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INFOSHEET

2018 PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER EQUALITY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

REPUBLIC OF
NORTH MACEDONIA

The data in this factsheet was collected in 2018 as part of a baseline survey exercise conducted by the Centre for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) under the EU-UN Women regional programme 'Implementing Norms, Changing Minds.' Data includes responses from 600 respondents including women, girls, men and boys in 37 municipalities of North Macedonia, in both urban and rural areas. Detailed information about CRPM can be found at: <http://www.crpm.org.mk/>

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COUNTRY CONTEXT

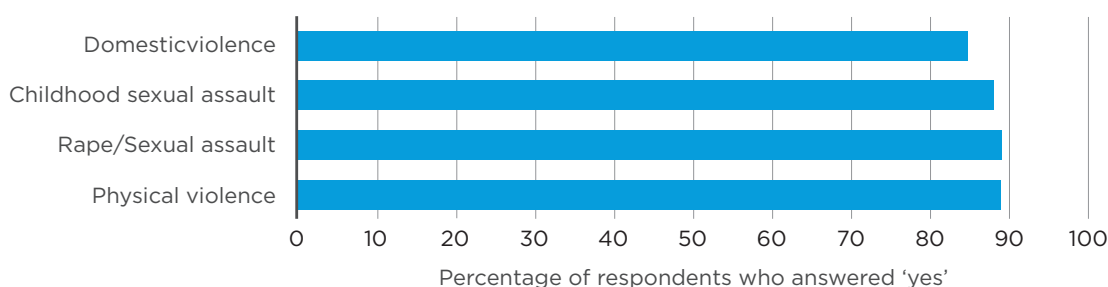
- The Republic of North Macedonia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Optional Protocol in 1994 and 2003, respectively. The government signed the Istanbul Convention in 2011 and ratified the Convention in 2017.
- Regarding legal protection from domestic violence, the Criminal Code does not define domestic violence as a gender-based violence and therefore does not identify it as a specific form of discrimination against women. The definition of domestic violence is gender neutral and does not regulate certain types of abuse, such as economic violence. In the Criminal Code, neither psychological violence nor stalking is included as a separate crime. Additionally, not all forms of sexual harassment are criminalized.
- Despite significant legal improvements, gender gaps and inequalities continue across all levels. Women make up only 39.5% of the labor force, earn 17.9% less than men per hour of work,¹ and make up 64.2% of the country's economically inactive population.²
- Women in North Macedonia are disproportionately affected by domestic and gender-based violence; 82% of domestic violence survivors are women, and men receive 93% of domestic violence convictions.³ There is a strong need for more research and data on gender-based violence.

Knowledge of the Law

Key finding #1: Only half (55.5%) of respondents were aware of the existence of a law on gender equality, and 73.7% were aware of the existence of laws against violence against women and domestic violence. A slightly higher proportion of men than women knew of the existence of such laws.

Key finding #2: A high proportion of respondents were aware that certain forms of violence were prohibited by law (see Figure 1 below). North Macedonia has not specifically criminalized many other forms of violence against women, such as stalking and sexual harassment.

Figure 1: Are the following forms of violence punishable by law?

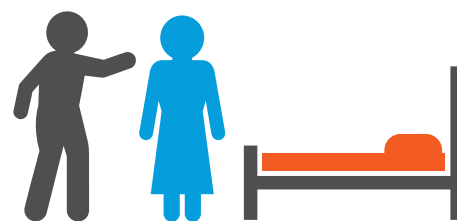


1. "Gender pay gap in Western Balkan Countries: evidence from Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia", FREN, Belgrade 2013. <http://www.fren.org.rs/sites/default/files/Gender%20pay%20gap%20in%20the%20Western%20balkan%20countries.pdf>

