Middle East and North Africa
Survey on Gender Equality at Home
Regional Brief

dataforgood.fb.com/docs/gendersurveyreport/
Introduction

The Survey on Gender Equality at Home offers a global snapshot of life at home, from the perspectives of Facebook users around the world. It was conducted in July 2020 to capture household gender dynamics during the COVID-19 pandemic, and reached a statistically representative sample of half a million people who use Facebook, spanning seven world regions and covering 208 countries, territories, and islands in 80 languages.

Over 460,000 people opted in to answer questions that focused on four areas in particular: attitudes and beliefs about gender equality; participation in unpaid care and domestic work; resource allocation and decision-making; and COVID-19’s impact on everyday lives. The survey results were disaggregated for men and women, allowing insights into gender differences.¹

This brief shares findings from the Middle East and North Africa,² describing aggregate patterns in survey responses from 18 countries highlighted on the map in Figure 1. The findings presented are based primarily on responses from 38,648 individuals, including 17,586 who identified as female and 21,062 who identified as male. This brief does not seek to describe the region as a whole. Rather, results are calibrated to the online population in the region. Note that as of 2017, only about 56 percent of the total Middle East and North Africa population was using the internet.³ This population tends to be younger (83 percent between the age of 18 and 54 years old), more urban (69 percent reside in cities), and better educated (62 percent have more than secondary education) than the general population. While this limits the generalizability of the findings, the picture that emerges provides important insights into gender differences for the region.

1. This report focuses on individuals who reported their gender as either female or male. This decision was taken in response to the very low share of respondents who selected the option ‘other.’
2. Countries allocated into regions based upon World Bank classifications.
FIGURE 1
Countries surveyed in the Middle East and North Africa
Key Findings

I. Gender norms

II. Unpaid care and domestic work

III. Resource allocation and decision-making

IV. Life during COVID-19
1. GENDER NORMS

The majority of respondents (79 percent) in the Middle East and North Africa region reported agreement with the statement, "Men and women should have equal opportunities (e.g. in education, jobs, household decision-making)." While both men and women agreed with this statement, women were significantly more likely to agree, about 90 percent of women agreed, compared to 70 percent of men.

While the majority of respondents agreed that men and women should have equal opportunities, respondents’ perceptions of their neighbors’ beliefs illustrate an interesting contrast. Overall, respondents expected that fewer than 5 (out of 10) of their neighbors hold such beliefs.

NOTE ON STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Throughout this brief, any time we use the word “significant” or highlight comparisons between male and female respondents we intend to indicate statistically significant differences (p<0.05). That is, we can be 95 percent confident that the observed differences reflect the real situation for men and women in the online population for the region and not an error caused by randomness.

4. We collapsed the proportion of respondents who indicated that they "agree" or "strongly agree" with this statement. This comment applies throughout the brief.

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79 percent of respondents agreed that men and women should have equal opportunities
72 percent of survey respondents agreed that a woman's most important role is to take care of her home and children, and 65 percent of respondents agreed that household expenses are the responsibility of the man, even if his wife can help him.

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree with the statement, “A woman's most important role is to take care of her home and children.” Nearly three quarters (72 percent) of respondents agreed with this statement. There were clear gender differences: 83 percent of men agreed with this statement, compared to 57 percent of women. Both men and women in the region reported expecting that an average of around 7 (out of 10) of their neighbors would also agree with the statement.

Regarding men’s household roles, 65 percent of respondents in the region agreed with the following statement, “Household expenses are the responsibility of the man, even if his wife can help him.” While 71 percent of men in the region agreed with this statement, just over half (56 percent) of women did.

Respondents’ perceptions of their neighbor's beliefs suggest similar tendencies: both men and women reported that an average of 6.8 (out of 10) of their neighbors would also agree that “household expenses are the responsibility of the man, even if his wife can help him.”

**FIGURE 2**
Proportion of respondents who agreed with the statement, “Men and women should have equal opportunities”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th>MEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK

Men were more likely to report being the main caregiver of elderly dependents, dependents with special needs, and self-isolating dependents.

Responses on caregiving also exhibit gender differences. Men were more likely than women to report being the main caregiver “in normal circumstances”\(^5\) of elderly dependents (17 percent of men vs. 12 percent of women), dependents with special needs (9 percent of men vs. 6 percent of women), and self-isolating dependents (9.2 percent of men vs. 6.5 percent of women). Self-reporting on caregiving for children was more equitably distributed among men and women in the region.

Women were significantly more likely than men to report spending time cooking, cleaning and on household management.

