



Intersecting Disadvantages:
Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Adolescents
Sarah Baird, George Washington University, sbaird@gwu.edu

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Overview: GAGE research

Please note that the photographs of adolescents DO NOT capture GAGE research participants and consent was gained from their guardians for the photographs to be used for GAGE communications purposes.

Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE):

A longitudinal research programme in the Global South (2015-2024)

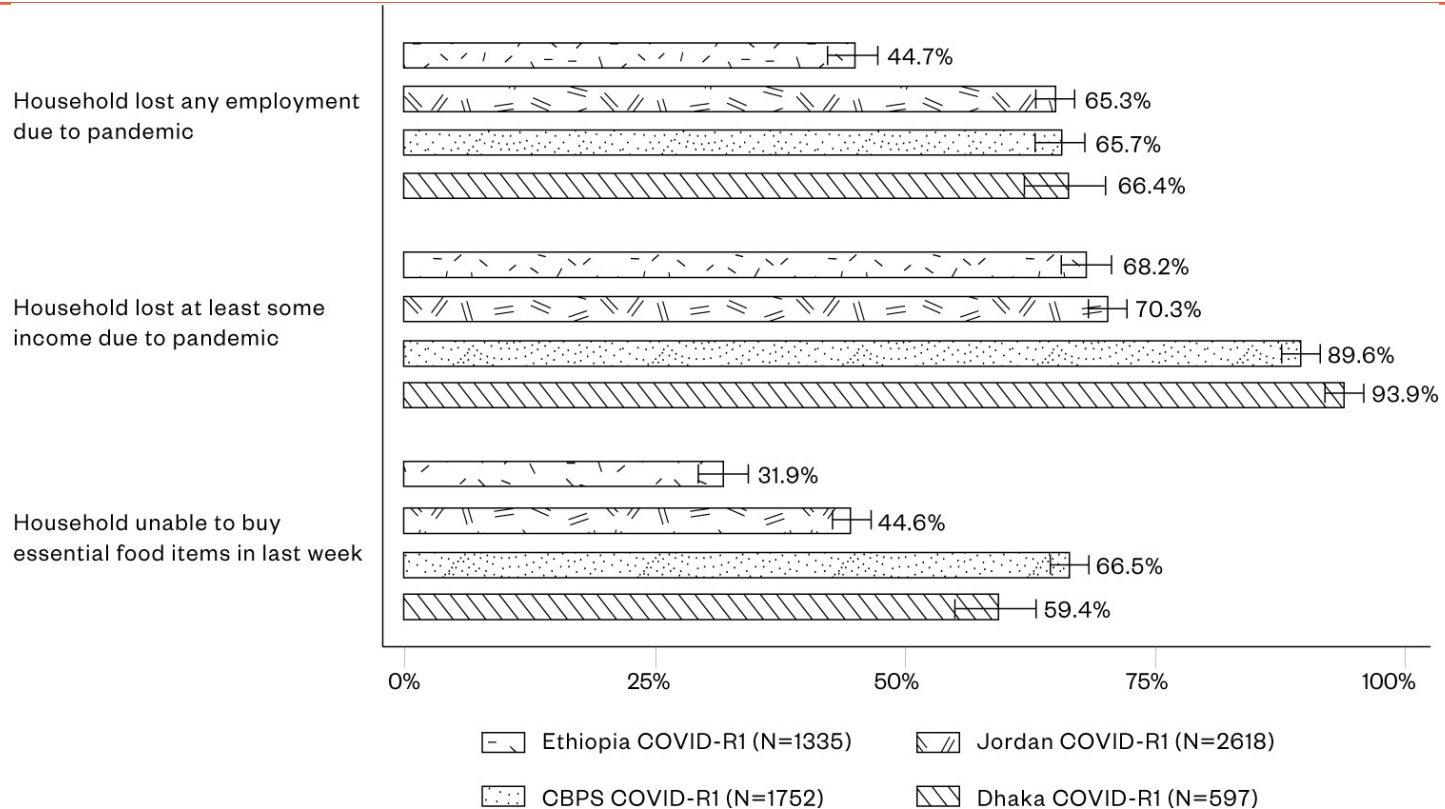


We are following 18,000 girls and boys - the largest cohort of adolescents in the Global South (<https://www.gage.odi.org>)

