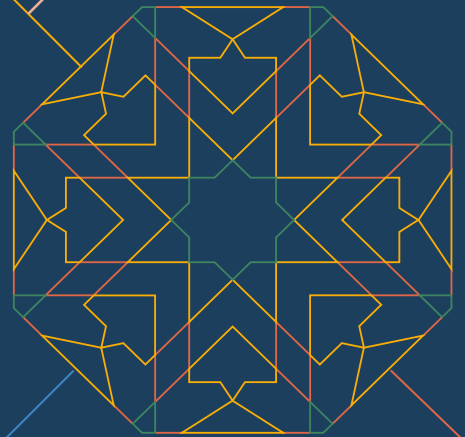
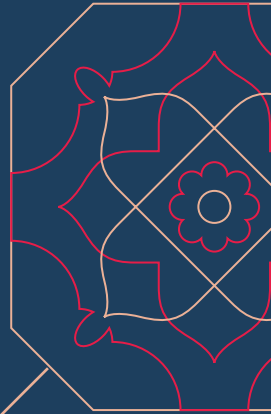
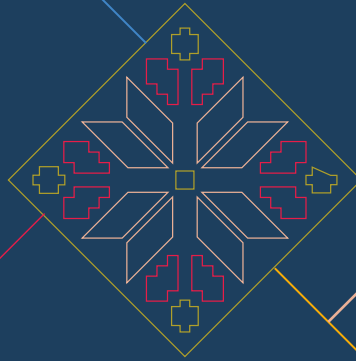
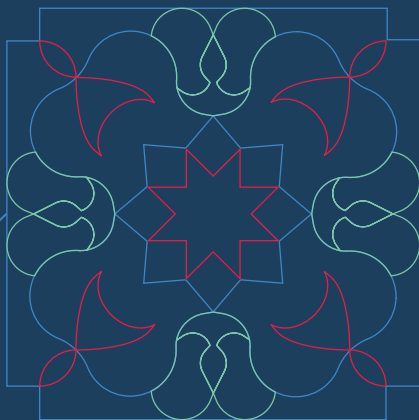
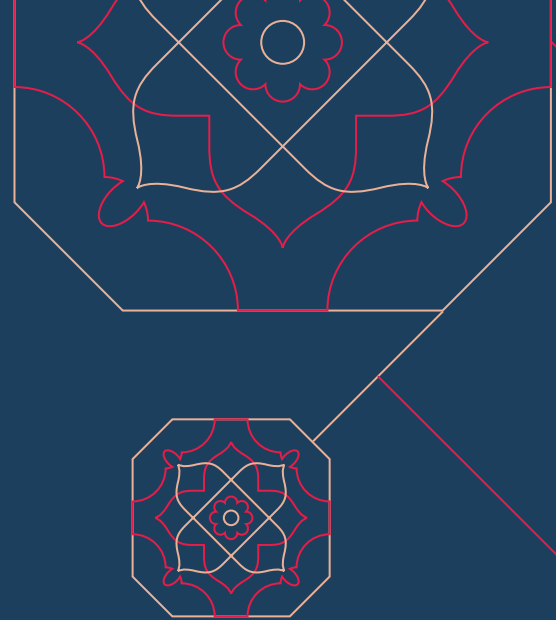


International Men and Gender Equality Survey IMAGES

LEBANON SUMMARY





Background

Gender relations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have become a subject of heated debate caught between the potency of traditions and modern influences. The International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) MENA country report for Lebanon is an attempt to understand gendered life experiences of both men and women aged 18 to 59. In light of the ongoing conflict in Syria, and due to the great number of Syrians residing in Lebanese communities, it has been decided to include both Lebanese and Syrians in the study sample (only Syrians residing in urban areas were included in sample). This report presents the quantitative findings from Lebanon, which form a part of the IMAGES MENA multi-country study in Egypt, Morocco, Palestine and Lebanon. IMAGES studies emphasize the importance to understand men's behaviours and attitudes, which allows for more effective involvement of men in empowering women and fostering gender equality. In the Arab context, men have often been left behind in initiatives addressing gender related issues. IMAGES MENA Lebanon provides ground on how men can be engaged in empowering women, raise awareness and better promote gender equality in both public and private spheres.

This publication was produced under the UN Women Regional Programme 'Men and Women for Gender Equality', funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). This summary document draws from the Lebanon country report as well as the IMAGES MENA regional report, available at www.imagesmena.org

We would like to acknowledge the research partner, Connecting Research to Development (CRD) for having carried out the quantitative IMAGES study in Lebanon, with guidance from UN Women and Promundo.

