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INFOSHEET

2018 PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER EQUALITY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The data in this factsheet was collected in 2018 as part of a baseline survey exercise conducted by the Centre for Social Research Analitika Bosnia and Herzegovina under the EU-UN Women regional programme 'Implementing Norms, Changing Minds.' Data includes responses from 504 women, girls, men and boys in 16 regions and 27 municipalities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in both urban and rural areas.

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COUNTRY CONTEXT

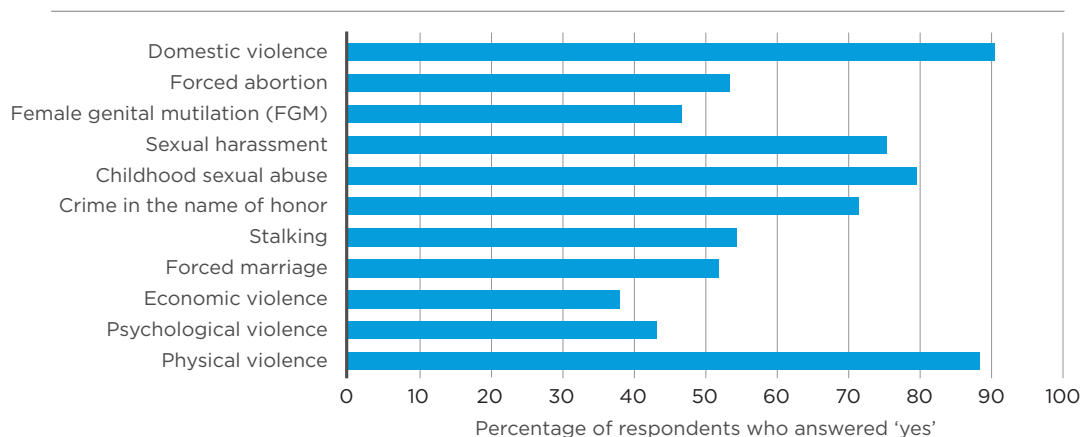
- Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified the Istanbul Convention in 2013 has taken a range of measures for the establishment of the legal, institutional and organizational framework for preventing and combating domestic violence.
- According to previous research, 47.2% of women have been exposed to at least one form of violence during their adult lives, while 11.9 per cent of women experienced violence in the 12 months preceding the research.¹
- Research suggests that women from excluded groups (particularly women of minority ethnic, religious and sexual backgrounds; women with disabilities; rural women; and women immigrants of both legal and illegal status) face higher rates of violence.²
- Very few women victims of domestic violence report the violence to relevant institutions, due in part to widespread patriarchal attitudes that justify violence against women, not only within society at large but also among individuals who represent protection agencies.³

Knowledge of the Law

Key finding #1: Only 61.7% of respondents were aware of the existence of a law on gender equality, and only 65.9% 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. Among the age groups, for both questions, adults were most knowledgeable, and adolescents were least knowledgeable.

Key finding #2: A high proportion of respondents were not aware that non-physical and lesser-known forms of violence are punishable by law. While the vast majority of respondents knew that certain forms of violence were punishable by law (domestic violence, physical violence, rape/sexual assault), they were much less aware of the criminal nature of non-physical forms of violence (psychological, economic) and lesser-known form of violence (forced marriage, forced abortion, stalking – see Figure 1). Men were often more knowledgeable than women regarding the criminality of non-physical violence.

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

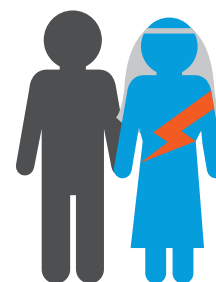


1. Babović, M., Pavlović, O., Ginić, K., Karađinović, N. (2013) *Rasprostranjenost i karakteristike nasilja prema ženama u BiH /Prevalence and characteristics of violence against women in B&H*, Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, page 19 and 96
2. Ibid.
3. Gender Center of the Government of Republika Srpska (2011) "Preventing and eliminating gender-based violence and domestic violence in B&H: Legislation and practices in Republika Srpska". During the analysis one police official stated: "God rules the world, and man rules at home!", Page 79.

