



## Executive Summary

# Understanding Masculinities

# INTERNATIONAL MEN AND GENDER EQUALITY SURVEY – **JORDAN**





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IMAGES Jordan is a research of UN Women undertaken in partnership with the University of Jordan's Center for Strategic Studies (CSS), Information and Research Center at King Hussein Foundation (IRCKHF) and Equipundo.

IMAGES Jordan consists of a quantitative component conducted by CSS and a qualitative study carried out by IRCKHF. The consolidated final research report was written jointly by CSS and IRCKHF. Equipundo provided technical assistance to both research partners and also wrote the Executive Summary.

IMAGES Jordan was developed under the framework of the UN Women's regional programme 'Men and Women for Gender Equality', funded by Sweden, with additional funds from the Government of the United Kingdom.

**UN Women** is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was created to accelerate progress in meeting their needs everywhere.

**UN Women** supports UN Member States in adopting international standards to achieve gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design the laws, policies, programs and services needed to ensure that the effective application of these standards and that women and girls everywhere benefit from them. UN Women works globally to make the ambition of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and supports women's equitable participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: strengthening women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; integrate women into all aspects of peace and security processes; strengthen the economic empowerment of women; and placing gender equality at the heart of national planning and budgeting processes.

**UN Women** further coordinates and promotes the work of the United Nations system in support of gender equality and within the framework of discussions and agreements relating to the 2030 Agenda. gender equality as a pillar of the Sustainable Development Goals and a more inclusive world. For more information: [www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org)

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# WHY A STUDY ON MASCULINITIES AND GENDER EQUALITY IN JORDAN?

As a signatory to several international conventions foundational to women's rights, the Kingdom of Jordan formally aims to be a country where equal rights are guaranteed to all, regardless of sex. Yet real progress towards this goal has been slow. To be sure, in recent years, Jordan has made legislative steps to guarantee the rights of women. Yet changes at the policy level will never create transformational change on their own. Instead, communities, civil society, academic and faith-based institutions, the private sector, the media, as well as government institutions, laws, policies and strategies must promote gender equality and women's empowerment at every level in order to bring about a fully gender-equal future in Jordan.

A crucial first step to undertaking these multifaceted changes is to better understand the current gender-related beliefs and practices of Jordanian men and women (as well as the Syrian and Palestinian refugee male and female populations living in Jordan) in a rigorous way. This is the overarching objective of the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) in Jordan, recently completed by the Information and Research Center at King Hussein Foundation (IRCKHF) and the University of Jordan's Center for Strategic Studies (CSS), with the support of Equimundo (formerly Promundo-US) and UN Women. As the name of the study suggests, the research emerges from the insight that men have an important role to play in the struggle for gender equality in Jordan. Men in all their diversity have the capacity to be powerful allies and accomplices in the pursuit of equality, even as they must also take responsibility for their role in upholding gender-based discrimination and benefiting from a patriarchal world. Yet men have rarely if ever been surveyed at a rigorous, nationally representative level to understand their current attitudes and practices related to gender equality. By undertaking such a survey with men alongside women, including several focus group discussions and in-depth interviews as well, the IMAGES Jordan study seeks to establish a starting point for renewed policy conversations, programming and activism to address harmful masculinities and accelerate the pace of progress towards gender equality in Jordan.

IMAGES Jordan is a publication of UN Women that builds upon the global IMAGES project, which aims to build better understanding of men's and women's practices related to gender equality worldwide and in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.



## WHO WAS INCLUDED AND HOW WAS THE RESEARCH CONDUCTED?

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Using the 2015 Jordan Population and Housing Census as a sampling frame, 2,400 households were selected to participate in the household survey, using stratified cluster sampling for Jordanian national participants only. An additional 512 households of Syrian refugees were also selected. The sampling design utilized Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) methods to provide valid and reliable survey estimates across Jordan. This included rural and urban areas, all 12 governorates and minority communities concentrated in specific geographic areas. The sample was also designed to ensure reliable estimates at regional levels (north, centre and south). Governorates were grouped into three regions: North (covering Irbid, Jerash and Ajloun), Central (covering Amman, Balqa, Madaba and Zarqa), and South (covering Aqaba, Karak, Ma'an and Tafilah). This approach resulted in a national sample of 1,200 Jordanian men, 1,200 Jordanian women, 256 Syrian men and 256 Syrian women aged 18–59. The ages, level of education, employment status and urban/rural location among these samples is a close approximation of the same characteristics at a national level.

Qualitative data collection took place both before and after the quantitative field work, allowing the later focus groups and interviews to bring greater depth to the emerging survey results. Participants were selected into very precise groups, based on age, sex, national identity, and disability status, with a final sample of 110 participants spread across 12 focus group discussions (FGDs) and 17 in-depth interviews (IDIs).

