



Formative Research: Adapting Indashyikirwa to the protracted Crisis in Syria

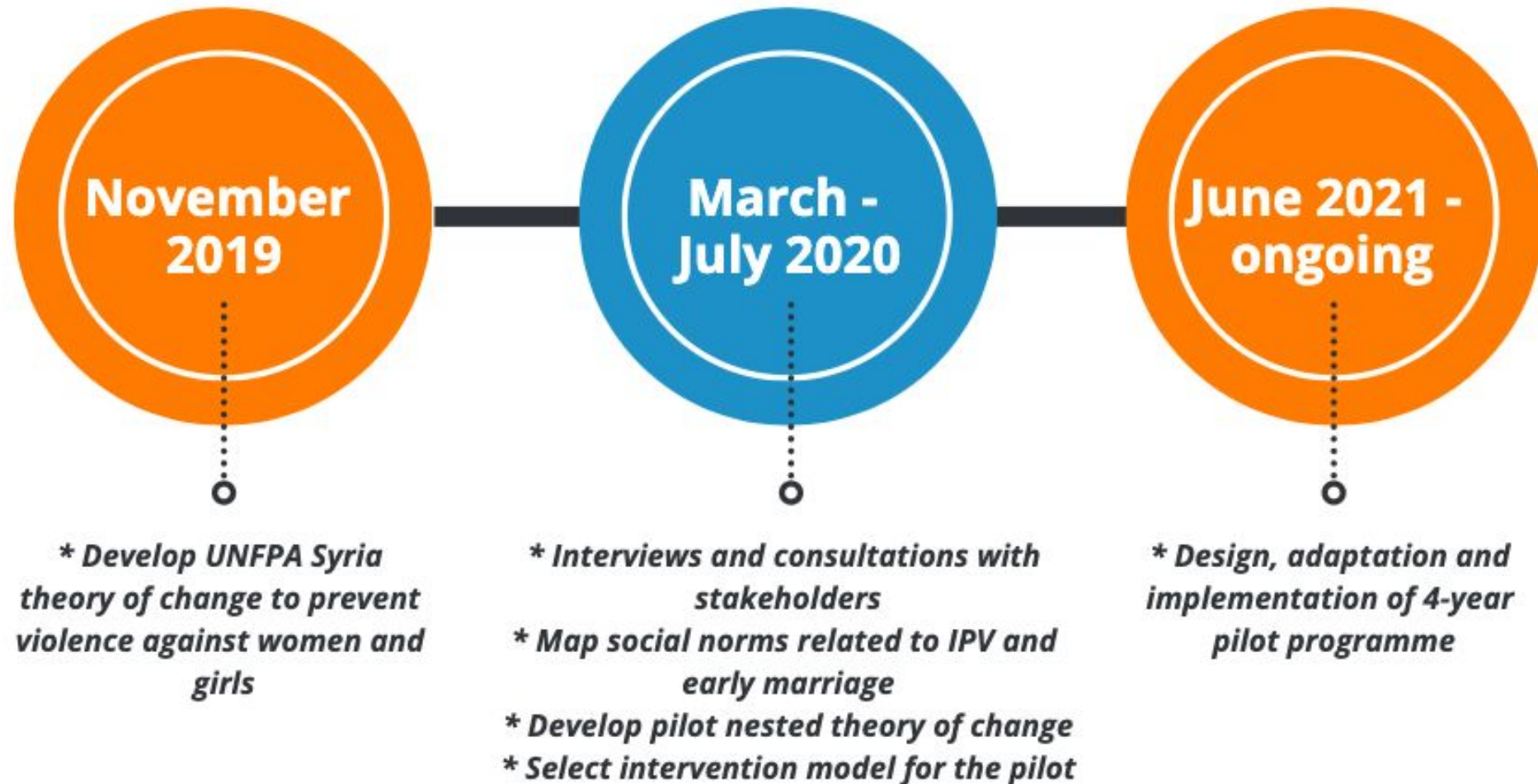
SVRI Forum 2022

Cancun, Mexico

