

Share-Net

Jordan

The Knowledge Platform on
Sexual and Reproductive Health
and Reproductive Rights



Quarterly Newsletter

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ShareNet Quarterly Newsletter – Third Quarter 2024

Introduction

Share-Net Jordan is pleased to present the 33rd issue of its quarterly newsletter, covering the third quarter of 2024. This newsletter aims to keep researchers, decision-makers, policymakers, program developers, and research institutions informed about the latest local and global developments in the field of sexual and reproductive health.

Among the key achievements during the third quarter was completing the preparation and development of an educational and awareness materials guide on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Gender-Based Violence. Additionally, Share-Net Jordan completed and translated the grant reports for Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan into English and designed them electronically. An infographic was also created to showcase Share-Net Jordan's knowledge products, including a fact sheet on The Use of Sexual Stimulants in Jordan - Facts and Risks, a policy brief on Reducing Elective Cesarean Sections Without Medical Justifications in Jordan, and a fact sheet on sexually transmitted infections, all in both Arabic and English.

Other notable achievements include conducting a training workshop on Preparing Policy Briefs and Fact Sheets related to Population Policies and Reproductive Health. Holding the annual meeting for Share-Net Jordan members, the steering committee, and practitioner committee members from university students and partners, and launching two policy and fact papers on cesarean sections and sexual stimulants in Jordan. Furthermore, two workshops were organized for the annual meeting for Share-Net Jordan members and partners, including officials and academics from the southern governorates. Participation also extended to the conference

for the release of detailed results of the 2023 Demographic and Health Survey, as well as meetings with Share-Net coordinators from knowledge platforms on Sexual and Reproductive Health linked to the International Share-Net network, with participation from Jordan, the Netherlands, Burundi, Bangladesh, Colombia, Ethiopia, and Burkina Faso.

Additionally, the research database on the sexual and reproductive health knowledge platform was maintained throughout the third quarter. Share-Net Jordan's membership reached 388 individuals and institutions from various sectors, including academics, policymakers, practitioners, and non-governmental organizations.

Achievements

- **Studies, Policy Briefs, Fact sheets, and Reports:**

- **Completion and development of the guide for educational and awareness materials on reproductive and sexual health and gender-based violence.** This guide aims to raise awareness and understanding of these important issues among target groups, including (youth, adolescents, women, and married girls). The educational materials also aim to equip those working in awareness programs with the necessary knowledge and skills to promote sexual and reproductive health and related rights. This report was prepared based on an agreement between the Higher Population Council, Share-Net Jordan, and the Institute for Family Health, funded by the Dutch Embassy in Amman.

- **A desk review and the preparation of a fact sheet on Twin Births in Jordan, covering incidence rates, trends, risk factors, and the health implications for both mother and child.**

- **Design of an infographic showcasing Share-Net Jordan's knowledge products (a fact sheet on The Use of Sexual Stimulants in Jordan - Facts and Risks, a policy brief on Reducing Elective Cesarean Sections Without Medical Justifications In Jordan, and a fact sheet on Sexually Transmitted Infections, available in both Arabic and English).** The design aims to present information on these knowledge products in an engaging and informative manner, raising awareness across all segments of the local community. The goal is to mobilize the greatest possible support for population and developmental issues, as well

as reproductive health/family planning, using infographics. These infographics and pamphlets may also be used in various council publications if needed, and in presentations during workshops.

- **Links to Knowledge Products:**

✓ Fact Sheet on the Use of Sexual Stimulants in Jordan - Facts and Risks :

https://share-net-jordan.org.jo/Admin_Site/Files/PDF/98763a8c-131e-47c59-cb95151256-85475.pdf

✓ Policy Brief on Reducing Elective Cesarean Sections Without Medical Justifications in Jordan :

https://share-net-jordan.org.jo/Admin_Site/Files/PDF/4da88d087-a70442-d-a513-bbd52bd92baf.pdf

✓ Fact Sheet on Sexually Transmitted Infections and Diseases :

https://share-net-jordan.org.jo/Admin_Site/Files/PDF/0087ce917-abe-4d308-a989-dce75d73416.pdf

- **Translation of Studies, Policy Briefs, and Fact Sheets into English and Electronic Design in Both Arabic and English:**

✓ A legal analysis study of the 2023 Cybercrime Law and the 1960 Penal Code and its amendments in Jordan concerning the sexual and reproductive health and rights information that Share-Net Jordan works on, and their impact on sexual and reproductive health and rights activities.