The research team ensured that all ethical considerations that inform data collection, analysis and dissemination were followed to the highest degree, including obtaining informed consent before starting any data collection, ensuring that all data were recorded and stored confidentially and that no findings could be linked back to the participants, and the University of Jordan provided ethical approval by its Institutional Review Board (IRB). Since the IMAGES MENA Jordan study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the CSS team instructed surveyors on COVID-19 protocols and health measures as they related to the data-collection process. Taking into consideration the sensitive nature of the IMAGES survey questions, and in accordance with IMAGES procedures and regulations, female enumerators interviewed female respondents and male enumerators interviewed male respondents.

# WHAT ARE THE MAIN FINDINGS?

## I. Attitudes toward gender, gender equality and masculinities

**Stereotypical beliefs persist within Jordanian society, especially related to gender-specific roles, responsibilities and fundamental freedoms.** These beliefs have real-world effects related to education, work, independent life, and many other areas of life. Men hold largely gender-inequitable views about household roles, with the vast majority (87 per cent of men compared to 52 per cent of women) asserting that a woman's most important job is to take care of the home and cook for the family. A further 73 per cent of men (compared to only 40 per cent of women) agree that a man should have the final say in household decisions. While women overall seem to share similar attitudes to men when it comes to gender roles, more educated women hold more progressive ideas on most issues. Forty-four per cent of male respondents agree that "if resources are scarce, it is more important to educate sons than daughters". Furthermore, half of male respondents accepted that a woman should have the same rights to work outside the home as her husband. These all point to a reality where commonly held opinions are a long way from true equality.

**At the same time, there is clear agreement between men and women that gender equality has not yet been achieved in Jordan and that more work is needed to promote it.** Statistical breakdowns of the Syrian community in Jordan shows even higher agreement with this idea, especially among women. Despite agreeing that equality is yet to be achieved, in a contradictory view, over one third of respondents believe that guaranteeing more rights for women means that men lose out. This suggests that a large section of Jordanian society sees women's rights as a threat to men's rights. Similarly, almost half of the total sample believes that gender equality is not part of Jordanian culture. Unsurprisingly, it is mostly male respondents who agree with both these statements. Yet there is some cause for hope, as a significant proportion (71 per cent) of the sample supports allowing men and women equal access to all types of work. Additionally, both 86 per cent of men and 95 per cent of women affirm that employers should be required to offer equal insurance benefits to men and women. Some 87 per cent of men and 71 per cent of women agree that men should be allowed to access the social security benefits and pensions of their deceased wives.

**Qualitative research shows that gender roles dictate that the male has the sole financial responsibility in a household.** Focus group discussions reveal that the idea of a "stay-at-home mom" is totally acceptable, while the idea of a "stay-at-home dad" remains unusual. Participants acknowledge that many men have lost their jobs because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but for them a male must always find ways to get back to work. A wife should not be the sole breadwinner, and if she makes money the money can be hers, while the husband's money is for the family.

“I am sure in our Jordanian society, the parents would not be satisfied if their son remains at home while his wife works, they would consider him a failure. This is how people view the situation, people do not understand that I cannot find a job and that the job is temporary, people think that the job is permanent.”

—Jordanian man in FGD for men aged 36–65

**Table 1.** Percentage of respondents who agree with selected statements about gender roles and decision-making, violence, and perceptions of masculinity and femininity, IMAGES Jordan 2022

	Men	Women
<b>Attitudes towards gender roles and decision-making</b>		
A woman’s most important role is to take care of the home and cook for the family.	87%	52%
A man should have the final word about decisions in the home.	73%	40%
Changing diapers, giving baths to children and feeding children should all be the mother’s responsibility.	65%	56%
A married woman should have the same rights to work outside the home as her husband.	50%	84%
<b>Attitudes towards violence</b>		
There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.	26%	19%
A woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together.	28%	28%
The girl or woman usually deserves punishment from her family to protect their honour.	82%	54%
<b>Perceptions of masculinity and femininity</b>		
To be a man, you need to be tough.	15%	11%
If resources are scarce, it is more important to educate sons than daughters.	44%	21%
It is a man’s duty to exercise guardianship over his female relatives.	74%	53%
Boys are responsible for the behaviour of their sisters, even if they are younger than their sisters.	87%	67%
Unmarried women should have the same right to live on their own as unmarried men.	16%	34%
<b>Attitudes towards relationships, and reproduction</b>		
In order to avoid pregnancy, women should take contraceptives rather than men using condoms.	48%	59%
If a man doesn’t want to have sex, it is normal and doesn’t make him less of a man.	77%	66%

**Restrictive gender attitudes in Jordan, as elsewhere, appear resistant to change, with no significant variation in attitudes between age groups.** Contrary to any expectation that the youngest generation would necessarily have more flexible or less traditional views of gender roles, IMAGES Jordan data in fact show that there is no statistical difference between age groups with regard to agreement or disagreement with the statements in the table above. This is true for men as well as women. A finding like this shows that, even amid the gains of the women’s movement and major social changes, a strong enough backlash against gender equality seems to exist, whereby many young people still embrace restrictive ideas about gender roles.

