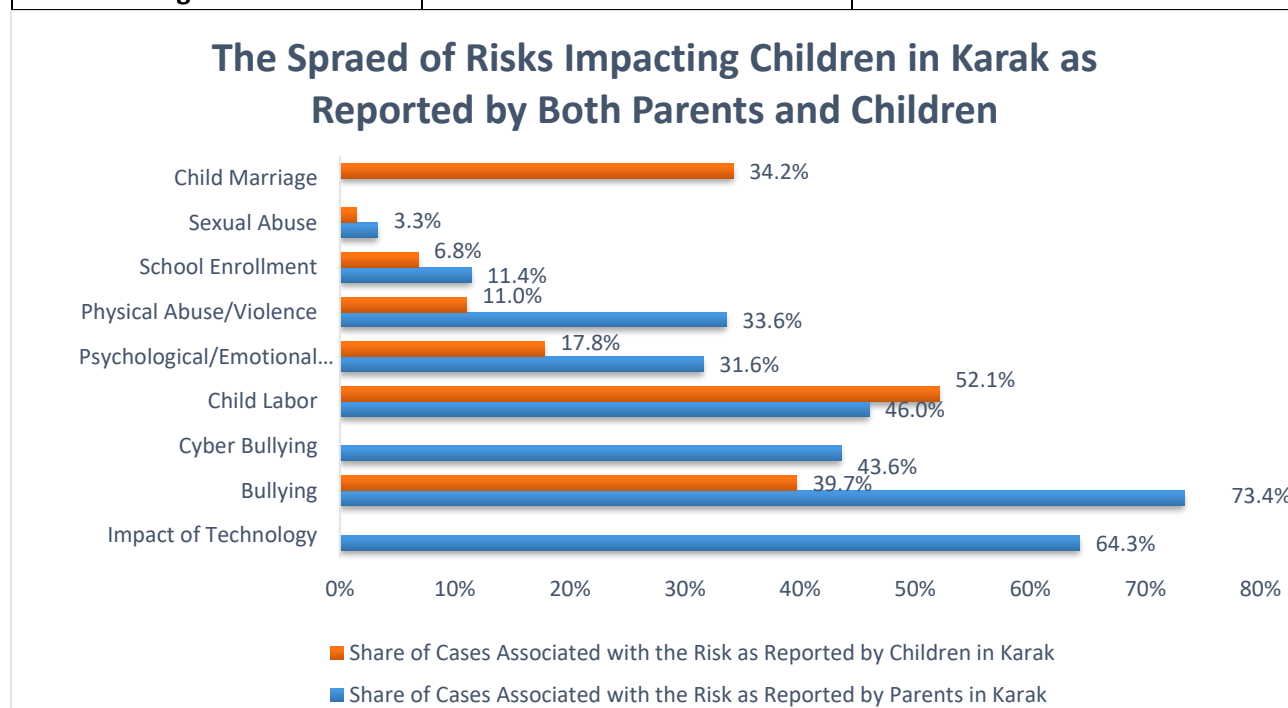
The Risk/Concern	Share of Cases Associated with the Risk as Reported by Parents in Tafileh	Share of Cases Associated with the Risk as Reported by Children in Tafileh
Impact of Technology	85.1%	-
Bullying	58.0%	30.6%
Cyber Bullying	50.8%	-
Child Labor	46.0%	40.3%
Psychological/Emotional Abuse	27.9%	9.7%
Physical Abuse/Violence	20.2%	0.0%
School Enrollment	15.6%	12.5%
Sexual Abuse	0.8%	0.0%
Child Marriage	-	23.6%



The exposure to bullying was the most reported risk in which 64.3% of interviewed parents reported their children being subject to, indicating that this risk was the major risk facing children in Karak, unlike the remaining governorates analyzed where parents reported the impact of technology and their number one concern. While both parents and children stated the highest reported rates of child labor and bullying within their communities.

Figure 6: The Spread of the Analyzed Risks Across Both Parents and Children Residing in Karak

The Risk/Concern	Share of Cases Associated with the Risk as Reported by Parents in Karak	Share of Cases Associated with the Risk as Reported by Children in Karak
Impact of Technology	64.3%	-
Bullying	73.4%	39.7%
Cyber Bullying	43.6%	-
Child Labor	46.0%	52.1%
Psychological/Emotional Abuse	31.6%	17.8%
Physical Abuse/Violence	33.6%	11.0%
School Enrollment	11.4%	6.8%
Sexual Abuse	3.3%	1.4%
Child Marriage	-	34.2%



An Analysis of the Major Risks Impacting Children and the Spread of each Across the Analyzed Governorates

This section highlights the reported risks by both parents and children interviewed, the reasons behind their spread and the followed measures and taken actions when dealing with.

a) Child Labor

The International Labour Organization define child labor as the work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development¹. Jordan was amongst the first countries to have approved the international agreements dedicated to child safety against the economic exploitation, its two protocols and the agreements associated with International Labor Organization in its two articles; 138 and 182². Nevertheless, this risk is impacting children across the kingdom and has not been diminished yet.

Out of total interviewed parents across the four governorates analyzed, 21.4% normalized underage children working at their family businesses, and perceived children assisting their families at their work not to be labelled as child labor, while amongst the interviewed adolescents only 3 of the Syrian nationality reported they would work in order to support the family, which comes in line with the mindset and traditions amongst Syrians, normalizing child labor, as stated by a key informant.

Additionally, when addressing if the family would starve without the help and support of their underage children, 53.6% of total interviewed parents perceived they actually would, while 44.5% of total interviewed adolescents shared the same perception. The below details the spread of this risk across the governorates analyzed, along with the causes and the adopted measures by both parents and adolescents alike to eliminate this risk.

Aqaba

Amongst the analyzed governorates, Aqaba was the least governorate with number of child labor cases reported to occur there by both parents and adolescents. The aforementioned can be attributed to the active role of the government bodies similar to the SDD in putting an end to the causes driving parents to practice this risk on their children, as declared by one key informant in Aqaba.

Out of total interviewed parents in Aqaba, 33.5% normalized children working, while 34.9% out of interviewed parents reported the occurrence of child labor cases within their community, with

¹ International Labour Organization – International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)

² The Jordanian Ministry of Labor

the most cases reported amongst Syrian parents, to constitute 44.2% out of total interviewed Syrian parents in Aqaba. Parents whom reported cases associated with this risk attributed its spread to financial difficulties and the need for additional income to cover the household basic needs and debts, followed by the lack of awareness perceived of parents of working children and the personal refine, as stated by 19.7% and 18.4%, out of total interviewed parents whom reported the spread of this risk within their communities in Aqaba. Meanwhile, 35.5% out of these parents perceived COVID-19 to have escalated this risk in that governorate, due to parents losing their jobs and the harsh economy and lack of income generating means within the family.

When assessing the spread of child labor amongst adolescents, 23.5% out of total interviewed adolescents reported being familiar with this risk within their community, while the majority of which attributed this risk to the financial difficulties forbidding head of households from covering their families' basic needs, standing at a share of 95.7%, while 30.4% of adolescents whom reported child labor cases within their communities stated that this risk is due to personal refine. Meanwhile, 52% of adolescents familiar with child labor cases reported COVID-19 to have impacted the spread of this risk within their residency area, due to the lockdown and the post precautions which forced schools to shut down and suspended the work of certain businesses, which drove children to work and generate income to cover the family monthly needs.

When addressing the needed measures to eliminate this risk, parents stated that financial aids provided to underprivileged households will have positive impact on children school enrollment rates, yielding into less spread of this risk, followed by spreading awareness amongst parents on the proper and modern parenting method and child rights, and creating job opportunities in the Southern region. On the other hand, 20% of total interviewed parents in Aqaba whom reported the occurrence of this risk within their community, perceived it to be acceptable.

“Child labor is not a risk; a child must work to know the value of things in life and become responsible when an adult” one Jordanian parent stated.

Ma'an

The share of child labor cases reported by parents to occur within their communities in Ma'an stood at 50% out of total interviewed parents residing there; 13.8% of which normalized child labor in Ma'an. The most reported cases of child labor occurring within parents' communities were amongst Syrian parents, standing at a share of 64.4% out of total interviewed Syrian parents residing in Ma'an, which can be attributed to the norms enabling parents to enroll children in the workforce rather than completing their education.

