

Understanding Masculinities:

Results from the

**INTERNATIONAL MEN AND GENDER EQUALITY SURVEY (IMAGES)
– MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine



About this Study

The International Men and Gender Equality Survey – Middle East and North Africa (IMAGES MENA) study includes quantitative and qualitative research with men and women aged 18 to 59 in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine. Local research partners are: (1) *Egypt*: El-Zanaty and Associates; Social Research Center, American University in Cairo (AUC); (2) *Lebanon*: Connecting Research to Development (CRD); ABAAD; (3) *Morocco*: Association Migration Internationale (AMI); Rajaa Nadifi (independent researcher); Gaëlle Gillot (independent researcher); (4) *Palestine*: Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University.

The multi-country study and its dissemination were coordinated by Promundo and UN Women, under the UN Women Regional Programme *Men and Women for Gender Equality* funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), with additional support from the Arcus Foundation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (via Prevention+), the U.S. Institute of Peace, the U.S. Department of State in partnership with Vital Voices, and the Oak Foundation.

This report presents the first round of IMAGES data collection in the MENA region that was carried out from April 2016 to March 2017. Other studies in the region are currently being planned. National reports are being produced in the four countries, further elaborating on the research findings and providing country-specific recommendations.

About IMAGES

The International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) is a comprehensive, multi-country study on men's realities, practices, and attitudes with regard to gender norms, gender-equality policies, household dynamics, caregiving and fatherhood, intimate partner violence, sexual diversity, health, and economic stress, among other topics. Promundo and the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) created IMAGES in 2008. As of 2017, IMAGES has been carried out in more than 30 countries, including this four-country study. Additional partner studies inspired by IMAGES have been carried out in Asia by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and other partners. IMAGES includes both women and men and is generally carried out with respondents aged 18 to 59. The survey is conducted together with qualitative research to map masculinities, contextualize the survey results, and provide detailed life histories that illuminate quantitative findings. The questionnaire is adapted to country and regional contexts, with approximately two-thirds of the questions being standard across settings. For more information, see: www.promundoglobal.org/images

Promundo

Founded in Brazil in 1997, Promundo works to promote gender equality and create a world free from violence by engaging men and boys in partnership with women and girls. Promundo's strategic partners in the United States (Promundo-US), Brazil (Instituto Promundo), Portugal (Promundo-Portugal), and Democratic Republic of the Congo (Living Peace Institute) collaborate to achieve this mission by conducting applied research that builds the knowledge base on masculinities and gender equality; developing, evaluating, and scaling up gender-transformative interventions and programmes; and carrying out national and international advocacy to promote gender equality and social justice. For more information, see: www.promundoglobal.org

UN Women

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN member states as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes, and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality. For more information, see: www.unwomen.org

Authorship

Promundo and UN Women coordinated the study in partnership with the UN Women country offices in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine.

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UN Women
Promundo-US

2017



Foreword



**MOHAMMAD
NACIRI**

**Regional Director,
Arab States UN Women**

There is a saying in Arabic, أول الشجرة بذرة, “a tree begins with a seed”. And indeed, this study was a seed waiting to be planted. Working toward the empowerment of women in a region that is not always associated with gender equality has been one of the greatest blessings and honours of my life. I am humbled and inspired daily by the brave women and girls who defy the restrictive norms and expectations under which they live to speak up, stand up, and push forward for their rights – because that is what they do. In the face of staggering statistics – of low participation rates in economic and political life, of pervasive violence in private and public spheres alike, of tremendous societal pressure to conform to a very narrow definition of femininity – women and girls persist, counting small victories along the way.

We have seen progress. Governments in the region have pushed for equality; particularly in the last few years, they have adopted legislation to ensure equal rights, they have criminalized violence against women, and some have lifted all reservations on CEDAW. Still, the biggest obstacle of all is society: you and me and our neighbours, and the stereotypes and norms we harbour and perpetuate. We are all guilty of it, which is what makes those defiant women and girls all the more brave.

This is where the seed comes in. To break down the wall, to break through resistance to equality, we have to know it, we have to understand it, and, yes, we have to sympathize with it. This is no easy feat, and we knew it would be a challenge. Asking men and boys about their attitudes around equality? Pushing them to reflect on their own behaviour, and their role in society? As we discussed this with Promundo for the first time two years ago, and later with our other research partners, we knew we would be pushing boundaries. Not all men are perpetrators of violence or custodians of inequality, but all men – and women – must be part of creating a more just society. Our logic was simple: if we do not approach men, and give them a space in which to engage, then how can we expect them to become part of the solution?

The International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) in the Middle East and North Africa is the most extensive comparative study of men and their views and experiences related to gender and gender equality ever undertaken in the region. Its results have shown us things we already knew but for which we did not have evidence – for example, that among many of the male respondents there is a sense of superiority, a conviction that they are entitled to protect and control their female family members.

Yet, I am hopeful. Across the four countries – Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine – we saw men and women who hold favourable views of women working outside the home. At the same time, we saw that men are less likely to be in favour of women in leadership positions – and even among women, many feel the same way.

For our work at UN Women, this report is an incredibly important tool in our programming, in our lobbying, and in our efforts to work with member states, civil society, and communities. Though the numbers alone may seem bleak, the research affirms that there are, among men and women alike, true champions who believe strongly in gender equality.

Amidst the stories of men's violence against women, we found stories of men's caregiving in the home. For every story of a man who compelled his daughter to marry against her will, there were stories of men who empowered their daughters. For every man who considered his job more important than his wife's or his sister's, we heard from men who viewed their wives' and their sisters' work as fully equal to theirs.

First and foremost, this study affirms the diversity of men in the four countries surveyed. And it is in that diversity that we see men whose attitudes and behaviour serve as models for what we need all men in the region to believe and to make possible every day: equality between women and men. Indeed, this study is a seed, and its stories will grow into a tree of hope and humanity.

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