## II. Women’s leadership

**Jordanian women’s representation at the national level, local assemblies and other institutions is still limited.** IMAGES findings provide important insights into the attitudes that shape this reality. At least 67 per cent of men as well as 52 per cent of women agree that “women are not tough enough for politics” – a restrictive and discriminatory attitude. Yet at the same time, many seem aware of political and social barriers and double standards that women face in the political arena: 77 per cent of women and 62 per cent of men agree that “women have to do more to prove themselves than men”. When asked a series of questions about important characteristics for Jordanian political leaders, respondents were somewhat reluctant to draw too stark distinctions between men and women, frequently claiming that both sexes can exhibit the range of characteristics. Yet important differences emerged, including 70 per cent of men believing that men are better at making tough decisions than women.

**All the same, many Jordanians seem resistant to electing a woman for higher office and agree that women need to do more to prove themselves in political life.** Roughly, two-thirds of men agree with the idea that women are not interested in holding higher office, not tough enough for policy or decision-making positions, or do not have the required experience or necessary political connections to run high office positions. Female respondents are more conscious than men of the challenges facing women in political life. Levels of awareness about these challenges rise along with age and life experience for both men and women.

**Qualitative responses emphasize the glass ceiling that limits the advancement of women in leadership.** The findings also highlight the fact that society and culture play a major role in reinforcing the differences between men and women, where values taught by the family, in school, or/and by media and social networks are perpetuating negative or discriminatory beliefs. This can start from simple concepts such as implying that women are not fit to drive or travel alone and spread to bigger ideas related to gender roles and how they affect and define women’s positions in public and private life.

“For women, it is oppression. They want to be independent but feel that they are not allowed to do anything...”

—25-year-old Jordanian woman, IDI participant

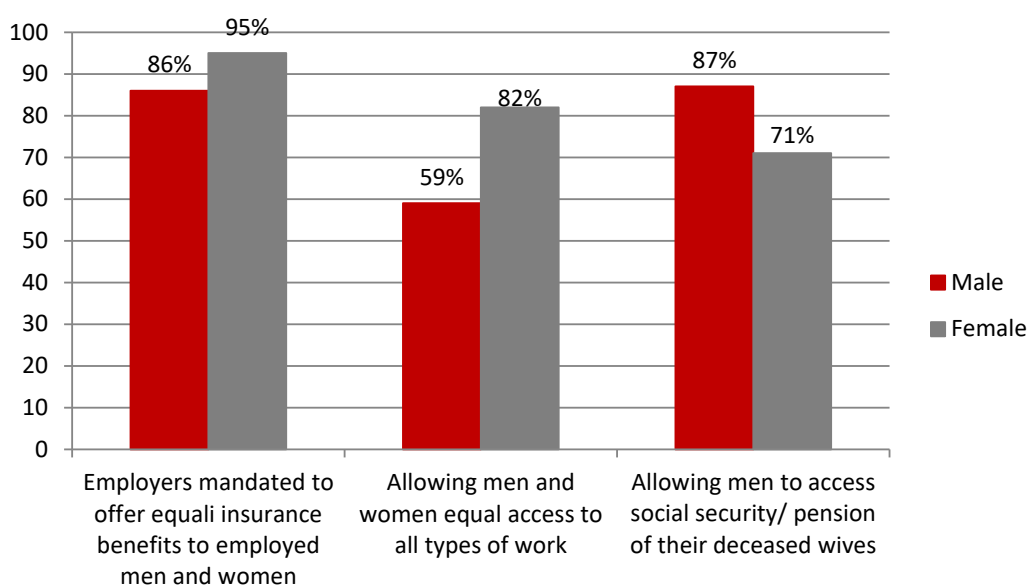
### III. Gender equality and the law

Legal guardianship of children is an important area of ongoing gender discrimination in the law, but the majority of Jordanian men (87 per cent) and women (94 per cent) in the study expressed support for equal guardianship rights for mothers and fathers. At present, fathers (or the next in line, grandfathers) can be given the exclusive right to the “wilaya”<sup>1</sup> and with it, full decision-making power over the child’s education, access to health, right to travel abroad and marriage. This law is unpopular among respondents. Furthermore, another 89 per cent of Jordanians and 79 per cent of Syrians support the idea of establishing a law “holding guardians whose children drop out of school before age 16 accountable.” Such a law would have important gender equality outcomes, as it would protect children, particularly girls, from dropping out of school early for marriage. Findings show that there are also many socioeconomic factors leading to early school dropout, such as the high cost of education or parents not being interested in educating their children as they would rather have them work and earn a living (especially for boys) or get married, even at an early age (especially for girls).

“I dropped out of school when I was in the seventh grade because I couldn’t comprehend everything and because of my family’s bad economic situation. We were a big family. So, my father asked me to get a job to help our family.”

—46-year-old Iraqi man living in Jordan, IDI participant

**Figure 1.** Percentage of men and women who agree or strongly agree with selected statements about working women legislation, IMAGES Jordan 2022



<sup>1</sup> Article 223 of the Personal Status Law provides that the *Wali* is the child’s father. The automatic grant of *Wilaya* – legal authority over the child – to the child’s father will not be removed even if the father acts in violation of the child’s best interests.

