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# Causes and consequences of child marriage among Syrian refugee populations in Jordan: An investigation of perceptions.

Alex Buckman  
*SIT Study Abroad*

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Causes and consequences of child marriage among Syrian refugee populations in Jordan: An investigation of perceptions.

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**Abstract:**

This study examined the perceived causes of child marriage among Syrian refugee populations in Jordan and investigated its perceived consequences. Further, perceptions of mothers with school-aged children were compared to the opinions of children themselves. Through interviews with both target populations, along with an analysis of the responses of humanitarian activists and organizations to Jordan's marriage law, the reality of child marriage within the country was ascertained. In conducting interviews, the data showed that many believed child marriage to be a normal occurrence in Syria, at least since the beginning of the war, with only two interviewees believing child marriage to also be normal in Jordan. Instead of attributing this as a purely cultural difference, many of the interviewees claimed dire financial circumstances, as well as a desire for overall security, to be the reasons why many marry early.

Over 700 million women around the world have been married before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2014b). Jordan is no exception to this global issue: on a national level, child marriage occurs at a rate of 8%; however, almost one-third (32%) of marriages within the Syrian refugee population in Jordan are with a girl under the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2014a). In order to stop child marriage, refugee mothers advocated for increased education initiatives and raising awareness, while children proposed eradicating poverty. Many activists and legal organizations cited the need to close loopholes in the current law and create a system to foster greater accountability. Further, this study illustrated the need for increased attention to the long-term effects forced displacement and protracted conflicts can have on livelihoods.

*Keywords: Sociology, child marriage, refugees, individual and family studies, displacement, law.*

**Introduction:**

As an undergraduate student majoring in political science and international affairs and minoring in Middle East Studies, studying abroad in Jordan was an easy choice. A great many social issues capture my attentions; however, those that affect the rights and livelihoods of women and children engender my particular interest. Given the large role Jordan has played in the Syrian refugee crisis, and knowing that around 80% of those refugees are women and children, I jumped at the chance to participate in SIT Jordan's Refugees, Health, and Humanitarian Action study abroad program (UNHCR, 2017). After learning about the realities of the crisis in Jordan, I felt the need to further explore child marriage within this unique context. While it is universally acknowledged that child marriage affects persons of all genders, this research will focus specifically on girls.

***I. Syrian Refugee Crisis in Jordan***

Since the start of the civil war in Syria in 2011, refugees have been pouring into neighboring Middle Eastern countries. Turkey currently houses the largest number of Syrian refugees (3.5 million), followed by Lebanon (991,000), and then Jordan with 661,000 refugees registered with UNHCR, although it is estimated that the total number of registered and unregistered Syrian refugees in Jordan is closer to 1.5 million (UNHCR, 2018). With 6.6 million internally displaced persons still residing in Syria, the global community is scrambling to provide solutions to what appears to be the largest refugee crisis since World War II. With any humanitarian crisis come complimentary issues, including hunger, dehydration, sickness, interruption of education, unemployment, and more. As conflict in Syria enters its eighth year and the subsequent refugee crisis grows protracted in its nature, Jordan has done its best to provide for the basic and immediate needs of its burgeoning refugee population, over 80% of which has since moved out of refugee camps and now resides in host communities throughout

the country. Now, Jordan has shifted its attention to long-term, sustainable empowerment of these communities and their livelihoods. Such initiatives include ensuring access to quality education and primary health care, encouraging financial independence of women, increasing job opportunities and access to work permits for men, and protecting the rights of children. In an effort to encourage overall social cohesion for future generations, special attention must be paid to children, namely mitigating the rates of child marriage and child labor within Syrian refugee populations. The high rate of early school dropout in order to work or marry increasingly separate refugee children from their Jordanian counterparts, reinforcing negative stereotypes and furthering social divides.

This research focuses on the causes and consequence of child marriage within Jordan. As mentioned in the abstract, the national rate of child marriage in Jordan is 8%, while the rate of child marriage among the Syrian refugee populations in Jordan is four times that at 32% (UNICEF, 2014a). On a global scale, children are often the most at-risk for early or forced marriage when they are impoverished, live in rural areas, or have a low level of education (UNICEF, 2014b). Girls are disproportionately affected by child marriage, and many are uneducated in the means of safe sex, putting them at risk for contracting HIV, AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases (UNICEF, 2014b). Further, many girls under the age of 18 that are married may not be physically mature enough to give birth, which is especially concerning given that child brides are only half as likely as their adult counterparts to seek and obtain proper medical care during pregnancy (UNICEF, 2014b). While this study certainly had its limitations (see “Limitations”), it was able to ascertain general attitudes of refugee mothers and children regarding child marriage and the opinions of child advocacy organizations within Jordan

regarding the law. As a fairly exploratory project, no outcomes were expected, and therefore no hypothesis was created.

## *II. Child Marriage Legal Framework*

In order to understand the intricacies of child marriage of Syrian refugees in Jordan, it is important to highlight the circumstances of refugees themselves, as well as the pre-existing laws regarding marriage in Jordan. The Personal Status Law provides the framework for many of women's rights in Jordan, including marriage, divorce, custody of children, financial matters, and violence (Musawah, 2017). First and foremost, consent of both parties is necessary before any marriage license is issued, therefore allowing a prospective bride to voice her refusal to the judge before any marriage is made official (Musawah, 2017). As the law stands, the minimum age of marriage for both men and women in Jordan is eighteen; however, a judge may issue permission for girls and boys as young as fifteen to be married if it is decided (by the judge) "to be in their interest" (Musawah, p. 3 2017). For example, the income level of the husband is often considered as the main factor before granting permission for a marriage with a girl under eighteen, to ensure her husband can provide for her expenses.

Further, it is stipulated that in rare circumstances, such as in cases of pregnancy, permission may be given to those aged under fifteen (Muswah, 2017). In such cases, registration of the marriage is postponed until the girl turns fifteen, creating a considerable loophole where the marriage goes unregistered, leaving the child particularly vulnerable, especially given that she may be pregnant. The law states that marriage registration is required; however, non-registration of marriages does not invalidate the marriage itself, but will affect the couple negatively. For Jordanians who fail to register their marriages, this will affect their ability to access social services, such as health care and education, and will impede their children's ability to access these services as well (Musawah, 2017). For Syrians, failure to register marriages reaps

grave consequences, including “inability to obtain identification cards”, which are vital to their status, and impeding their ability to access social services, similar to Jordanians (Musawah, 2017).

In order to enter into a marriage contract, regardless of age, any woman under Jordanian law who is marrying for the first time will require the consent of a guardian who must be male, Muslim, and related to the bride in some way, such as a father, brother, uncle, or cousin (Musawah, 2017). In the absence of such a guardian, the judge may act as the female’s guardian. If the guardian does not give their consent to the marriage, the judge can overrule this given the bride’s request. Once again, when a judge is considering overriding the objection of the bride’s guardian, the financial status of the prospective groom is taken into account (Musawah, 2017). Article 11 of the Personal Status Law proscribes the marriage of a woman to a man twenty years her senior without “a show of the consent and free choice” of the prospective bride (Musawah, 2017, p. 8).

Given the aforementioned legal conditions for marriage in Jordan, it is easy to see how loopholes can allow for early and/or forced marriages to be permitted and registered. Most importantly, it is the responsibility of the judge in cases of child marriage to determine whether or not the marriage is “in the best interest” of the child, but the law does not list any necessary determinants of what may be considered the interests of the bride. Many judges remark the prospective groom’s financial capacity as the leading interest of the girl, and there is no mention of further interests, such as continuing education, proximity to her family, or future employment. When verbalizing consent to a judge, it is easy to imagine a circumstance where a prospective bride is being coerced, or pressured by her family or her prospective groom himself. The fact that marriages that involve girls under the age of fifteen are permissible is disturbing, and the fact

that many of such marriages are not registered until the bride reaches fifteen can leave refugee girls to be extremely vulnerable, as their husbands could deny the legitimacy of the marriage or even abandon them. Further, refugee girls without a parent or guardian could be taken advantage of, even though the judge would fill the role for legality purposes. Ultimately, the judge decides if the marriage is overall beneficial to the girl, giving them an incredible amount of authority over the fate of young girls and boys.

### **Theoretical Framework:**

According to the UNFPA, “child marriage” and “early marriage” refer to a marriage in which “one or both spouses are under 18 years old” (UNFPA, 2018b). Related to these terms, “forced marriage” refers to a union to which one or both spouses did not give their consent, regardless of their ages (UNFPA, 2018b). Many child marriages are considered forced marriages due to the fact that those under the age of 18 cannot give their legal consent, and according to Article 16 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, marriage should only exist given the “free and full consent” of both spouses (UN, 1948). UNICEF goes so far as to say that any marriage before the age of eighteen “is a fundamental violation of human rights” (UNICEF, 2018). Similarly, within the *Convention on the Eradication of All Forms of Violence Against Women*, child marriage of any form is formally proscribed, and the necessity for the establishment of a minimum age for marriage is mentioned (UN, 1979).