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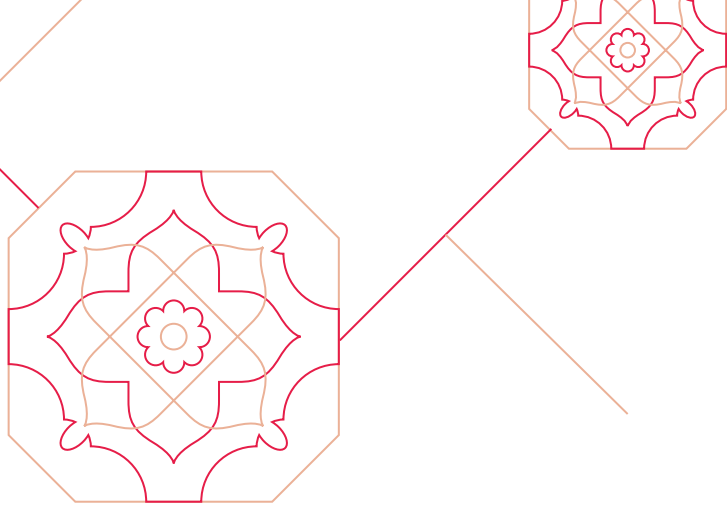
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1. IMAGES MENA Lebanon: Introduction and Methodology

Development towards gender equality in Lebanon has been decidedly shaped by the historical, political and legal particularities of the country (Abouchedid, 2007). Following the end of the 15-year long Lebanese Civil War that lasted till 1990, Lebanon began its progress towards emancipatory social change (Mitri, et al., 2016). In fact, the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991 and the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1997 indicate Lebanon's endeavor towards human-rights-based legal reforms (UNICEF, 2011). The Lebanese Constitution asserts that: "All Lebanese shall be equal before the law." They shall equally enjoy civil and political rights and shall equally be bound by public obligations and duties without any distinction." (The Lebanese Constitution of 1926, amended in 1995) Nowadays, Lebanon is often perceived as one of the most gender-equitable countries across the MENA region (Khatib, 2008).

However, reservations are maintained so far regarding several articles of the CEDAW on nationality rights and discrimination against women in marriage and family relations (UN Women, 1996). Furthermore, the fundamentally patriarchal legislative and political system is conducive to the creation of barriers towards achieving absolute equality between men and women (Khatib, 2008), although some recent developments in legislation are encouraging.

A recently added complexity has been the massive influx of Syrian refugees since 2011 (Refaat & Mohanna, 2013). This development has led to increased discussion and focus on the impact of conflict on the roles of men and women and women's rights, specifically regarding gender-based violence (GBV) (Anani, 2013; Masterson, Usta, Gupta, & Ettinger, 2014). Within this pressing environment, there is an essential need for solid data that highlights the influence of political, economic and social shifts of men's views on their role in their families and communities, and how these changes shape their own identities as men and their relations with others. Closing the gender gap by inclusive development, empowerment and positive imaging will ultimately enable men and women to work together towards collective well-being and more cohesive societies (UN Women, 2015).

In order to address this need for evidence-based policy reform, and perception and attitudinal change, researchers undertook the International Men and Gender Equality Survey in Lebanon, providing new, rich data on the gendered lives of Lebanese and Syrian respondents across the country.

The study objectives are:

- To assess the current behaviors and attitudes of men on a wide range of gender-related issues, including gender-equality and gender roles, and their experiences related to intimate relationships, fatherhood, and GBV;
- To compare these results with women's attitudes and behaviors;
- To assess men's knowledge of and attitudes towards policies that have sought to promote gender equality;
- To explore factors that may explain variations in men's behaviors in their family lives and intimate relationships, including childhood experiences of violence, gender norms, stress, migration, and unemployment, among others.