2. Labour Force Survey, State Statistical Office of FYR Macedonia, Skopje, 2014

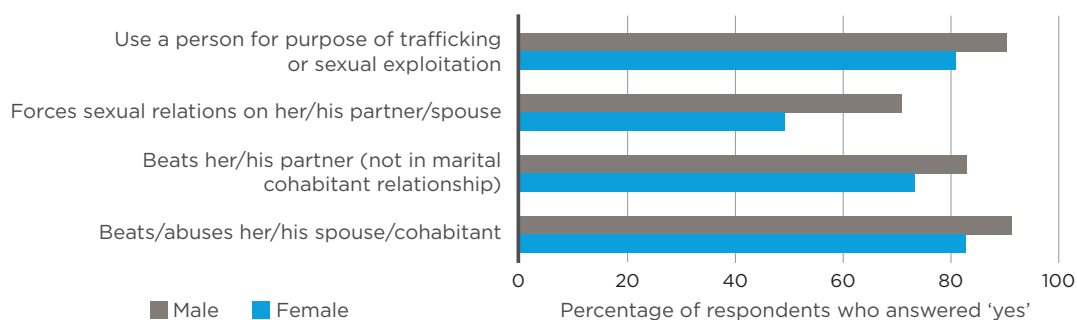
3. Mirceva S., Caceva V., Kenig H., Voice for Justice, Assessment of the court procedures for domestic violence cases with special focus on the managing the cases from gender perspective, Institute for Sociological, Political and Legal Research - ISSPI, Skopje, 2014.

Key finding #3: Women have low confidence that people will be punished for breaking the law. Noteworthy contradictions were found between forms of violence that women knew to be illegal (Figure 1) and forms of violence that women believed an individual would be punished for committing (Figure 2). While nearly all women knew that rape/sexual assault was punishable by law, only 49% of women believed that a person would be punished for forcing sexual relations on their spouse/partner. This contradiction may be the result of 1) not perceiving marital rape as equally criminal as rape in other circumstances, 2) not trusting that the law will be implemented effectively for this crime, and/or 3) women’s personal experiences regarding a lack of punishment for perpetrators when they (or their female friends/family) report violence.



Only 49% of women believed that a person would be punished for forcing sexual relations on their spouse/partner

Figure 2: Would a person be punished if he/she...



Perception of gender roles

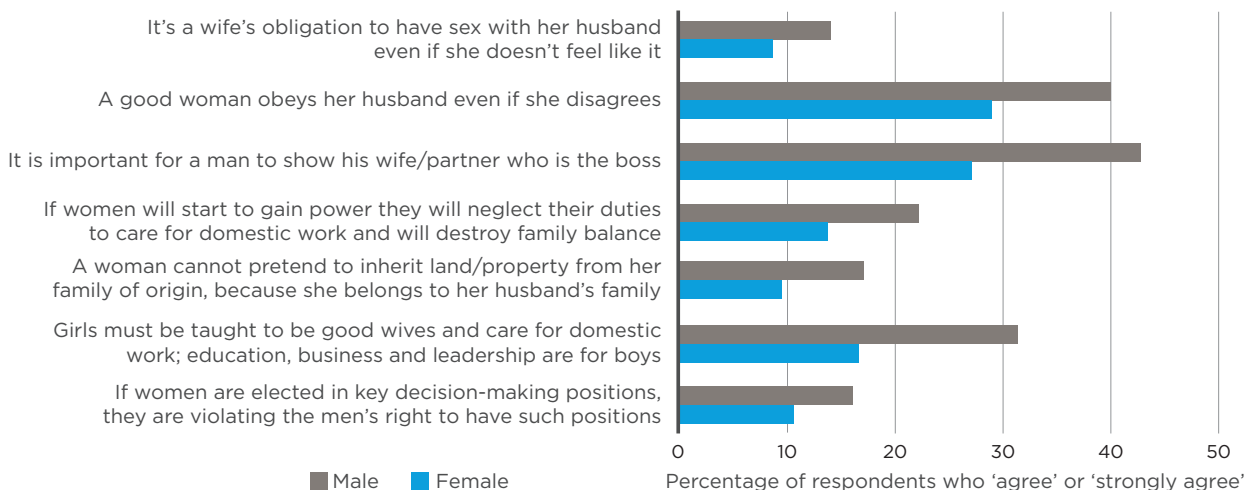
Key finding #1: Women are expected to behave within traditional gender roles. A notable proportion of both male and female respondents believe women to be better suited for domestic work and men to be better suited for leadership and paid work (see Figure 3 below). However, women present more equitable attitudes than men in nearly every category.