The reported child labor cases were perceived to be attributed to the financial difficulties and the needs for additional source of income to cover their basic needs mainly then financial obligations and debts, along with the lack of knowledge of the child rights associated with parents of working children, as perceived by interviewed parents in Ma'an. Whereas, Syrian parents attributed the

practice of child labor to social norms and traditions, which normalize child enrollment in the workforce at a young age, meanwhile, 10% out of interviewed Syrian adolescents in Ma'an added that families resort to child labor to train their children to work in the family business. COVID-19 was perceived to have triggered the spread of child labor, constituting a share of 36.2% out of interviewed parents whom reported child labor cases within their communities in Ma'an, due to the financial difficulties and the increase in the monthly expenses within the household, and the lack of added value associated with online learning during the pandemic.

Amongst the interviewed children, 56.5% reported being aware of child labor cases within their communities, the most reported cases of which were by Syrian children, standing at a share of 67.5% out of total interviewed Syrian children. When addressing the reasons behind families rooting for child labor, children perceived the financial difficulties forbidding head of households from covering their financial debts nor their basic needs on a monthly basis. Whereas, 28.8% of children whom reported cases of child labor attributed its spread to COVID-19 due to the absence or lack of income associated with businesses closing or head of households working as a day laborer, along with children having extra free time due to schools shutting down or education being conducted online.

“Parents losing their jobs made children feel obligated to work and support their families, considering that their work does not require permits nor social security subscriptions” a Jordanian adolescent reported.

Meanwhile, parents perceived the financial support provided for vulnerable families, through creating job opportunities for graduates and unemployed head of households, along with supporting the establishments of micro and small businesses, to have an effective contribution in eliminating this risk. Whereas 34.5% out of interviewed Syrians in Ma'an stated the main key to eliminate this risk is through increasing the financial aid provided for refugees. Meanwhile, adolescents emphasized the role of spreading awareness amongst parents of children rights and the consequences associated with depriving them from acquiring a proper education, and stated that the role of enforcing the bylaws forbidding child labor will yield into deterring parents and employers from misconduct.

Tafileh

In Tafileh, 46% of interviewed parents reported being familiar with at least one case of child labor within their community; 19.2% of which reported normalizing this risk. Additionally, parents of the non-Jordanian nationality (Syrian, Egyptian and Yemeni) reported cases of child labor the most when compared with Jordanian parents interviewed, which can be attributed to the restrictions in job permits and the limited work fields open for refugees.

Interviewed parents in Ma'an attributed this risk to the financial difficulties encountering families in Tafileh, which reflect negatively on their ability to cover their monthly basic expenses and financial debts, followed by the lack of awareness amongst families of child rights to have

contributed in the spread of this phenomenon. Whereas, 52.5% of parents whom reported the existence of this risk within their communities, perceived the increase in family expenditure, arising from the pandemic, and the virtual learning which was foreseen not beneficial, to have been the main factors behind the spread of this phenomenon in Tafileh.

“COVID-19 increased the number of child labor cases due to financial pressure stemming from not covering the family needs and the loss of parents jobs” one parent reported.

Amongst the interviewed children, 40.3% reported being familiar with child labor cases occurring within their community in Ma’an, with non-Jordanian segments reporting this risk the most. Children attributed this risk to the financial difficulties facing head of household and impacting their ability to cover their debts and meet their families’ basic needs, while 48.3% of children whom reported being familiar with child labor cases within Tafileh attributed this risk to the lack of awareness amongst parents and caregivers of child rights. Not to mention the impact of COVID-19 on the rates of child labor, as perceived by 79.3% of children whom reported cases of child labor within their community, which caused the average income of the family to drop due to the loss of jobs or the lack of job opportunities, along with the adoption of online learning at schools, granting the child extra time to work during.

Parents stated that tackling the root-cause of the risk through supporting underprivileged families financially to have positive impact in eliminating the spread of this risk in Tafileh, coupled with creating job opportunities for head of households so they can generate descent income to cover their family’s basic needs.

Meanwhile, some parents whom reported cases of child labor within their community, normalized this risk, stating that no action must be taken towards eliminating this phenomenon, on the contrary, in the case where the family was facing financial difficulties or the loss of one parent, children work is considered crucial to help support the family, in which necessities overrule prohibitions.

Karak

The shares of parents whom reported cases of child labor occurring within their community stood at 46% out of total interviewed parents in Karak; 14.3% of which normalized children work to help support their families. In which the most reported cases were by Syrian parents, standing at a share of 66% out of total interviewed parents of the Syrian nationality, reported this risk existing within their communities. This risk was attributed by parents whom reported its existence within their local communities to the financial difficulties encountering families and impacting their ability to meet their financial debts or covering their basic needs, along with the personal refine perceived by 17.9% of that segment. Meanwhile, 61.6% out of parents whom reported this risk taking place within their communities attributed the spread of this risk to COVID-19, due to the lack of descent income to cover the family’s needs, the loss of jobs and lack of work

opportunities. Meanwhile, few parents added that the negligence of head of households was the driver behind the increase in the number of cases during COVID-19 in particular.

“Drug using and negligence of parents drove children to enroll in the work force” one parent stated.

When measuring the spread of this risk amongst children in Karak, 52.1% reported being aware of child labor cases within their community, where this risk was reported amongst Egyptian and Syrian children more than Jordanians, standing at a share of 75% and 53%, respectively. Adolescents attributed this risk to the financial difficulties encountering the head of household, while 15.8% reported the lack of awareness of child rights to have contributed in this risk. Additionally, 39.5% out of interviewed children reported cases of child labor, added that COVID-19 has accelerated the number of cases, due to the financial difficulties and loss of jobs and lack of income generation within the households, forcing children to enroll in the workforce. Meanwhile, few children added that it is more beneficial to work rather than have a degree, indicating that education will not be useful nor beneficial in the future.

“It is better for children to work than going to school” one Jordanian child stated.

The proposed measures to alleviate this risk were based on eliminating poverty through increasing financial aids and creating job opportunities, followed by spreading awareness amongst parents of child rights, and the impacts of child labor on the child physical, mental and psychological growth, as stated by 6% of total interviewed parents in Karak. Meanwhile, children added the lack of awareness of child rights normalizes practicing such risk. On the other hand, few parents reported rooting for child labor through proposing establishing customized projects and vocational centers for children as a solution for this risk.

“Children must work to be able to cover their personal expenses” one parent stated.

“It is acceptable to enroll the child in workforce, under the condition of supervising the work environment”, another parent added.

b) Bullying

Bullying has been defined as a form of aggressive behavior that occurs in an intentional and repeated manner causing another child to feel hurt¹. The risk of bullying takes several forms including: physical bullying, verbal, social, psychological, and cyberbullying. Bullying can cause long-term impacts stemming directly from short-term impacts, in which the exposure of this risk at an early age when the child persona is molding is expected to create mental health issues during adulthood. The direct impact of bullying varies to include: anxiety, depression and suicidality, aside from the physical bruises and scars, if the risk was physical in its form. Out of total interviewed parents, 13% perceived lack of awareness in bullying and its practices, whereas, in terms of the spread of this risk amongst the interviewed sample, parents share whom

reported their children being bullied stood at 52.1% out of total interviewed parents, while children reported being bullied constituted 29.3% of total interviewed children, indicating that this risk is foreseen more amongst children of the age 13 years and beyond.

It is worth noting, that out of total children whom reported being bullied, 4.1% perceived bullying between peers to be acceptable, and attributed normalizing this phenomenon to the fact that bullying is done out of humor rather than picking on one another; 75% of which reported being bullied by schoolmates and peers.

Aqaba

In Aqaba, the share of parents reported their children being bullied stood at 46.3%, in which this phenomenon was reported the most amongst non-Jordanian, nor Syrian parents, standing at 50% out of total interviewed parents from these nationalities, which can be attributed to the inclusive society and the difference between children in nationality, and ideology, which can trigger bullying associated with these segments.