Although Lebanon posed particular political, demographic, and methodological challenges for data collectors, the resulting dataset and conclusions offer many unprecedented and useful insights into the gendered lives of Lebanese and Syrian respondents across the country. The nationwide household survey, carried out during the period from June to September 2016, comprised 1050 men and 1136 women¹ ranging from 18 to 59 years old, either of Lebanese or Syrian descent. Study topics included attitudes towards gender equality, experiences during childhood and in later life, marriage and divorce, household dynamics, violence experience, quality of life and attitudes towards sexual diversity. With a rough ratio of one quarter Syrian to three quarter Lebanese, the sample was nearly proportionate to the population's representation in Lebanon at the time of the study, although some sample features (education level and marital status) were found to differ somewhat from previous nationwide estimations of the population characteristics, with the sample being highly educated, around half of the sample having ever been married and about 80 percent of men compared to 40 percent of women being currently employed; these details are presented at length in the full report. Nonetheless, the study and sample make a meaningful contribution to the body of knowledge on gender dynamics and masculinities in Lebanon.

2. Key findings

The full country report of IMAGES Lebanon data is organized as follows: Following the thorough presentation in the first three chapters related to the IMAGES Background and Rationale (Chapter 1), Methodology (Chapter 2), and Sample Characteristics (Chapter 3), the report's findings are grouped into thematic areas in Chapter 4. The report concludes with a set of concise, country-specific conclusions and recommendations (Chapter 5). The primary findings and messages emerging from the findings set forth in Chapter 4 include the following:

ATTITUDES TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY

There is a relatively positive attitude towards gender equality, but women are significantly more supportive to gender equality than men.

Traditional gender roles remain salient in both private and public spheres, yet many

¹ These numbers reflect the completed questionnaires.

women and men (although fewer men than women) showed some dimension of positive perceptions towards gender equality. Among the Syrian refugee population, attitudes tend to be slightly more conservative and inequitable, by certain measures of gender-related attitudes and behaviors. Younger respondents, those with more education, those with greater wealth, those whose mothers had higher levels of education, and those whose fathers - at their childhood homes - participated in domestic tasks perceived socially as feminine, hold more equitable views.

Respondents show mixed results with regards to attitudes on other domains of gender equality, with women consistently showing more equitable attitudes than men. Both men and women were asked more specifically about their opinions about gender equality in Lebanon and its future progress and implications. Fully two thirds of men disagreed that “the idea that men and women are equal is not part of our traditions and culture in Lebanon,” for instance. By contrast, two thirds of women agreed with such a statement.

Participants were also asked about their attitudes towards women’s participation in leadership positions, specific jobs, and in politics. Men were much more likely to express resistance to women in public leadership than women. When asked about their support for women in various public positions, men were most likely to express support for women as heads of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and least likely to express support for women as religious leaders, heads of political parties, heads of states, and military officers. Men and women were also asked about their feelings related to having female colleagues or bosses, as well as their opinions on quota policies to designate a certain proportion of government, education and business leadership positions for women. While all participants seemed broadly comfortable working with women at similar or lower levels, men were less likely to express comfort with having a female boss. Fully 92 percent of women reported comfort with having a female boss, compared with 74 percent of men.

CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES OF GENDER RELATIONS

Participants’ experience with gender relations in the household during childhood largely followed a traditional division of roles.

Nearly half (48 percent) of men but only a third (33 percent) of women recalled their father, or any other man, ever participating in any “traditionally feminine” household work, including preparing food, cleaning the house, washing clothes, or cleaning the toilet. Instead, the most common tasks carried out by their father, or any other male participant in the household, were taking care of the children, shopping for household items, and helping the children with their homework. Younger respondents, respondents with greater educational attainment, and respondents from higher wealth categories were all more likely to report men being involved in traditionally feminine household work at their childhood homes.

A traditional pattern was also identified for respondents’ perspective on rules for themselves and other children of the same sex during childhood, with boys being more often allowed to go outside their homes than girls. When respondents were asked about their own participation in domestic work when they were children, women’s mean participation score in “feminine household tasks” was 0.6 times higher than men (56 percent of men had ever participated in such tasks in comparison to 84.5 percent of women).

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Participants' reflection on marriage and divorce revealed ambiguous attitudes and behaviors. A considerable percentage of both men and women gave relatively equal value to caregiving and career-based goals.

Very few respondents agreed with statements such as “If a man does not marry, he is not a man”, for instance, or “a man should not marry a woman who is more educated than him”. Surveyed men were far more open to informal marriages than women. The majority of men (87.9 percent) also reported that they would appreciate if their wives work after marriage and contribute to the household finances. Also the majority of men liked to control their wives, wanting to know where their partners are all the time, and half of them do not allow their wives to wear certain clothes.

