

Share-Net
Jordan

The Knowledge Platform on
Sexual and Reproductive Health
and Reproductive Rights



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The Knowledge Platform on
Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights



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Preamble:

We at Share-Net Jordan Hub/The Higher Population Council are pleased to release the Fourteenth issue of the Quarterly Newsletter for Share-Net Jordan for the fourth quarter of 2019, which falls within framework of informing researchers, decision makers, policymakers, program developers, service providers, and research authorities informed and aware of local and global updates in the field of Reproductive Health.

This quarter has witnessed various activities, the most prominent of which was the participation in "The International Conference on Population and Development ICPD + 25 - Acceleration of Promise which was held in Nairobi, capital of the Republic of Kenya during the period (12-14 November 2019). Another prominent activity was the participation in The First International Conference-Co-creation on Sexual and Reproductive Health title:"Engaging in Knowledge Translation Together ", organized by Share-Net International from October 8th to 10th,2019 in Amsterdam.

Furthermore, another prominent activity was taking part in the signing ceremony" project agreement entitled "You have the right to choose

and demand your rights" implemented by the King Hussein Foundation through the Institute for Family Health Care and the Foundation's Studies and Research Center, funded by the Dutch embassy, in partnership with the I Am Human Society and in cooperation with the National Council for Family Affairs, the Higher Population Council, and the Jordanian National Commission for Women, in addition to civil society institutions and a number of activists in the field of women's rights.

This quarter has also witnessed various events, most notably, the preparation of the National Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health 2020-2024, in addition to holding several workshops aimed to raise awareness about the National Standards for Sexual and Reproductive Health Friendly Services for Youth.

First: Studies and Research

- **Preparing a study entitled 'Mapping Awareness Programs in the Field of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights (SRH & RR) for Adolescents and the Youth in Jordan'.**

Share-Net Jordan Hub/ The Higher Population Council have completed the study funded by

Share-Net International. An approach relying on several methods for data collection was adopted in the implementation of the study, including focused interviews with those concerned with providing awareness services relating to sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive rights issues for the youth in Governmental institutions and organizations, civil society institutions and international institutions, In addition to focused discussion sessions with the targeted group of youth in the three regions, reinforced by a questionnaire provided to the participants before the start of the sessions, The study also included a review of the means used in the awareness programs and identify the gaps that are holding the back. The results of this study are expected to be launched in early 2020.

• **Preparing a Five-year Strategy for National Sexual and Reproductive Health (2020-2024)**

The Higher Population Council has finalized preparing the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy for the next five years (2020-2024) funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The strategy aimed at providing an appropriate and supportive environment for sexual and reproductive health issues that achieve access to the population opportunity and

contribute to the well-being of citizens. This strategy was developed through the adoption of a participatory approach involving (27) concerned governmental and non-governmental institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector, and relevant scientific and research institutions and donors working in the field of Sexual Health and Reproductive issues in Jordan in several workshops. This strategy was constructed on four main components; each component has its inputs, outputs and results. The components and their outcomes were as follows:

1. The Possible Environment Component: The expected result: "supportive and possible legislations and policies for integrated reproductive and sexual health issues".

2. The Services and Information Component: The expected result: Inclusive and integrated quality Reproductive and Sexual Health information and services for all citizens (individuals) throughout the kingdom

3. The Community Component: The expected result: "Positive societal attitudes, beliefs and behaviors towards Reproductive and Sexual Health issues."

4. The Sustainability and Governance Component: The expected result: Integrated and sustainable Reproductive and Sexual Health

services and information through the establishment of effective sectoral partnerships”.

A specialized workshop was held on 24/12/2019 in aims of presenting the inputs, outputs and outcomes of the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and measurement indicators. Present in the workshop were representatives of government institutions, civil society institutions and relevant international institutions.

The inputs, outputs and outcomes are expected to influence the desired outcome of the strategy, which is the inclusive availability of integrated Reproductive and Sexual Health services and information that contribute to achieving the well-being of families in Jordan.

• The Study and Policy Brief “Trends in Total Fertility Levels in Jordan: Variations and Determinants at the National Level and Governorates basis of Population and Family Health Surveys” .