**Another unpopular Jordanian law grants Jordanian fathers the exclusive right to pass their nationality to family members.** Jordanian women whose children are from non-Jordanian fathers are not permitted to pass on their citizenship to their children. Yet an overwhelming 85 per cent of men and 93 per cent of women in the study feel that women should be allowed to pass nationality to their children.

## IV. Childhood and adolescence

**Gender discrimination towards children – even starting before childbirth – is changing in Jordan.** While previous studies have highlighted that a gender discriminatory understanding dominates parental attitudes towards children, there seems to be a positive change in the ways that gender and rights of sons and daughters are perceived. At least 86 per cent of male and 80 per cent of female respondents disagree with the idea that having sons is more important than having girls. The majority also disagree with the statement “If resources are scarce, it is more important to educate sons than daughters”, although the distinction is stark, as 84 per cent of women disagree with this idea compared to only 55 per cent of men. Syrian respondents reverse the trends of their Jordanian counterparts, with 62 per cent of Syrian men and 70 per cent of Syrian women supporting a less discriminatory approach to children’s education. Qualitative fieldwork, however, shows a different reality in different areas of the Kingdom. From FGDs especially in rural and more popular areas of the country, it emerges that giving birth to males is still an obsession that haunts many families and constitutes a reason to end marriage. The prevailing community culture that prefers to have boys to girls still exists and is justified by many respondents, and respondents share that many men still prefer to have boys and often continue to seek pregnancies until a boy child arrives. Men may even abandon their families if no male child is born.

**Once brought into the world, gender inequality starts early in the lives of most Jordanian and refugee children.** Both male and female respondents say that growing up, they had different expectations placed on them depending on their respective sex. Females are, for example, expected to dress “appropriately” and help with the household chores or childcare, while males are expected to behave “appropriately” and earn money at some point.

**IMAGES data furthermore show that this unbalanced division of household tasks and responsibilities is passed on through the generations.** The majority of respondents do not recall their fathers participating in chores or other kinds of housework traditionally considered part of women’s duties (such as preparing food, cleaning the house and washing clothes). Chores outside the household, such as buying food, are more commonly taken care of by respondents’ fathers and generally understood as part of their duties. Female respondents are more likely to affirm that their fathers never or very rarely helped with household work and 73 per cent report that they had never seen their father or another man cleaning at home, compared to 54 per cent of the male sample. While the majority of both male and female respondents do not recall their fathers participating in chores, they do recall fathers’ care and affection for children and most report that their fathers played and spent time with them even if he did not assist them with schoolwork. This suggests that fathers of a prior generation did consider play and physical attention to be important aspects of fatherhood. However, domains – such as household work, routine care, education, and more – all appear to have been the mother’s responsibility.

**Qualitative analysis confirms that when fathers carry out household chores, the pattern is also repeated by sons.** Most respondents indicate that they remember their mother and female household members doing housework and but that fathers would rarely take part. Even if they were unaware of it early on, this has affected their own views and practises and become a followed pattern. Some sons were affected by relating certain chores to women or men only but managed to change their habits as they grew older and gained more experience and exposure.

“It was all on my mother, all of it. All the cooking, dishwashing, cleaning. My father only cooked if my mother was tired or sick and when he did, oh wow how great of him to do this. He did not do it as being part of it, he did it only because she was sick. Washing the dishes took me a long time because it is tied in my mind to being a woman. I kept refusing to do any dishes and this did not resolve until I lived on my own and my female friends told me ‘I am not your mother; wash the dishes yourself.’”

—34-year-old Jordanian man, IDI participant

**Sadly, violence of various forms during childhood remains an issue in Jordan.** Nine per cent of male respondents reported experiencing physical violence, like being beaten by an object by their parents, compared to three per cent of female respondents. A greater proportion, 26 per cent of men and four per cent of women, state that they were beaten or physically punished at school by a teacher. Qualitative analysis indicates, however, that violence at home and bullying in schools is experienced by children living in Jordan more than these statistics may show. More male respondents mention physical violence towards them at home, in comparison to females, while females speak more of moral violence or control. Most say that it was a way of raising children and that some parents lack the tools of proper parenting, which is why they resort to violence. At the same time, other respondents say that violence rates have increased recently, due to more financial and social pressures on parents. Many say that the COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated violence, given the economic adversities and the physical restrictions people are under.

“I was once exposed to violence by my brother. He started growing up and thinking he became a man, but I stopped him. I was also exposed to psychological violence by my father; he used to control my life decisions. And when I started making my own decisions, he wanted me out of the house. So, I left our home, and we stopped talking to each other. Until now, I learn about new traumas he caused me when I was a child.”