Within Jordan, legal age to marry is eighteen, but special permission from a judge allows marriage for a girl between the ages of fifteen and eighteen, provided both parties fulfill certain criteria (Musawah, 2017). According to the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, all humans under the age of eighteen are considered children, “unless under the law applicable to the child,

majority is attained earlier” (UN, 1989). Despite this grey area within international law, and despite the Jordanian law allowing marriage involving children under 18 to occur, this research will follow the definitions laid out by UNICEF and UNFPA and consider any “child and early marriages” involving one or more persons under the age of eighteen to be child marriages.

According to UNFPA, child marriage is the result of “poverty and gender inequality” and, in times of humanitarian crises, the desire for protection and security as well, be it physical, legal, or nutritional (UNFPA, 2018a). A recent study conducted by Zaki Wahhaj at the University of Kent examined the high prevalence of child marriage within Southern Asia, particularly in Bangladesh. Wahhaj observed that within the marriage market, younger brides are more popular, and their popularity decreases with time spent on the market, causing their families to pay a higher dowry to the groom’s family the older the bride (Wahhaj, 2015). Therefore, families have an economic incentive to accept an offer of marriage sooner within their daughter’s life, especially if the family is poor and cannot afford to pay “higher dowry payments” as their daughter’s age increases (Wahhaj, 2015, p. 5). Recognizing that child marriage causes “a significant disruption” in a woman’s “accumulation of human capital” due to school drop out and absence in labor markets, Wahhaj uses a market model simulation to illustrate the relationship between age and perceived “quality” of brides (Wahhaj, 2015, p. 3). His study shows that in order to disrupt and alter the relationship between age and market popularity, certain interventions conducted by NGOs have been shown to increase the opportunity cost of early marriage, and can “trigger a virtuous cycle of marriage postponement” (Wahhaj, 2015, p. 5). Such interventions include raising awareness on negative health consequences of child marriage, providing parents with incentives to postpone the marriage of their children, and granting adolescents opportunities to learn new skills and alternatives to early

marriage and motherhood (Wahhaj, 2015). Within Bangladesh, interventions that boosted the opportunity cost of early marriage were the establishment of free tuition for girls in 1990, the expansion of a secondary school stipend program for females in rural areas in 2000, and the introduction of a “food-for-education programme” to rural areas 1993, which provided free grain to families with children actively enrolled schools (Wahhaj, 2015, p. 33). Wahhaj found that those most susceptible to accepting offers of early marriage are those that are impoverished, and cannot afford to pay higher dowries to marry their daughters as they get older, in addition to paying her expenses for a longer amount of time before she is married. Many of the interventions Wahhaj outlines that proved helpful in mitigating child marriage alleviated the economic struggles of the family while providing tangible alternatives to child marriage for girls themselves, such as continuing education.

While poverty may be one of the leading causes of child marriage, Wahhaj’s economic theory alone cannot explain the phenomena of child marriage in Jordan; cultural norms and gender inequality likewise play important roles. In many cultures around the globe, wifedom and motherhood are indicators of femininity, and perceived as determinants of a fulfilled life for a woman. However, these gender norms dictate behavior, often times leaving women and girls without a choice or offering any options for their lives. According to a 2007 study submitted to the World Health Organization regarding gender inequity in health, norms are socially expected behaviors that are generally accepted by the population, and control a large portion of how we live our lives (Sen, Östlin, & George, 2007). While norms are the backbone of most social relationships and interactions, they are not always positive or beneficial to all members of a society. Often times, norms “reflect and reproduce relations that empower some groups of people” while “marginalizing and subordinating others” (Sen et al., 2007, p. 28). Many gender

norms act in such a way, namely by “normalizing shame, inequality, indifference, or invisibility” (Sen et al., 2007, p. 28). It is important to note that gender norms can vary by culture, society, and/or state.

Gender and cultural norms in Jordan are different from those in Syria, just as gender norms vary from country to country and city to city. Many of the norms that feed into child marriage, however, are fairly similar across societies. According to a study conducted by the World Bank that surveyed women across twenty nations, the rate of child marriage highlights “the imposition of strong social and cultural norms” regarding the expectation of women to marry, run households, and bear children (Boudet, Petesch, Turk, & Thumala, 2012, p. 86). This study found that many women married early due to arranged marriages, pregnancy, or for financial reasons (Boudet et al., 2012). Therefore, while marriage is seen as a key component of a woman’s life and the first step in her expected journey towards household management and motherhood, marriages may happen earlier in a girl’s life due to her financial circumstances, familial obligations, or unintended pregnancy.

While it may seem imperative for a girl to be swiftly married following an unintended pregnancy due to cultural and gender norms, it is not solely the compilation of pregnancy, poverty, and family edicts that cause child marriage to occur. Such cultural expectations and norms may change during displacement, as noted by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in their 2014 report on global gender justice. Often times during displacement women and girls take on “male” roles both in and out of home; for example, when Chadian refugees returned to their homes following the 1970 civil war, many of the women “had a new sense of autonomy” that had “been forged under conditions of hardship” (Marcus & Harper, 2014). This led some of the women to decide that “their interests were best served outside of the marriage” completely

(Marcus & Harper, 2014). Additionally, it was found that when Afghan refugees in Iran were exposed to policies that afforded women greater rights in “an alternative but still clearly Islamic... context”, it influenced the Afghani refugee population’s opinions on “domestic violence and female education, employment and early marriage” when they returned to their home country (Marcus & Harper, 2014). However, the ODI report found that the inverse is also true. While in many contexts it was found that increased economic opportunities during or after migration had led to new norms regarding education, work, and overall mobility and agency for females, it was also shown that migrants or refugees may cling to their perceived “conservative” norms as a means of “asserting their identity” as members of a new community (Marcus & Harper, 2014). Highlighting differences in culture may be the way many refugees or migrants attempt to preserve their own identities in a new place or context, and distinguish themselves from their hosts. This may explain why child marriage among Syrian refugees in Jordan remains four times higher than the Jordanian rate of child marriage (UNICEF, 2017).

### **Literature Review:**

It has been observed that during times of conflict and displacement, child marriage tends to increase for a plethora of reasons, and this is especially true if child marriage was already a common, or at least present, practice prior to the disruption to society. UNICEF statistics show that in Yemen, for example, child marriage, which has been prevalent for some time, has increased since the start of the conflict (UNICEF, 2017). Trends among rising rates of child marriage among Syrian refugee girls in Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan reflect the same phenomenon occurring in Yemen (UNICEF, 2017).

UNICEF’s 2017 report on child marriage across the Middle East and North Africa region specifically concluded that during displacement, due to the fact that many girls are susceptible to

sexual violence and assault, many families will marry their daughters young in an effort to protect them. This “increased need to secure girls’ honor” was observed within Syrian refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, despite the fact that child marriage was not widely practiced in the aforementioned host countries before the refugee crisis (UNICEF, 2017, p. 33). Further, in many refugee crises education can be limited or nonexistent, leading to the mobility and movement of girls to be curbed. Such an environment reportedly gives way to girls feeling as if they are a “financial burden” to the family, prompting child marriage as a form of “securing financial sponsorship” for the females (UNICEF, 2017, p. 34).

Many of the programs that target child marriage in Jordan, observed through UNICEF’s report, specifically aim to educate children on their rights and raise awareness on all forms of violence, including child marriage (UNICEF, 2017). However, according to the study, none of the programs focus solely on child marriage or in great depth. This differs greatly from efforts to combat child marriage in post-earthquake Nepal from 2015-2016. Aura Freedom International collaborated jointly with Apeiron, a local partner, to create ten Female Friendly Spaces (or FFS) across Kathmandu Valley, Rasuwa, and Dhading (Girls Not Brides, 2016). These facilities offered a safe space where women and girls displaced by the earthquake could “report violence, seek services, and attend educational workshops” (Girls Not Brides, 2016, p. 1). Such workshops, which catered to both males and females, provided information on gender equality, the legal rights of women and children, reproductive health, violence against women, and child marriage. Other services offered by the FFS included daily literacy classes, referrals for health services, registration support, including personal identification documents, marriage and birth certificates, and more. Additionally, the program trained community members to serve in a gender-based violence (GBV) watch group to monitor their neighborhoods, report incidents, and

act as a confidant for all women and children in their areas and camps. The FFS initiative offered stability, support, and advocacy at a time when “families were facing increased hardship” and “girls were at an increased risk of being married as children” (Girls Not Brides, 2016, p. 2). This successful program could serve as a model in areas with high-risk populations in Jordan, despite some of the challenges presented to them. Of the obstacles faced by Aura Freedom and Apeiron, one of the most difficult to overcome was justifying the need for awareness sessions “rather than bags of rice or blankets” (Girls Not Brides, 2016, p. 3). This may be a common problem among Syrian refugee host communities in Jordan as well, but as the FSS project put it: GBV, human trafficking, and child marriage “increase drastically” during post-disaster settings, leading to long-term harmful consequences on the ability of society to prosper (Girls Not Brides, 2016, p. 3). Therefore, the need to prevent both short term and long term negative consequences on the afflicted population must be addressed in concert, despite the fact that immediate needs may be more apparent or acknowledged.