✓ A study on Women's Withdrawal from The Labor Market and Sexual and Reproductive Health in Light of The Implications of the COVID-19 Crisis.

✓ A policy brief on Mechanisms to Increase Women's Economic Participation in The Labor Market and Sexual and Reproductive Health in Light of The Implications of the COVID-19 Crisis in Jordan.

✓ A fact sheet on The Use of Sexual Stimulants in Jordan – Facts and Risks.

✓ A fact sheet on Sexually Transmitted Infections.

✓ A fact sheet on HIV and AIDS in Jordan.

✓ A policy brief on Reducing Elective Cesarean Sections Without Medical Justifications In Jordan in both Arabic and English.

- Completion of the Grant Reports Provided by Share-Net Jordan for Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan, Including Translation into English and Electronic Design:

✓ A Study Analyzing the Developmental Kindergarten Curriculum in Jordan According to Sexual Education Domains (Jordan).

✓ A Study Proposing a Conceptual Framework for Integrating Sexual and Reproductive Health Concepts into Preparatory and Secondary Education (Egypt).

✓ A Study on The Readiness of Educators in Lebanon to Establish Competencies Related to Sexual Education and Reproductive Health (Lebanon).

These grants were presented by Share-Net Jordan at the regional conference held in Jordan on Comprehensive Sexuality Education

and The Integration of Sexual and Reproductive Health Concepts into School Curricula during the period (April 22- 23, 2024). The grants were announced on the second day of the conference based on the discussions and deliberations from the participating countries (Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Morocco).

• Events and Activities Executed and Participated In:

- The Higher Population Council held a training workshop on preparing policy briefs and fact sheets in the field of population policies and reproductive health. The workshop was attended by members of the technical committee of the National Strategy for Reproductive and Sexual Health, representing relevant national bodies.

The workshop, conducted during the period (July 3- 4, 2024), aimed to equip participants with the requirements, specifications, and elements of policy papers related to population and development issues. It also aimed to provide participants with skills and methods for researching information and its sources on specific phenomena or issues and to introduce participants to how to transition from data and research results to identifying their impacts, and then derive policy recommendations by proposing appropriate options or alternatives to address the issue.

During the workshop, topics such as defining policies, the gap between research /researchers and policymakers, raising awareness and advocacy, and the difference between the two in terms of concept, target audience, and success indicators were discussed. Additionally, participants were introduced to policy papers

and the basic elements of policy papers related to population and development issues, as well as methods for drafting and writing them, starting with selecting a priority problem or issue suitable for a policy paper, gathering and documenting available information and data from all reliable sources, proposing alternatives and options for solutions, and evaluating methods. Practical applications of the workshop topics were also carried out by the participants, who provided their inputs and suggestions.



- On July 22, 2024, the Higher Population Council and Share-Net Jordan held their annual meeting for Share-Net Jordan members, the Steering Committee, and Community of Practice members from university students and partners. This event coincided with the council's commemoration of World Population Day, celebrated every July.

During the meeting, a presentation was delivered highlighting Share-Net Jordan's

achievements in 2024. The outcomes of the regional conference on integrating sexual and reproductive health concepts into curricula, jointly organized by the Council and Share-Net Jordan in April, were also presented. Additionally, a presentation was given on the contents of the policy brief titled "Reducing Elective Cesarean Sections Without Medical Justifications in Jordan," developed by the Council and Share-Net Jordan. This brief aimed to create a supportive policy environment to rationalize the use of cesarean sections and limit them to medically necessary cases. Jordan has witnessed a significant and steady increase in the rates of elective cesarean sections without medical justification. A committee of experts representing the Ministry of Health, the Royal Medical Services, the University of Jordan Hospital, and the Health Services Quality Enhancement Project contributed to the development of this brief.