The Higher Population Council has completed the preparation of the study funded by UNFPA. One of the most prominent aspects of the study was the examination of the relationship between women's empowerment and reproductive rights; the study measured the degree of women's empowerment through two indicators: The first

indicator is the number of reasons a woman believes that her husband is entitled to hitting her, and the second indicator is the number of family decisions in which the wife is involved. The results indicated a relationship between the first indicator and the ability of women to exercise their reproductive rights; the higher the degree of their empowerment according to this indicator is, the greater the percentage of those who participate in making all family decisions, which, in return, contributes to increasing the proportion of those who use the traditional and modern family planning methods. The aforementioned leads decreasing the percentage of women encountering unmet needs, which leads to decreasing the average of the ideal number of children.

Moreover, a clear relationship can be detected between the second empowerment index and the exercise of reproductive rights; the more the number of family decisions in which women participate, the greater the proportion of those who use traditional and modern family planning methods among them is, which leads to decreasing the percentage of women encountering unmet needs, and, in return, decreasing the average of the ideal number of children. Furthermore, corresponding statistics derived from the 2012 Population and Family Health Survey indicate relationships

between indicators of women's empowerment and their practice of their needs and reproductive rights, which is broadly similar to those shown in the 2017/18 survey.

• Publishing the thirteenth issue of the Knowledge Platform for Sexual and Reproductive Health Research

The issue includes the achievements Share-Net Jordan Project for the third quarter of 2019; the issue it was uploaded to the website of the Knowledge Platform on Reproductive Health - Jordan

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

Second: Holding or Participating in Local and International Meetings, Seminars, Workshops and Conferences.

• Follow-up Workshop on the Participatory Approach to Address the Issue of Child Marriages in Jordan

On October 22, 2019, Share-Net Jordan Hub/The Higher Population Council held a workshop on employing a participatory approach in addressing the issue of child marriage in Jordan, which comes as a continuation of the series of workshops previously held within the framework of building national capacities to generalize the participatory approach in dealing with societal

issues. This workshop was funded by Share-Net International, with the participation of (36) representatives of national authorities and civil society institutions. The workshop aimed at discussing the achievements in the field of addressing child marriage in Jordan based on the outputs of previous workshops held in this framework. (12) Institutions presented their experiences, including the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, the Ministry of Development, the Ministry of Youth, the Department of Statistics, the Royal Medical Services, the National Women's Health Care Center, the Institute for Family Health, the Jordanian National Commission for Women, UNRWA, the Jordan Association for Family Planning and Protection, Jordan Health Aid Society and Save the Children. The Higher Population Council also reviewed the national plan to implement the recommendations of the child marriage study.



The workshop agenda included lectures aimed at building partners' capabilities of in the concept of multilateral partnerships, its applications and

tools for knowledge dissemination. In the conclusion of the workshop, the pursuant steps for the continuation of the participatory approach as activities for 2020 were agreed upon.

• **A Workshop for Launching the National Action Plan to Implement the Recommendations of the “Child Marriage” Study to Reduce the Marriage of those under 18 years of Age in Jordan.**

On October 31, 2019 Share Net Jordan Hub/The Higher Population Council in cooperation with the National Council for Family Affairs, launched a National Action Plan for the implementation of the Child Marriage study recommendations in aims of limiting the marriage of children under the age of 18 in Jordan for the years 2018-2022. 100 participants attended this meeting from concerned stakeholder, the workshop was funded by Share-Net International.

The Action Plan aimed at providing a practical framework that includes procedural instructions and guidance to facilitate the transition from a theoretical aspect to a practical application to reduce the marriage rates of those under the age of 18 in Jordan. The plan also aimed at activating the partnership and cooperation principles amongst civil society institutions, international organizations and government agencies to define

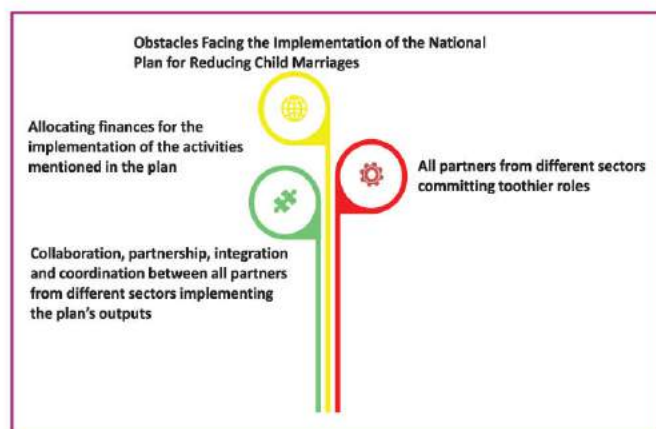
their respective roles in this field. Furthermore, the plan aimed driving the aforementioned institutions and agencies to adopt the plans' main components as a research launch platform and a



basis for the evaluation and review processes governed by quantitative and qualitative indicators, facilitating the processes of follow-up and evaluation of the activities and efforts, and facilitating the attraction of international and local funding to implement the activities and programs emanating from the plan.