Child marriage is commonly practiced in India, and in 2006 about 44.5% of girls were married before the age of eighteen (Pramila, 2013). During this time, the number of child brides in India constituted 40% of the total global population (of child brides) (Pramila, 2013). While not facing a refugee crisis as Jordan is, the Indian government has made attempts to solve the issue of child marriage, just as the Hashemite Kingdom is trying to do. Some of the attempts to change the nationally attitude towards child marriage include creating more stringent legal frameworks, improving access to education and employment opportunities, especially for women and girls, and increasing monitoring efforts. However, one of the states in India, Tamil Nadu, had exceptionally high rates of child marriages, and posed a particular challenge to the Indian government’s initiatives. After conducting interviews in many of Tamil Nadu’s villages, it was

found that some girls were engaged as young as four or five, often times married between ten and thirteen, delivering an average of ten to twelve children in their lifetimes (Pramila, p. 1003, 2013). To combat this, the government assigned social welfare officers to the districts to assist in interventions; at the time of the study's publishing, around 230 child marriages had been stopped due to the efforts of the officials (Pramila, 2013, p. 1006-7). However, in the body of the paper, it is cited that the villages in Tamil Nadu are "economically and socially backward", which is the reason for the high rates of child marriage (Pramila, 2013, p. 1003). While the implementation of social welfare officers in the area clearly led to desirable outcomes, it is also clear that attributing a form of GBV to 'social backwardness' does not constitute an explanation. If child marriage is a social norm within the villages, it is paramount that the Indian government make attempts to understand the cultural perspectives of the people in order to raise awareness about the risks of child marriage, the benefits of achieving a higher level of education, and more in a way that appeals to their social expectations and practices. This lesson is highly applicable to Jordan's circumstances; although child marriage may be culturally accepted and frequently practiced in Syria, the Jordanian government has a responsibility to understand this rather than writing it off as a cultural difference. If the Jordanian government made an effort to understand why child marriage was so widely practiced in Syria, it may be easier to address those reasons in order to mitigate the practice within its own borders.

According to UNICEF, poverty, limited access to education, and living in rural areas increase the probability of child marriage and child labor, and for displaced populations the likelihood of living with any of the aforementioned circumstances is high, leading to a seemingly inevitable occurrence of child marriage and child labor. However, when a government does not address child marriage, they encourage gender-based discrimination, early and dangerous child

bearing practices, and give preference to boys' education (UNICEF, 2018). It is not enough to simply read UNICEF reports regarding the most recent trends, or attribute harmful practices to cultural differences. Nor will changing the law solve the issue, though it may be a welcome first step. While Jordan has done an admirable job addressing the immediate needs of its refugee populations, the crisis is now entering its eighth year, and the Hashemite Kingdom's focus much switch to strategies of development and empowerment. Not many could have predicted that the crisis would last this long, but that does not change the reality of teenagers dropping out of school to work in hazardous conditions or to marry someone who is potentially twice their age. This research will explore how refugee mothers and girls view the issue of child marriage, its causes, prevalence, and consequences. Hopefully, these answers will illuminate more effective means of combatting child marriage as a whole.

**Methodology:**

My research began as a too large comparative study involving two major topics of my interest: child marriage and child labor. Originally, my plan was to survey refugee and non-refugee parents with school-aged children and interview refugee boys and girls about both topics. Then I was going to compare their responses on the two topics, all within a five-week time span. Looking back now, I see how ambitiously naive that was. After receiving feedback from the Local Review Board as well as my research advisor and academic director, I finally was able to narrow my focus to child marriage, and decided to interview refugee mothers with school-aged children and girls between the ages of eleven and eighteen, forgoing surveys completely. This would be accompanied with an analysis of the general responses to recent changes in Jordan's marriage law. With these two populations in mind, as well as this method of data collection

(interviews), I was able to move forward with my research with a more practical, focused approach.

Knowing my populations of interest, and acknowledging how vulnerable they are, it was imperative that I protected their privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. All adult participants signed an informed consent form, provided to them in Arabic. If they were unable to read the form, the translator for the interview (Carmen Abu Fannouneh) was able to read the form in its entirety and answer any questions they had. Children were provided an informed assent form that they signed, as well as their parent/guardian. All of the interviewees were informed of their rights to skip questions or stop the interview entirely. Copies of the consent forms can be found in the appendices. Each of the interviewees were given a number, and their names were not written in any place other than on their consent form in the form of a signature. My translator was briefed on the purpose of my research and was able to help me ask probing questions during my interviews, as well as simplify questions for any children that did not understand the complexities of what I was asking.

During the course of my research several obstacles arose, mainly concerning access to populations. Two days of data collection were conducted; on April 29<sup>th</sup> at the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD) community center in Madaba I interviewed all six of my mother interviewees and completed one of my child interviews. Then, on May 5<sup>th</sup>, the remainder of my interviews with children were conducted at a residence facility for Syrian refugees in Safout, Amman. Copies of my interview guides with the questions asked can be found in the appendices. While I had wanted to interview more children, it was difficult to arrange time to see them on Saturdays so my research did not interfere with their school schedule during the week or their religious practices on Fridays. Because of the limited time frame I had

to conduct interviews, accompanied with these ethical considerations, it left me with only a couple of possible interview dates, and then I had to coordinate a time that also worked with my translator and with the NGOs where I would meet my interviewees.

As aforementioned, I was encouraged to change my research's focus from a comparative study that explored the responses of boys versus girls and refugee versus non-refugee parents to one that concentrated on refugee mothers and girls between eleven and eighteen. Further, my research was changed from a dual concentration on child marriage and child labor to solely one regarding child marriage. Due to the limited timeframe and population, the only girls I interviewed were between the ages of eleven and fifteen, thus missing out on the opinions of girls at a potential bride-to-be age. Additionally, it would have contributed to the depth of my research had I had the time and resources to conduct interviews with boys and girls to compare their responses, as well as refugee and non-refugee mothers. However, this is one of my recommendations for further research on this topic, as I believe it will contribute greatly to the scope of the research and its findings.

### **Findings:**

#### *Interviews:*

Six interviews were conducted with Syrian refugee mothers between thirty-four and forty-five years of age with an average of 4.7 children per mother. Five interviews with girls were completed, with the girls' ages ranging from eleven to fifteen. Each child interviewee averaged approximately 5.4 siblings. A summary of the demographic information of refugee mothers can be found in Figure 1.1 below, with the child interviewee counterpart can be found in Figure 1.2. During the course of my interviews, four out of six mothers and all five children

affirmed that they believe child marriage is a problem, leading to a total of 9 out of 11 interviewees agreeing that child marriage is an issue.

**Figure 1.1** – Demographic information for refugee mother interviewees.

Interviewee Number	Age	Marital Status	Number of Children	Is child marriage a problem?
1	34	Married	7	Yes
2	38	Married	5	Yes
3	37	Married	6	No
4	45	Married	4	No
5	43	Married	4	Yes
6	45	Widowed	2	Yes

**Figure 1.2** – Demographic information for female child interviewees.

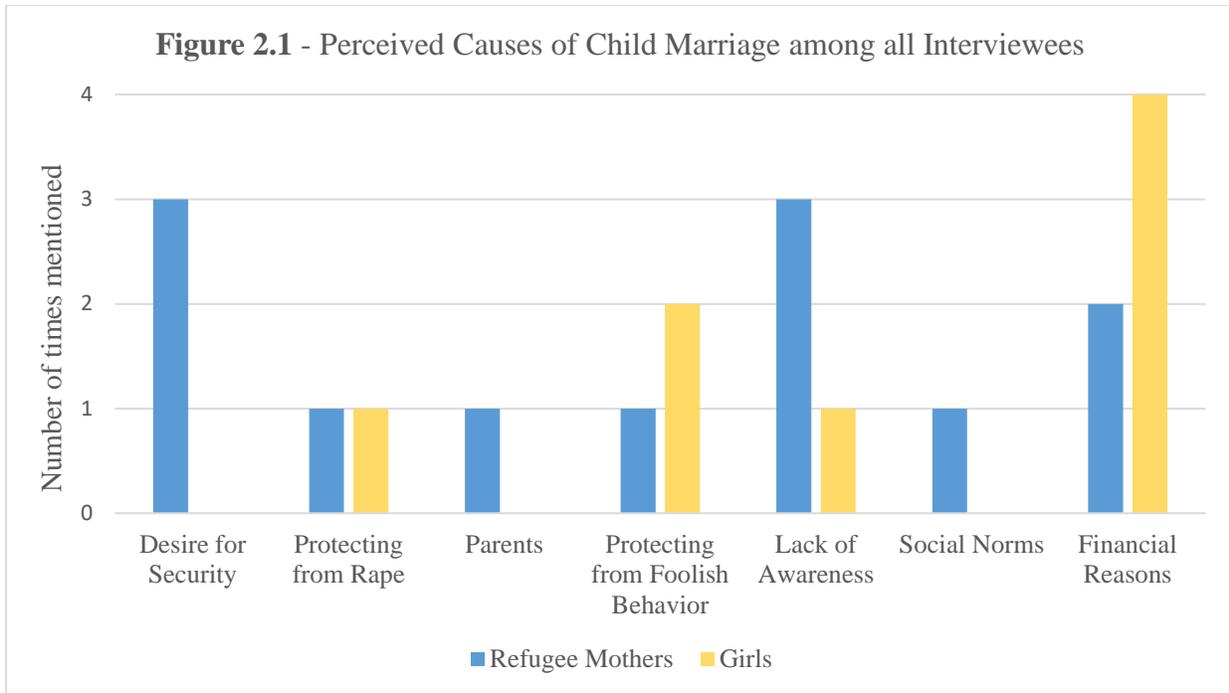
Interviewee Number	Age	Refugee Status	Number of Siblings (including half and step siblings)	Is child marriage a problem?
1	11	Syrian	7	Yes
2	15	Syrian	2	Yes
3	12	Syrian	11	Yes
4	14	Non-refugee Jordanian	2	Yes
5	13	Syrian	5	Yes