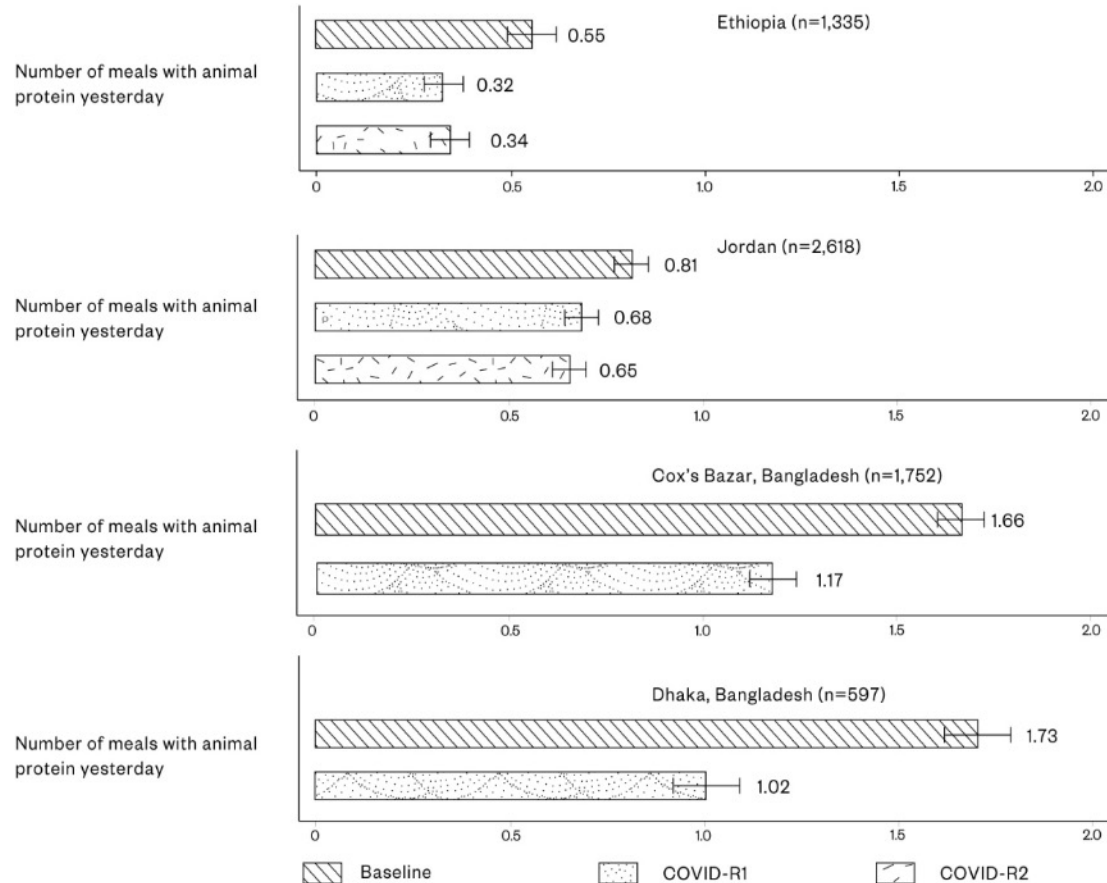
Sample

	Ethiopia	Jordan	Bangladesh-Cox's Bazar	Bangladesh-Dhaka
Description	A random sample of adolescents aged 10–12 and 15–17 at baseline from three urban centres in Ethiopia: Adami Tulu, Debre Tabor, and Dire Dawa.	The sample includes vulnerable Jordanian, Syrian and Palestinian adolescents living in camps (Azraq, Zaatari and Gaza), host communities, or Informal Tented Settlements (ITS) in five governorates of Jordan: Amman, Mafraq, Irbid, Jerash and Zarqa. Adolescents were randomly sampled from databases of vulnerable adolescents maintained by UNHCR and UNICEF.	A random sample of Rohingya and Bangladeshi adolescents aged 10–12 and 15–17 at baseline from random sample of 32 refugee camps and 192 blocks in 6 upazillas in Cox's Bazar.	