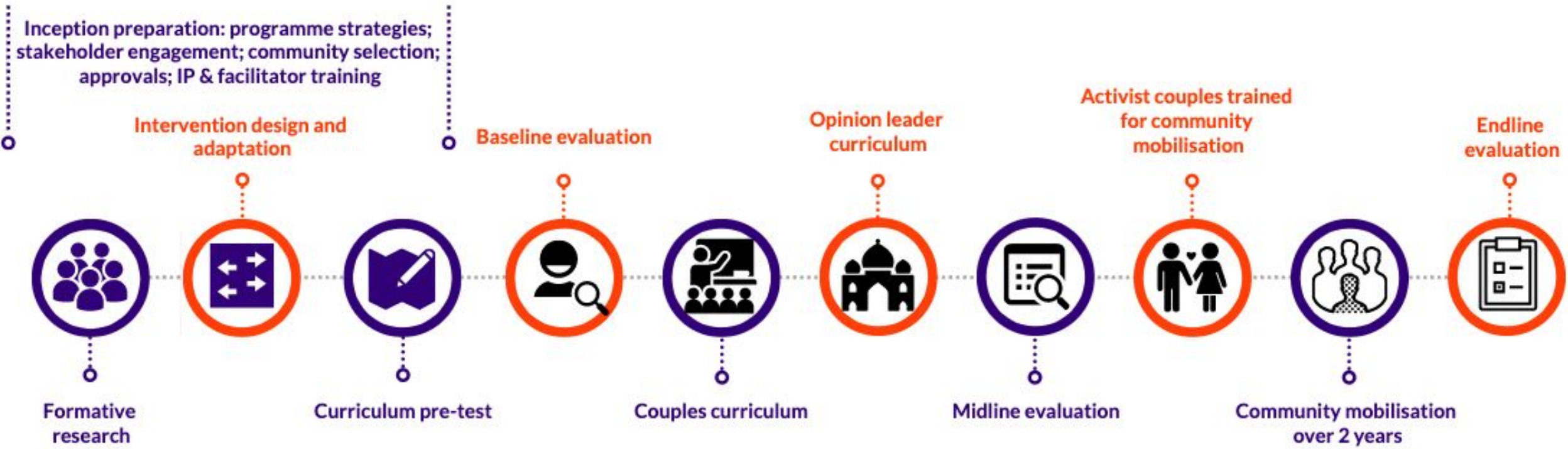
Objective

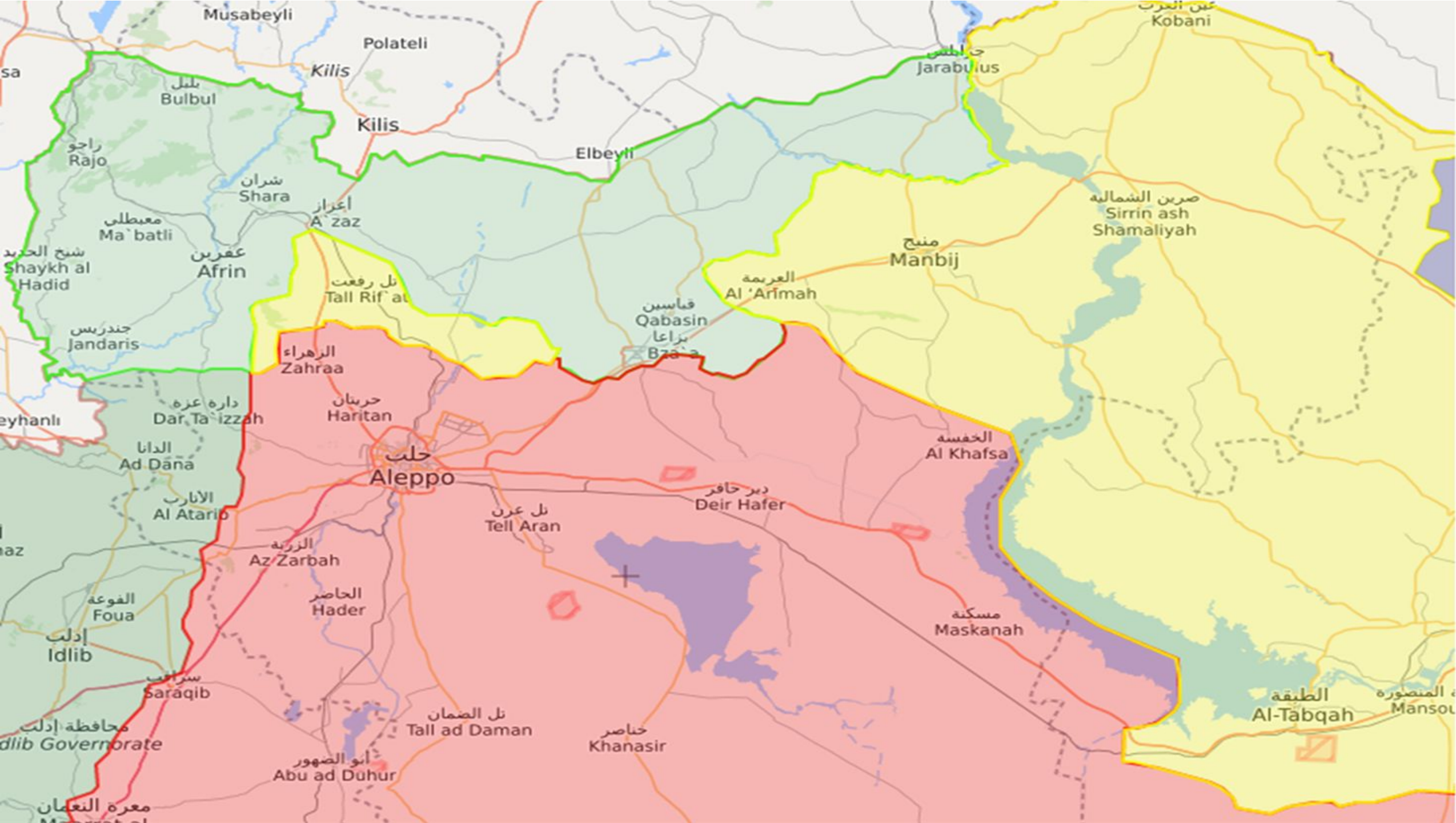
- To provide an overview of the Indashyikirwa adaptation process in Aleppo, Syria
- To share key findings of formative research conducted in Aleppo, Syria
- Discuss recommendations and adaptations of the Indashyikirwa approach to the protracted crisis in Syria