—26-year-old Jordanian woman, IDI participant



## V. Gender dynamics in households

**Respondents' current adult homes mirror the gender-based division of household responsibilities they reported witnessing in their childhood homes.** Tasks that are traditionally considered feminine, such as cleaning, washing clothes and preparing food are performed almost exclusively by women. Only a small percentage of male respondents participate in any of these tasks. Ever-married men's participation in household affairs is higher in traditionally masculine roles such as paying bills and making household repairs. There is almost identical participation of ever-married men and women in buying food and making weekly budgets.

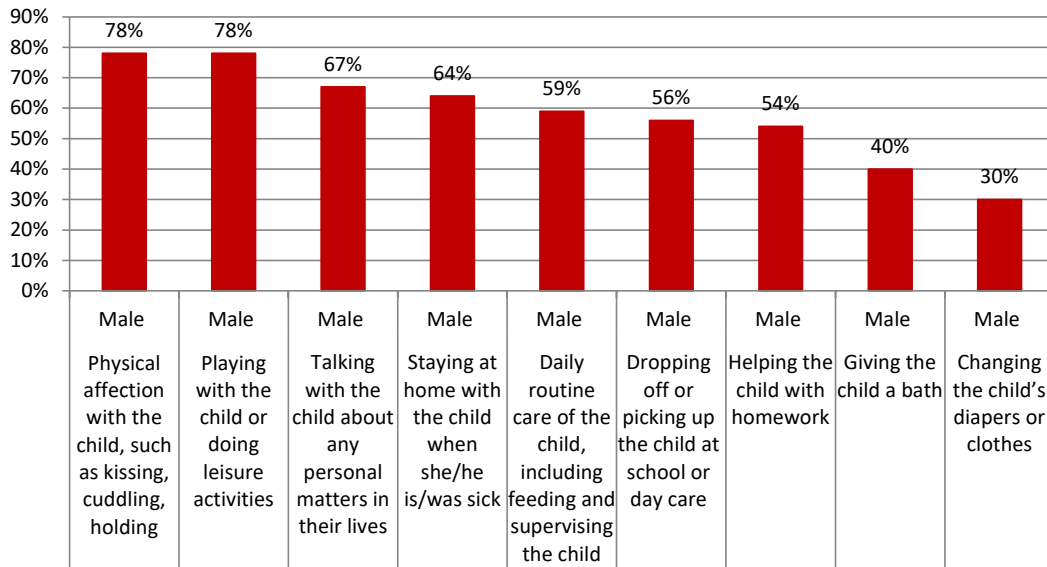
**Changes to working time and space due to COVID-19 have had a significant impact on women's caregiving and domestic workloads.** When asked to what extent the division of household labour has been affected by the COVID pandemic, over two-thirds of men affirm that the division of household chores stayed the same. Fifty-four per cent of women agree that there have been no significant changes in the organization of housework. However, 40 per cent of female respondents affirm that they undertake more domestic tasks, compared to only 14 per cent of their male counterparts who state the same. Twenty-four per cent of Syrian men say they took on more household responsibilities during the pandemic. Forty-one per cent of Syrian women state that their domestic workload also increased.

**Even as women undertake the majority of household work, men maintain a dominant role in household decisions, and this is a consistent pattern across generations.** Seventy-three per cent of men also state that they have the final word on decisions in the household compared to only 40 per cent of women who claim the same. Unsurprisingly, however, men are much more likely than women to feel that this is the appropriate division of household power. According to IMAGES Jordan, 73 per cent of male respondents compared to only 40 per cent of female respondents agree that men should have the most decision-making power in the household. Findings do not show any significant difference in male responses when broken down by age or level of education on this topic, suggesting that inequitable power is a universally popular idea among men. More highly educated women are less likely to believe that men should have the final say in family decisions, while older women are more inclined to accept men's central role in decision-making.

**Many men continue to believe that their role is in the public sphere and that they are supposed to be the breadwinners, while women's duties are relegated to the household and caregiving for children.** While 84 per cent of female respondents believe that women should have the same right as men to work outside the house, only 50 per cent of male respondents affirm the same. The other half of male respondents reject the idea of women working outside equally to men. The percentage of Syrian respondents agreeing with the statement is slightly lower than that of Jordanians, as 72 per cent of Syrian women and 43 per cent of Syrian men support a women's right to work outside the home.

**The perception of the paternal role in the upbringing of children is positively changing and men's involvement in childcare is being normalized in Jordanian society.** While women are still seen as those mainly responsible for childcare, the understanding of men's contribution to it is shifting. Ninety-seven per cent of Jordanian men and women agree that "it is normal and acceptable for men to cuddle, hold and play with toddlers." Sixty-three per cent of male respondents also affirm that they spend too little time with their children. At least 75 per cent of men and women are in favour of a law to give fathers longer paternity leave, with most of them preferring a leave of up to 2 weeks.

**Figure 2.** Percentage of ever-married men who performed childcare tasks related to their youngest child (under the age of 18) while that child was living at home, IMAGES Jordan 2022



**Qualitative research reveals that despite the increase in the number of divorce cases in Jordan, it is still widely considered a taboo and to be prevented at any cost.** Many female respondents pointed out that women are forced to endure gender-based violence to prevent a divorce. They indicated that even though the relationship is harmful, a divorce is even more harmful. Women suffer from social pressure and violence, they can be pressured by their parents to endure domestic violence to prevent bringing shame to the family through divorce. At the same time, women fear losing the custody of their children in the process.