The Action Plan identified a set of results to be achieved; the desired results were in the form of legislation to support the reduction of child marriage, in addition to making available health and psychological services to support the affected cases. The desired results also included and the implementation of programs to reduce the marriage rates of those under the age of 18, and positively changing the beliefs and behaviors of society members towards child marriage.

Achieving the desired results can only be accomplished by overcoming a various number of challenges; the most notable of which are depicted in the figure.



The workshop included a number of speeches in support of reducing the marriage rates of those under the age of 18. Her Excellency, Representative Wafaa Bani Mustafa, who stressed the need to eliminate this issue with the concert of all national efforts and Her Excellency, Dr. Salma Al-Nems, Secretary General of the National Commission for Women.

• **A Workshop on Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness for Educational Supervisors, Counselors and Biology Teachers of Elementary and Secondary Stages in the Ministry of Education**

In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Share-Net Jordan Hub/ The Higher Population Council held on November 4, 2019 a workshop

on Sexual and Reproductive Health awareness and its related social and religious aspects, funded by the Share-Net International. (55) Educational supervisors, counselors and Ministry of Education Biology teachers in the Central Region attended the workshop. Five qualified, professional lecturers who hold educational qualifications in Educational Supervision, Religion, Medicine, and Educational Communication Methods conducted the lectures. The lectures covered the following topics:

1. Recognizing the current state of Sexual and Reproductive Health, and the future aspirations for the Ministry of Education's curricula.
2. Reproductive and Sexual Health for students and the youth and its constraints.
3. Communication and outreach mechanisms for students and the youth for raising awareness regarding Sexual and Reproductive Health issues.
4. Mechanisms for improving community system, as programs or barriers, in order for students to receive information regarding Sexual and Reproductive Health.



5. The religious context in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health education for students and the youth.

This workshop came as an effort to enhance the role of teachers and the educational supervisors in managing Sexual and Reproductive Health issues facing students and the youth.

• **Workshopsto Raise Awareness about the National Standards for Sexual and Reproductive Health Friendly Services for Youth.**

In cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Share-Net Jordan Hub / The Higher Population Council implemented a series of introductory workshops funded by Share-Net International on the National Standards for **Sexual and Reproductive Health Friendly Services for Youth**. The workshops targeted family medicine physicians, doctors and legal midwives in the Ministry of Health' Child and Maternity Directories in Southern, Central and Northern governorates. (25) Participants took part in the workshop held for the Central Region on October 17, 2019, and (24) participants took part in the workshop held for the Southern Region on 1/12/2019, while (24) participated in the workshop held for the Northern Region on 4/12/2019.

Furthermore, Share-Net and the Higher Popula-

tion Council carried out a workshop devoted to the staff and employees in the health, social and youth sectors working with the Syrian youth in Zaatari Refugee Camp on 25/9/2019, and (25) participants attended the workshop.

These workshops aim to familiarize the participants with the National Standards for Sexual and Reproductive Health Friendly Services for Youth- that take into account the sensitivity of local culture and religious values, in addition to developing the necessary mechanisms for the implementation of these standards within concerned institutions.

The workshops covered topics related to Sexual and Reproductive Health and its components, what is meant by Youth-Friendly Sexual and Reproductive Health services in Jordan, the youth's need for Sexual and Reproductive Health services, the current challenges facing the provision of these services, in addition to the goal of the document of National Standards for Youth-friendly Reproductive Health Services. The workshops also discussed the beneficiaries of the National Standards for Youth-friendly Reproductive Health Services, the principles of providing Youth-Friendly Reproductive Health Services, and the definition of National Standards for

Sexual and Reproductive Health Friendly Services for Youth, as depicted in the figure below.



This series of workshops coms as a response to Council of Ministers’ approval of National Standards for Sexual and Reproductive Health in 2018. The Council of Ministers assigned the Higher Population Council to work with the Ministry of Health to utilize the centers and clinics in the field of training, rehabilitation, and education on Sexual and Reproductive Health services programs for the youth.



Annual Meeting of the Members of Share net Jordan.



