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 Sub-Saharan Africa,² describing aggregate patterns in survey responses from the 44 countries and islands highlighted on the map in Figure 1. The findings presented are based primarily on responses from 54,922 individuals, including 20,981 who identified as female and 33,941 who identified as male. This brief does not describe the region as a whole. Rather, results are calibrated to the online population in the region. Note that as of 2017, only about 25 percent of the total Sub-Saharan Africa population was using the internet.³ This population tends to be younger (84 percent between 18 and 54 years old), more urban (54 percent reside in cities), and better educated (43 percent have secondary education or higher) 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.
³. World Bank and ITU (2017). Individuals using the Internet (% of population) - Sub-Saharan Africa
FIGURE 1:
Countries included from Sub-Saharan Africa
Key Findings

I. Gender norms

II. Unpaid care and domestic work

III. Resource allocation and decision-making

IV. Life during COVID-19
Illustrating a consistent trend across all sampled regions, the majority of respondents (80 percent) in Sub-Saharan Africa reported that they agree with the statement, “Men and women should have equal opportunities (e.g. in education, jobs, household decision-making).” While both men and women from the region agreed with this statement, women were significantly more likely to agree, 87 percent of women agreed, compared to 77 percent of men.

Respondents were also asked about their neighbors’ beliefs about this question. Both men and women expected that more than 5 (out of 10) of their neighbors believe that men and women should have equal opportunities. However, women reported a significantly higher number on average (6.1 vs. 5.4 out of 10).

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 collapse the proportion of respondents who indicate that they "agree" or "strongly agree" with this statement. This comment applies throughout the report.
80 percent of respondents in Sub-Saharan Africa agreed that men and women should have equal opportunities.
66 percent of respondents agreed that a woman's most important role is to take care of her home and children, while 45 percent agreed that household expenses are the responsibility of the man, even if his wife can help him.

66 percent of respondents in Sub-Saharan Africa said they agree with the statement, “A woman's most important role is to take care of her home and children.” Similar proportions of men and women expressed agreement.

Again, respondents were asked about their neighbors' beliefs. While both men and women expected a majority of their neighbors to agree, women again indicated that a greater number of neighbors would agree than did men (7.1 vs. 6.5 out of 10).

Regarding men's household roles, 45 percent of respondents in the region agreed with the statement, “Household expenses are the responsibility of the man, even if his wife can help him.” While more than half (52 percent) of men in the region agreed with this statement, a significantly smaller proportion of women (34 percent) expressed agreement.

Both men and women in Sub-Saharan Africa reported that an average of around 6 (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, “Household expenses are the responsibility of the man, even if his wife can help him”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th>MEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34%</td>
<td>52%</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 indicate gender differences. In Sub-Saharan Africa, men were significantly more likely than women to report being the main caregiver “in normal circumstances”\(^5\) of elderly dependents (16 percent of men vs. 8 percent of women), dependents with special needs (14 percent of men vs. 7 percent of women), and self-isolating dependents (11 percent of men vs. 5 percent of women).

Women were 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 than men to report spending time cleaning (66 percent of women vs. 35 percent of men), cooking (55 percent of women vs. 24 percent of men), and household management (19 percent of women vs. 28 percent of men). Men, meanwhile, were significantly more likely than women to report spending time subsistence farming (21 percent of men vs. 8 percent of women), collecting water or fuel (19 percent of men vs. 17 percent of women), and supporting the family business (20 percent of men vs. 12 percent of women). Furthermore, men were more likely to report not taking part in any of the above-mentioned chores (8 percent of men vs. 5 percent of women).

---

\(^5\) This phrase was used to solicit responses about conditions prior to COVID-19.
III. RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND DECISION-MAKING

Men were more likely to report owning motorized vehicles, land, the places they live, and computers.

The survey illustrated a number of gendered differences in asset ownership. Among the surveyed population in Sub-Saharan Africa, men were significantly more likely to report owning motorized vehicles (7 percent of women vs. 13 percent of men), land (11 percent of women vs. 20 percent of men), the place they live (16 percent of women vs. 21 percent of men), and computers (16 percent women vs. 23 percent men). The survey suggested a more equitable distribution of smartphone ownership among the online population of this region.

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

Women in the region were significantly less likely than men to report being engaged in income-generating activities (65 percent of men vs. 48 percent of women). Furthermore, whereas over half (51 percent) of men reported being the main income earner, just over one third (34 percent) of women indicated the same.

Lastly, men in the region were also significantly more likely to report fully covering their own expenses (86 percent of men vs. 79 percent of women), while women in the region were significantly more likely to report that they “fully depend” on another member of their household (21 percent of women vs. 14 percent of men).
Men were more likely to control financial decision-making and have full access to household money.

Men were significantly more likely than women to report making decisions about large purchases (36 percent vs. 26 percent) as well as about “critical or urgent matters” within their households such as medical emergencies or family member job losses (37 percent of men vs. 22 percent of women).

Along these same lines, men were significantly more likely to report having full access to household money, while women were significantly more likely to report having no access. While 28 percent of men reported having full access to household money, just 23 percent of women did. Likewise, while 37 percent of men reported having no access to household money, 43 percent of women did.
IV. LIFE DURING COVID-19

Among respondents from Sub-Saharan 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 in Sub-Saharan Africa was school being canceled or reduced (42 percent of respondents). Although this was the most common response overall in the region, women were significantly more likely than men to report experiencing it (46 percent of women vs. 39 percent of men). On the other hand, men in the region were more likely to report migrating (12 percent of men vs. 7 percent of women), having lost a job (28 percent of men vs. 23 percent of women), or having lost access to public transport (25 percent of men vs. 21 percent of women) as a result of COVID-19.

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

When asked about their main concerns during the pandemic, the most common response in Sub-Saharan Africa was being stuck at home for a long time (36 percent). Additionally, respondents reported concern over the future of their work (29 percent), having enough money to sustain their families (33 percent), and access to healthcare (20 percent).

Lastly, there were gender differences in responses regarding food security. While 34 percent overall reported concern about having enough food and basic supplies for their families, women were five percentage points more likely to report this concern (37 percent of women vs. 32 percent of men).

6. Respondents were provided with a series of options including: School was canceled 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 3
What are respondents’ main concerns during the pandemic?

- Women
- Men

- Enough money to sustain family
- Enough food and basic supplies for family
- Stuck at home for long periods of time
- Access to accurate COVID-19 information
- Future of work
- Access to health care
- Repaying outstanding loans
- Staying home with limited things to do
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.

We would like to thank the World Bank, UN Women, Equal Measures 2030, and Dr. Safaa Amer of Facebook's Demography and Survey Sciences group, for input into the development of this survey.

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