Key finding #2: Men are perceived to hold 'rightful' positions of dominance and power over women. These beliefs extend to men's 'rights' over women's behavior and attitudes. Compared to respondents from other countries, respondents from North Macedonia (men, in particular) show greater support for traditional and patriarchal gender roles.



Both male and female respondents believe women to be better suited for domestic work

Figure 3: What do you think about the following statements?



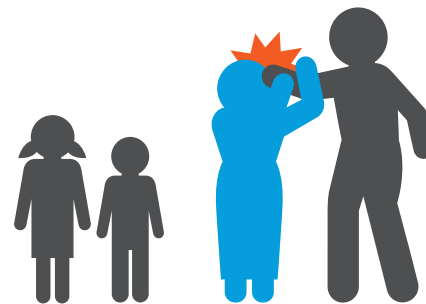
Attitudes toward violence against women

Key finding #1: A significant percentage of respondents hold beliefs that justify violence against women.

Respondents showed relatively strong support for statements that justify violence against women and place blame on women victims of violence. Notably, nearly half of men and 40% of women believed the myth that some women like to be beaten. Compared to other countries, women respondents were particularly supportive of these statements (see Figure 4 below).

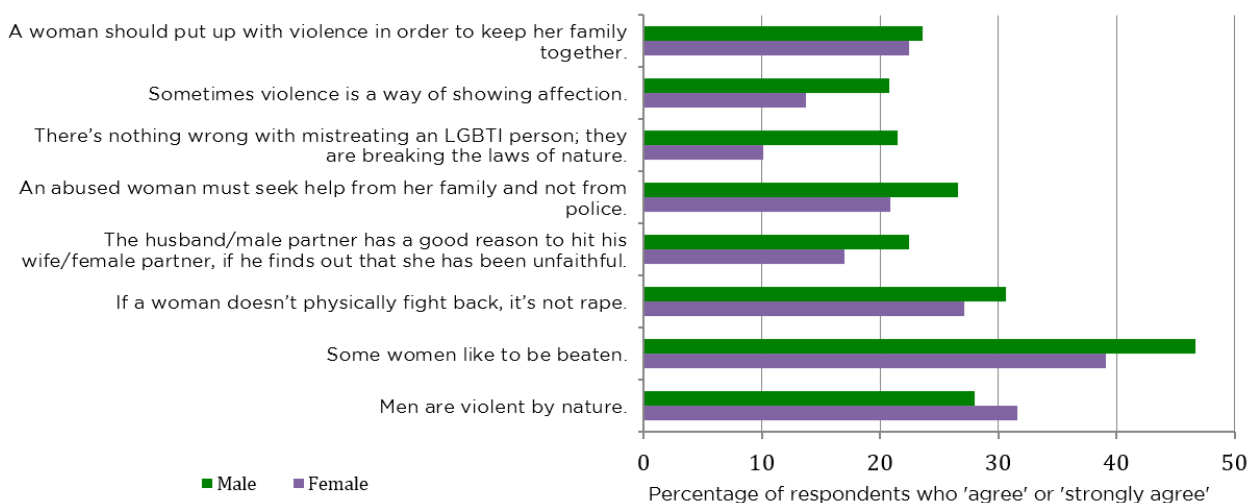
Key finding #2: Women are expected to endure violence in relationships. More than 1 in 4 male respondents and 1 in 5 female respondents believed that women shouldn't seek help from the police in situations of violence. Moreover, a similar percentage of men and women (24% and 23%, respectively) agreed that women should put up with violence for the sake of the 'family.'

Key finding #3: Beliefs that support traditional gender norms and beliefs that justify and minimize violence against women are inherently linked. These beliefs and attitudes are mutually reinforcing, and violence against women cannot be eradicated until women are seen and treated as equal to men. The perception of men as rightful holders of power over women promotes men's use of physical and non-physical violence in attempts to exercise that power. As in other countries of the region, respondents from North Macedonia supported the belief that "men are violent by nature," which minimizes men's violence towards women as normal and inevitable.