A fact sheet on "The Use of Sexual Stimulants in Jordan: Facts and Risks," prepared by the council and Share-Net Jordan, was also presented. This fact sheet aimed to provide information and data on the use of sexual stimulants in Jordan, outlining the facts and risks associated with this issue. The goal was to raise awareness about the importance of safe and responsible sexual health by promoting healthy and safe practices to protect sexual and reproductive health for all. To achieve this, a national committee of practicing experts representing relevant national institutions, including the Ministry of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, the Customs Department, the Government Procurement Department, the Pharmaceutical Association, and the Public

Security Directorate, was formed. This committee provided data on the availability, types, and effects of sexual stimulants, enabling the council to prepare this fact sheet.



- Share-Net Jordan formed a Community of Practice midwives and medical support professionals from the Royal Medical Services. These individuals will serve as participating members of the Share-Net Jordan Community of Practices. They will be tasked with developing knowledge products related to the future of midwifery in Jordan.

- The Higher Population Council concluded its campaign to raise awareness about the electronic knowledge platform on adolescent reproductive health (DARBY) and to encourage its use among youth and parents. This campaign was supported by the United Nations Population Fund and implemented in partnership with Jordanian universities, the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development, the Royal Health Awareness Society, and the National Center for the Performing Arts - King Hussein Foundation. The campaign ran from April 15 to July 18, 2024.

This campaign was conducted within the framework of the Council's interest in raising awareness about the components of adolescent reproductive health to improve their health. It aimed to provide a comprehensive package of information and correct misconceptions about reproductive health components, as well as to enhance the role of parents in educating their adolescent children about reproductive health issues. This was based on the results and recommendations of studies conducted by the Council and relevant stakeholders in this field.

The campaign targeted approximately 1,000 students from the following Jordanian universities: University of Science and Technology, Al-Ahliyya University-Irbid, Al-Ahliyya University-Amman, Princess Sumaya University, Applied Science University, and the College of Education and Arts - UNRWA. The campaign also targeted members of women's committees and youth committees at Princess Basma Centers for Development, affiliated with the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development, in Aqaba, Tafila, Karak, Sahab, An-Nazha, Irbid, Mafraq, and Zarqa. Approximately 350 members of women's committees and 350 members of youth committees participated.

In a related context, the Higher Population Council has updated the DARBY youth reproductive health knowledge platform to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, both in terms of content and technical aspects. This aims to raise awareness among this group about the concept of reproductive and sexual health and its importance in the health and lives of individuals with disabilities and their families. This initiative, supported by UNFPA, applied international standards for

websites responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities. Additionally, a series of awareness videos on reproductive health topics were produced in sign language, and all questions and answers on the platform were translated into sign language in collaboration with the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

- Share-Net Jordan organized two workshops over two days, on July 31 and August 1, 2024, as part of its annual meeting for Share-Net Jordan members and partners, including officials and academics from southern governorates. The first workshop was held at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University, attended by the university's vice president for administrative affairs and included academics from Al-Hussein Bin Talal University and Mutah University, as well as representatives from health and education directorates and civil society organizations in Ma'an, Karak, and Tafila governorates. The second workshop took place at Princess Basma Development Center in Aqaba, with participation from representatives of the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Jordan - Aqaba, health, education, and youth directorates, and civil society organizations in Aqaba governorate. These events coincided with the Higher Population Council's celebration of World Population Day, which falls in July of each year.

At the beginning of these meetings, various aspects of Jordan's demographic situation since the start of the third millennium were reviewed, focusing on the changes that have occurred over the past two decades. Presentations were also made on Share-Net Jordan's achievements in 2024 and the outcomes of the regional

conference on integrating sexual and reproductive health concepts into school curricula, which was organized by the Council and Share-Net Jordan last April.

Presentations were also given on the policy brief titled "Reducing Elective Cesarean Sections Without Medical Justifications in Jordan", which was prepared by the Council and Share-Net Jordan, as well as a fact sheet prepared by the Higher Population Council and Share-Net Jordan titled "The Use of Sexual Stimulants in Jordan: Facts and Risks". Additionally, presentations were delivered on the concept of Community of Practice within Share-Net, Share-Net's Theory of Change, and its evolution.



- Participation in the meeting of the National Committee on Sexual and Reproductive Health, organized by the Royal Health Awareness Society and supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in collaboration with the Higher Population Council, from July 31 to August 1, 2024. This meeting was part of the ongoing work with members of the National

Committee under the project "Our Youth for Health," implemented by the Society in cooperation with the Council and supported by UNFPA. The aim was to review the committee's tasks in the field of comprehensive sexual education and to identify key issues to work on, along with developing the committee's action plan for 2024.