The share of parents whom reported their children being subject to cyber bullying in Aqaba stood at 28.4% out of total interviewed parents residing there. The majority of which reported their children referring to them, standing at 93.5%, while 4.8% reported referring to school teachers, meanwhile, none of these parents indicated referring their cyber bullied children to a specialized service provider.

Meanwhile, when assessing the spread of bullying amongst children, 24.5% out of total interviewed children reported being bullied, and the most impacted by this risk were of the Syrian nationality in Aqaba, standing at a share of 29.6% out of total interviewed children reported being bullied. Out of total adolescents reported being bullied, 83.3% reported being bullied by peers, while 16.7% reported being bullied by parents.

With respect to the measures followed by parents with bullied children, 67.3% of which reported talking to their children and advising them on how to deal with this type of abuse through boosting their morals and increasing their confidence level, while 38.6% of parents reported addressing this matter with their children teachers at school. Whereas, less than 10% of parents in Aqaba reported not doing anything towards their children being bullied. As per the adopted measure amongst bullied children in Aqaba, 79.2% reported responding the same way as the bully.

Ma'an

In Ma'an, the share of parents whom reported being aware of their children being bullied stood at 31.2% out of total interviewed parents residing there; amongst these parents 6.2% of which normalized bullying between children.

It is worth noting that Syrian parents reported their children being subject to bullying the most when compared with parents of other nationalities, standing at a share of 37.9% out of total

interviewed Syrian parents in Ma'an, which can be attributed to the difference in the nationality triggering this phenomenon. Additionally, this risk was foreseen amongst head of households of the Jordanian and Syrian nationalities whom reported being divorced, separated or widowed, driving others to mock or humiliate their children utilizing that reason. It is worth noting, that 7.3% out of total interviewed parents in Ma'an reported their children being cyber bullied; all of which were females excluding one male child.

When measuring the spread of this risk amongst children in Ma'an, 25% reported being bullied, while the analysis revealed that the spread of this risk was amongst non-Jordanian, nor Syrian adolescents, where the two children interviewed (one Sudani and one Yemeni) reported being subject to. Additionally, 73.9% out of total bullied adolescents reported the bully to be peers or their schoolmate, 13% reported to be bullied by parents and 8.7% reported being bullied by school teachers.

The actions taken by parents of bullied children in Ma'an varied, but the most followed action was providing advice to children subject to this risk not to confront bullies and ignore what they say.

"I tell my children to ignore the bully and that such things happen with us refugees" a Syrian parent in Ma'an stated.

Additionally, parents reported to boost their children confidence level, as reported by 24.7% by parents with bullied children in Ma'an, and enforcing their values towards accepting who they are.

"I raise his confidence level, even though he has special needs and I try to make him accept that" a parent residing in Ma'an stated.

Standing up against bullies and confront them followed amongst the advices parents give to their bullied children in Ma'an. On the other hand, few parents reported distancing their children from bullies and the areas where their children might be exposed to this risk.

Whereas, children subject to bullying in Ma'an whom reported responding the same way as the bully constituted 34.8%, while 8.7% reported referring for parents and school teachers/personnel for advice.

Tafileh

Amongst interviewed parents in Tafileh, 58% reported their children being bullied, where the analysis revealed that this risk had the most spread amongst Syrian parents when compared with the remaining nationalities analyzed in Tafileh, standing at a share of 67.3%, out of total interviewed Syrian parents there. Additionally, 6.6% of parents whom reported their children being bullied were either divorced or widowed.

In Tafileh, 50.8% of interviewed parents reported their children being subject to electronic bullying, out of total interviewed parents residing there; 66.2% of which reported their children referring to them, while 25.6% reported their children referring to their siblings, meanwhile, none

of which reported referring to a specialized service provider. Additionally, cyber bullying or electronic bullying was reported more by parents with female children, to constitute a share of 58.6% out of total interviewed parent with cyber bullied female children, compared to a share of 42.6% out of total parents with cyber bullied female children in Tafileh. An important note, is that children uncensored usage of smartphones and tablets was attributed by several key informants in Ma'an and Tafileh in particular to the absence of free of charge entertainment and amusement centers during school holiday.

Meanwhile, the spread of this risk amongst children in Tafileh stood at a share of 30.6% out of total interviewed children there, bearing in mind that this risk was foreseen amongst non-Jordanian children, of the Syrian and Egyptian nationalities, when compared with Jordanian children. Over 75% of total bullied children reported being subject to bullying by schoolmates and peers, while 18.2% reported being bullied by parents and 22.7% by either school teachers or staff.

In terms of the most adopted measures and actions taken by parents towards their bullied children, parents stated to advise their children and declaring that the best solution is to ignore the bully and walk away, and not to follow bullies' approaches, while 12.7% of parents reported advising their children to confront the bully whether physically or verbally, emphasizing that this approach would boost the child confidence.

"My children father always says to beat whomever beats you, although I am not fond of this advice" a parents in Tafileh stated.

An important note, is that none of the parents in Tafileh whom reported their children being exposed to electronic bullying requested support from specialized service providers.

In terms of children followed measures towards this risk, 54.5% of which reported seeking advice from school staff mainly and parents, while 31.8% reported responding the same way as the bully when subject to bullying, as per the rest of children, they reported not doing anything regarding this matter.

Karak

Parents' share whom reported their children being bullied in Karak amounted to 73.4% out of total interviewed parents residing there, with the most vulnerable segment towards this risk is Syrian children, standing at a share of 85.1%, out of total interviewed Syrian parents residing in that governorate, followed by Jordanians; constituting a share of 71.1% out of total interviewed Jordanian parents residing there. While, out of total parents with bullied children in Karak, 3.9% reported being either divorced, separated or widowed.

Out of total interviewed parents in Karak, 43.6% reported their children being electronically bullied; 87% of which reported their children referring to them.

Amongst interviewed children in Karak, 39.7% of which reported being bullied, and was foreseen with the most spread amongst Egyptian children; constituting a share of 50% out of total interviewed non-Jordanian nor Syrian children in Karak. Additionally, 89.7% of children reported

being bullied by peers and schoolmates, while 13.8% reported being bullied by relatives. It is worth noting that none of bullied children normalized this phenomenon.

When encountering this risk, parents reported talking to their bullied children and advising them to ignore the bully and attempt in boosting their morals, followed by escalating this matter to the teacher at school or school counselor, while 37.9% of parents with bullied children reported confronting the bully. Meanwhile, 58.6% out of interviewed children subject to bullying reported responding the same way when defending themselves, whereas, 17.2% reported seeking advice from parents and school staff.

c) Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions against the child³. Whereas, sexual exploitation refers to any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes. Perpetration children through sexual abuse or exploitation, endanger their psychological, social and physical health, causing trauma, isolation, sex transmitted diseases or unwanted pregnancy, and in some cases suicidality.

Aqaba

The share of parents whom perceived sexual abuse as a common risk impacting children well-being, amounted to 21.1% out of total interviewed parents in Aqaba; 87% of which perceived it to occur within their residency governorate the least. Meanwhile, amongst the interviewed parents in Aqaba, four Jordanians reported their children being sexually abused; 75% of which were reported to be females.

Amongst the interviewed children in Aqaba, 7.1% perceived sexual abuse as a common risk impacting children, while the majority of which perceived it to impact children within their residency area, on the other hand, few added that it extends to impact children across the kingdom. Which was attributed to the lack of job opportunities, poverty and addiction to prohibited substances according to key informants from CBOs and NGOs in Aqaba. When assessing the exposure to sexual abuse across the interviewed adolescents in Aqaba, one Jordanian male out of total 98 adolescents reported his parents being aware of his sexual abuse, and reported referring to the school counselor. This risk was attributed to the financial difficulties the family encounter, which may cause negligence and thus exposing the child as a vulnerable target.

³ UNICEF – Protecting Children from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

When inquiring the parents if these children benefited from awareness raising or psychosocial support, the response was no for both, while the child added that the support provided by the school counselor is not always effective.