Attitudes about divorce reflected divergence between men and women. Some 94 percent of women believed they should have the right to divorce. In contrast, only 63 percent of men felt that women should have this right. Both men and women felt that joint custody of children is the best arrangement in case of divorce, with upwards of 87 percent agreement on this item. Around half of both men and women affirmed the belief that “divorce will lead to the breakdown of society.”

GENDER DYNAMICS IN HOUSEHOLDS

Men and women reported a gender-based division of household roles, describing that women were more involved in washing clothes, cleaning chores and preparing food for the family.

IMAGES MENA Lebanon investigated several aspects of gender dynamics in the household, focusing on the participation in housework, the final authority for decisions made in the household, couple satisfaction/communication, and child care. According to respondents, decisions in the household tend to be made by the husband or by both husband and wife jointly, but very rarely by the wife alone (mirroring childhood experiences of decision-making patterns in the household). Women reported washing clothes, cleaning the kitchen or sitting rooms, and cleaning the bathroom or toilet almost unanimously, while only 26 percent of ever-married men reported ever carrying out these tasks.

In terms of supporting their wives during antenatal healthcare visits, the majority of men (84.2 percent) reported to have accompanied their wives. However, only 55.5 percent attended such visits with the healthcare provider, and the rest sat in the waiting room, dropped their wives at the entrance, or waited outside.

Although fathers carry out a limited amount of daily caregiving, there are exceptions, and this points to possible pathways towards equality. As with domestic work, women reported far greater involvement in routine caregiving than men. Furthermore, many men and women in the sample stated that a father spends too little time with his children.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Even as study participants widely felt that violence at home is unacceptable, their rates of perpetration of violence against children, sexual harassment, and intimate partner violence are significant.

Violent experiences during childhood were commonly shared by study participants, with male respondents being more likely to recall being physically abused at home or at school than female respondents. As adults, many respondents report using physical discipline and other forms of violence against their children. Around half of both interviewed men and women acknowledged to have ever spanked or slapped their child on any part of their bodies, and approximately one quarter of both men and women ever hit their child on the bottom or elsewhere on the body with something like a belt, stick or any other hard object. Men tended to use force more often towards boys than girls, whereas women did not show a clear gender division in using physical punishment towards their children. Older individuals with lower education and lower wealth were more likely to use violence against their children.

The majority of women reported having experienced sexual harassment in public spaces at some point in their lives, half of them within the previous three months. Nearly 60 percent of women reported having ever experienced some form of sexual harassment in the street; one-third of men reported having ever carried out this harassment. Men with inequitable gender attitudes and men who experienced violence at their childhood homes were significantly more likely to report having perpetrated sexual harassment.

Randomized nationally representative household survey research on intimate partner violence is unprecedented in Lebanon. As such, it remains difficult to ascertain a rigorous estimate of the prevalence of this violence in the country. As the first truly randomized nationwide household survey investigating intimate partner violence² in the country, IMAGES MENA Lebanon sought to adhere to the highest standards of research rigor. In accordance with the highest ethical and safety recommendations for research on intimate partner violence, the research team took specific steps after finding that respondents' reported rates of violence were lower than the existing (if limited) evidence-based case, and that the expert observation suggested should be the case. This included two follow-up studies: one qualitative (which included focus groups with 25 Lebanese men, 12 Syrian men, 37 Lebanese women, and 20 Syrian women), and one quantitative with a more focused questionnaire (that surveyed 246 Lebanese men and 272 Lebanese women, residing in different areas in five governorates in Lebanon, all of whom are ever-married respondents), both discussed at length in the full report. Acknowledging all of these constraints and challenges, IMAGES data show that 31 percent of women in Lebanon report ever experiencing one or more forms of intimate partner violence, and 24 percent of men report ever perpetrating one or more forms of intimate partner violence.

HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Men and women rated their health mostly as good or very good, but substantial rates of work-related stress and fears for physical or economic well-being were also expressed.

Depressive symptoms were common for men (27 percent) and women (35 percent). Even as women were more likely to show depressive symptoms than men, less-wealthy respondents of all genders and those with only primary education showed higher rates of depressive symptoms. Many respondents also shared fears for their physical and economic well-being. Some 96 percent of men and 97 percent of women reported that they “worry about their families' safety”.

² The types of intimate partner violence investigated in the study were: emotional/psychological violence, economic violence, physical violence, and sexual violence.