24% of men and 23% of women agreed that women should put up with violence for the sake of the 'family.'

Figure 4: What do you think about the following statements?

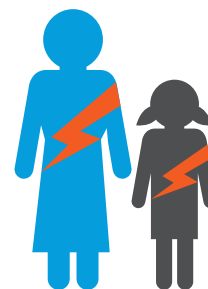


Willingness to prevent or report violence

Key finding #1: Compared to other countries, respondents from North Macedonia were less willing to take action to prevent and report violence. Only 70% would be willing to report violence that happened to someone else to the police, and only 68% would be willing to engage in any actions to prevent violence against women and girls. Women were somewhat more willing than men to report violence and seek assistance.

Key finding #2: Respondents were significantly less willing to help prevent violence against members of marginalized communities, highlighting how other forms of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity or sexual orientation intersect to enable and promote violence against women. While women were more willing to help victims of violence in some circumstances, they were not more willing than men to help individuals from minority groups.

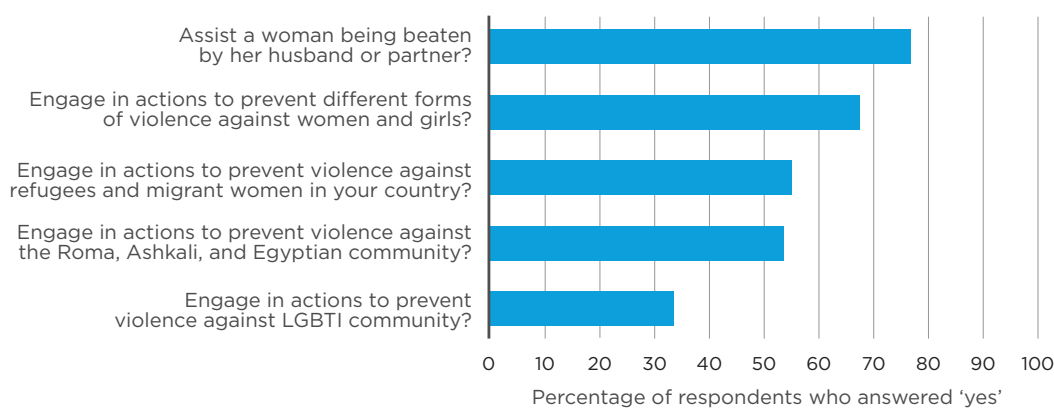
Key finding #3: In almost every category, women were more willing than men to act positively and proactively to escape or prevent violent situations and abuse. In the majority of questions, women showed to be more willing than men to act in situations of violence, especially towards vulnerable groups and in their own abusive relationships.



Only 68% of respondents

would be willing to engage in any actions to prevent violence against women and girls.

Figure 5: In the future, would you be willing to...



Commonality of discussions on VAW/G and gender equality

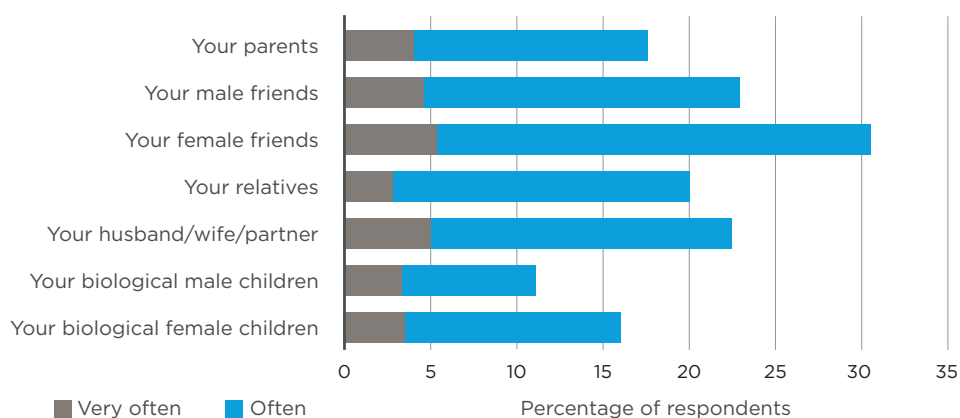
Key finding #1: Issues related to violence against women and girls are rarely discussed, even among family and friends. Respondents most often discuss these issues with female friends, and almost never discuss them with people other than those listed in Figure 6 below, including in-laws, NGO staff members, police officers, etc.