Throughout the interviews, interviewees were asked what causes child marriage. Some interviewees offered one main cause, and others cited multiple. Four of the five children interviewed mentioned poverty or financial reasons as the cause of child marriage, one of them specifically citing the desire to “give up the responsibility” of the daughter to someone who can take care of her expenses (trans. by Abu Fannouneh). Two of the children mentioned that fathers have a desire to protect girls from engaging in “foolish” behavior, so they marry her early (trans.

by Abu Fannouneh). Such foolish behavior includes dating without parents' permission, premarital sex, and more. Other responses included a lack of awareness and protecting girls from rape as some of the contributing factors.

Three mothers mentioned a desire for security with one specifically mentioning the need to protect girls from rape. Three mothers cited a lack of awareness as one of the causes of child marriage; two mothers claimed financial circumstances led to child marriage with one specifically mentioning the need to "give up the responsibility of the daughter" to her husband (trans. by Abu Fannouneh). Another mother said it is because of cultural norms that some girls marry so early, because some people believe if you do not get married young you will not be desirable when you are older; you will become a "maid" and not ever get married (trans. by Abu Fannouneh). Another mention of protecting girls from engaging in 'foolish behavior' was made, but this time by a mother interviewee. This interviewee mentioned that such behavior has been made easier by the advent of Facebook and social media websites that encourage increased contact between the sexes.

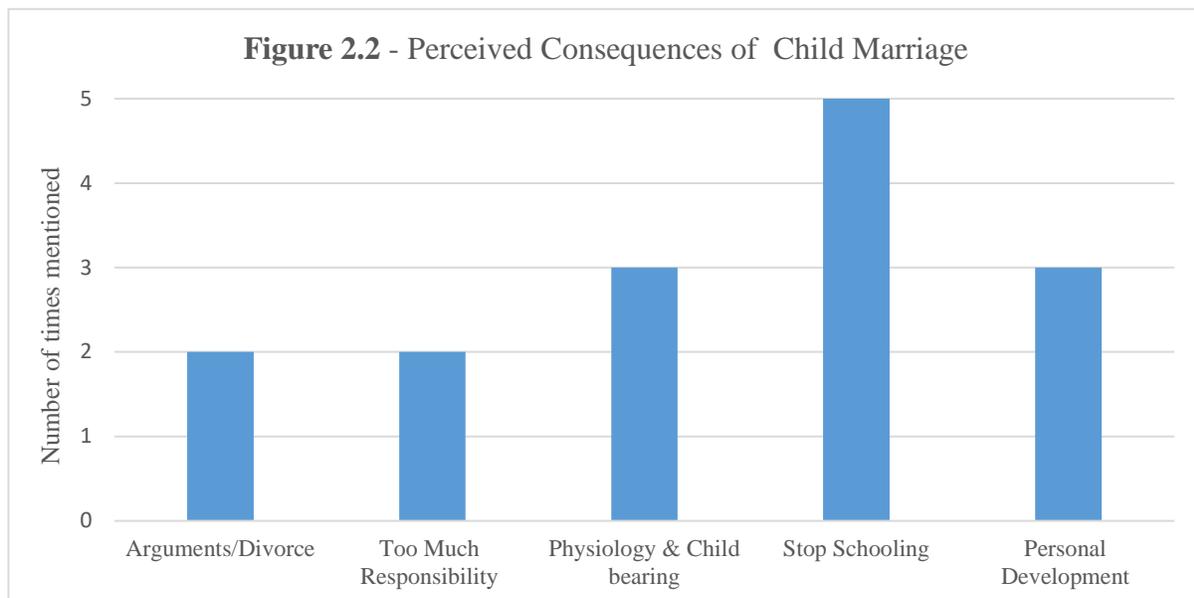
While the mothers interviewed claimed that a desire for security is the main reason many girls are married before eighteen, the children argued that poverty is the leading cause. Two of the six mothers also cited financial insecurity as a cause of child marriage, making financial circumstances the most cited theme throughout the interviews. It is very possible that within the realm of security that half of the mothers cited, this includes both the economic security and physical safety of girls, therefore strengthening the idea that financial circumstances are the paramount consideration when child marriage occurs. Figure 2.1 outlines all of the responses in a visual representation.



In terms of perceived consequences of child marriage, mothers gave a plethora of answers, mostly centered around topics of the happiness of the marriage, as well as the girl's physical health and educational and personal development. Many of the adult interviewees mentioned that child brides are still children, and that managing a household and dealing with the responsibilities of wifedom and eventually motherhood is too much responsibility for a child to handle. Given that they are still children, some of the women noted their concern over her physiology, that she is not strong enough or ready to bear children. A major topic that was cited many times is the implication that if a girl marries, she will stop going to school, despite Jordan's compulsory high school education. Mother # 3, who believes that child marriage is not a problem, explained that if a girl does not want to go to school then her father will marry her. This idea that girls have two options, school or marriage, highlights an interesting concept; many of the women presented this as a well-known phenomenon, that if a girl marries she will stop her schooling, and if she stops her schooling she will have to get married. Mother #1 noted that one

of the main reasons she is so against child marriage is because “all of your business should be your studies, at least through high school”, knowing that marriage would directly impede that goal (trans. by Abu Fannouneh). She mentioned that girls should refrain from marrying until after they complete high school, so that “if she faces any bad circumstances in her life, at least she will have her [high school] certificate” (trans. by Abu Fannouneh).

Many of the women interviewed also noted that marriage is hard for anybody, but especially girls under eighteen, as they are still growing as people. Mother # 5 said that girls “have no personality, no fingerprint in the world” and are thus not ready to be partnered with someone for life and expected to have children (trans. by Abu Fannouneh). Similarly, mother #1 claimed “they don’t know life yet” (trans. by Abu Fannouneh). In terms of specific personal development, a few of the mothers mentioned that marriage will change a girl’s personality and negatively affect her level of confidence. Further, it will affect how much control she will have over her life, how she is able to raise her children or manage her own chores and duties with a new husband and family, but that if she was married at a later age she would have a stronger personality and be able to have a stronger voice. Figure 2.2 below lists the perceived consequences of child marriage, according to the refugee mothers interviewed.



While the girls interviewed were not explicitly asked what they believed to be the consequences of child marriage in order to keep interviews simple and not cause any undue distress, many of them implied what they thought the lives of girls would look like after they married. Many of them mentioned that girls would stop going to school, and that they themselves would not get married until they finished university. A few of them mentioned that girls would end up being completely dependent on their husbands for everything, including finances, how to raise the kids, and with what their daily lives would involve. One of them specifically said that in the beginning, girls would be happy; they would say “I’m a bride” and be excited, but then once the newness wore off, “she will suffer a lot” with all of her new responsibilities (trans. by Abu Fannouneh). Two of the girls commented that girls who get married will argue a lot with their husbands, and one even said that a child marriage will usually end in divorce. Alarmingly, one of the girls interviewed commented that because the girls are so young, they will not be able to defend themselves from their new husbands. One of the most disturbing things about this observation is that it implies domestic violence is inevitable, and that because the wife in this scenario will be young, it will be harder for her to protect herself.