Furthermore, men's reports suggest that they are more reluctant to seek health care than women. In cases of stress, depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, or substance abuse, both men and women (39 percent and 37 percent, respectively) reported seeking help from people other than health professionals for mental illness; only 3 percent and 2 percent, respectively, sought professional treatment.

Finally, reproductive health behavior responses - assessed by contraception use and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) testing - showed higher rates of condom use among never married men than women, yet low numbers of HIV testing were reported among both sexes.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMOSEXUALITY

A low level of tolerance for homosexuality was apparent among the respondents.

Respondents shared predominantly negative attitudes towards homosexuality, with men being less tolerant of homosexuality than women. 27 percent of men, as compared to 55 percent of women, reported that homosexuals should be treated as a normal part of society. The majority of men believed that homosexuality is immoral and that it endangers the institution of the family.



3. Conclusions

The IMAGES MENA survey paints a varied picture of gender dynamics in Lebanon. The behaviors and attitudes uncovered in the survey reflect the complexity of gender norms shaped by traditions, changing gender identities and peculiar life situations. On the one hand, some men are broadly supportive of some forms of gender equality. Those with higher education, those who have educated mothers, and/or those whose fathers were involved in commonly perceived feminine tasks demonstrate higher levels of agreement with gender-equitable attitudes at a statistically significant level. Younger men display somewhat more equitable views than older men. At the same time, however, results show that women of all ages display more equitable attitudes than men. Some male respondents do report putting more equitable ideas into practice, however, including through participating in routine domestic work and childcare. Among the Syrian refugee population, attitudes tend to be slightly more conservative and inequitable by certain measures of gender-related attitudes and behaviors.

The findings also point to the need for legal and policy reform to be coupled with attitudinal change among the general population in an effort to address gender-based discrimination, as acceptance of gender equality among the general population still needs to be achieved. Even with some men holding some equitable views, the study still points to men's control over women's movements, their decision-making, and the most intimate spheres of their lives. Male respondents largely disapproved that women may assume high executive positions as well. On the whole, traditional gender norms related to masculinity and femininity often appeared to be internalized by both men and women on an equal footing.

Gender dynamics in the household in Lebanon, likewise, are mostly based on gender-inequitable divisions between men and women. This was affirmed by both the respondents' memories of their fathers' involvement in housework and the ever-married respondents' reports of their own participation in domestic tasks.

Violence was prevalent during the childhood of many respondents. Many men and women experienced physical violence at home or at school during their childhoods. Many, too, witnessed physical violence against their mothers at home. Later in life, such violence seems to repeat itself, with many respondents reporting the use of physical discipline towards their own children. Violence experienced during childhood is often associated with adult forms of violence, including street-based sexual harassment and intimate partner violence. More than half of women reported ever having experienced some form of sexual harassment in streets, while only one third of men reported having perpetrated such kind of harassment. Men with inequitable gender attitudes and childhood experiences of violence were significantly more likely to have perpetrated sexual harassment.



4. Recommendations

The IMAGES MENA Lebanon study provides valuable evidence on attitudes and behaviors towards gender issues among the Lebanese and Syrians residing in Lebanon. Based on the findings, key action-oriented recommendations have been formulated:

ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH A MULTISECTORAL COMMITMENT

Leverage gender equality in all sectors, such as education, health, and economy through assessing and considering the impact of any action, legislation, policy, or program on gender – e.g. for women and men, boys and girls. The IMAGES MENA Lebanon data showed that traditional gender divisions persist in both public and private spheres. A national intersectoral strategy would be an effective measure to integrate a gender equality perspective in all policies and programs, ensuring the elaboration of gender sensitive topics and fostering changes in the norms and rules. This strategy should focus on legislative reforms on women's rights complemented with public discussions and awareness raising campaigns to make men and women understand why such reform is necessary and how it will benefit them and their society at large. It should be informed by Sustainable Development Goal 5 “to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, thus to involve men and boys proactively and hold them accountable for their roles in achieving this goal. The strategy should furthermore include, but not be limited to:

- Legal reforms, in compliance with international legislation and treaties regarding gender equality (e.g. the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women - CEDAW);
- Improvement of the capacity of social services - to prevent and respond to gender- based violence and other gender-related issues;
- Gender awareness trainings provided to social services professionals and law enforcement personnel;
- Awareness raising about gender equality through campaigns and educational curricula --building on the current interest by the Government of Lebanon in integrating gender in educational policy -- and the promotion of male role models for gender equality; and
- Promotion of gender sensitive and family friendly working environments.