- Participation in the youth consultation session on national standards for youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services on August 5, 2024, organized by the Health Care Accreditation Council in cooperation with the Higher Population Council and UNFPA Jordan. The session aimed to ensure young people's right to participate in decisions that affect their lives, as their involvement is an integral part of service delivery. It focused on providing three key areas for youth participation: their involvement in planning, monitoring, and evaluating sexual and reproductive health services, their participation in decisions related to the services provided to them, and their involvement in some aspects of service delivery.

- Participation in reviewing the updated draft of the national standards document for youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, which was updated by the Health Care Accreditation Council with support from UNFPA to align with the recognition and quality system requirements for healthcare institutions according to best practices. This update was informed by the recommendations and findings of the analytical report on the standards document prepared by the Council at the end of last year. Based on discussions and meetings with stakeholders from the Health Care Accreditation Council and UNFPA, a workshop was held by the Council with

partners on August 21, 2024, to gather feedback on the updated document.

- On July 24, 2024, the Higher Population Council, in collaboration with UNFPA, held a consultative meeting with members of the UNFPA Reproductive and Sexual Health Group, representing all relevant entities involved in providing sexual and reproductive health services in Jordan. The meeting included an introduction to the National Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health (2020 - 2030) and its monitoring and evaluation methodology, in addition to discussing the expected response of service programs and managers to the reproductive health needs of refugees in Jordan.



- The Higher Population Council and Share-Net Jordan participated in the conference launching the detailed results of the 2023 Demographic and Health Survey, organized by the Department of Statistics on August 21, 2024. The Secretary-General of the Council, Professor Dr. Issa Al-Masarwa, participated in the opening session of the conference and chaired a session that addressed topics such as reproductive outcomes, housing characteristics,

and respondents, as well as family planning results. Additionally, a series of radio and television interviews were conducted by the Secretary-General to discuss the key findings of the survey related to reproduction and family planning in Jordan.



• **Link to the main survey results:**
https://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/DataBank/Population/Health/KIR_DHS2023.pdf

- **The Higher Population Council participated in the technical committee for drafting a policy paper on establishing a legal mechanism to prevent the hysterectomy of women with disabilities in Jordan. This was based on a research paper prepared by the Information and Research Center in collaboration with the Arab Network for Civic Education (ANHRE) on the rights of recipients of sexual and reproductive health services and those most marginalized in Jordan in 2023.** This paper is part of advocacy activities led by the Information and Research Center – King Hussein Foundation on "The Rights of Recipients of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services and the Most Marginalized in Jordan," funded by the HIVOS organization. It addresses one of the project's goals of identifying legislative and policy gaps that prevent marginalized groups from accessing sexual and reproductive health services and proposing legislative amendments and policies that protect them from abuse and exploitation, in line with international standards and best practices.

- **The Higher Population Council, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), held a scientific, informational, and consultative meeting on "The Status of Family Planning in Jordan and Its Relation to Development Needs and Outcomes" from September 25 - 26, 2024.** Representatives from relevant national bodies participated in the event, which coincided with World Contraception Day, celebrated annually on September 26, to expand opportunities for men and women to make informed decisions regarding their reproductive health. This activity also supports national efforts and those of donors to improve maternal and child health and achieve gender equality.



- The Higher Population Council has updated the demographic status document of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan population for 2024 / Reference Paper, in light of the 2023 Demographic and Health Survey results, and translated it into English.

- The Higher Population Council's participation in reviewing documents issued by the Arab Council for Population and Development, including issues of reproductive health, specifically: a policy brief on public-private sector cooperation in education and training to change behaviors related to population and reproductive health, and a report on the impact of COVID-19 on population dynamics in the Arab world.

- Share-Net Jordan's participation in the launch of the 2023 Human Rights Report prepared by the National Center for Human Rights, which included issues related to promoting the right to health, including reproductive health rights.

- Share-Net Jordan's participation in meetings of the SRHR for Adolescents and Youth International Community of Practice on July 1, 2024, and August 5, 2024, held via Zoom and managed by Share-Net International. The discussions included the preparation of sexual

and reproductive health content for persons with disabilities, to be uploaded to the DARBY platform for sexual and reproductive health.