“My neighbour’s family cut ties with her because she got divorced. She got divorced because her husband hit her, tortured her, and there was blood all over her face. And the end, her family cut ties with her because they refuse to let their daughters get divorced. What are they waiting for? Are they waiting for her to die? No one wishes to destroy their family, but mistreatment forces you to.”

**Palestinian woman living in East Amman**

**Women in Jordan are more likely than men to question rights to polygamy, yet they do not overwhelmingly support legislative change to outlaw the practice.** At least 85 per cent of Jordanian women say they would refuse to allow their daughters to marry a polygamous man, compared to much lower percentages among men. Fifty-three per cent of men in the 50+ age range oppose their son marrying additional wives, while only 32 per cent of men in their twenties disagree with such an arrangement. This finding suggests that younger generations of men may be especially likely to support maintaining the status quo.

## VI. Gender-based violence

**Men’s power over women includes controlling their movement and other freedoms.** While there is a tendency among respondents to report equal sharing of important decisions at home, IMAGES Jordan data suggest that women’s agency in decisions related to movement and time spent outside the house is still limited. Over a third of both male and female samples report that decisions on whether the wife (and husband) spend time with family or friends or go outside the house is taken jointly. However, a husband’s power to decide on his wife’s time is much higher than the wife’s influence on her husband’s decisions to visit relatives or friends. Additionally, more than one-third of female respondents affirm that their husband controls their access to social media. Half of the surveyed women also confirm that husbands have decision-making power over their social life and on what they wear. Male respondents are more even likely to affirm men’s control over various aspects of women’s lives.

**As a more severe manifestation of inequitable power and control, women experience frequent violence and control from their husbands and male family members.** According to quantitative data, 20 per cent of women affirm suffering from different types of physical spousal violence in their lifetime and 13 per cent of the men report practising physically violent acts against their wives. Quantitative analysis also shows that the majority of all respondents (74 per cent of men and 81 per cent of women) disagree with the idea that “there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.” Also, 72 per cent of both men and women disagree with the notion that “a woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together.” However, qualitative analysis shows a more complex story. In dept interviews and focus group discussions participants alike feel that violence against women is likely more frequent (and thus highly underreported in the survey). All female respondents agree that there is something ‘deeply wrong’ with a man who resorts to intimate partner violence but that “poverty”, “unemployment”, “drugs”, or “being far from religion (not religious)” could be the main drivers. At the same time, they all agree that there is “no excuse for such behaviour”.

“I was exposed to violence by my husband. He used to humiliate and hit me. I was under so much pressure but exploded in the end and left the house. We would be on good terms, but once he visits his family, they speak ill about me in front of him because of my medical condition ... When he wanted to hit me, I used to tell him ‘You are my husband and can hit me, but please tell me what I did wrong?’ He used to hit me all the time, sometimes as soon as he came home.”

—42-year-old Jordanian woman, IDI participant

**Over one third of spousal domestic violence acts take place in front of children, a troubling reality given the strong intergenerational transmission of such experiences.** Up to 38 per cent of ever-married women in the survey who report being a victim of one or more types of domestic violence in their lifetime say the violence happened in front of their children. Twenty-seven per cent say it happened during their pregnancy. These numbers are almost double those reported by male perpetrators. As reported by both men and women, acts of physical violence are the most common forms of abuse to occur in front of children or during pregnancy.

**Women are still considered responsible for family honour – and might be punished for it physically.** While a majority do not agree with practising physical violence against women, over half of female respondents and 82 per cent of men agree that a girl or woman usually deserves punishment from her family (males/ guardians) to protect her honour.

**Street sexual harassment is commonly perpetrated by urban men and experienced by urban women; with women often blamed or considered responsible for “provoking” harassment.** Although a slight majority of men and women reported not practising/experiencing sexual harassment in its different forms, qualitative data show that the reality on the ground may be different and that harassment could be a more prevalent practice. Moreover, 64 per cent of the surveyed men and 80 per cent of the surveyed women agree that women who dress provocatively deserve to be harassed, and 53 per cent of all respondents report that women like the attention when men harass them.

**Table 2.** Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree with selected statements about sexual harassment and street harassment, IMAGES Jordan 2022

	Men (Perpetrated)		Women (Experienced)	
	Lifetime (%)	Previous 12 months (%)	Lifetime (%)	Previous 12 months (%)
<b>Types of sexual harassment/assault</b>				
Ogling	40	25	40	18
Catcalls or sexual comments	12	8	32	13
Stalking or following	8	3	23	9
Obscene phone calls or text messages	3	2	9	4
Online harassment	7	3	9	5
Unwanted touching of intimate parts of your body	2	1	3	1
Exposing his private parts	2	1.5	4	1
Forcing to have sex	1	0.5	1	1
<b>Any of the above acts of sexual harassment/assault</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>23</b>

**Syrian respondents and other vulnerable population groups were most likely to discuss experiences**

**of bullying and harassment in the qualitative research.** Many Syrian youth in qualitative discussions indicate that they've witnessed violence in the form of bullying in schools or their neighbourhoods. Syrian and Jordanian males also say that with the COVID-19 pandemic everyone got more tense and parents started beating their children sometimes, because everyone had to stay in all the time and that was very hard, particularly in very small living spaces.