Share-Net Jordan Hub / The Higher Population Council held, on November 7, 2019, the Annual Meeting of the project members, which was funded by Share-Net International. Fifty five members participating in the event represent the various national public, private, international organizations and relevant academic institutions. The meeting aimed at informing the Share-Net Jordan project members of the project achievements for the year 2019, and its annual plan for 2020. The meeting also discussed the outcomes of the recent conference held in the Netherlands on the topic of Infertility and the components of Reproductive and Sexual Health Rights in Fragile Situations/ Emergency and Conflict Situations.

The meeting also discussed the idea of establishing a "Cochrane Jordan" for Health and Social aspects, which will be one of the centers worldwide under the umbrella of the Cochrane International Foundation.

This concept could contribute to the development of several areas, most notably, building and developing research and academic relationships with relevant institutions in Jordan and countries, Arab and International.

Ali Al-Metlaq, the Project coordinator of Share-Net Jordan/ Director of the Studies and Policies Unit at the Higher Population Council, reviewed the most notable achievements of the project during the year 2019 and its future aspirations. He noted that the Higher Population Council implemented a number of round table meetings and training courses in partnership with the project in aims of building the capabilities of partners. He also highlighted updating the website of the Knowledge Platform on Reproductive Health, which aims to provide a comprehensive base for studies and research related to population and development issues including Reproductive Health/ Family Planning in both languages, Arabic and English.

The Higher Population Council is the incubator of the Knowledge Platform for Reproductive Health project in Jordan, which is being implemented since 2016 and continues to the year 2024. Furthermore, the Higher Population Council is the national contact, through which Share-Net International implements its activities in Jordan,

• Participating in the First International Conference - Co-creation Conference title: "Engaging in Knowledge Translation Together"

Share-Net Jordan attended the first international conference Co-creation Conference on Sexual and Reproductive Health, organized by Share-Net International and under the main theme: "Engaging Together in Knowledge Translation" from 8 to 10 October in Amsterdam. Share-Net Jordan also participated in the Share-Net annual meeting organized by Share-Net International on 11/10/2019.

This conference focused specifically on two tracks: *"Breaking the silence around infertility"* and *"Access to quality sexual and reproductive health services for people affected by conflict, fragility or crisis"*. A narrative review was conducted in advance for each track and deliberative dialogues were also organized beforehand to identify the priority areas of intervention and the type of knowledge products that will be developed during the conference.

In aims of enhancing its participation efforts, Share-Net Jordan formed local teams for each conference topic, and each team consisted of concerned members who wish to participate in the local Community of Practices. The local (CoP) for Infertility included 14 members of

experts in this field. As for the second topic, SRHR in fragile/ emergency conflict situations, its CoP included 20 members. Share-Net Jordan prepared two reports; one regarding infertility in Jordan, and the second was a desk review of the topic of SRH & RR in Fragile/ Emergency Situations. Furthermore, an expert from each team participated in the conference, in addition to an expert as a Policy Maker and Coordinator of the Share-Net Jordan project.

At the end of the conference, 18 knowledge products were developed on the two themes. These knowledge products included articles, fact sheet, policy brief, Evidence review, campaign toolkit, videos, lesson plans, concept notes, checklists, project designs and training kits, etc.

• **Participating in the Regional Workshop on Using Census Data for Development Planning and Scientific Research Purposes in Arab Countries**



Mr. Ali Al-Metlaq, Director of Studies and Policies Unit and the Share-Net Jordan Project

Coordinator, participated in a regional workshop organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in cooperation with the High Commission for Planning in the Kingdom of Morocco, and the regional office of the United Nations Population Fund for Arab Countries, on the use of census data for Development Planning and Scientific Research purposes in Arab countries. The workshop was held in the city of Rabat, on October 1 to 3, 2019.

The workshop aimed at reviewing the multiple ways of disseminating census data and its uses in development planning. It also aimed at highlighting the importance of communication between data producers and users and the role of population and housing censuses in providing indicators for the 2030 sustainable development agenda, and discussed the use of processed individual census data in research and planning processes. Moreover, two presentations were conducted in this workshop; the first presentation was on subject of the Jordanian experience in the use of population projections in determining needs and building sectoral plans, and the second presentation was on the use of census data in monitoring the numbers and characteristics of Syrian Refugees in Jordan.