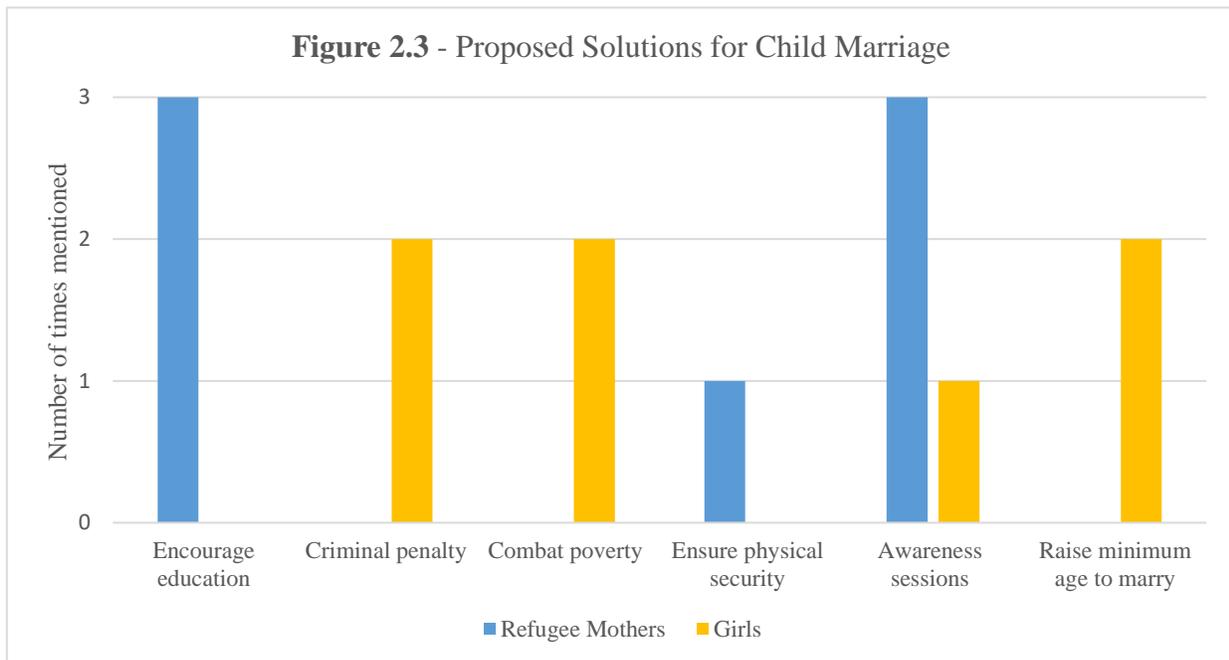
Of those interviewed, only two believed child marriage to be normal in Jordan, both of them child interviewees. However, all of the interviewees, both refugee mothers and girls, asserted that child marriage is normal in Syria. Some of the mothers specified that in Syria, child marriage was more common in the countryside than in the cities where they lived, or that sometimes families will specifically forbid it. Mother #2 remarked that child marriage was not widely popular until the war started, and child interviewees #3 and #5 said similar things.

Ten out of eleven of those interviewed had some type of personal experience with child marriage; five interviewees knew somebody from their neighborhood or school who had been

married early, while three interviewees were related to someone who was married early. Child interviewee #1 shared that all six of her sisters married at fifteen. The final two, mothers #3 and #4, were both married early in Syria at ages fifteen and fourteen respectively. Both of these mothers, who had been child brides themselves, had daughters that were being married before eighteen. The daughter of mother interviewee #3 was married at sixteen, and her husband is ten years older than her. She said her daughter was deprived of a childhood when she married, but that it was necessary because her daughter did not want to go to school, even though both she and her husband preferred that she finished her studies before she married. Mother interviewee #4 told a story about how she was interviewed at the United Kingdom Embassy in Amman as a candidate for seeking asylum in the UK, but that her application was rejected because they learned that her daughter was seventeen and engaged, and that child marriage was not allowed in the UK.

When both groups were asked what can be done to stop child marriage, a variety of responses were gathered. The responses of mother interviewees differed greatly from those of the girls interviewed. Proposed solutions from refugee mothers tended to center around ensuring a greater quality of education, and encouraging girls to attend university. One of the mothers even recommended offering more university scholarships just for girls. Many of the mothers also noted that awareness sessions would help combat the practice of child marriage. Some of them advised that sessions be given to parents, while others proposed raising awareness specifically among girls at the ages of fourteen or fifteen, right around the beginning of the average early marriage period in Jordan. Lastly, mother #2 highlighted that many of the Syrian refugees in Jordan want “security and safety”, and thus suggested steps be taken to try to contribute to an environment where they feel welcome and stable (trans. by Abu Fannouneh).

The girl interviewees tended to offer solutions focused on legal repercussions, including raising the minimum age to marry or creating a criminal penalty for fathers who marry their daughters before they are eighteen. Other suggestions included eradicating poverty, as a few of the girls believe that poverty and dire financial circumstances are the main reasons child marriage happens. Lastly, one of the interviewees also proposed awareness sessions for children, both boys and girls, like many of the mother interviewees. It is interesting that mothers tended to focus on furthering education and raising awareness, whereas the girls' responses tended towards legal recommendations and alleviating socioeconomic circumstances. It would have been interesting to ask mothers #3 and #4, who were child brides themselves, if any of the proposed solutions from all of the interview sessions would have delayed their circumstances, and which (if any) would have been the most and least effective, in their opinion. However, time did not allow for secondary rounds of interviews. Figure 2.3 illustrates the proposed solutions and their frequencies.



*Material Culture:*

In July of 2017, Jordan's Cabinet of Ministers issued some regulations to the Personal Status Law that imply certain instructions need to be followed before a judge should permit a marriage with any party under the age of eighteen to take place. These new regulations did little to create real change to the law or the reality of the marriage that is taking place. The new rules prohibit marriages from occurring between two parties that are more than fifteen years apart in age, the husband can not be married to another person at the time of the marriage, and the marriage cannot be the reason to stop going to school (ARDD, 2017). However, these new regulations were not met warmly by the public; in fact, a day after the conditions were released, an article was published by *The Jordan Times* aptly titled "New early marriage regulations draw fire from civil society" (Husseini, 2017). According to the article, activists and women's groups throughout Jordan referred to the new regulations as a "step backwards" in preventing child marriage, and it did not take long for loopholes and dissenting opinions to come to light. Asma Khader, executive director of the Sisterhood Is Global Institute (SIGI) in Jordan, remarked that there was no mention of oversight for judges, or what type of punishment, if any, would be dealt to a judge who failed to follow the regulations (Husseini, 2017). In a similar vein, Salma Nims, Secretary General of the Jordanian National Commission for Women, expressed her particular concern for the clause that stipulates that the marriage cannot be the reason for the girl to stop going to school. First, she points out that the clause does not specify a level of education, and there is no mention of what would happen if the marriage did result in the end of the child's education (Husseini, 2017). Given the ambiguous nature of the new regulations, and their lack of stipulations for oversight, they did not engender any outstanding popularity.

While proponents of the law as it stands exist, they cite mostly religious reasons, saying that according to Islamic law, girls are ready to marry and have children once they reach puberty (Husseini, 2017). One particular legal aid organization in Jordan, the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) published an opinion paper following the new regulations, summarizing the new conditions and offering recommendations on how to change them. ARDD offers legal support and holds awareness sessions on human rights and empowerment for refugees, women and girls, youth groups. Overall, the paper stressed first and foremost that no marriages to a person under the age of eighteen should be allowed, but if the current law allowing minors to marry stands, certain loopholes and ambiguities within the law should be resolved. This included explicitly stating the stipulations surrounding how any underage parties would be encouraged to continue their education, and demanding specific paperwork to prove the financial circumstances of the groom, among other things (ARDD, 2017). The opinion paper stressed the need for humanitarian organizations to continue their work in raising the awareness about the “social, health, physiological, and economic disadvantages” of child marriage, particularly with vulnerable groups (ARDD, 2017).

**Conclusion:**

After conducting interviews with refugee mothers, refugee girls, and one Jordanian girl, it was found that many believed child marriage to be a normal occurrence in Syria, at least since war began, with only two interviewees believing child marriage to be normal in Jordan. It is impossible to tell if this is an example of Syrians attempting to assert their identity and set themselves apart from their Jordanian counterparts, as Marcus and Harper claim has been observed in other societies. Instead of attributing this as a purely cultural difference, as was found in India, many of the interviewees believed dire financial circumstances, as well as a

desire for overall security, to be the reason why many marry before the age of eighteen. This reinforces UNFPA's idea that child marriage is often the result of poverty and inequality of the sexes.

An overwhelming percentage of those interviewed mentioned that once girls got married, they would stop going to school. Further, many interviewees commented in some way on how an early marriage would affect the personal development of the girl, such as her personality, confidence, and general agency and independence. To combat these consequences, and the occurrence of child marriage as a whole, many interviewees advocated for increased education initiatives, including scholarship programs, and raising awareness among parents and children. These interventions are similar to the ones Wahhaj highlights as having increased the opportunity cost of child marriage for many of the young girls in Bangladesh, which created greater options for girls outside of marriage and motherhood, as well as alleviating some of the financial concerns of families, which many of the girls interviewed during this study believe to be the main manner by which to stop child marriage completely. While the proposals of the girls interviewed did involve the eradication of poverty, they also centered largely around legal responses, such as raising the minimum age to marry and creating criminal penalties for fathers who marry their daughters early. While responses by humanitarian activists and organizations did not specifically match these proposed solutions, many of them did involve legal changes, including closing loopholes in the existing law and creating penalties for judges who do not follow its regulations.

Based on the data collected, it can be concluded that while economic conditions do play a large role in the practice of child marriage, forced displacement and lack of security coupled with pre-existing social norms likewise contribute. Encouraging education, offering scholarships, and

generally providing more options for girls other than school or marriage will help to mitigate child marriage, and will work best when accompanied by legal change enacted to protect girls, close loopholes, and increase oversight and coordination across agencies.

**Study Limitations:**

This study was limited most notably by time. With only five weeks to complete the research, it seemed fairly easy to produce a reasonably detailed project. However, before I could even begin my data collection I had a few obstacles. First, I had to use my feedback from the Local Review Board to alter my project, gaining their approval once I made their suggested changes. Next, I had to enlist the help of an Arabic translator to translate my interview guides and my consent forms from English to Arabic. Given that the same translator was used by every student conducting research within my study abroad program, it understandably took some time for me to receive my translated versions.