“We have Syrian children who are subjected to bullying in schools. We heard that it was only because they are Syrians, and we heard with our ears, but we have to keep silent. We can't talk [...] For example, my son came to me, he was upset with his friend. I mean they are children. His friend told him “Soori, Nouri” which means Syrian, not raised up properly. I told him, Mama, we are Syrians, but we are polite and clever. So, I gave him some confidence back.”


—45-year-old Syrian woman

## VII. Health and quality of life

**Women in Jordan tend to seek health services more often than men.** The majority of both men and women had sought out health services in the past five years. However, Jordanian men report using health services at lower rates, with one-third either never having sought health assistance or not having accessed such services in over five years. Only 9 per cent of Jordanian women answer the same.

**Despite seeking health care less often, men engage in risky health-related behaviours more often than women, including smoking.** Sixty-five per cent of Jordanian men and 54 per cent of Syrian men say they are smokers. By contrast, 20 per cent of Jordanian women and 15 per cent of Syrian women report smoking. Among men who smoke, 25 per cent say they have experienced smoking-related health problems. The fact that the remaining group of male smokers (75 per cent), do not believe that smoking has caused them any health issues personally, may contribute to respondents' low rates of utilizing medical care. Syrians more so than Jordanian nationals, especially women, are keener to quit smoking. Some 85 per cent of Syrian women smokers and 82 per cent of Syrian men smokers express a desire to stop smoking. Younger age groups are among those most likely to report smoking.

**Women follow COVID-19 regulations more strictly than men.** An overwhelming majority of both men and women affirm that their social interactions were impacted by COVID-19. Respondents say that practices such as shaking hands, kissing for greetings, attending mass gatherings and smoking shisha outside all decreased, with some going so far as to say that they stopped using their hands to eat Mansaf. That said, gendered health patterns apply to the pandemic as well, with the majority of female respondents stating that they always covered their faces with a mask and followed governmental restrictions during the pandemic, compared to only about one-third to a half of male respondents.



**Approximately seven per cent of men and five per cent of women report ever having thoughts of suicide.** Out of those respondents who say they have ever considered ending their lives, many men (45 per cent) and women (40 per cent) admit to considering the possibility recently. As in all countries, open discussions about suicide and suicidal thoughts are stigmatized and so a complete understanding of the issue is challenging to obtain.

**Syrian respondents are particularly concerned about the present and anxious about the future.** The overwhelming majority of Syrian male and female respondents share that they do not feel safe in general (90 and 96 per cent, respectively). Ninety-three per cent of Syrian men and 89 per cent of Syrian women state that they feel confident they can protect their families, but at least 91 per cent of men and 96 per cent of women are highly worried about their future all the same.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

**The findings of IMAGES Jordan demonstrate that, while steps towards gender equality are slowly being taken, patriarchy is still dominant in public and private life.** Generally, both men and women hold inequitable attitudes about the rights and responsibilities of women. Yet many women, particularly those with higher educational attainment, appear more aware of the importance of changing social dynamics, legislation and laws in favour of broader empowerment and equality. Interestingly, data show that neither the age nor educational level of male respondents significantly influence how they view women's rights, suggesting that these forms of discrimination are very widely held. COVID-19's economic effects and accompanying social restrictions have additionally slowed down progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

**The story is not entirely negative, however, with significant support for fathers' participation in childcare and certain legislative changes to protect women's rights.** IMAGES Jordan identifies more positive attitudes towards women's legal rights, such as support for passing a mother's nationality on to her children. There also seems to be a positive attitude shift taking place towards women's role in public spaces and leadership positions. Even as women's main responsibility and duty is still seen as being in the private sphere as caregivers, there seems to be more and more support for men taking on deeper roles as fathers and caregivers as well.

**These and other IMAGES findings can be used to strengthen policies, programmes and campaigns in Jordan in numerous ways.** The overarching goal of IMAGES is to build an understanding of men's and women's practices and attitudes about gender equality to inform, drive and monitor efforts to promote gender equality, particularly at the public decision-making level. With these incredibly rich new data points on-hand, movements to prevent violence against women, promote the full realization of women's rights, achieve equality in care work, and shift social norms now have a powerful new tool to inform their efforts. Anyone wishing to draw upon these data to advance rapid, powerful change in Jordanian society would do well to:

1. **Look to local feminist, women's rights, vulnerable population groups rights and violence-prevention movements and voices for guidance on what messages to prioritize, and how**

None of the issues addressed in this study are new or entirely surprising to the brave groups of activists already working for generations in Jordan to bring about a more just and equal society. Any effort to advance these findings at policy, programme, campaign or educational levels must be brought into alignment with the objectives and ongoing efforts of these activists.