As per the measures adopted towards this risk, parents reported seeking help and advice from family, friends and community members, while only one parent attempted to seek professional help, meanwhile only one admitted that the abused daughter benefitted from psychosocial services. The reported setbacks amongst these parents were the social prohibition and the perceived lack of awareness of service providers within the residency area.

Ma'an

When assessing the perception of parents in Ma'an towards the most common risks impacting children, 4.2% stated sexual abuse as a concern associated with their children safety and well-being; 72.3% of which added that this risk is not limited to Ma'an and is threatening children across the kingdom. Meanwhile, five parents out of total interviewed in Ma'an reported their children being sexually abused; constituting 1.9% out of total interviewed parents living there.

Out of total interviewed children, 2.2% perceived sexual abuse as a common risk impacting children across the country's governorates, and not only their residency area, and added that the risks threatening children safety and well-being are due to external factors, similar to neighbors, peers and community members. It is worth noting that this risk was perceived common amongst female adolescents in Ma'an, of the Jordanian and Syrian nationality. Additionally, all of which reported not sharing the risks they were exposed to and -had direct impact on their physical and mental health-, with their parents. On a separate note, the lack of specialized service providers within the adolescents' residency areas and the shortage in adequate qualifications within were reported by the children whom perceived this risk being common across the kingdom, while none reported being aware of the helpline service provided by Jordan River Foundation.

With respect to the measures and action taken by parents of sexually abused children, it was noticeable that none of which referred their child to psychosocial services. The aforementioned was attributed according to several informants, to the stigma and labelling sexual abuse under the "taboo" umbrella, along with sugar coating this phenomenon due to social prohibitions, which reflect negatively when alleviating this risk by child protection service providers.

"I am afraid my community will judge me if we seek professional help from specialized service providers" One parent with sexually abused child stated.

Tafleh

Parents in Tafleh whom perceived sexual abuse as a common risk constituted 6.1% out of total interviewed parents there; 81.3% of which stated that this risk is not solely limited to Tafleh and

that this risk is impacting children across the kingdom. Meanwhile, two parents out of total interviewed reported their male children of the Syrian nationality being sexually violated.

In Tafileh, 8.3% of adolescents of the Jordanian nationality perceived the risk of child sexual abuse to have impact children safety not only within their governorate of residency but extends to impact children across the kingdom. Meanwhile, none of the interviewed children in Tafileh reported being sexually abused.

In terms of the measures followed in dealing with this risk, the majority of children reported referring to their parents and family members when encountering any risk, whereas, only one child standing at a share of 16.7% reported resorting to specialized figures when exposed to any risk impacting the mental and physical health status. Again, the main factor behind the lack of enticement towards seeking help from professional and specialized figures by both parents and children was the lack of service providers as perceived by these segments within their residency areas. It is worth mentioning that the awareness of the helpline provided by JRF was reported absent by children and parents with sexually abused children.

Karak

Child sexual abuse was perceived as a risk amongst 47.1% of total parents interviewed in Karak; 77.4% of which added that it is not limited to their residency governorate and that this risk spans to impact children on a country level. Meanwhile, eight parents out of total interviewed in Karak reported their children being sexually abused; seven of which are females of the Jordanian nationality, while one reported to be a male from Yemen, indicating that this risk impacts females more, which can be attributed to females being more subjected to coercive behaviors more than males.

A share of interviewed children in Karak perceived sexual abuse as a common risk facing children in all the country, standing at a 6.8% out of total interviewed children residing there.

On the other hand, 21.9% out of total interviewed children in Karak reported sharing the risk they face with their parents; only one Jordanian male of which (standing at a share of 1.4% out of total interviewed children in Karak) reported being sexually abused, and added that the household is incapable of covering their financial obligations, along with the head of household practicing physical abuse/violence to be as a solo stress factor within the family, as reported by the adolescent. The aforementioned can be considered the reasons behind the exposure to this risk.

The male child in Karak added that his parents did not refer him to a professional after being sexually abused, and attributed that to parents' stigma and the social prohibitions which tend to dodge discussing this matter out loud.

It is worth noting that amongst parents whom reported their children being sexually abused in Karak, only one indicated referring the child to professional figures or counselors, meanwhile, none of these parents referred their children to psychosocial support services.

d) Technology and its Impact on Children Health

The excessive exposure to technology similar to video games, the Internet and social media platforms, can have several repercussions and implications on children health and mental stability, along with impacting their social skills, including: anxiety, tension, depression, eyesight problems, low self-esteem, and sleep deprivation.

Out of total interviewed parents, 74.8% reported the mental health of their children of the ages 13 and below being impacted by technology. The below details the spread of this risk according to the governorates analyzed:

Aqaba

Out of total interviewed parents residing in Aqaba, 72% reported their children health status being impacted by exposure to technology; with the highest concentration of cases amongst Jordanian nationality, standing at 78.8% out of total Jordanians residing in Aqaba. The exposure of this risk was reported to cause children to be isolated and distanced, with 53.5% of total parents in Aqaba reporting this risk, followed by sleeping problems and stress, with 43.9% and 17.2%, respectively.

Ma'an

Parents in Ma'an reporting this risk to have impacted their children stood at a share of 76.5% out of total interviewed parents in that governorate, causing sleeping problems for children under the age of 14 years, as reported by 64.8% of interviewed parents whom reported this risk impacting their children in Ma'an, followed by children need to be distanced and alone, along with the stress, with 55.3% and 44.7%, respectively. In Ma'an, the highest share of children impacted by this risk were of the Yemeni, Egyptian and Palestinian nationality, standing at 85% out of total interviewed parents of the non-Jordanian nor Syrian nationalities, where 72.7% of which reported not being able to cover their monthly financial obligations.

The spread of this risk can be attributed to the lack of safe haven free of charge and accessible by all citizens and residents, similar to amusement parks, which can force parents to give their children smartphones during summer break and fill their time with uncensored use of technology.

"Ma'an does not host entertainment environment for children, therefore I see me obligated to handle them smartphones and tablets, as currently there is no other alternatives", a key informant at the SDD in Ma'an stated.

Tafleh

Tafileh scored the highest share of parents reporting technology impacting their children mental health standing at 85.1% out of total interviewed parents in Tafileh. It was foreseen that this risk was reported by all the interviewed parents of the non-Jordanian, nor Syrian nationality, of the Egyptian and Yemeni nationalities; 84.6% of which reported not being able to meet their households' financial obligations on a monthly basis.

Karak

Across the interviewed parents residing in Karak, the share whom reported their children health being impacted by technology constituted 64.3%, whereas, when assessing the spread of this risk across the nationality, it was reported to have impacted Jordanian parents the most, standing at 65.2% out of total interviewed Jordanian parents in Karak.

e) School Enrollment

Schools can be considered a safe haven for children to develop and gain the knowledge needed to enter the adulthood. Our study revealed a share of 12.7% of parents depriving their children from school, by which negatively impacting their children social and psychological development, along with the household economic development. The consequences of this risk extends to affect the economic growth on a national level, therefore, eliminating this risk is considered crucial by all stakeholders involved, starting from children, parents, school staff, and decision makers.

Aqaba

Amongst the interviewed parents in Aqaba, 91.7% reported enrolling all of their school age children to school, while the remaining 8.3% of parents reported lack of enrollment of all or some of their children to school. It is worth noting, that in Aqaba this risk is impacting both male and female children, meanwhile, it was noticed according to parents' responses to have the major impact on Palestinians, Pakistanis and Egyptians, standing at a share of 35.7% out of total non-Jordanian nor Syrian parents interviewed.

The majority of which attributed that to the need in an additional source for income generation within these families, additionally, the proportion of parents whom reported withdrawing their children from school out of total interviewed parents reported having no income generating members stood at 93.8%. The aforementioned reveal a relation between absence of income generators within the household and school aged children enrollment to educational institutes, in which financial difficulties drive parents to withdraw their school aged children from educational institutions.

Meanwhile, few parents stated that their school age children are people of determination/have special needs and that school is not equipped to meet their needs. Additionally, 66.7% of the families whom reported the lack of enrollment in their children to school added having financial difficulties and being incapable of meeting their households needs on a monthly basis.