• **Participating in the “International Conference on Population and Development + 25 – Accelerating the Promise”**



An official Jordanian delegation headed by the Secretary-General of the Higher Population Council, Dr. Abla Amawi, and representatives of the Higher Population Council and government agencies, the House of Representatives and Senate, Youth Organizations, Civil Society organizations and Media Institutions, participated in the Nairobi Summit, “The International Conference on Population and Development + 25 - Accelerating the Promise” held in Nairobi, the capital The Republic of Kenya during the period (12-14 November 2019). The summit aimed at obtaining countries’ commitments to ending preventable maternal deaths, eliminating unmet needs for modern contraceptives, ending gender-based violence, reducing child marriage, and reducing female genital mutilation.

During the summit, the delegation presented Jordan's position paper, containing Jordan's achievements in the field of the most prominent global commitments addressed by the Nairobi Summit based on the agenda of the International Conference on Population and Development 1994, emanating from the consultations previously implemented by the Higher Population Council with the relevant authorities at the national and local levels.

During a specialized session within the conference activities, the head of the delegation, Secretary General of the Higher Population Council, Dr. Abla Amawi delivered a lecture on “Integrating Sustainable Development Goals into Planning and Budgeting Frameworks at the Local Level”.



• **A follow-up Workshop on Jordanian Studies in the Field of Sexual and Reproductive Health Funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research and Share-Net International**

Share-Net Jordan held the workshop on 12/12/2019, with the participation of (65) concerned governmental institutions, research centers, governmental and private universities, civil society and relevant international institutions. This workshop aimed at exchanging the acquired knowledge in the use of sexual and reproductive health study results in policies and practices with relevant authorities (Practitioners/ Policy makers), in addition to providing the opportunity for participants to:

- See the progress of Jordanian studies funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research and make recommendations regarding topics of policy briefs based on the results of these studies.
- Building participants' capacities in preparing policy briefs.
- Determining what has been implemented of the recommendations of six Jordanian studies funded by Share-Net International, the obstacles that hinder their implementation and providing recommendations to overcome such obstacles.



• Discussion Sessions on the importance of obtaining Sexual and Reproductive Health Information and Services by Adolescents and the Youth.

The First Session, held on: 17/12/2019

Share-Net Jordan held this session, which was funded by Share-Net International, for (70) participants of university students and faculty members, with the aim of raising awareness regarding the importance of Sexual and Reproductive Health information and services for youth and adolescents. The speakers in this session were the following:

- Director of the Family Protection Department, who talked about the abuse occurring as a result of the lack of awareness among teenagers, youth and parents regarding this issue.
- A faculty member in the College of Nursing, who talked about the importance of this subject regarding health, and the consequences that might be inflicted on families.
- A Mufti from the Department of General Fatwa has talked about the religious aspect of the subject.
- A Cybercrime Specialist, who talked about the risks to which the youth are exposed as a result of relying on informal sources in the area of sexual and reproductive health.

During this session an exercise was played to enhance the principle of complementarity in providing reproductive health information and services among the institutions concerned. Where a painting was drawn was drawn representing a youth-friendly clinic.

The board was converted to a puzzle, and we asked the attendees to install the puzzle cards to obtain a complete board that expresses the idea and promotes the principle of complementarity by working to reach quality services.



The Second Session, held on: 18/12/2019

Share-Net Jordan held this session, which was funded by Share-Net International, on the importance of obtaining Sexual and Reproductive Health information and services for youth and adolescents in cooperation with the National Center for Culture and Arts. (70) Participants, university students and faculty members, were present. The play entitled "Mesh 'Eieb" was performed with the aim of highlighting the

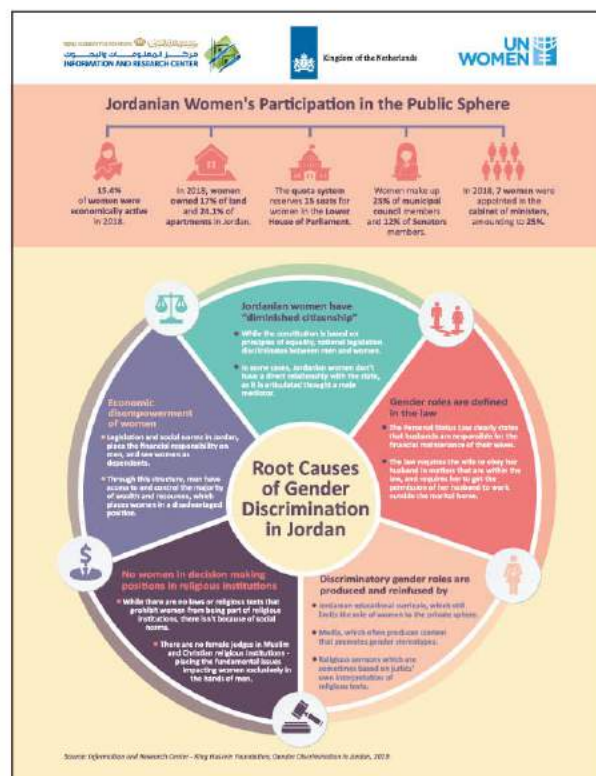
importance of receiving sexual and reproductive health information and services from qualified health personnel.