A random sample of adolescents aged 10–12 and 15–17 at baseline from three shums in Dhaka: Duaripara, Mohammadpur and Ershadnagar.
Baseline Survey Timing	12/2019- 3/2020	10/2018- 03/2019	03/2019 -10/2019	12/2017 -01/2018
COVID-R1 Survey Timing	06/2020- 07/2020	05/2020 – 07/2020	05/2020 – 07/2020	05/2020 – 07/2020
COVID-R2 Survey Timing	11/2020-02/2021	11/2020 – 01/2021	2/2021-04/2021	2/2021-04/2021
Sample Size	2,384	4,101	2,241	780

Extent of the shock



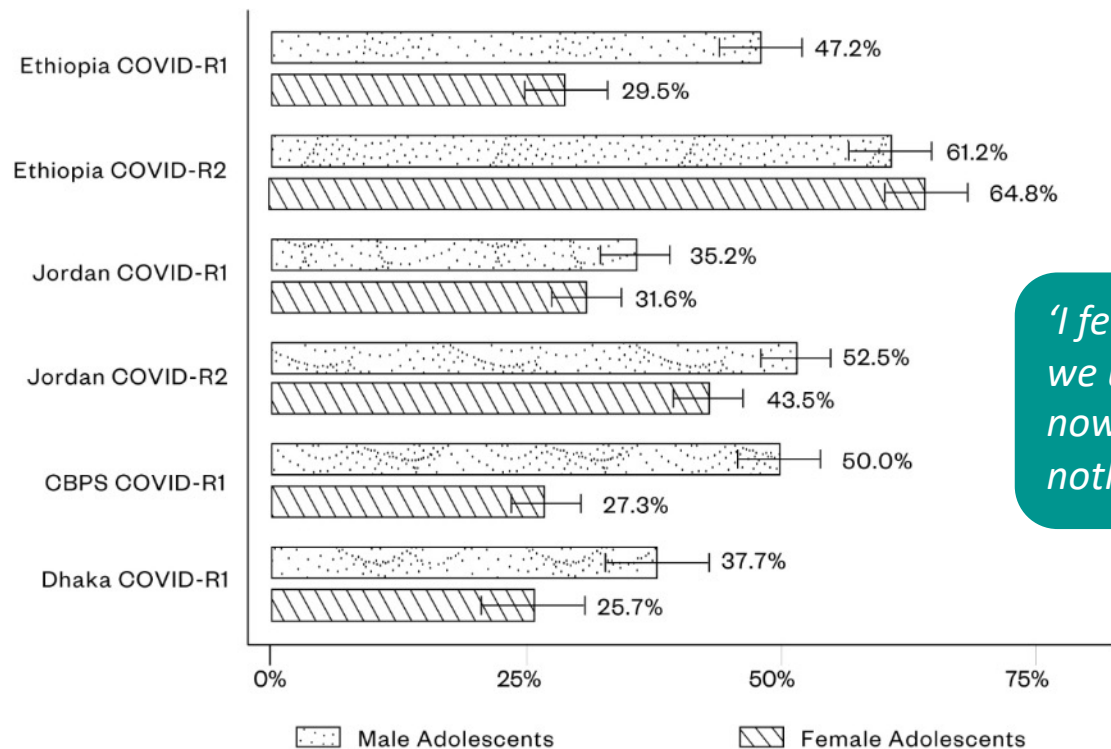
Food insecurity



'Sometimes we have to eat rice only with salt. We could sell food and buy something for us before. But [now] they give us food like we are beggar.'
(17-year-old married Rohingya girl)