Key finding #3: Respondents have limited confidence that people will be punished for breaking the law. For example:

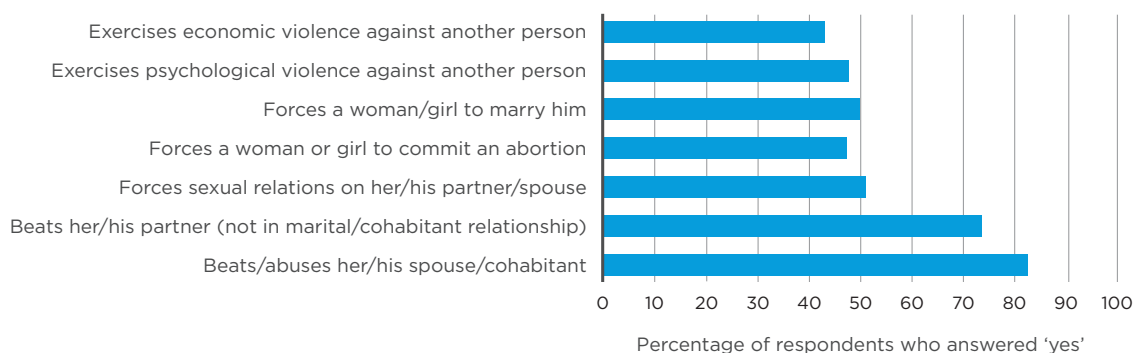
- Despite the fact that **96%** of respondents knew that rape/sexual assault was punishable by law (see Figure 1), only **51%** believed that a person would be punished for forcing sexual relations on their spouse or partner (see Figure 2 below).
- Although **88%** of respondents knew that physical violence was a crime, only **73%** believed a person would be punished for beating their non-married partner.

These contradictions may reflect respondents' perception of these crimes as less severe than similar crimes in other circumstances, and/or low trust that the law will be implemented effectively for these crimes.



Only 51% of respondents believed someone would be punished for forcing sexual relations on a spouse or partner

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



Perception of gender roles

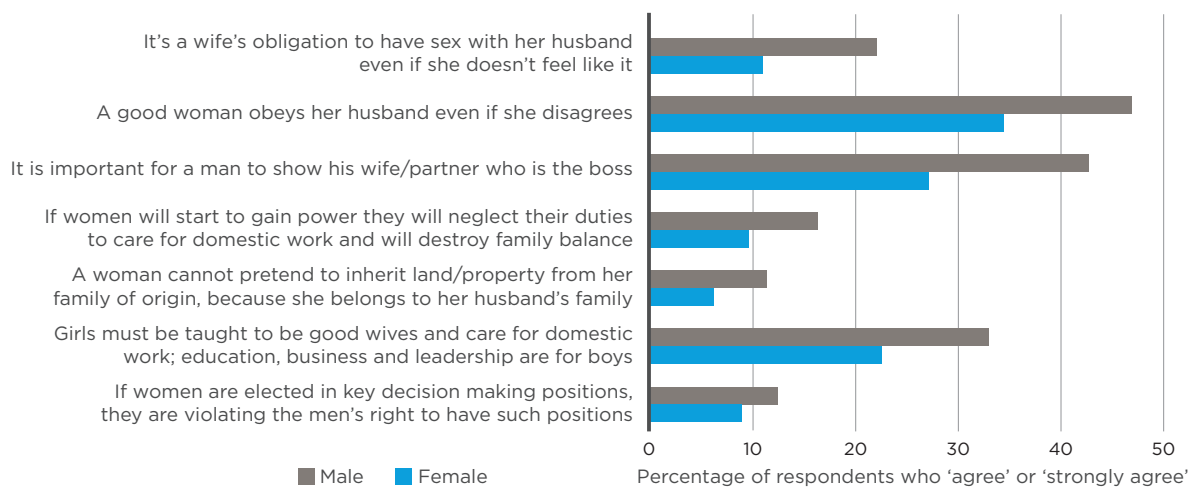
Key finding #1: Women are expected to behave within traditional gender roles. 1 in 3 men and almost 1 in 4 women believed that women belong in the domestic sphere, and boys should pursue career and leadership opportunities (see Figure 3 below).

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 bodies, as nearly a quarter of male respondents believed that women are obligated to have sex with their husbands regardless of their own desire. Beliefs that promote men's control over women and limit women's professional and economic opportunities serve to isolate women to the

domestic sphere and exclude them from public life, which provides a thriving ground for domestic violence and creates situations of financial dependence that make it difficult for women victims to leave abusive relationships.