Fourth: Sustainability of the Electronic Knowledge Platform

The research base of the Knowledge Platform's website was sustained through four research studies on the field of sexual; and reproductive health.

Fifth: The Latest Reports and Newsletters on Population Issues

The Study of Gender-Based Discrimination in Jordan, 2019.



The study was prepared by the United Nations Women and the Information and Research Center - King Hussein Foundation.

It is supported by the Government of the Netherlands in the framework of the project "From principle to practice: Understanding stereotypes that discriminate against women and pave the way for policy reform". You can refer to this study through the following link:

<http://haqqi.info/en/haqqi/research/gender-discrimination-jordan>

This study aimed at investigating the root causes of inequality between men and women in Jordan and the extent to which patriarchy is rooted in national legislation and government and community-based executive practices. This study is based on a comprehensive review of the literature and legislations relevant to the subject, in addition to 15 in-depth interviews with experts.

The study indicated the existence of several root causes of gender inequality in Jordan as shown in the figure:

1. There is a great disconnect between rights granted by the Constitution and rights and responsibilities found in various national laws.
2. Jordanian women have 'diminished' citizenship as Jordanian women cannot pass their nationality to their children.

3. Patrilineal citizenship structures and the emphasis of family as the single most important unit in society impacts the wellbeing of citizens who do not fall within this traditional structure.

4. Several Jordanian laws, including the Nationality Law and the Penal Code are derived from colonial institutions of law that date back to the 19th century and heavily revolve around the notions of paternity and patrilineality.

5. The Personal Status Law is based on interpretation by religious jurists who were guided by the gender assumptions that reflected the social, political and normative values of their time.

6. The Personal Status Law maintains the traditional role of women in the domestic sphere as wives and caretakers.

7. The marriage contract is the only tool through which a woman can protect her constitutional rights.

8. As the Personal Status Law is based on religion, it is highly dependent on the interpretations of religious institutions. Those who work in religious institutions such as the Shari'a courts, the General Iftaa Department and the Supreme Judge Department are predominantly male. And the same is true for ecclesiastical courts that regulate personal status matters for the Christian communities.

9. Patrilineal citizenship structures result in the production of gender roles in society. For years, the Jordanian society has been based on rigid and traditional gender roles that place a higher value on women's reproductive roles.

10. Gender roles are reinforced and reinfused through several mechanisms and as a result, citizens become socialized into thinking that these discriminatory practices and beliefs are the norm as they become part of the everyday narrative and practice.

11. Legislation and social norms in Jordan, place the financial responsibility on men, and see women as dependents. Through this structure, men have access to and control the majority of wealth and resources, which places women in a disadvantaged position.

12. Patriarchy in the self: gender discrimination is heavily ingrained in the Jordanian political, religious, social, and economic systems.

The study resulted in a set of recommendations to policymakers that aim at achieving and promote equality between men and women in Jordan. The following are the most prominent recommendations:

1. Amend Article 6(i) of the Constitution – by adding the word 'sex' - in order to clearly denounce and prohibit gender-based discrimination.

2. Amend the Nationality Law, while taking into consideration practices of other countries from the region that have successfully amended their nationality laws, to ensure equality between women and men and to enable Jordanian women to pass their nationality on to their children and spouses.

3. Associate relevant family information to national ID numbers, hence eliminating the need for a separate family registry book.

4. Remove the articles in the Civil Status Law that define the head of the household.

5. Reform the Penal Code to remove all articles relating to the concept of honor and family honor.

6. Amend the Personal Status Law.

7. Further review the national educational curricula to:

- Ensure that men and women are equally represented.
- Remove all gender stereotypes relating to the role of men and women in the private and public spheres.
- Include material with relevant examples on gender equality and women's rights as part of human rights.
- Equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to be critical of discriminatory social norms.