Social connectedness

Figure: Percentage of adolescents who interacted with friends or non-household family members in person in the last seven days by setting and gender



'I feel suffocated. Before corona[virus], we used to go out and see friends, but now there is no going out. There is nothing.' (17-year-old Syrian Girl)

COVID-19 and Refugees



Bangladesh - Rohingya women in refugee camps share stories of loss and hopes of recovery © UN Women Gallery, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Education and learning: Jordan

73% of adolescent refugees enrolled in any school prior to COVID-19 (only 54% in ITS)

75% using internet or media to continue learning (Ministry of Education online service (Darsak.jo) and national TV channels)

67% of Primary Female Caregivers of refugee adolescents are concerned the adolescent won't return to school

'I used to go to school, now I only study at home. They sent us a message, and told us it is now through the internet... In our tent, only my dad has a phone. We do not know how to study alone, and I do not know if they stopped giving lessons or not'
(12-year-old girl living in an informal tented settlement (ITS) near Amman)

'The lessons are very difficult and the teachers don't know how to explain things clearly for us. I can't understand the material and teachers don't provide enough detailed explanations.'
(13-year-old Syrian Girl from Irbid)

Education and learning: Bangladesh

47% of refugees enrolled in non-formal school and 73% of Bangladeshis enrolled in formal school prior to COVID-19

6% of Bangladeshis report using media to continue learning with 1 Rohingya using media

27.5% of Rohingya primary female caregivers (PFC) are concerned the adolescent won't return to schooling.
18.5% of Bangladeshi PFCs are concerned the adolescent won't return.

'Now there are many difficulties in education in the camp. While studying in class 1 and class 2, the children's year is over. Previously they were tested at the end of the year. Now [this won't happen] either.'
(17 year old boy, Camp)

(quick detour) How do you measure violence on the phone...

- We did not feel comfortable explicitly asking about violence
- Instead took the following approaches:
 - Indirect: Asked about what was happening in terms of violence towards adolescent (girls/boys) as a result of Covid-19 in the community.
 - Proxy: Asked about increased stress in the household and how household members are coping and responding to the situation
 - Vignette: different for ever-married vs. never married

[Read the following filling in the CR's gender]: We now want you to think about [girls/boys] living in your community and the experiences they are currently having. For example, let's think about a [girl/boy] who is your age and is not married. [She/He] lives with [her/his] parents and attends school regularly. This isn't a real person – but for the purposes of these questions let's call [her/him] [Elizabeth/John] *[replace with locally appropriate name]*.

- Gendered Constraints (girls only):

Read: In many households during the COVID lockdown, young women and adolescent girls have had to change the way they live in their own homes, due to increased presence of men in households during the day. Have you had to alter your behavior at home in any way due to the increased presence of men in the household following the COVID-19 pandemic and the social containment efforts to manage the spread of the virus (lockdown, curfew, etc). Please respond yes or no to each of the following statements, as applies to you:

Findings: Violence

53% of adolescent refugees in Jordan and **88%** of Rohingya report **increased stress in the household** as a result of COVID-19

and **47% (15%)** report that household members are getting angry quicker or arguing more often

Using vignettes given concerns around privacy, **47%** of adolescent refugees in Jordan identified violence as a concern of adolescents like him/her and **63%** of these said it had increased since onset of COVID-19

'If we hear soldiers are coming, we leave the spot instantly... We don't go out... We don't want to risk the beatings.' (14-year-old Rohingya boy)

'People fight a lot in the household... because they spend all the time with each other'.
(16-year-old Palestinian girl with a visual disability)

Helping Adolescents Cope: Makani (My Space) (Jordan)