According to the interviewed adolescents in Aqaba, only 2% of families reported currently not enrolling all their school-age children; one Jordanian and one Syrian. The Syrian adolescent attributed it to not being able to cover the school fees, while the Jordanian adolescent attributed it to having a health condition forbids him from going to school.

Ma'an

In Ma'an the total parents whom reported the enrollment of all of their children of the eligible age to school stood at 85.4% out of total interviewed parents residing there, leaving 14.6% of families enrolling only some or none of their children to school. Meanwhile, and according to the interviewed children in Ma'an, 14.1% reported the lack of enrollment of children to school; the majority of which are of the Syrian nationality.

The collected data indicates that the lack of school enrollment was followed amongst non-Jordanian families the most, whether Syrians or non-Syrian, which can be attributed to the lack of work opportunities and permits, which force these families sometimes to withdraw their children from school and enroll them in labor work.

Additionally, Syrian families attributed that to being incapable of affording school fees and the need for extra income generating member in the family specially with male children, meanwhile, female children stated that not going to school was due school location being far from home, while one Syrian child added that not completing her education was not by choice, as her parents forced her. Whereas, Jordanian parents whom reported not enrolling all their children to school stated the reasons to have special need children, along with the lack of preference by children to continue their education.

Tafleh

Out of total interviewed parents, 84.4% reported enrolling all their school-age children, whereas, 15.6% reported lack of enrollment to educational institutes. While, amongst interviewed children in Tafleh, 12.5% of households reported not enrolling all children of the eligible age to school.

This risk was reported to have the most spread amongst Syrian families when compared with the remaining nationalities interviewed in Tafleh, to constitute a share of 18.2% out of total interviewed Syrian parents there, and 28.5% out of total interviewed Syrian children. Which can be attributed to the social norms amongst Syrians, normalizing children to drop out of school and start building a career at an early age.

Syrian parents and children alike attributed this behavior to not being able to afford school tuitions or fees. While Jordanian parents stated wanting their children to work in the family business, and children choice in quitting school whether due to the low quality of education or their personal preference, to be the major reasons behind lack of school enrollment.

Karak

Parents share in Karak whom reported all their school-age children already enrolled in school stood at 88.6%, out of total interviewed parents residing in that governorate, leaving 11.4% of families of which implementing this risk. Meanwhile, 6.8% out of total interviewed children reported lack of school enrollment within their households. The analysis revealed that the most impacted nationality with this risk in Karak were mainly Syrians, standing at shares of 31.9% and 26.7%, out of total interviewed Syrians parents and children, respectively. Followed by Yemenis, to constitute 30% out of total interviewed non-Jordanian nor Syrian parents in Karak, whom reported implementing this risk.

When assessing the factors behind adopting this phenomenon, Syrian parents and children whom reported lack of enrollment of all children to school, stated not being able to afford school fees and the need for help in income generation, while two Syrian parents added having children with special needs; one of which is autistic. Whereas, Yemeni families reported financial difficulties as the main stress factor within the households, meanwhile, few non-Jordanian parents stated the lack of equality in accessing services similar to education and health amongst the barriers facing them as refugees and forbidding them from accessing these fundamental services.

“The school my boy was enrolled in is small to take all children and the priority is for Jordanians” a Syrian parent said.

f) Child Marriage

Child marriage or as known as underage marriage refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 and an adult or another child⁴. Additionally, the risk of child marriage imposes several impacts on the child’s physical, psychological and social health, therefore, we had the urge to investigate more on the spread of this phenomenon and its drivers, in order to put an end to the violation of children rights.

When shedding the light on this risk, females were found more endangered than males, in which child marriage will most likely drive females in particular to withdraw from school, forbidding them from acquiring a decent education and entering the workforce, additionally, pregnancy at an early age amongst children will have severe consequences on both the baby and the mother, similar to premature deliveries, congenital anomalies or as known as birth defects, and not to mention death to the infant and the mother.

According to parents, the acceptable age of marriage was perceived to differ with respect to child gender. In which, 20 parents out of total 984 interviewed parents perceived the minimum age of marriage for females to range between 14 years and 17 years. Overall, it was noticeable that the adequate age for girls differ according to nationality, in which 99% of Jordanian parents out of total interviewed Jordanian parents reported the adequate age for females to be married to range between 18 and 35 years, while for Syrians the majority did not exceed the age of 25 years.

⁴ UNICEF-Harmful Practices

The aforementioned was attributed by several key informants to the social norms amongst Syrians.

“it is acceptable within the Syrian community for a girl beneath the age of 18 to be married at an early age of 13 years, while for male Syrians, it is accepted by their norms and tradition to focus on learning a skill rather than completing his education”, a key informant in Aqaba stated.

Meanwhile, 99.5% of total parents reported the minimum age for marriage amongst males to range between 18 and 40 years, indicating the practice of gender inequality and discrimination against females in Jordan.

Aqaba

Amongst interviewed parents in Aqaba, 6.9% perceived child marriage as an acceptable practice; 60% of which reported having female children, while 5.4% of parents with female children, out of total interviewed parents with female children in Aqaba, reported their willingness to marry their female children if a suitable man proposes. In which this perception was followed heavily amongst Syrians, followed by Jordanians, to constitute 6.3% and 5.7%, out of interviewed Syrian parents and Jordanian parents with female children, respectively. On the other hand, none of the non-Jordanian nor Syrian families with female children consent this practice.

When assessing the spread of this risk across children in Aqaba, 25% of children reported being familiar with at least one case of child marriage, over half of which perceived it to be by choice. On the other hand, one Jordanian female child in Aqaba reported being married, while stating that child marriage is an unacceptable practice, indicating that her marriage was not by choice, then added that child marriage has no advantages, declaring that chances are it is ending with divorce. Meanwhile attributed practicing this risk to traditions reflecting of the family's honor.

Both Syrian and Jordanian parents whom reported rooting for child marriage, attributed that to the financial difficulties, standing at five families out of nine, while three families added that customs and traditions are the driver behind accepting this phenomenon, and reflecting on the family's honor. Meanwhile, none of which perceived COVID-19 to have any impact on child marriage rates.

Ma'an

In Ma'an, 5.8% of interviewed parents perceived child marriage as an acceptable practice, with the highest adoption amongst Syrian families, standing at 10.3% out of total interviewed Syrian parents in that governorate, followed by Jordanians with 4.4% of Jordanian parents sharing that perception. Meanwhile, none of the remaining nationalities rooted for child marriage. Whereas, amongst interviewed children, 44.6% reported cases of child marriage, with 22% of which perceiving these children to be forced into marriage by parents and household decision makers.

Additionally, this perception was found amongst parents with female children the most when compared with males, standing at a share of 6.3% out of total interviewed parents reported having female child of the age 13 years and below. On a side note, and due to customs and

traditions this perception was adopted by higher education graduates and illiterates alike, with the most spread amongst parents with secondary educational level and below, when compared with higher education graduates.

Meanwhile, 5.2% out of total parents with female children reported rooting for this risk, by accepting to marry their female child if a decent guy proposes, and again the highest adoption towards this perception was amongst Syrian parents; constituting 12.9% out of interviewed Syrian parents with female children. Meanwhile the share of Jordanian parents with willingness to marry their female children stood at 1.6% out of total Jordanian parents with female children, while none of the other nationalities approved this practice.

This behavior was attributed amongst both Syrian and Jordanian parents to the traditions and customs; reflecting of protecting the family honor, as stated by nine out of ten of these families, followed by poverty and financial difficulties as reported by seven out of ten families rooting for this practice. Meanwhile, none of these families perceived COVID-19 to have contributed in the number of child marriage cases.

Tafileh

Amongst the interviewed parents residing in Tafileh, almost 5% of which normalized child marriage, with the most impact on non-Jordanian families, standing at 15.4% of Egyptian families out of total non-Jordanian nor Syrian parents interviewed, and 14.5% of Syrian families, out of total interviewed Syrians, residing in Tafileh. Amongst the parents normalizing this risk, the educational level of parents is not considered a major factor, as again this perception was shared amongst illiterate parents and parents with high educational level alike. It is worth noting, that this perception was shared amongst parents in Tafileh of both male and female children.