## 2. Use images data to identify the highest-priority, most harmful or most widely held attitudes to address

IMAGES Jordan data offer tremendous richness in understanding the landscape of gender-related attitudes among Jordanian and Syrian populations. This richness must now inform future campaign and programme efforts. As Section VI of this executive summary has shown, Jordanian respondents do not widely agree with certain restrictive definitions of manhood or masculinity such as toughness and self-sufficiency. That is not to say that these attitudes do not exist in Jordan, but rather that they did not emerge as the absolute top priority, according to IMAGES responses. By contrast, the rates at which respondents: (a) justified honour-related punishment; (b) agreed with extreme restrictions on women's movement; and (c) granted decision-making power and "guardianship" disproportionately to men all stand out as particularly high. Deeper analysis of these and other findings would be a helpful prioritization exercise for gender equality movements in Jordan.

## 3. Draw upon positive attitudes that are widely held to demonstrate that there is public support for certain aspects of equality

The inverse of the previous strategy is also true: where respondents already seem to hold positive attitudes in favour of gender equality, campaigners would do well to amplify this and establish these ideas as social norms. Some examples may include the fact that significant majorities of men and women feel that "we as Jordanians need to do more work to promote the equality of men and women", or that the vast majority of Jordanian respondents agree that there is nothing shameful in men's involvement in caring for children or doing other domestic work. There are many other examples.

## 4. Draw upon the support for various policies expressed in the survey responses

Similarly, many respondents – in some cases the vast majority of men and women – already support policies or legislative ideas that could bring about greater equality in Jordan. One particularly notable example is the widespread support (more than 75 per cent) expressed by men and women alike for longer paid paternity leave opportunities to encourage men to take a more active role in fatherhood from the child's earliest ages. This finding is tremendously powerful in the political arena, where it can demonstrate to elected officials that this and other more gender equal policies are actually popular. There are numerous additional examples in this study, including broad support for mothers' ability to pass their nationalities on to their children, and more.

## 5. Advocate for preventative measures – don't focus only on responses

This study reveals notable rates of childhood experiences of violence as well as adult experiences of intimate partner violence and street harassment. It is tempting, when looking at these findings, to call for more and better legislation to punish the perpetrators of these acts of violence. This kind of legislation is an important element in efforts to end violence, but it should not be the only element. IMAGES Jordan also shows the strong linkages between childhood exposure to violence and using the same violence in adulthood; furthermore, attitudes that justify violence are common. Against these realities, it is arguably more essential to focus on *preventing* violence before it happens, as opposed to solely focusing on punishing those who use violence after they have done so. Preventative measures can take many forms, from community-wide campaigns to challenge social norms supporting violence, to curricula for youth where they can learn healthier relationship and anger-management practices, to promoting healthier and better expressions of non-violent masculinity in popular media, and beyond.

## 6. Explore ways to share nuance in addition to just numbers

The qualitative research participants in this study generously opened their hearts and told their personal stories to help deepen the study's understanding of the gender dynamics at play in Jordan. The fullest and best use of the research results would not sideline these testimonies, but rather draw on them to tell complex and specific stories about gender inequality in Jordan. The quantitative statistics in this report are very powerful indeed, in all the ways expressed above. But, by definition, they can only speak to broad trends, not the specific lived reality of any one Jordanian or Syrian refugee in Jordan.

## Unmet needs

The 2021 State of the World's Fathers report, which is informed by and features IMAGES data, takes an exclusively structural focus on the issue of equality in care work. Inequalities in care at home are influenced by many structural inequalities in our societies, including in Jordan, which are driven by government inaction or insufficient support programs. As such, the advocacy targets of this recent report resonate in Jordan as well:

1. Put in place national care policies and campaigns that recognize, reduce, and redistribute care work equally between men and women.
2. Provide equal, job-protected, fully paid parental leave for all parents as a national policy.
3. Design and expand social protection programs to redistribute care work equally between women and men, while keeping a focus on the needs and rights of women and girls.
4. Transform health sector institutions to promote fathers' involvement from the prenatal period through birth and childhood and men's involvement as caregivers.
5. Promote an ethic of male care in schools, media, and other key institutions in which social norms are created and reinforced.
6. Change workplace conditions, culture, and policies to support workers' caregiving – and mandate those changes in national legislation.
7. Hold male political leaders accountable for their support of care policies, while advocating for women's equality in political leadership.

**The findings of the IMAGES MENA Jordan study provide valuable insights for understanding where changes are needed and what progress is being made towards a more gender-equitable society.** A much deeper presentation of the findings in all seven themes addressed here is included in the full version of the report. The authors thank you sincerely for your interest and invite you to visit <http://www.menandgendersurvey.com> and <http://www.imagesmena.org> to learn more about IMAGES locally, regionally and globally.