About 25% of refugee adolescents were attending Makani when COVID-19 hit. Of these:

- **40% received some support** from Makani
- **23% received messaging** about MoE online learning
- **33% received message about how to deal** with being stuck at home
- **32% of parents report receiving messaging** on WhatsApp

UNICEF's Makani program provided informal learning support classes combined with psychosocial support and child protection messaging through a network of community-based centers

Centers closed, but facilitators adapted quickly:

- disseminate info on virus;
- distribute hygiene kits to most vulnerable;
- learning support via WhatsApp and
- messaging to parents on how to support children

'[The support we are getting from Makani] is very helpful for us now. They tell us that we should eat healthy food ... And we eat everything that includes Vitamin C ... They also explained how to study through TV ... We talk through WhatsApp and Imo, too.'
(12-year-old girl living in Zatari Camp)

Makani: Average Treatment Effect (NN Matching)

	Overall	Females	Syrians (Host)	Syrians (Camp)
=1 if Patient Health Questionnaire-8 (PHQ-8) Score ≥ 10 (suggest symptoms of moderate to severe depression)	-0.010 (0.016)	-0.015 (0.022)	0.012 (0.025)	-0.007 (0.027)
=1 if adolescent reports he/she has a friend that he/she can trust	0.038 (0.025)	0.073 (0.033)**	0.088 (0.035)**	0.023 (0.057)
=1 if adolescent had no interaction with friends either in person or online in past 7 days	-0.044 (0.023)*	-0.048 (0.035)	-0.051 (0.032)	-0.036 (0.054)
=1 if adolescent has complete/moderate increase in technology access	0.024 (0.026)	0.020 (0.035)	-0.009 (0.036)	0.128 (0.062)**
=1 if adolescent scored within high resilient coping range (13-16), Brief Resilient Coping Scale	0.017 (0.019)	0.004 (0.024)	-0.005 (0.028)	0.076 (0.045)*
=1 if adolescent wants to return to formal school when schools re-open (among those enrolled in formal school at onset of COVID-19.	0.022 (0.011)*	0.019 (0.014)	0.067 (0.017)***	0.009 (0.026)

Notes: Parameter estimates statistically different than zero at 99% (***), 95% (**), and 90% (*) confidence. Each cell is the coefficient from a separate regression and provides an estimate of the difference in the outcome between Makani and non-Makani participants. Estimates are derived from matching techniques that utilize the 'teffects' command in Stata to implement nearest Neighboring matching (using five matches per observation) to match participants to non-participants on a set of baseline variables arguably exogenous to Makani participation. These variables include the following baseline characteristics: asset decile, gender, age cohort, nationality, household size, whether the household is female headed, and if the household receives any aid. which computes robust Abadie-Imbens standard errors. Refer to Table 1 for detailed sample size information.

Married girls



Adolescent mother with her newly born child, Oromia, Ethiopia © Natalie Bertrams / GAGE 2019

Child Marriage

- Our sample includes 1,203 ever married girls (15+), and 2,420 never married girls in the same age-range; allowing us to assess the impact of COVID-19 on married girls.
- While the literature has focused on the potential of COVID-19 to increase rates of child marriage, limited evidence on impact of COVID-19 on already married girls.
 - Prior to COVID-19, married girls were more vulnerable than their non-married peers for some outcomes and in some contexts, but marriage also provided some protective benefits to adolescents.
 - During COVID-19-related lockdowns, married girls' outcomes were consistently **more negative** than those of their unmarried peers, suggesting not only that their wellbeing is more precarious overall but that informal and formal sources of support and safety nets are less responsive to married girls' needs in times of crisis.