Key finding #3: Men are the primary supporters of beliefs that place them in positions of power over women. In each question, men showed greater support for traditional gender roles that limit the opportunities and self-determination of women. Since men hold disproportionate economic, political, and social power, it is imperative to work with men and boys to change their attitudes and beliefs toward gender norms.

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

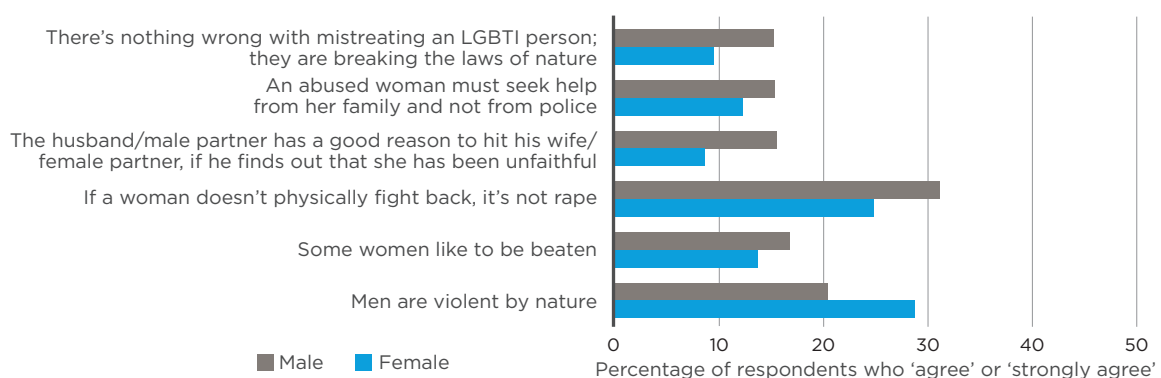


Attitudes toward violence against women

Key finding #1: A significant percentage of respondents hold beliefs that justify violence against women. These beliefs and myths lessen the accountability of perpetrators and place responsibility and blame on victims of violence. See Figure 4 below.

Key finding #2: 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.

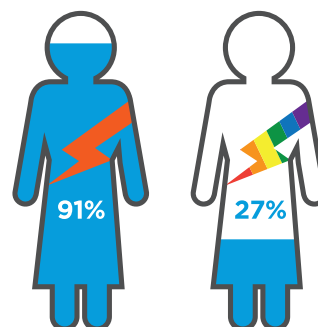
Figure 4: What do you think about the following statements?



Willingness to prevent or report violence

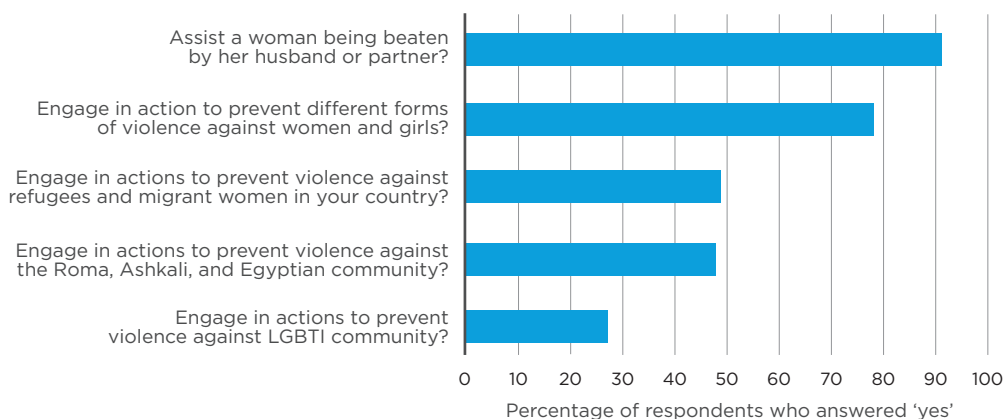
Key finding #1: Respondents were significantly less willing to help prevent violence against members of marginalized communities, highlighting how other forms of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity or sexual orientation intersect to enable and promote violence against women. While 91% of respondents were willing to help a woman being beaten by her husband, only 27% were willing to take action to prevent violence against LGBTI individuals.