Access to the populations of interest themselves was another quite vexing limitation. Not knowing many organizations in Jordan that serve refugee mothers and children in general, and not knowing the best (and safest) way to go about contacting them for research purposes, my Academic Director Dr. Bayan Abdulhaq played an invaluable role in coordinating much of my data collection with JOHUD and the Syrian refugee residence facility in Safout. However, it was difficult to coordinate a time that not only suited the translator I would need for my interviews, but also the mothers and the children, with whose school schedule I did not want to interfere.

Other notable limitations included my language capability. My Arabic language skills are nowhere near as advanced as they would need to be in order to conduct an interview of this complexity, but I was able to generally follow along with my translator and have her fill in the details. This certainly helped me have an idea of what the conversation was about, so I could ask

more questions if I needed to. I realized that my translated interview guides did not always ask the question I had intended when I wrote it in English, and so I had to ask my translator during one of the interviews to alter the wording of the question in Arabic to come closer to my intended meaning. Having this language barrier, coupled with the fact that I am visibly white, may have created some perceived distance or separation between myself and my interviewees, despite having a native speaker serve as my translator during my interviews.

### **Recommendations for further research:**

In order to make this research even more significant in the field, it would be great if my original proposal could be followed, and the same (or even more) questions could be asked of refugee and non-refugee mothers (for comparison) and girls and boys aged eleven to eighteen (for comparison). Further, I would recommend a greater volume of interviews, as eleven total is quite small and not statistically significant. Also, I had an idea of interviewing judges that issue marriage licenses about their experiences, their views on the laws, etc., but was discouraged from this as they would likely tell me (an obviously white woman with mediocre Arabic language skills) that they are following the law, and that the law is fair and just. However, I think with the right person, and if they were convinced that their responses would be kept completely anonymous and confidential, maybe they would open up and give a realistic account of their perspectives and experiences.

I also think it would be significant to try to incorporate topics of child labor in the mix. While child marriage certainly does affect boys as well as girls, all of my interviewees immediately referred to 'her' or 'she' when they answered my questions regarding child marriage. I believe that much in the same way that child marriage disproportionately affects girls, child labor disproportionately affects boys. Lastly, it would be interesting to conduct this

study in another area affected by conflict-driven displacement, as there is not much research related to such occurrences. According to the findings of this study, child marriage was practiced in Syria before the war, and with even greater frequency during the conflict. Child marriage was also widely practiced in Yemen before its own crisis; conducting similar studies in Yemen or with Yemeni refugees in host countries regarding child marriage would be interesting, given the similarities between the two cases.

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**Appendix A:** *Interview guide for parents with school-aged children (English)*

1. Do you identify as a refugee?
  - a. If yes, please indicate the nationality/nationalities with which you identify.
2. Please tell us your gender.
3. What is your age in years?
4. Please tell us your marital status.
5. How many children do you have?
6. Do your children attend double shift schools?
  - a. If yes, which shift do they attend?
7. Do you believe child marriage is a problem in Jordan?
  - a. How big of a problem?
8. What do you believe causes child marriage?
  - a. ie. Why does child marriage occur?
  - b. If they list multiple causes, ask them which they believe is the leading cause and why.
9. Do you believe child marriage affects everyone in the same way?
  - a. Do you believe some children are more vulnerable than others?
  - b. Is child marriage normal in every society? Is child marriage normal in Syrian society?
10. What do you believe are the consequences of child marriage?
  - a. For children?
  - b. For families?
  - c. For the economy?
  - d. For society?
11. Do you have any personal experiences with child marriage?
  - a. Have you or anyone you know been involved in child marriage? In what way?
12. What do you think can be done to mitigate child marriage?
13. Do you believe the government is focusing the proper amount of attention on child marriage?
14. Do you share the same views as your spouse on this issue? If not, how do they differ and why?

**Appendix B: Interview guide for children (English)**

1. Tell me about yourself:
  - a. What is your gender?
  - b. What is your age (in years)?
  - c. Where were you born?
  - d. Where do you live?
  - e. Describe your family.
2. Tell me about your school.
  - a. Two shift? If so, which shift do you attend?
  - b. Are your classes big? How big/How many students?
3. What do you know about child marriage?
  - a. Is it a big problem in your neighborhood/city?
  - b. Do you know any children who got married?
  - c. Why does it usually happen?
4. Is child marriage normal in every society?
  - a. Is it normal in Jordanian society?
  - b. Is it normal in Syrian society?
5. Is it okay for children to get married?
  - a. Are there certain circumstances when it's okay, and other times when it isn't?
6. Do you think anything should be done to stop child marriage? If yes, what? If not, why?

### Appendix C: Interview guide for parents with school-aged children (Arabic)

- الملحق الأول: دليل مقابلة أولياء الأمور لأطفال في سن المدرسة
1. هل يتم تعريفك كلاجئ؟
  - ا. إذا كانت الإجابة نعم ، فيرجى تحديد الجنسيات / أنت لاجئ من أي بلد إلى أي بلد؟
  2. من فضلك أخبرنا ما هو جنسك.
  3. كم عمرك بالسنوات؟
  4. من فضلك أخبرنا عن حالتك الاجتماعية.
  5. كم عدد أولادك؟
  6. هل يذهب أطفالك إلى مدارس فيها فترتين صباحية ومساءلية؟
  - ا. إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم ، ففي أي فترة يذهبون إلى المدرسة؟
  7. هل تعتقد أن زواج الأطفال يعتبر مشكلة في الأردن؟
  - ا. ما هو مدى كبر هذه المشكلة؟
  8. باعتقادك، ما هو سبب زواج الأطفال؟
  - ا. بمعنى: لماذا يحدث زواج الأطفال؟
  - ب. إذا قاموا بذكر أسباب متعددة ، فاطلب منهم السبب الرئيسي باعتقادهم ولماذا يعتبرونه كذلك.
  9. هل تعتقد أن زواج الأطفال يؤثر على جميعهم بنفس الطريقة؟
  - ا. هل تعتقد أن بعض الأطفال أضعف من غيرهم؟
  - ب. هل زواج الأطفال يعتبر طبيعياً في كل المجتمعات؟ هل زواج الأطفال يعتبر أمراً طبيعياً في المجتمع السوري؟
  10. ما هي عواقب زواج الأطفال برأيك؟
  - ا. على الأطفال؟
  - ب. على العائلات؟
  - ج. على الاقتصاد؟
  - د. على المجتمع؟
  11. هل لديك أي تجارب شخصية مع زواج الأطفال؟
  - ا. هل أنت أو أي شخص تعرفه لديه تجربة في زواج الأطفال؟ كيف كان ذلك؟
  12. ما الذي يمكن القيام به لتقليل من زواج الأطفال؟
  13. هل تعتقد أن الحكومة تعطي الاهتمام الكافي لقضية زواج الأطفال؟
  14. هل تشارك نفس وجهات نظر زوجك/ شريكك بالنسبة لهذا الموضوع؟ إذا كانت الإجابة لا ، فكيف يختلفان؟ ولماذا؟

### Appendix D: Interview guide for children (Arabic)

الملحق الثاني: دليل مقابلة للأطفال

1. أخبرني عن نفسك:
  - ا. ما هو جنسك؟
  - ب. كم عمرك؟ (بالسنوات)؟
  - ج. أين ولدت؟
  - د. أين تسكن؟
  - ه. صف عائلتك.
2. أخبرني عن مدرستك.
  - ا. مدرسة بفترتين؟ إذا كانت الإجابة " مدرسة بفترتين " ، في أي فترة تذهب إلى المدرسة؟
  - ب. هل صفوفك كبيرة؟ ما هو حجم الصف / كم عدد الطلاب في الصف؟
  3. ماذا تعرف عن زواج الأطفال؟
    - ا. هل هو مشكلة كبيرة في حيك/ مدينتك؟
    - ب. هل تعرف أي طفل/ة متزوج/ة؟
    - ج. لماذا يحدث هذا عادة؟
  4. هل زواج الأطفال طبيعي في كل المجتمعات؟
    - ا. هل هو طبيعي في المجتمع الأردني؟
    - ب. هل هو طبيعي في المجتمع السوري؟
    5. هل من المقبول أن يتزوج الأطفال؟
      - ا. هل هناك ظروف معينة حيث يكون زواج الأطفال مقبولا ، وظروف أخرى لا يكون فيها مقبولا؟
      6. هل تعتقد أنه يجب القيام بخطوات لايقاف زواج ؟ إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، فما الذي يمكن عمله؟ إذا كانت الإجابة لا ، فلماذا؟

**Appendix E: Consent form (English)****PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT TOPIC:** Causes and consequences of child marriage among Syrian refugee populations in Jordan: an investigation of perceptions

**STUDENT NAME:** Alex Buckman

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this project.

My name is Alex Buckman. I am a student with SIT Study Abroad Jordan: Refugee Health and Humanitarian Action program. I would like to invite you to participate in a study I am conducting. However, before you agree to participate in this study, it is important you know enough about it to make an informed decision. If you have any questions, at any time, please ask me. You should be satisfied with the answers before you agree to be in the study.