Impact of Marital Status on Changes in Health and Economic Empowerment after COVID-19

Outcomes	Bangladesh- Cox's Bazaar		Ethiopia Urban	Jordan	
	All	Rohingya		All	Syrian
	(1)	(2)		(4)	(5)
=1 if self-reported health worse	0.074** (0.034)	0.038 (0.031)	-0.028 (0.038)	-0.026 (0.040)	-0.047 (0.043)
=1 if completely or moderately worried/anxious	0.062** (0.031)	0.020 (0.039)	0.067 (0.090)	0.125*** (0.019)	0.094** (0.031)
=1 if completely or moderately scared/fearful	0.064** (0.031)	0.042 (0.042)	0.114 (0.097)	0.097* (0.042)	0.081 (0.043)
= 1 if lost employment permanently or temporarily	0.111** (0.055)	0.151** (0.076)	-0.054 (0.088)	0.182*** (0.037)	0.170** (0.052)
=1 if hungry more often in past 4 weeks	0.049 (0.053)	0.050 (0.079)	0.146* (0.073)	-0.031 (0.032)	-0.042 (0.030)
=1 if thinks will be better off in a year	-0.053 (0.041)	-0.012 (0.044)	0.075 (0.102)	-0.037 (0.036)	-0.014 (0.040)
=1 if increase in technology access	-0.041 (0.042)	-0.012 (0.054)	-0.136* (0.074)	-0.135*** (0.028)	-0.121*** (0.021)
Observations	426	169	538	678	538

Qualitative quotes

'Sometimes we have to eat rice only with salt. We could sell food and buy something for us before. But [now] they give us food like we are beggars. The potatoes were 15/16 taka before. Now the price has risen up to 32/30 taka'

- 17-year-old married girl, Rohingya camp, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

'I rely on other people for information, even during the pandemic... There are persons who have mobile. But Facebook does not function on their mobiles. We also do not have electric light to charge the mobile and use it.'

- 17-year-old married girl, East Hararghe, Ethiopia

'I use Facebook but I use my husband's account. He doesn't allow me to download the application and have my own account. He refused, even now [lockdown] when we are at home all the time '

- 17-year old married Syrian refugee girl, Jordan

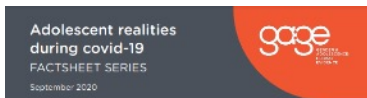
Next Steps

Planned longitudinal mixed-methods data through 2024 (1-2 more rounds in each context)

- Continue to improve measurement
- Tell stories of most vulnerable adolescents using mixed methods data.
- Assess post COVID-19 recovery, and factors that promote and hinder that recovery.

Continued engagement with UN agencies, World Bank, NGOs, and relevant government bodies to ensure that research findings inform policy and programming.

Data will all be publicly archived, and we welcome broad collaboration.



Adolescents' experiences of covid-19 and the public health response in Jordan

Authors: Sarah Baird, Nicola Jones, Agnieszka Malachowska, Majid Maswari, Erin O'Leary and Muhammad Danyal

Introduction

COVID-19 has rapidly changed the lives of individuals across the globe. While the direct health effects are largely contained within the elderly, the all other groups have also experienced effects on young people with varying degrees of severity. The factsheet is part of a series of reports on the impact of COVID-19 on young people, which are available on the GAGE website. The factsheet is part of a series of reports on the impact of COVID-19 on young people, which are available on the GAGE website.

Sample and context

This feature presents findings from GAGE's ongoing longitudinal survey in Jordan, which follows 4,000 adolescents over a period of 12 months from 2019 to 2020. The survey is part of a series of reports on the impact of COVID-19 on young people, which are available on the GAGE website.



Covid-19 phone survey (round 1)
Core respondent module

Authors: Sarah Baird, Agnieszka Malachowska and Nicola Jones
June 2020



Exploring the impacts of covid-19 on adolescents in Jordan's refugee camps and host communities

Authors: Agnieszka Malachowska, Taghreed Al-Ahmad, Wafa Al-Amari, Nafis Barakat, Sarah Al-Nawid and Nicola Jones

Introduction

The government of Jordan, after declaring the first covid-19 cases in early March, acted decisively to stop the spread of the virus, implementing a multi-layered system of measures to contain the virus across the country. The introduction of the Jordanian Law No. 15 of 2020, which prohibits the movement of individuals between their homes, after an initial 14-day quarantine period, has been a significant step in the country's response to the pandemic.