Survey responses indicated gender differences in responsibility for household chores. Women were significantly more likely to report spending time on cleaning (74 percent of women vs. 24 percent of men) and cooking (57 percent of women vs. 20 percent of men). Men in the region, meanwhile, were significantly more likely to report they spend time subsistence farming (5 percent of men vs. 1 percent of women), collecting water or fuel (18 percent of men vs. 7 percent of women), household management (19 percent of women vs. 37 percent of men) and supporting the family business (19 percent of men vs. 8 percent of women). Furthermore, men in the region were more likely to report not taking part in any of the above-mentioned chores (15 percent of men vs. 6 percent of women).

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5. This phrase was used to solicit responses about conditions prior to COVID-19.
Men were more likely to report owning motorized vehicles, land, and the places they live.

The survey illustrated a number of gendered differences in asset ownership. Men were more likely to report owning motorized vehicles (13 percent of women vs. 27 percent of men), land (9 percent of women vs. 15 percent of men), and the place they live (36 percent of women vs. 44 percent of men). Survey responses indicated more equitable distribution of computer (37 percent of women vs. 39 percent of men) and smartphone (79 percent of women vs 80 percent of men) ownership among the online population in the Middle East and North Africa.

Women were less likely than men to report being engaged in income-generating activities and the main income earner, and were more likely than men to say that they “fully depend on someone else in [their] household”.

Women were significantly less likely than men to report being engaged in income-generating activities, with 55 percent of men reporting being recently engaged in income-generating activities, compared to 29 percent of women.

Furthermore, women were also less likely to report being the main income earner. 61 percent of men from the region reported being the main income earner, compared to just 21 percent of women.

Lastly, men were also significantly more likely than women to report fully covering their own expenses (89 percent of men vs. 75 percent of women), while women in the region were more than twice as likely to report that they “fully depend” on another member of their household compared to men (25 percent of women vs. 11 percent of men).
FIGURE 3
Proportion of respondents who reported being the main income earner in their household, by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th>MEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Men were more likely to report control over financial decision-making and having full access to household money.

Men were more likely than women to report making decisions about large purchases (39 percent of men vs. 18 percent of women). When asked who makes decisions about “critical or urgent matters”, men were also more likely than women to make such decisions (44 percent of men vs. 20 percent of women).

Men were also more likely than women to report having full access to household money (42 percent and 25 percent, respectively), while women were more likely than men to report having no access (26 percent and 34 percent, respectively).
IV. LIFE DURING COVID-19

Among respondents from the Middle East and North Africa, the most commonly reported impact from COVID-19 was having school canceled or reduced.

When asked how their lives have been affected by COVID-19, the most common response from survey participants in the Middle East and North Africa was school being canceled or reduced (31.9 percent). More women reported this experience than men, however (39 percent of women vs. 27 percent of men). Notably, 24.1 percent of respondents also reported losing a job, and 20.7 percent reported difficulty accessing medical or hygiene supplies.

The most commonly reported concern during COVID-19 was being stuck at home for a long time.

When asked about their main concerns during the pandemic, the most common response was being stuck at home for a long time (36 percent). Women were significantly more likely than men to report this concern (42 percent of women vs. 32 percent of men).

Nearly a third (31 percent) of respondents reported concern over the future of their work, although men were considerably more likely to report this concern (35 percent of men vs. 26 percent of women). Overall, 24 percent of respondents in the region were concerned with access to health care, with women being somewhat more likely to report this concern (26 percent of women vs. 22 percent of men).

Lastly, in a separate question on the survey, women were 14 percentage points more likely than men to report that they “feel uncomfortable or even unsafe” in their house during the pandemic (52 percent of women vs. 38 percent of men).

6. Respondents were provided with a series of options including: School was cancelled or reduced; Migrated to different geographical area; Difficulty accessing medical or hygiene supplies; Longer wait times to visit doctors/seek medical care; Lost a job; Lost access to/ could not use public transport; Unable to perform usual personal care/health routines; Unable to seek medical care; Isolate or follow a quarantine order; None of the above; and Other.

7. Respondents were provided with a series of options including: Having enough money to sustain my family; Having enough food and basic supplies for my family; Being stuck at home for a long time; Having access to accurate information on coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic; The future of my work; Access to health care; Repaying outstanding loans; Staying home with limited things to do; My children education; I do not have any concerns at this time; and Other.
FIGURE 4
What are respondents’ main concerns during the pandemic?

- Women
- Men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Women (%)</th>
<th>Men (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enough money to sustain family</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enough food and basic supplies for family</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuck at home for long periods of time</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to accurate COVID-19 accurate</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future of work</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to health care</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repaying outstanding loans</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying home with limited things to do</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This brief was commissioned by Facebook to accelerate progress on Agenda 2030 and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The brief was authored by Dr. Tara Patricia Cookson, Dr. Ruth Carlitz, Dr. Lorena Fuentes and Alex Berryhill of Ladysmith, a feminist research collective that helps international organizations collect, analyze, and take action on gender data.

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Visit www.dataforgood.fb.com/docs/gendersurveyreport for more information about Facebook’s Survey on Gender Equality at Home.