- Share-Net Jordan's participation in the preparatory meeting to present Share-Net's knowledge products on July 11, 2024. During the meeting, the knowledge products to be presented at the 2024 Showcase were discussed, and any questions regarding the presentation of the knowledge products were answered.

- The Higher Population Council's participation in a workshop discussing the launch of the results of a study entitled "Community Health Systems - Policies and Implementation in the Middle East and North Africa" on July 25, 2024.

- Share-Net Jordan's participation in meetings of the small group on the study "Monitoring the health and hygiene of girls and related measures" on August 8 and 13, 2024, via Zoom, led by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education. During the meetings, the topic was discussed, a partnership map was determined, and a partner roles model was filled out.

- Share-Net Jordan organized a Zoom meeting with the Share-Net International team on July 25, 2024, to present a study on the legal analysis of the Cybercrimes Law of 2023 and the Penal Code of 1960 and its amendments in Jordan regarding sexual and reproductive health information handled by the Share-Net Jordan platform, and their impact on sexual and reproductive health activities. There was an extensive discussion on the study and its main recommendations.

- **The Secretary-General of the Higher Population Council and member of the Executive Committee of Share-Net International**, Professor Dr. Issa Al-Masarweh, chaired the Share-Net International Executive Committee meeting on September 19, 2024, via Zoom. The discussion focused on the future of Share-Net International, funding sources, and the preparation of the Share-Net International report at the end of the current strategic plan 2020 - 2024.

- **Meetings of the Coordinators of the Share-Net Knowledge Platforms on Sexual and Reproductive Health** associated with Share-Net International in Jordan, the Netherlands, Burundi, Bangladesh, Colombia, Ethiopia, and Burkina Faso:

- ✓ The Share-Net Jordan coordinator participated in a coordinators' meeting on 15 /7/ 2024, where a presentation on Share-Net Jordan's achievements was given.
- ✓ The Share-Net Jordan coordinator chaired a meeting held on 16 /9 / 2024, presenting Share-Net Jordan's achievements, discussing funding, and the future of Share-Net International and its knowledge platforms.

- **Meetings on the grant provided to Jordan for organizing the regional conference on knowledge production** in comprehensive sexuality education and integrating sexual and reproductive health concepts into school curricula in Jordan, Tunisia, Lebanon, Egypt, and Morocco:

- ✓ The Share-Net Jordan coordinator participated in follow-up meetings on the implementation of this grant's activities on 2 / 7 / 2024, 1 / 8 / 2024, and 12 / 9 / 2024, presenting progress in each meeting.

- ✓ The Secretary-General of the Higher Population Council, Professor Dr. Issa Al-Masarweh, who is also the Chair of the Steering Committee for Share-Net Jordan, along with the Director of Studies and Policies/Share-Net Jordan Coordinator, Ali Al-Mutlaq, will participate in the International Workshop on Adolescence, Reproductive Health, Sexual Rights, and HIV 2024, which will be held from October 2 - 4 , 2024, in Nairobi, Kenya.

- **Preparation and publication of a media briefing for World Breastfeeding Week, which takes place in the first week of August. This year's theme was " Closing the gap: Breastfeeding support for all," where information on the subject was shared, and an interview was arranged with the Secretary-General of the Higher Population Council, Professor Dr. Issa Al-Masarweh, on Radio Al-Balad to discuss the topic.**

- **The fact sheets "Sexually Transmitted Infections and Diseases" in Jordan and "HIV and AIDS in Jordan" were launched on 29/ 9/ 2024 alongside a position paper entitled "Reducing hysterectomy for girls with mental disabilities" Presented by "Lahun" Campaign with the participation of government institutions, civil society institutions, Community of Practice of youth and university students, and the Community of Practice of experts in the field of sexually transmitted diseases.**



- A workshop will be held on 11/ 10/ 2024 to launch the results of the following grant reports provided by Share-Net Jordan for Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan:

- ✓ Study on the analysis of the developmental kindergarten curriculum in Jordan in terms of sexuality education (Jordan).
- ✓ Study on developing a conceptual framework for integrating sexual and reproductive health concepts in the preparatory and secondary stages (Egypt).
- ✓ Study on the readiness of educators in Lebanon to establish competencies related to sexuality education and reproductive health (Lebanon).

Each expert will present their country's study during a panel discussion featuring the three experts.

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