Covid-19 risk pathways for adolescent girls in low- and middle-income countries

Authors: Nicola Jones, Agnieszka Malachowska, Silvia Guglielmi, Fatima Alam, Bassem Abu-Hamad, Sarah Al-Nawid and Yasmineh Yacoub

August 2020



Authors: Sarah Baird, Jennifer Seager, Shwetana Sabarwal, Silvia Guglielmi, and Mahesh Sultan

SUMMARY

The new measures the effects of COVID-19 and subsequent economic and educational disruption on a cohort of young people in Bangladesh. The analysis is based on data from 2,055 in-school adolescents aged 15-18 collected prior to COVID-19 (February 2020) and 2,055 in-school adolescents aged 15-18 collected during COVID-19 (April 2020). Findings show that the pandemic has had a significant impact on the lives of young people, with many reporting increased anxiety, stress, and isolation. The pandemic has also led to a significant increase in the number of young people who are not attending school, which is a major concern for the government and the community.

BACKGROUND

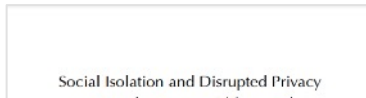
COVID-19 has rapidly changed lives across the globe. While the direct health effects are largely contained within the elderly, the all other groups have also experienced effects on young people with varying degrees of severity. The factsheet is part of a series of reports on the impact of COVID-19 on young people, which are available on the GAGE website.

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'Some got married, others don't want to attend school as they are involved in income-generation': Adolescent experiences following covid-19 lockdowns in low- and middle-income countries

Authors: N. Jones, S. Guglielmi, A. Malachowska, B. Abu-Hamad, W. Yacoub, S. A. Hameed, F. Abu-Hamad, F. Alam, S. Al-Nawid, N. Barakat, Y. Yacoub, K. Deshpande, A. Hameed, A. Qasbi, M. Sultan, K. Tishan and R. Workalemahu

March 2021



Social Isolation and Disrupted Privacy: Impacts of COVID-19 on Adolescent Girls in Humanitarian Contexts

Authors: Sarah Baird, Sarah Al-Nawid, Rebecca Dutton, Khadija Mita, Erin O'Leary, Taseen Wadhwani, and Nicola Jones

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns have disrupted the lives of young people, leading to increased isolation and disrupted privacy. This report explores the impacts of COVID-19 on adolescent girls in humanitarian contexts, focusing on the challenges they face in maintaining their social connections and privacy. The report also discusses the importance of providing support and resources to these young people during this difficult time.

Keywords: digital exclusion, gender, pandemic, privacy, refugees

Introduction

COVID-19 and government responses to contain it will have multi-dimensional effects on adolescent girls' wellbeing in the short and long term. One area of concern is the disruption to their lives of privacy and psychological isolation resulting from the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, and their likely reinforcement of pre-existing inequalities. Emerging research suggests that the physical distancing measures implemented to prevent the spread of the virus can lead to chronic loneliness and isolation, which can have significant impacts on mental health.

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Exploring the impacts of COVID-19 on Rohingya adolescents in Cox's Bazar: A mixed-methods study

Authors: Sarah Seager, Jennifer Seager, Khadija Mita, Sarah Baird, Wafa Sultan

November 2020

Contact Us

Dr Sarah Baird

sbaird@gwu.edu

WEBSITE

www.gage.odi.org

TWITTER

[@GAGE_programme](https://twitter.com/GAGE_programme)

About GAGE:

- Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) is a nine-year (2015-2024) mixed-methods longitudinal research programme focused on what works to support adolescent girls' and boys' capabilities in the second decade of life and beyond.
- We are following the lives of 20,000 adolescents in six focal countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