History of the pilot



Pilot process







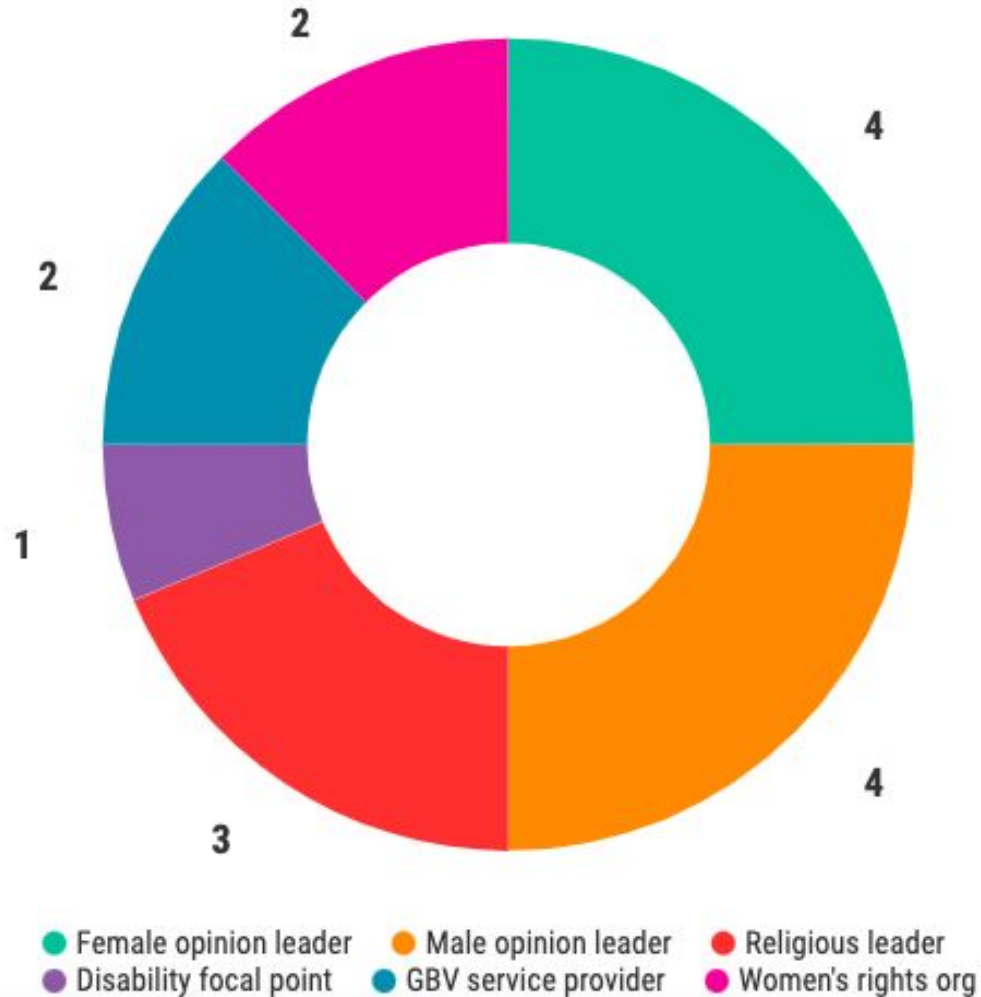
Formative Research



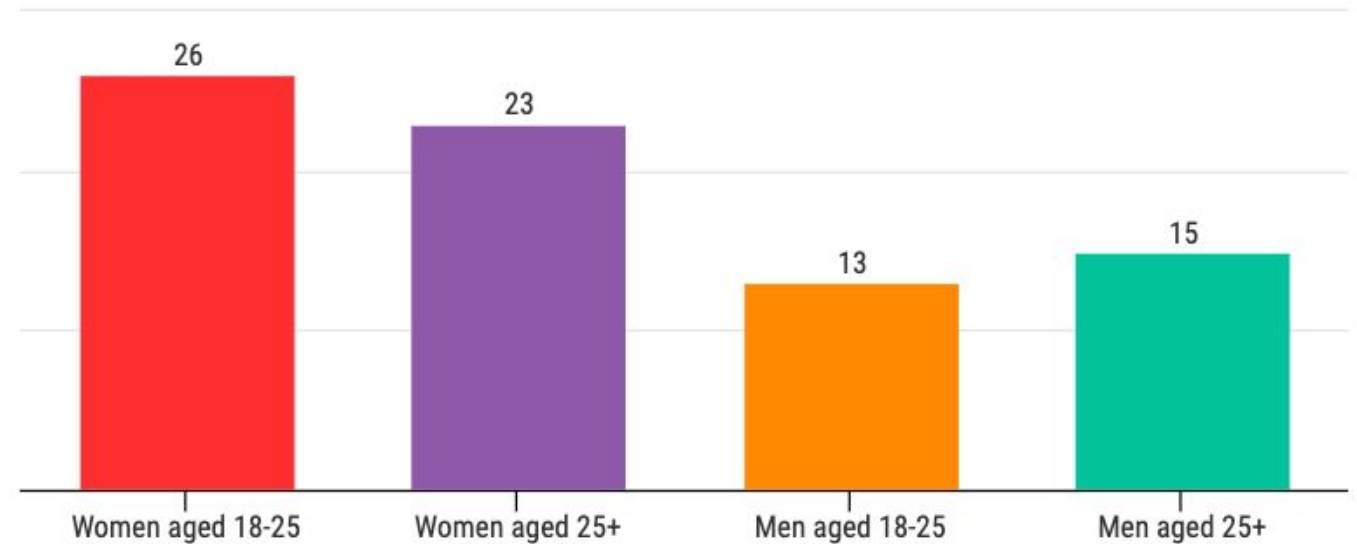
1. Social, cultural and demographic characteristics of target areas
2. Social norms driving early marriage and IPV
3. Decisions around help-seeking and reporting
4. Experiences of marginalised women and girls in relation to GBV and access to GBV services
5. Key reference groups for social norms change