Key finding #2: Respondents rarely discuss issues related to violence against women and girls with their children. When they do, they more often discuss such issues with their daughters than with their sons.



Issues related to violence against women and girls are rarely discussed outside of family and female friends

Figure 6: In the past 12 months, have you discussed issues related to the prevention of VAWG with...



Common channels for messaging on VAW/G and gender equality

Key finding #1: Commonly used methods of communication are most likely to reach target audiences.

TV programmes, movies, social media, and newspapers remain the most common sources of information for message on gender equality and the prevention of violence against women and girls (see Figure 7 below).

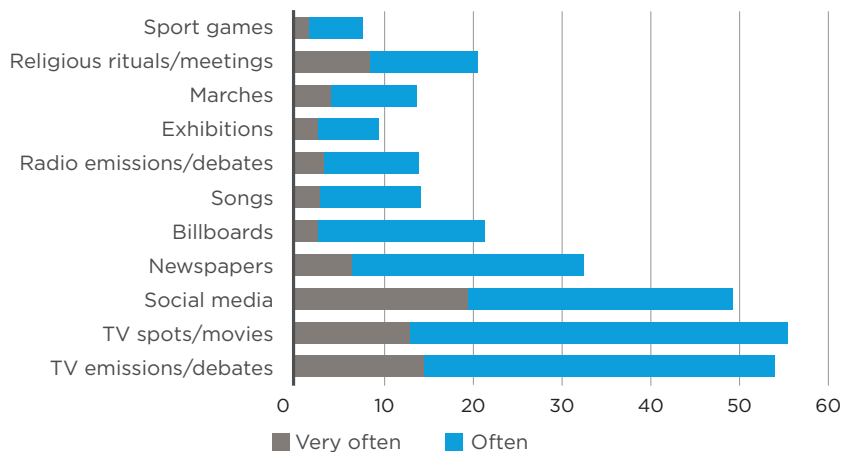
Key finding #2: Campaigns that use innovative messaging techniques, such as through sports games or songs, may be less effective in reaching a large audience, although they may be useful as part of a broader campaign that also utilizes common methods of communications.

Key finding #3: Compared to other countries, respondents from North Macedonia received messages related to gender equality and the prevention of VAW/G less often. Considering as well how rarely respondents discuss these issues with friends and family, this may point to a strong taboo against public discussion around these issues.



Commonly used methods of communication (TV, social media, newspapers) are most likely to reach target audiences

Figure 7: In the past 12 months, have you heard about issues related to gender equality or the prevention of VAW/G through...



PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

- **Conduct open and public campaigns and discussions on gender equality and VAW/G** to break the taboo surrounding the topic and normalize these issues as acceptable (and important) to discuss.
- **Work with men and boys, to challenge traditional gender norms and address** the concerns, fears and pressures that men face because of harmful gender roles. Violence against women cannot be prevented without the active participation of men and boys.
- **Engage with professionals involved in domestic violence response and prevention to challenge patriarchal attitudes and discrimination against minority groups and to increase their knowledge of international standards in their fields.** Women's unwillingness to report violence may stem from low trust in institutions and unsatisfactory previous experiences with service providers such as police officers, social workers, and healthcare professionals.
- **Work with women, particularly those from marginalized communities,** to help them identify all forms of violence against women, particularly non-physical violence, and raise awareness on physical and non-physical types of violence that are prohibited by law.
- **Use common channels of communication to spread information about the issue of VAW/G,** such as television and social media, in order to reach a larger audience.
- **Ensure that services and protective measures for victims/survivors of violence also meet the specific needs of members of marginalized communities** to enable all women to speak out and report violence and prevent future cases of abuse.