Meanwhile, 2.9% of parents out of total interviewed parents with female children reported practicing child marriage if a decent man proposes to their female children; with the larger share amongst this perception amongst Syrian parents standing at 6.1% out of interviewed Syrian parents with female children. When measuring the spread of this risk across Tafileh, 23.6% of interviewed children reported knowing cases of child marriage, only third of which were consensual, whereas, two interviewed female Jordanian children in Tafileh reported being married, and perceived child marriage as an unacceptable practice, adding that the cons of this practice include conflicts, divorce, and yielding into dysfunctional families.

Which attributed that to family's awareness level and the customs and traditions normalizing girls to start a family at a premature age, while added that COVID-19 had no impact on the spread of this phenomenon in Tafileh. Followed by Jordanian parents standing at 2% out of total interviewed Jordanian parents with female children, where both married Jordanian children and parents attributed rooting for this practice due to mainly poverty and the traditions reflecting of the family's honor.

Karak

Out of interviewed parents residing in Karak, 4.5% of which perceived normalizing child marriage. The aforementioned was foreseen the most amongst Egyptians and Syrian parents, with shares of 20% and 14.9%, out of interviewed parents of these segments, along with variations in the educational level of these parents, including illiterate, secondary education and parents with higher education certificates.

Amongst parents whom reported having female children, only six reported marrying their daughters to a suitable guy, with the highest adoption amongst Syrians (6.1% of Syrian parents with female child), followed by Jordanians (2% out of interviewed Jordanians with female children). Whereas, the spread of this risk was reported to take place amongst 34.2% of children in Karak; fourth of which perceived the marriage was coercive and not by choice.

When investigating the factors associated with child marriage, Jordanian parents rooting for this practice attributed that to poverty and parents' low awareness level, while Syrians main driver was customs and traditions, followed by poverty and social pressure to marry female children. On the other hand, COVID-19 had zero impact on child marriage rates as perceived by parents rooting for this practice.

g) Psychological/Emotional Abuse

UNICEF defines psychological/emotional abuse as All forms of persistent harmful interactions with the child, for example, conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved, unwanted, endangered or only of value in meeting another's needs. Additionally, Scaring, terrorizing and threatening; exploiting and corrupting; spurning and rejecting; isolating, ignoring, favoritism, Insults, name-calling, humiliation, belittling, ridiculing and hurting a child's feelings. Along with Placement in solitary confinement, isolation or humiliating or degrading conditions of detention and the practicing of cyberbullying through information and communication technologies.⁵ Amongst interviewed parents, 37.8% reported their children physical or emotional safety being harmed; 50% of which reported the risk impacting their children to be psychological and emotional.

Financial difficulties, unemployment and stressors on the head of the household to support the family, along with the old school parenting style, which lacks building communication bridges and mandates the child to follow what the parent demand, were the main drivers behind the recurrence of this phenomenon, as reported by several informants operating in FJPD, school counselors, SDD, and CBOs, in the four governorates analyzed.

Aqaba

Amongst the interviewed parents in Aqaba, 10.1% reported their children being psychologically abused; 86% of which knew through their children informing them of the incidents, while the remaining reported knowing through school faculty reporting to them. This risk was foreseen to

have the major impact on Jordanian children; constituting 13% out of total interviewed Jordanian parents in that governorate. Meanwhile, parents' findings revealed that children in Aqaba of both gender are equally impacted by this risk.

Out of interviewed children in Aqaba, 3.1% reported their parents being aware of their psychological/emotional abuse, which were all female Jordanians. Of the three females reported being psychologically/emotionally abused; two reported being bullied by their parents, whereas only one of which benefitted from psychosocial support services.

Amongst parents of psychologically abused children, 40% reported seeking help from professionals or CBOs operational in child protection within their residency area, while 22.7% reported their children benefitting from psychosocial support services.

Ma'an

The share of parents reported their children being psychologically/emotionally abused stood at 4.6% out of total interviewed parents in Ma'an, all of which reported knowing through their children approaching them and opening up about this violation. The spread of this risk was noticed amongst females in Ma'an, to constitute a share of 6.2% out of interviewed parents with female children in Ma'an, additionally, the risk was associated with children of all nationalities, with the highest impact on non-Jordanian nor Syrians, where 7.7% of non-Jordanian nor Syrians reported their Yemeni child being emotionally harmed, while Jordanian children share stood at 5%. As per the Syrian children share whom reported being psychologically harmed, it amounted to 3.4% out of total interviewed Syrians in Ma'an.

In Ma'an, 2.2% of children reported their parents being aware of their psychological/emotional abuse, standing at two children out of total interviewed in that governorate, whom reported financial difficulties and lack of communication between family members as the main stressors in the family. Additionally, of the two children, one (female Syrian) reported not being able to share the risks facing her with her parents due to fear, indicating the psychosocial abuse is accompanied by physical abuse within the family.

"I am afraid if I tell my father he will hit me" a Syrian child stated.

It is worth noting, that none of the two female children whom been psychologically abused did seek help from professionals, nor were referred to psychological support.

Amongst parents whom reported their children being psychologically abused, 50% reported being aware of psychosocial support, whereas, only 16.7% of which reported their children benefitting from these services.

Tafleh

In terms of the spread of this phenomenon across Tafleh, 27.9% of parents out of total interviewed parents residing in that governorate reported their children being exposed to psychological/emotional abuse; 80.1% of which knew through their children, while the remaining

reported knowing through school faculty (teacher, staff or counselor) or witnessing the incident by their own eyes. This risk was correlated with male children more than females; constituting a share of 33.3% out of total interviewed parents with male children, while females share stood at 22.6%. On the other hand, Syrian children were reported to be the most impacted by this risk, standing at 40% out of total interviewed Syrians, followed by Jordanians with a share of 24.7% out of interviewed Jordanian parents in Tafileh, meanwhile, other children of other nationality whom been psychologically abused constituted a 23% share out of total non-Jordanian nor Syrians interviewed in that governorate.

Out of total interviewed children in Tafileh, 9.7% reported their parents knowing about their psychological/emotional abuse, with the majority of which being males standing at 13.8% out of total interviewed males in Tafileh and of the Jordanian nationality; constituting 16.7% out of interviewed Jordanians in Tafileh.

The lack of awareness of psychologically abused children and their parents of psychosocial and awareness sessions, along with not benefitting from the support services were foreseen by the majority of both children and parents, standing at only one child out of total seven abused children benefitting from these services, and a share of 6.8% out of parents with psychologically abused children.

Karak

Psychological/emotional abuse readings towards children were reported the most in Karak when compared with the remaining governorates analyzed, standing at a share of 31.6% of interviewed parents in Karak out of total parents residing in that governorate; 90.1% knew through their children while the remaining either saw the incident or it was reported to them through friends and neighbors. With this risk impacting both males and females in Karak, it was noticed that its major impact was amongst Syrians, constituting 34% out of interviewed Syrians in Karak, followed by Jordanians and other nationalities, with 31% and 30% respectively.

In Karak, 17.8% of interviewed children reported being psychologically abused and their parents being aware of the risk they encountered, with female children being impacted the most by this risk, standing at a share of 25.7% out of interviewed females in that governorate. Meanwhile, in terms of the vulnerable nationality subject to this risk, it was foreseen to be Jordanians with 18.5% out of total Jordanians interviewed, reported being psychologically abused, followed by Syrians; constituting 20% of interviewed Syrians in Karak.

The lack of awareness and access of psychosocial support services was foreseen high amongst psychologically abused children, where only 15% of which reported being aware of these services. Meanwhile, in terms of the accessibility rate associated with these services, only 6.5% of psychologically abused children in Karak reported seeking help from professionals or specialized CBOs in their areas, while 37.7% reported their emotionally abused children benefitting from psychosocial support services.

h) Physical Abuse/Violence

Physical abuse/violence is any punishment in which physical force is used and intends to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light in intensity⁵. The non-accidental harm in all of its forms leave the abused child psychologically and emotionally abused whether it was intentionally or as a result in an excessive punishment. Amongst all interviewed parents, 25.5% reported physical abuse occurring within their community.