Sample

16 key informant interviews



10 focus group discussions with 77 participants





Findings





Drivers of IPV

- **Economic stress and insecure livelihoods is strong driver of IPV, leading to marital conflict over control and distribution of economic resources.**
- **Other triggers of IPV include marital conflict over men's infidelity, or when they take additional wives (i.e., polygamy).**



Drivers of early marriage

- **Economic stress is also important driver of early marriage.**
- **Families marry girls to receive bride price or to offset household expenses onto the households girls' husbands.**



Social norms linked to IPV

- IPV is highly normalised (severe physical IPV less normalised)
- Women blamed for IPV that is perpetrated against them
- Women's perceived responsibility for IPV is framed as a justification for IPV
- IPV is considered to be a private matter that should not be interfered with
- Strong social norm that women should tolerate IPV to keep the family together - divorce highly stigmatising for women
- Strong norm that men have the right to punish their wives



Social norms linked to early marriage

- Early marriage of girls is highly normalised although not always seen as acceptable
- Strong social norm that girls need to be socially, physically and economically protected to maintain honour of girl and family
- Older girls are perceived to be unmarriageable
- Customary marriages are common and side-step the law by avoiding formal/legal marriage until age of 18
- Displacement and conflict have played a significant role in driving early marriage, and this is linked to both social norms and other drivers

Social Norms

Factors influencing help seeking

- Perception of IPV as private matter creates barriers to community intervention
- Women reporting or seeking help perceived as women 'ruining' the family
- Women fear divorce due to stigma and risk of losing their children

**"Divorce is unjustifiable unless there is a huge cause and it is the final stage with no way back. The society puts the blame of divorce, separation and their consequences on the wife always."
(FGD with men, 18-25, Bustan Zahra)**

Key reference groups

- Religious and community leaders often justify IPV and support early marriage, including performing customary marriages of girls
- Religious leaders and traditional community leaders are influential in intervening in cases of IPV and early marriage, but this is not even across geographical locations
- Fathers are important decision makers about girls' marriage. Older, respected female family and community members are also influential

Marginalised women and girls

Widowed and divorced women

- Both divorced women and widows, particularly divorced women, are highly stigmatised in their communities.
- Divorced women and widows appear to have limited opportunities to work
- Women who are divorced and widowed were identified as being at high risk of verbal abuse, sexual harassment and exploitation when they move outside their home
- Divorced women and widows were also said to be at risk of family violence, especially for divorced women e.g. controlling behaviours

Women with disabilities

- Common perception that women and girls with disabilities do not get married and so are not at risk of IPV or early marriage, which is contrary to evidence in Syria
- Respondents highlighted some circumstances in which women with disabilities would get married:

Second or third wife of polygamous men

Husband perceived as doing a 'service'

Marrying older men or men with disabilities

Family payment to husband



Adaptations





Early marriage is very prevalent, and linked to concerns about honour and protection

New couples and opinion leader curriculum session on early marriage which contains content on protection and honour. Also, focus on recruitment of parents of adolescent girls in couples curriculum.



Stigma and GBV against widowed and divorced women

Unable to include widowed and divorced women in couples curriculum, but content, examples and scenarios related to widowed and divorced women have been integrated into couples and opinion leader curricula to reduce stigma.



Women with disabilities may face challenges participating in the pilot

Strong gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) strategy, including targeted disability inclusion, and integration of content in the couples and opinion leader curricula aimed at reducing stigma against women with disabilities.



Challenges to recruitment and participation

Men may struggle to commit the to participate weekly in couples curriculum, and women may be restricted from family members. Stipends, refreshments, transport etc will be provided.



Variations in male and female opinion leaders across geographical areas

Original focus on religious leaders in opinion leader curriculum has been expanded to other opinion leaders, including female leaders and traditional and formal community leaders.



Expansion of opinion leader curriculum

Opinion leader curriculum expanded, drawing from sessions in couples curriculum. Role of opinion leaders also expanded - not just supporting an enabling environment for community mobilisation, but key change agents alongside couples.

Thank you