The engagement of all stakeholders is crucial, including media, the private sector and faith-based leaders.

PROMOTING EQUAL GENDER ROLES EARLY ON

Raise awareness among young girls and boys for gender equality by investing in an education for children and youth engagement that fosters both genders equally without promoting gender stereotypes. Among the participants of the IMAGES MENA Lebanon study, the exposure to traditional gender roles and dynamics during childhood was reflected in the attitudes and practices they adopt in their later lives. Therefore, the positive portrayal of the diverse roles each gender can have at home or in public life, for example men and boys doing domestic work or care-giving tasks for children, shall be used to sensitize both young girls and boys to make their own choice regarding their gender role. Educational curricula, literature and plays targeting children can be used to dissolve gender stereotypes and reinforce gender equality, especially with regard to sharing household responsibilities. Teachers should also be trained in gender sensitive and non-violent teaching methodologies. Moreover, parent training programs should be designed to support both mothers and fathers to raise their sons and daughters equally and to practice non-violent child rearing.

INCORPORATING FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES IN THE WORKPLACE

Support mothers and fathers equally to balance and fulfill their work and family obligations by establishing family-friendly policies in the workplace. Both men and women in the IMAGES MENA Lebanon study were in favor of paternity leave (currently not existing in Lebanon's labor law), which indicates positive attitudes towards men's involvement in child care. Paternity leave is important to establish a more gender-equal home environment. Furthermore, flexible schedules, onsite child care facilities at work, subsidized childhood care services and the provision of child sick leave facilitate the parents' work-life balance. Gender sensitive social protection policies are vital for safeguarding employment and income for mothers and fathers equally.

EMPOWERING THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

Enable women to claim their right to participate in economic and political affairs. Enable women to claim their right to participate in economic and political affairs. Despite that IMAGES MENA Lebanon presented generally positive attitudes towards women's economic participation, however, when job opportunities are scarce, men's access to employment was prioritized by both women and men. The majority of women and men expressed that there should be more women in positions of political authority, however, men and women tended to not favor women in high authoritative positions. Therefore, raising awareness is essential on women's potential and equal rights to participate in both economic and political spheres- and for the benefit of a more gender equal society for all. Male senior leaders in the workplace as well as policy makers should be trained to encourage and support women to assume leadership positions. Regarding economic participation, initiatives that enhance economic opportunities for women, such as women entrepreneurship schemes and the promotion of economic policies supporting women, are suitable approaches that can enhance women's participation in the Lebanese labor market. Promoting equality requires a dual approach, e.g. promoting women's participation in the workplace and men's participation in domestic chores and care giving. Leadership trainings for women should be combined with actions to sensitize men about supporting women in the workplace and in leadership positions. In politics, advocating for women entering the political arena, while addressing the barriers that they are facing to enter, along with a quota system for women parliamentarians, and the encouragement of Lebanese political parties to nominate women candidates - are all appropriate measures to encourage a fairer political representation in Lebanon.

STRENGTHENING FATHER'S INVOLVEMENT DURING PREGNANCY AND CHILD CARE

Encourage and facilitate men to accompany their wives before, during, and after the birth of a child. The majority of men in the IMAGES MENA Lebanon study accompanied their spouses to antenatal care visits at the health care centers, although only half actually accompanied their wives inside the health care centers where they were being examined by health care providers. Therefore, programmatic action in the communities and at health care facilities on active fatherhood shall take place to encourage men to accompany their wives more regularly. Health care facilities and health care policies should be developed to reinforce the fathers' involvement, including being present during child birth. Healthcare personnel should be trained to foster gender equality and to be sensitive to the needs of both women and men. Investments in fatherhood programs to engage men in child development, as part of parental trainings, can further be beneficial to promote positive ways of parenting.

PROMOTING EQUALITY DURING MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Allow both men and women equal say in decision making before, during and after marriage. A large proportion of ever-married men and women in the IMAGES MENA Lebanon study reported to have mutual decision-making habits for marriage planning and household finances. This existing equality between men and women provides a positive entry point to further promote gender equality in other spheres, such as parenthood, domestic work and social life. However, a sizable proportion of men liked to control their wives, wanting to know where their partners were all the time or not allowing them to wear certain clothes. On the question of divorce, more women than men believe that women should have the right to divorce. Hence, initiatives should stimulate acceptance and respect for one's own life choices and the right for women to end a relationship. Initiatives should further be developed that sensitize religious institutions to the equal decision-making power of husbands and wives.