Aqaba

Out of interviewed parents in Aqaba, 28% reported cases of physical abuse against children in their communities; 44.3% perceived it to take place in the households, 40.9% perceived violence to occur in school, and 27.9% to take place outside the households.

Amongst parents whom reported cases of violence occurring in the households within their communities, 63% attributed it to the financial difficulties encountering these families and head of households, 44.4% attributed that to lack of communication between parents and children, 40.7% perceived parents following this outdated approach in raising children, and 37% perceived it crucial in discipline and raising children. Meanwhile, 16% of which perceived COVID-19 to have impacted the spread of this risk due to financial and mental pressures on children and parents alike.

Amongst the interviewed children in Aqaba, 9.2% reported being familiar with physical abuse cases occurring within their community, standing at nine children; one Syrian male of which even reported being subject to physical abuse and added that children subject to physical abuse at the neighborhood. Meanwhile almost have of these children perceived physical abuse taking place at school, whom attributed that to lack of surveillance within school premises, followed by spending long hours at school with no activities filling in the time of children. While, 44.4% perceived this risk to take place in the neighborhood, and justified it to parent's negligence and the differences in children ages, backgrounds and nationalities. Meanwhile, only one child stated the occurrence of physical abuse within the household, due to parents following outdated parenting approaches.

From the perspective of parents whom reported cases of child violence at home within their communities, 50.8% of which reported the proper measure to alleviate this risk is spreading awareness amongst parents on the proper and modern parenting techniques, and strengthening the cooperation with the active organizations working in the scope of child protection, while, 13.1% stressed on implementing the bylaws and intensifying the sentences associated with violence against children. Meanwhile, 8.2% of parents' familiar with violence cases within their communities reported not being aware of the measure or the action to be taken to alleviate this risk.

⁵ UNICEF – National study on violence against children

In terms of the awareness level of children familiar with physical abuse cases in Aqaba of the entities and authorities serving abused children, it was foreseen descent standing at a share of 66.7%, whom reported the FJPD along with local organization (JRF) as the go to places when children physical health is encountered.

Ma'an

Amongst the interviewed parents in Ma'an, 21.2% reported cases of physical violence within their communities; 45.5% perceived it taking place outside the household like in the neighborhood or outside school, while 40% of which perceived it taking place in the household, meanwhile, 27.3% perceived it occurring within school borders. Parents whom reported cases of child violence from parents or family members attributed that to following outdated parenting approach (68.2%), followed by poverty and financial difficulties (59.1%), and lack of communication between parents and children (45.5%). On the other hand, 18.2% of these parents perceived COVID-19 to have an effect on the frequency of this risk, due to head of households losing their jobs and adopting violence as a stress relief.

On the other hand, 28.3% of interviewed children in Ma'an reported cases of physical abuse occurring within their communities; 46.2% of which perceived similar cases occurring in the neighborhood and attributed this behavior to racism where the larger groups pile up against the weaker, along with the differences in children ages, nationalities, tribes and backgrounds. While 34.6% stated that physical abuse is taking place at schools, emphasizing on children attempts to prove superiority through violence and racism which outcasts different member.

“Racism drives children at school to become extremely violence against anyone from outside their tribe” one Jordanian child said

Meanwhile 30% reported this risk occurring in the households and stated the driving factors to be the lack of communication between parents and children and the perception that violence is needed to establish discipline.

“Violence is needed while raising to establish discipline and I do not think we need to alleviate this risk” one male Jordanian child stated.

Parents familiar with child violence cases perceived the main action to be followed in eliminating this risk was spreading awareness on children rights and the risks they encounter, along with the proper parenting approach based on open communication rather than beating the child under the name of “upraising or parenting”, while few parents emphasized on the importance of these sessions prior to marriage, which qualifies the newlyweds on the fundamentals essential when establishing a family.

It is worth noting, that almost half of children whom reported cases of violence occurring within their communities reported not knowing where these cases shall resort seeking help; constituting

47.8%. Meanwhile, the remaining children stated the FJPD along with police precinct amongst the entities and authorities abused children can resort to in Ma'an.

Tafileh

In Tafileh, 20.2% of interviewed parents reported cases of physical abuse against children within their communities; 41.5% perceived violence occurring at school, while 37.7% perceived it in the neighborhood, and 30.2% to be inside the household. The majority of parents whom reported violence cases inside of homes within their community attributed this phenomenon to the lack of communication between parents and children, standing at 75%, followed by following outdated approach in upraising with 62.5%, meanwhile 56.3% attributed this risk to financial difficulties and the stress arising from poverty. Additionally, 75% of parents perceived COVID-19 to have influenced the frequency of this risk, due to lockdown forbidding parents from going to work and children attending school.

As per children perspectives on the spread of this risk within the local community, 26.4% of total interviewed children in Tafileh reported cases of physical abuse against children; over half of which perceived the occurrence of these cases in the neighborhood which was attributed to the variation in children ages, nationalities and financial statuses, along with the absence of surveillance. While 36.8% perceive it to take place at school and attributed that to the aforementioned reasons, while stressing on the risk of bullying and its role in escalating into physical abuse either by the bully or as a defense mechanism by the bullied, as reported by few children. Meanwhile, 31.6% of children reported cases within their local communities and perceived them occurring in the household, all of which attributed practicing this risk to the financial difficulties facing these households, followed by adopting outdated parenting approach and the lack of communication between parents and their children.

Parents familiar with cases of child violence at home perceived the role of awareness of the proper parenting approach and the role of communication between children and the parent along with the importance of psychosocial support services provided for abused children, to have a major role in alleviating this risk, whereas, one parent reported lack of need to take any measure against this risk.

"I do not think we need to alleviate this risk" one parent said.

On the other hand, the awareness level amongst children familiar with physical abuse cases remain humble and have plenty of room to grow, where it was reported absent by 36.8% of these children.

Karak

Out of total interviewed parents in Karak, 33.6% reported cases of child physical abuse occurring within their community; 45.1% perceived it occurring outside the household, and 34.1%

perceived it at school, meanwhile, 28% perceived violence at households. Amongst the parents reported violence cases within their communities taking place inside of households, 78.3% attributed it to financial difficulties, while 39.1% attributed this phenomenon to following outdated parenting approach, and 30.4% attributed it to the perception that physical abuse is crucial in establishing discipline or as known as corporal punishment.

Meanwhile, this risk was the most reported in Karak amongst children when compared with the remaining governorates in the south, standing at a share of 47.9% of interviewed children reported cases of violence taking place within their communities; six children of which reported being physically abused. Where, the highest share reported it taking place at school, with 45.7% out of total children reporting such cases in their community, followed by violence in the neighborhood and the household, alike, standing at 28.6% each, due to the lack of surveillance in the neighborhood, and the perception amongst children that whomever uses physical abuse against children, was physically abused while growing up. This risk was foreseen impacting both genders in Karak, where physical abuse does not distinguish between male or female child, while in terms of nationality all cases reported were associated with Jordanian children, excluding one Egyptian case; only one of these cases reported occurrence of violence in the household, while the majority stated that violence takes place at school.

It was worth noting that, almost 50% of children whom reported violence cases occurring within the local communities in Karak were unaware of any entity or authority an abused child can refer to in Karak, as per the remaining share whom reported being familiar with such entities stated police precinct and FJPD as the solo examples off entities/authorities offering help for abused children in Karak.

Improving National Systems and Programs Through Strengthening Linkages Between Sectors

The majority of interviewees operating in the child protection sector reported low awareness level in the Jordanian regulations, Standard Operating Procedures and best practices. Additionally, several individuals highlighted the lack of knowledge within local CBOs, in Karak and Tafileh, in particular, which was attributed to the lack of interest and follow up from the concerned parties within the organization, along with the inconsistency with the CBOs goals which can be seeking personal profit under the umbrella of operating as a community based organization, according to an expert operating in governmental entity in Tafileh.

On the other hand, an NGO worker reported that awareness level of the current regulations and SOPs is considered irrelevant, as providing support and assistance is driven from humanitarian aspects rather than it being purely correlated with the mandatory regulations and bylaws.