**Brief description of the purpose of this study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceived causes of child marriage among Syrian refugee populations in Jordan. This study will also investigate the perceived consequences of child marriage. Further, the study will explore proposed solutions to issues of child marriage and child labor.

Your participation will consist of a written survey and some short answer questions and will require approximately 30 minutes of your time.

There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study and no penalties should you choose not to participate; participation is voluntary. During the interview you have the right to not answer any questions or discontinue participation at any time.

**Rights Notice**

In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT ISP proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by a Local Review Board or SIT Institutional Review Board. If at any time, you feel that you are at risk or exposed to unreasonable harm, you may terminate and stop participation. Please take some time to carefully read the statements provided below.

- a. *Privacy* - all information you present in this interview may be recorded and safeguarded. If you do not want the information recorded, you need to let the interviewer know.
- b. *Confidentiality* - all confidential information will be protected.
- c. *Withdraw* – you are free to withdraw your participation in the project at any time and may refuse to respond to any part of the research. Participants who desire to withdraw shall be allowed to do so promptly and without prejudice to their interests

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you may visit the World Learning website and check its policies on Human Subjects Research at: <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/documents/studyabroad/human-subjects-policy.pdf> or contact the Academic Director at bayan.abdulhaq@sit.edu.

If you have any questions or want to get more information about this study, please contact me at phone: +962798706280 or email at: aab1016@wildcats.unh.edu.

Please sign below if you agree to participate in this research study and acknowledge that you are 18 years of age or older.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Translator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix F: Minor Assent Form (English)*****MINOR ASSENT FORM***

**Title of the Study:** Causes and Consequences of child marriage among Syrian refugee populations in Jordan: an investigation of perceptions

**Researcher:** Alex Buckman

**Why have you been asked to be part of this study?**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this project.

My name is Alex Buckman. I am a student with SIT Study Abroad Jordan: Refugee Health and Humanitarian Action program. I would like to invite you to participate in a study I am conducting. However, before you agree to participate in this study, it is important you know enough about it to make an informed decision. If you have any questions, at any time, please ask me. You should be satisfied with the answers before you agree to be in the study.

**Brief description of the purpose of this study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceived causes of child marriage among Syrian refugee populations in Jordan. This study will also investigate the perceived consequences of child marriage. Further, the study will explore proposed solutions to issues of child marriage and child labor.

**What will you be asked to do?**

Your participation will consist of a written survey and some short answer questions and will require approximately 30 minutes of your time.

**Are there any potential risks or discomforts for you?**

There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study and no penalties should you choose not to participate; participation is voluntary. During the interview you have the right to not answer any questions or discontinue participation at any time.

Your parents know about the study and have agreed that you can participate if you want to.

**Confidentiality**

The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

**Right to Refuse or Withdraw**

The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study *at any time* without affecting your relationship with the investigator of this study or Smith College. Your decision will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview at any point during the process; additionally, you have the right to request that the interviewer not use any of your interview material.

**Who will see the information collected about you?**

When I am finished with this study, I will write a report about what I learned. This report will not include your name or that you were in the study. I will give you a fake name and I will not keep any of the materials you recorded.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the study.

Advisor:

I understand what I will be asked to do in this study. I understand that I can stop participating at any time.

I want to take part in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Minor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Translator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix G: Consent Form (Arabic)

### نموذج موافقة على المشاركة في بحث

#### هدف البحث:

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو دراسة الأسباب المتعلقة بزواج الأطفال عند اللاجئين السوريين في الأردن. وهي تبحث أيضا في النتائج المتعلقة بزواج الأطفال. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تقارن هذه الدراسة التصورات المختلفة بين اللاجئين وغير اللاجئين، الأولاد والبنات، وتقوم بتقديم الحلول المقترحة لقضية زواج. يعتبر هذا البحث احدى متطلبات مؤسسة التعلم الامريكية في الأردن: دراسات عامه حول الصحة وتنمية المجتمع. نتائج هذا البحث ستكون متوفرة على شبكة التواصل العنكبوتية ( الانترنت), و من الممكن أن تستخدم هذه النتائج في المستقبل لأغراض بحثية أخرى.

#### الخصوصية والسريه:

كل المعلومات التي سيتم جمعها ستعامل بسرية تامة من قبل الباحثه ولن يطلع على البيانات إلا الباحثه نفسها. بالاضافه الى ذلك سيتم اتلاف البيانات فور الانتهاء من الدراسه وتحليل النتائج.

#### حقوق المشاركين:

المشاركة في البحث طوعية وبمحض اختيارك. لا يتطلب الاشتراك في البحث ذكر الاسم او ما يدل عليه ومهما كانت اجابتك او رأيك فان هذه الاجابات والآراء لن تؤثر بأي شكل كان على وضعك. كما انه لديك الحق بعدم المشاركة في البحث ان شئت، واذما ما غيرت رأيك وقررت الانسحاب بعد المشاركة فيمكنك الانسحاب كذلك. ومن حقهك رفض السماح للباحثه باستخدام بيانات الدراسه في اي دراسات أخرى ستقوم بها الباحثه الرئيسييه.

#### المعايير الاخلاقيه لمؤسسة التعلم الامريكية:

أ. الخصوصية - كل المعلومات سيتم تسجيلها وحمايتها كما ستعامل بسرية تامه, من حقهك رفض تسجيل المقابله وذلك من خلال الباحث الرئيسي.

ب. عدم الكشف عن الهوية - لا يتطلب الاشتراك في البحث ذكر الاسم او ما يدل عليه إلا إذا اختار المشارك خلاف ذلك.

ج. السرية - إن جميع الأسماء ستبقى سرية تماما ومحمية بالكامل من قبل الباحث.

من خلال التوقيع أدناه، فإنك تعطي الباحثه المسؤولية الكاملة لحفظ هذا العقد ومحتوياته. كما سيتم توقيع نسخة من هذا العقد واعطائها للمشارك.

من سيتطلع على المعلومات التي تم جمعها عنك؟

عند الانتهاء من هذه الدراسة ، سأكتب تقريراً عن ما تعلمته. ولن يتضمن هذا التقرير اسمك أو مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة.

سأعطيك اسماً مزيفاً ولن أحتفظ بأي المواد التي سجلتها. إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة متعلقة بهذه الدراسة ، فلا تتردد في الاتصال

بي على رقم الهاتف +962798706280 أو عبر البريد الإلكتروني على Aab1016@wildcats.unh.edu . يمكنك أيضاً

التواصل مع المدير الأكاديمي لبرنامجي على bayan.aabdulhaq@sit.edu.

5. اقرار موافقه:

من خلال التوقيع أدناه، فإنك توافق على استخدام ردودك على أسئلة الاستطلاع في دراسة بحثية بعنوان (أسباب ونتائج زواج

الأطفال عند اللاجئين السوريين في الأردن، دراسة حول التصورات). كما أن توقيعك يعني أنك لا تمنع باستخدام ردودك

على أسئلة الاستطلاع خلال هذه الدراسة في دراسات مستقبلية على مواضيع مماثلة . وعلاوة على ذلك ، توقيعك يعني

فهمك الكامل لحقوقك أثناء المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

---نعم لا--- اوافق على تسجيل المقابلة علماً بان المقابله سيتم اتلافها خلال شهر عند الانتهاء من تحليل المعلومات.

توقيع المشـارك \_\_\_\_\_ التاريخ: \_\_\_\_\_

6. اقرار سرية:

من خلال التوقيع أدناه فإنك ملتزم بحفظ المعلومات المقدمة من قبل المشاركين في الدراسة بسرية في جميع الأحوال. وهذا يشمل هوياتهم، اجوبتهم على الأسئلة، أو أي معلومات أخرى.

توقيع الباحث \_\_\_\_\_ التاريخ: \_\_\_\_\_

توقيع المترجم \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ التاريخ

## Appendix H: Minor Assent Form (Arabic)

## SIT Study Abroad

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نموذج موافقة على المشاركة في بحث للقاصرين

عنوان هذه الدراسة المستقلة: أسباب ونتائج زواج الأطفال عند اللاجئين السوريين في الأردن، دراسة حول التصورات  
اسم الطالب: Alex A, Buckman

شكرا لأخذك الوقت للمشاركة في هذا المشروع.

اسمي Alex A, Buckman . أنا طالبة في برنامج SIT Study Abroad program "اللاجئين والصحة والعمل الإنساني" . أود أن أدعوك للمشاركة في دراسة أجريها. ولكن قبل الموافقة على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ، من المهم أن تعرف ما يكفي عنها لاتخاذ قرار سليم. إذا كانت لديك أية أسئلة، من فضلك لا تتردد في السؤال في أي وقت. يجب أن تكون راضياً عن الإجابات قبل الموافقة على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.  
**لماذا تُطلب منك أن تكون جزءاً من هذه الدراسة؟**

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو دراسة الأسباب المتعلقة بزواج الأطفال عند اللاجئين السوريين في الأردن. وهي تبحث أيضاً في النتائج المتعلقة بزواج الأطفال. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، تقارن هذه الدراسة التصورات المختلفة بين اللاجئين وغير اللاجئين، الأولاد والبنات، وتقوم بتقديم الحلول المقترحة لقضية زواج وعمالة الأطفال.