Key finding #2: Attitudes that minimize or justify violence against marginalized women are not limited to marginalized groups, but are directed toward all women. Victim-blaming attitudes that identify some people as ‘deserving’ of violence, as seen in Figure 4 above regarding LGBTI individuals and in Figure 5 below, should not be interpreted as only being relevant to minority or disadvantaged groups. These attitudes are likely to be directed at any woman who does not conform her behavior to strict gender norms (e.g., by wearing revealing clothing, flirting, consuming alcohol, being perceived as ‘promiscuous’, etc.). The persistence of these attitudes toward *any* women is a threat to the safety of all women.



91% of respondents were willing to help a woman being beaten by her husband, only 27% were willing to take action to prevent violence against LGBTI individuals

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 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, including in-laws, NGO staff members, police officers, etc. See Figure 6 below.

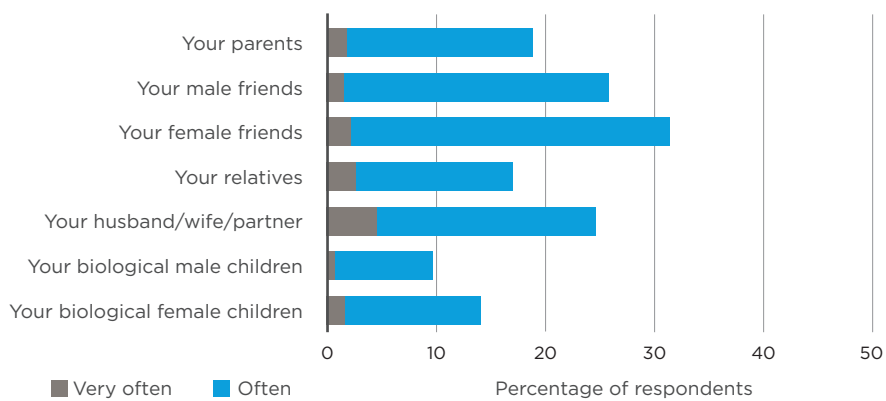
Key finding #2: Respondents rarely discuss issues related to violence against women and girls with their children.

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 among family and close 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

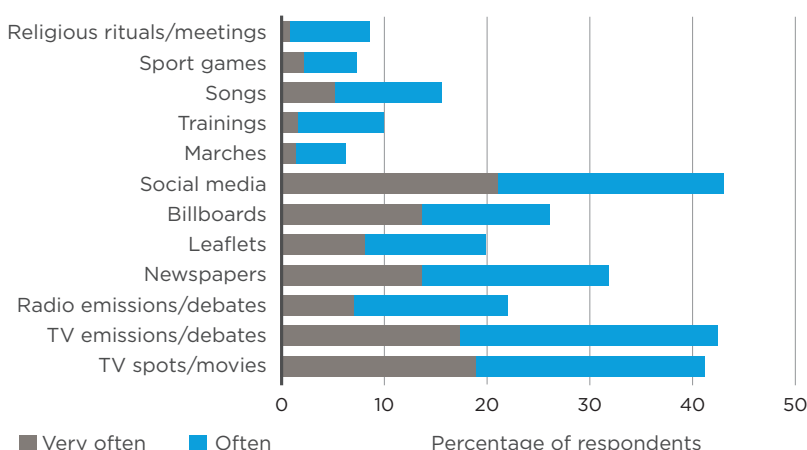
Key finding #1: Commonly used methods of communication are most likely to reach target audiences. TV shows and advertisements, social media, and newspapers remain the most common sources of information for message on gender equality and the prevention of violence against women and girls (see Figure 7 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.



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

- **Work with men and boys to challenge traditional gender norms and address** the concerns, fears and pressures that men face because of toxic gender roles. Violence against women cannot be prevented without the active participation of men and boys.
- **Work with women towards recognizing intimate partner violence, including non-physical violence**, and specifically empower them to distinguish it from cultural norms thereby erasing any shame or guilt that stems from using one's own rights.
- **Ensure that programming is intersectional and addresses other forms of discrimination** (on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc.).
- **Use social media strategically along with other platforms that are able to enhance citizen involvement.** Utilize the most common channels of communication in order to reach a larger audience.
- **Give women more opportunities participate in the public sphere and within local forums that enable them with decision-making rights.** This may require to execute outreach activities and to find creative solutions for practical issues, such as transportation to event locations, childcare services, etc.
- **Target children and adolescents with messages promoting non-discrimination, bodily autonomy, and anti-violence.** As children may not discuss these issues at home, collaborate with schools and municipalities to reach the youth.