Supporting and strengthening national systems, SOPs and programs was reported to be adopted amongst all stakeholders, in which the current Jordanian legislations and bylaws support its implementation. Nevertheless, linkages between sectors and key players are foreseen in need of further nourishing and strengthening.

The SDD praised the linkages with the Public Security Directorate, in which when a case encountered proved physical abuse over children, the directorate immediately refer the case to the FJPD. On the other hand, the SDD in Tafileh perceived the lack of linkages between sectors and the key players within the governorate. It is worth noting, that in Tafileh a local CBO perceived strengthening the bonds and linkages between sectors shall be based on the constant communication and prompt responses and intervention when foreseen needed and intensifying efforts on a national and regional levels to put an end to the risks facing children within their residency areas.

In Tafileh, the FJPD condemns the role of the CBOs in Tafileh, and added that their role is insufficient requesting strengthening the linkages between CBOs and the partnering NGOs and UN agencies. Meanwhile, several NGOs operating in Ma'an reported facing a set-back associated with Syrian refugees, in which were foreseen to be nomadic, switching their residency area during summer and winter, in order to adapt with the weather and the job opportunities, open during each season. It is worth noting that the aforementioned can be overcome by adopting constant follow-up with the cases and spreading awareness amongst parents on the measures to be followed when facing any case of child protection violation, and the service providers within their residency area and the adjacent governorates.

Meanwhile, a school counsellor indicated distributing surveys over students on a monthly basis; entitled "Towards safe school environment", in which the survey tackles all forms of abuse, then the results are directly interlinked with the concerned ministries, to guarantee prompt response from all the concerned stakeholders.

Conclusion and Recommendations

According to interviewed parents in Aqaba, Ma'an, and Tafileh, the major risk impacting children protection is exposure to technology, which have impacts on their mental health. Meanwhile, interviewed parents in Karak reported bullying as the most recurrent risk facing children residing there.

In Tafileh and Aqaba, parents reported exposure to technology as the most recurrent risk when compared with the remaining risks analyzed in each of the two governorates, followed by bullying, while the risk of child labor came after, as reported by parents residing in Tafileh and Aqaba. Parents residing in Karak reported the major three risks facing children were bullying, followed by exposure to technology, and child labor, whereas, in Ma'an, interviewed parents reported exposure to technology as the number one risk facing children due to the high number of cases reported there, followed by child labor, and bullying.

Adolescents in Ma'an, Karak, and Tafileh, reported the risk of child labor as the main risk occurring against children in these governorates. Meanwhile, the reported cases of child marriage were the highest in Aqaba, when compared with the remaining governorates.

In Ma'an, the most recurrent risk was reported to be child labor, followed by child marriage and third came physical abuse. While in Aqaba, child marriage came first with the highest number of cases indicating its spread, followed by bullying, and child labor. Child labor was reported the major risk in Tafileh standing at the highest number of cases indicating its occurrence when compared with the remaining analyzed risks, followed by bullying and violence against children.

Whereas, child labor cases were reported the highest in Karak, when compared with the remaining risks analyzed. Violence cases against children came second, and bullying followed in the same governorate.

This section highlights the major recommendations associated with the study, which were driven by the needs of the surveyed segments and the key informants operating in the child protection domain.

- **Hosting awareness sessions on the proper parenting methods**, which aims at shorten the gap between parents and children.
- **Establishing prevention hubs dedicated to bullying, violence and psychological abuse**, which specialized experts can offer tailored plans and guidance to families which children exposed of bullying or accused of being a bully. These hubs will grant outreach amongst wide variety of society slices whom are digitally literate.

- **Spreading the word amongst parents, head of households and caregivers of children rights**, and governing the safety of children by limiting the improper use of authority by decision makers through adopting child labour and child/underage marriage practices.
- **Spreading awareness amongst the citizens and residents within the understudy governorates on the available channels** associated with reporting a violation of child protection case, and the locations of these service providers, through using unorthodox means, including celebrity endorsement, as it has proven to be both impactful and efficient. Additionally, raising awareness on the name of the service provider, in addition to the bundle of services provided by each.
- **Eliminating the misperception associated with the social norms and the “Taboo” or the cultural prohibition**, which forbids parents and children alike to acknowledge the occurrence of child protection cases and obtain help from service providers across the Southern region of the kingdom.
- **The incorporation of all child protection key players’ representatives in the rulemaking process**, and activating their roles in drafting and reviewing the policies and procedures associated with children safety and protection.
- **Focusing on the drivers behind child protection violations in order to eliminate these cases**, in which it was foreseen the proportional correlation with the recurrence of these cases as reported by experts in the child protection and the financial status of the household. Through the reinforcement of the Social Development Directorate and the NGOs’ initiatives in supporting families through conducting thorough case study of the family and provide them with financial aid or job opportunities to help enhance their economic status.
- **Offering incentives in exchange of transportation for parents and caregivers whom attending the awareness sessions** on child protection issues in the analysed governorates, and for those whom reside outside the centre of the governorate in particular, as it was reported by several experts that the financial setbacks and the long distance between some provinces and the centre of the governorate as the main drivers behind the low attendance rate of the hosted awareness sessions.
- **Rooting for partnerships with UN agencies, NGOs, governmental and educational institutes and the private sector**, to offer the needed support in providing a descent venue for hosting the awareness sessions.
- It was foreseen that the governmental bodies represented by the FJPDs in Ma’an and Tafileh, alike, lack the needed manpower for serving beneficiaries, including: full time psychiatric, and forensic paediatrician. In which it was reported to be on duty only one day a week in the two governorates. Therefore, **providing these entities with the needed manpower to execute their job efficiently**.
- **Devising drug use prevention programs across all the kingdom’s governorates**, as this matter is not limited to the four governorates analyzed, on the contrary, it was reported

to be spreading across the kingdom. Additionally, eliminate the cultural prohibition associated with substance abuse and shedding the light on its impacts which can extent to committing murders similar to the case in Jafer-Ma'an, in which an addict father slaughtered two of his daughters, aged 4 and 3 years.

- **Establishing more child and adolescents care centres in order to be accessible** and contain all the cases which are ordered to be admitted in care centres by the judge, and selecting a proper geographical location for the centre, especially in Ma'an where it spans the largest area across all the kingdom's governorates.
- **Shedding the light on the psychological and emotional abuse, its patterns, and impacts on children.** According to the study, bullying and emotional abuse were amongst the most recurrent risks facing children in the analysed governorates, and their impacts reflect on children mental development, and the chronic exposure to these risks can cause children to be depressed, traumatized, isolated, and even suicidal. Therefore, parents, schools and the community, alike shall be keen on normalizing and popularizing mental health care by seeking emotional and psychiatric support when needed. Along with seeking guidance and support from specialized service providers rather than strictly escalating the issue to siblings and parents.
- **Increasing the awareness level amongst the key players in the national child protection system and the legislations and bylaws governing the protection of children and adolescents,** was perceived low, specifically amongst local CBOs based in Tafileh and Karak in particular, and amongst school faculty and counsellors.
- **Strengthening the outreach of UN and both local and international NGOs through collaborating with local CBOs,** in which it was reported that both Ma'an and Tafileh suffer from the lack of physical presence of these organizations, which were reported to operate from adjacent governorates similar to Aqaba and Karak, and the kingdom's capital Amman.
- **Creating job opportunities by focusing on the value of the vocational training amongst all nationalities as a career accelerator,** along with the ability to join the workforce in short to no time, and its current state being currently unsaturated and in Europe in particular, which will reduce the impact of COVID-19 on the unemployment rates in the kingdom and across the globe.
- **Enhancing and amending the penalties associated with child employment,** where according to the national Jordanian Labor Law in its 73 article associated with the employment of a minor, which incriminates the head of the business of a minimum fine of JD 300, and a cap of JD 500, under the direction of the law's 77 article⁶. Increasing the surveillance over child employment by the Ministry of Labor inspectors and amend the penalties and fines' mechanism, as it has been proven to be insufficient in order to eliminate the risk of child labor.

⁶ The Jordanian Labor Law

Situational Analysis of Child Protection Concerns and the Causes as Perceived by
Community Actors in the Southern Region of Jordan-UNOCHA