ELIMINATING ANY ACCEPTANCE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Move towards non-acceptance of GBV by preventing any kind of violence during childhood, at private homes between intimate partners and in public spaces among strangers. IMAGES MENA Lebanon confirmed high rates of violence against women both in private and public spheres. In addition, the study also confirmed the acceptance of violence, anchored in the practice and witnessing of violence throughout the life cycle. There is then a need for comprehensive legislative, policy and institutional reforms addressing violence against women, including, not only the criminalization of all forms of VAW, the effective prosecution and punishment of perpetrators, but also the prevention, empowerment, support and protection of survivors. Although law (293) on family violence, passed by the Lebanese Parliament in 2014, was the first of its kind in Lebanon, there is more that needs to be done to ensure that the law addresses all forms of violence, and to ensure its proper implementation. The cancellation of clause (522) in the Lebanese Penal Code, allowing rapists to escape punishment by marrying their victim, is also a step in the right direction; however, other reforms are still needed in the Code. Furthermore, there is a need to scale up community based interventions, targeting men and women and aiming to foster favorable social norms and attitudes to promote gender equality, prevent violence against women and enhance the engagement of by-standers to speak out against violence. Community interventions should reinforce the engagement of men and boys through implementing GBV prevention curricula for young men and young women, employers and teachers but

also through engaging faith-based organizations and building the evidence on fatherhood skills-building programmes. The provision of appropriate services to survivors is also a key element in the prevention and response to violence against women to open possibilities to seek help and advice, taking into consideration the issues of privacy and confidentiality.

PROVIDING ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Establish psychosocial and mental health programs accessible for men and women throughout Lebanon. Stress and fear were seen as common features among IMAGES MENA Lebanon study participants. Psychological help is evidently crucial to cope with difficult everyday life stress. It is suggested that the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) leverage the integration of mental health in primary health and social outlet networks to meet women's and men's needs and to advocate for and allow fair access to these services. These services and the health professionals need to be sensitive to both men's and women's mental health issues.

ADDRESSING NEGATIVE BODY IMAGES AND SEXUAL HEALTH ISSUES

Empower men and women to be self-confident about their bodies and promote awareness for sexual and reproductive health protection. Women in the IMAGES MENA Lebanon study reported to be less confident than men about their bodies, as around half of all men and women would like to lose weight. Ever-married respondents were less likely to seek health care for a sexually transmitted disease; while contraceptive use was often rejected due to religious beliefs, misconceptions, or lack of knowledge. Therefore, the Lebanese MoPH and MoSA are advised to accelerate the establishment of youth-friendly and gender-sensitive reproductive health services including sexual health and sexually transmitted infection (STI) care within the primary health care and social outlet networks. These services are important entry points for discussing issues of GBV, gender and sexual health with young men and women.

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE AND MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS

Develop cultural and gender sensitive programs targeting vulnerable populations living in the communities. In the IMAGES MENA Lebanon study, respondents with lower wealth and lower education had high prevalence of stress and fears in their lives. Specific attention shall be given to the living conditions of the vulnerable host communities, (and Syrians and Palestinians) and their health and social well-being. Culturally sensitive mass communication campaigns will help to inspire the population and break gender stereotypes at all levels of society.

ENHANCING THE UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER ISSUES

Conduct further research on gender topics to deepen the understanding of how gender dynamics affect people's lives and well-being and to develop strategies to promote equality between men and women. IMAGES MENA Lebanon has provided insight into men's and women's gender-related attitudes and behaviors valuable to conceive social norms and perspectives towards gender. Now it is vital to carry on research to translate and transform the evidence into feasible and applicable interventions and programs, to promote a positive discourse about gender and to enhance gender equitable attitudes and practices. Subjects to be further explored comprise:

- Variations by nationality and other key background characteristics in shaping gender identity, attitudes and behaviors;

- Culturally sensitive approaches to break down gender stereotypes in order to empower boys and girls, men and women to make free life choices;
- Feasible and evidence-based programs and policies to support families and fathers involvement in child care and domestic work;
- Economic empowerment of women and its link with household well-being;
- Gender-based violence, its roots and successful countermeasures to protect children, men and women who experience violence at their homes;
- Exploring alternative and innovative ways to collect data on sensitive topics, such as violence;
- Patterns of gender differences in seeking healthcare services and their impact on the well-being of men and women.