**ماذا سيطلب منك أن تفعل؟**

في حال موافقتك على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ، فستطلب منك المشاركة في مقابلة حيث سيتم سؤالك عن تجربتك في الزواج والعمل. وهذا يتطلب ما بين 30 دقيقة إلى ساعة من وقتك.

**هل هناك أي مخاطر أو إزعاجات محتملة لك؟**

المشاركة في هذه الدراسة تحمل مخاطر معقولة (أو متوقعة). وقد تكون هناك مخاطر غير معروفة. ووالداك على علم بهذه الدراسة وقد تم أخذ موافقتكما على مشاركتك فيها إذا كانت لديك الرغبة في ذلك.

### السرية

سيتم الاحتفاظ بسجلات هذه الدراسة بسرية تامة حيث سيتم الاحتفاظ بسجلات الأبحاث في ملف مغلق مع ترميز جميع المعلومات الإلكترونية وتأمينها باستخدام ملف محمي بكلمة مرور. لن نقوم بذكر أي معلومات في أي تقرير قد ننشره مما يجعل تحديد هويتك مستحيلاً.

### الحق في رفض المشاركة أو الانسحاب

قرار المشاركة في هذه الدراسة هو قرارك خاص بك تماماً. يمكنك رفض المشاركة في الدراسة في أي وقت دون التأثير على علاقتك مع القائم على هذه الدراسة أو على أي خدمات تتلقاها حالياً. لن يؤدي قرارك إلى أي خسارة أو أي مزايا غير التي يحق لك الحصول عليها. لديك الحق في عدم الإجابة عن أي سؤال ، وكذلك الانسحاب كلياً من البحث في أي مرحلة خلال العملية ؛ بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، يحق لك أن تطلب من الباحث عدم استخدام أي من إجاباتك.

**من سيتطلع على المعلومات التي تم جمعها عنك؟**

عند الانتهاء من هذه الدراسة ، سأكتب تقريراً عن ما تعلمته. ولن يتضمن هذا التقرير اسمك أو مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة. سأعطيك اسمًا مزيّفًا ولن أحتفظ بأي المواد التي سجلتها. إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة متعلقة بهذه الدراسة ، فلا تتردد في الاتصال بي على رقم الهاتف +962798706280 أو عبر البريد الإلكتروني على [Aab1016@wildcats.unh.edu](mailto:Aab1016@wildcats.unh.edu) . يمكنك أيضًا التواصل مع المدير الأكاديمي لبرنامجي على [bayan.aabdulhaq@sit.edu](mailto:bayan.aabdulhaq@sit.edu)

**يرجى التوقيع أدناه إذا:**

أفهم ما سيطلب مني القيام به في هذه الدراسة وأنه يمكنني التوقف عن المشاركة في أي وقت. وأود المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

\_\_\_\_\_ التاريخ \_\_\_\_\_ توقيع القاصر  
 \_\_\_\_\_ التاريخ \_\_\_\_\_ توقيع الباحث  
 \_\_\_\_\_ التاريخ \_\_\_\_\_ توقيع المترجم

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### نموذج إذن الوالدين لمشاركة الطفل في البحث

عنوان هذه الدراسة المستقلة: بحث حول الخدمات والبروتوكولات المتاحة للأمهات السوريات القاصرات

اسم الطالب: Alex A, Buckman

طلب من طفلك المشاركة في دراسة بحثية. يحتوي هذا النموذج على معلومات مهمة حول سبب إجراء هذه الدراسة ، وما سيطلب من طفلك القيام به ، والطريقة التي سيتم فيها استخدام المعلومات المتعلقة بطفلك إذا وافقت على السماح لطفلك بالمشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

اسمي Alex A, Buckman. وأنا طالبة في برنامج اللاجئين والصحة والعمل الإنساني SIT Study Abroad . أود أن أدعو طفلك للمشاركة في دراسة أجريها. ولكن، قبل موافقتك وموافقة طفلك على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ، من المهم أن تكون على دراية كافية بها لاتخاذ قرار سليم. إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة ، من فضلك اسألني في أي وقت . يجب أن تكون راضياً عن الإجابات قبل أن توافق على السماح لطفلك بالمشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

**لماذا تقوم بهذه الدراسة؟**

سوف يشارك طفلك في دراسة بحثية حول أسباب ونتائج زواج الأطفال عند اللاجئين السوريين في الأردن، دراسة حول التصورات. الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو دراسة الأسباب المتعلقة بزواج الأطفال عند اللاجئين السوريين في الأردن. وهي تبحث أيضا في النتائج المتعلقة بزواج الأطفال. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، تقارن هذه الدراسة التصورات المختلفة بين اللاجئين وغير اللاجئين، الأولاد والبنات، وتقوم بتقديم الحلول المقترحة لقضية زواج وعمالة الأطفال.

**ماذا سيطلب من طفلي أن يفعل إذا كان مشاركا في هذه الدراسة؟**

ستطلب من طفلك المشاركة في مقابلة حيث سيتم سؤاله عن تجربة الزواج والعمل. وهذا يتطلب ما بين 30 دقيقة إلى ساعة من وقته.

### ما هي المخاطر أو الإزعاجات المحتملة لطفلي؟

حسب معرفتنا ، فإن الأشياء التي سيطلب من طفلك فعلها في هذه الدراسة ليس فيها أي مخاطر أكثر من مخاطر الحياة اليومية.

### السرية

كما هو الحال مع جميع الأبحاث ، هناك احتمال أن يتم اختراق للمعلومات التي سيتم جمعها عن طفلك - وسنقوم باتخاذ خطوات لتقليل هذه المخاطر ، كما هو موضح بالتفصيل أدناه في هذا النموذج. سيتم الاحتفاظ بسجلات هذه الدراسة بسرية تامة حيث سيتم الاحتفاظ بسجلات الأبحاث في ملف مغلق مع ترميز جميع المعلومات الإلكترونية وتأمينها باستخدام ملف محمي بكلمة مرور. لن نقوم بذكر أي معلومات في أي تقرير قد ننشره مما يجعل هويتك مستحيلاً.

### ما هي المنافع الممكنة لطفلي أو غيره؟

هذه الدراسة قد تكون مفيدة بالطرق التالية:

القدرة على مشاركة تجربتك في بيئة آمنة وخاصة والمساهمة في زيادة المعرفة في مجال. زواج وعمالة الأطفال. المعلومات التي يمكن الحصول عليها من خلال هذا المشروع البحثي قد تكون مفيدة للمنظمات غير الحكومية ومنظمات الرعاية الصحية والعاملين وواضعي السياسات واللاجئين والأكاديميين والمنظمات الدولية في تقديم

### المعلومات المالية

لن تشمل المشاركة في هذه الدراسة أي تكلفة عليك أو على طفلك. لن يتم دفع راتب لطفلك مقابل المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

### ما هي حقوق طفلي كمشارك في هذا البحث؟

المشاركة في هذه الدراسة طوعية. ويجوز لطفلك الانسحاب من هذه الدراسة في أي وقت. لن تتعرض لا أنت ولا طفلك لأي عقوبة بأي شكل من الأشكال أو تخسر أي نوع من المزايا إذا قررت إيقاف المشاركة في البحث. إذا قرر طفلك الانسحاب من هذه الدراسة ، فيسأل الباحثون ما إذا كان من الممكن استخدام المعلومات التي قد تم جمعها من طفلك.

عند الانتهاء من هذه الدراسة ، سأكتب تقريراً عن ما تعلمته. ولن يتضمن هذا التقرير اسمك أو مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة. سأعطيك اسماً مزيقاً ولن أحتفظ بأي المواد التي سجلتها. إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة متعلقة بهذه الدراسة ، فلا تتردد في الاتصال بي على رقم الهاتف +962798706280 أو عبر البريد الإلكتروني على [Aab1016@wildcats.unh.edu](mailto:Aab1016@wildcats.unh.edu) . يمكنك أيضاً التواصل مع المدير الأكاديمي لبرنامجي على [bayan.abdulhaq@sit.edu](mailto:bayan.abdulhaq@sit.edu)

يرجى التوقيع أدناه إذا:

لقد قرأت هذا النموذج وتم شرح هذه الدراسة البحثية لي. لقد قرأت هذا النموذج. لقد تم إعطائي الفرصة لطرح الأسئلة وتمت الإجابة على أسئلتي. إذا كانت لدي أسئلة إضافية ، فقد تم إخباري بمن يجب علي التواصل معه. أعطي تصريحاً لطفلي للمشاركة في الدراسة البحثية الموضحة أعلاه وسأحصل على نسخة من نموذج إذن الوالدين بعد التوقيع عليه.

التاريخ \_\_\_\_\_

توقيع الوالد / الوصي القانوني \_\_\_\_\_

التاريخ \_\_\_\_\_

الاسم الوالد / الوصي القانوني كتابة

التاريخ

اسم الطفل المشارك