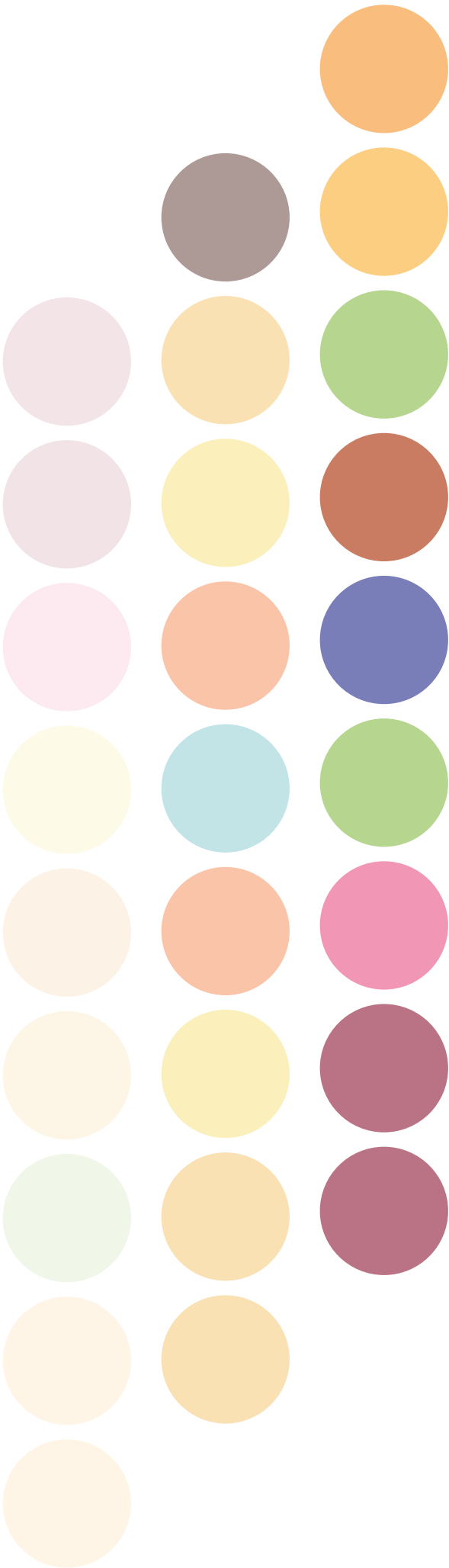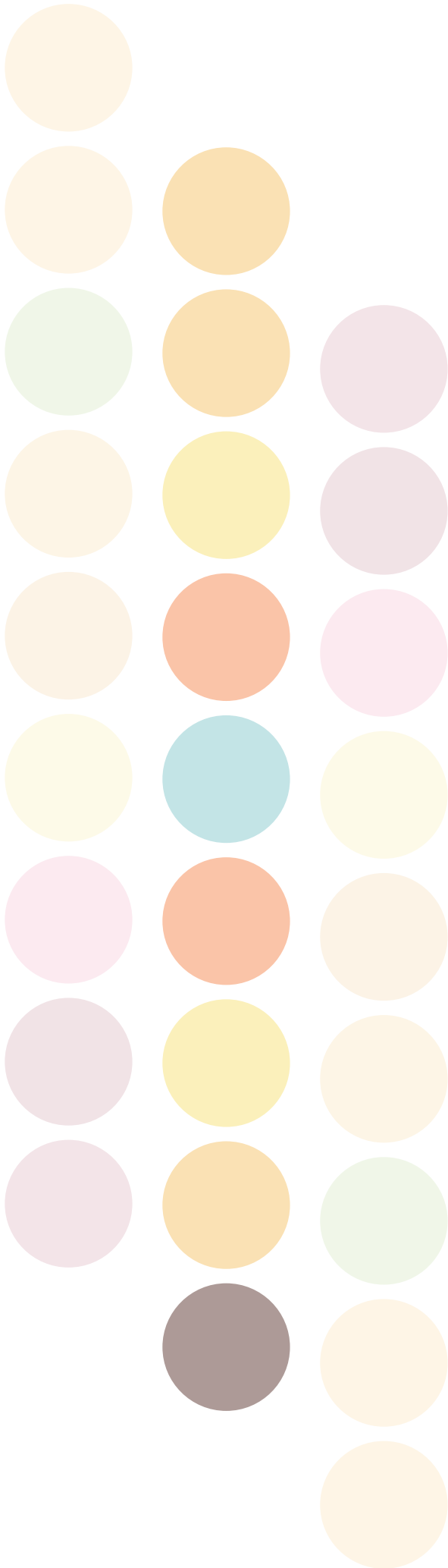# Qualitative Research
on Social Norms around Gender-Based Violence and the Physical Punishment of Children in Kosovo (UNSCR 1244)

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Qualitative Research on Social Norms around Gender-Based Violence and the Physical Punishment of Children in Kosovo

(UNSCR 1244)

Contents

Acknowledgments

List of Acronyms

DV	Domestic violence
FGD	Focus group discussion
GBV	Gender-based violence
IDI	In-depth interview
K-Albanian	Kosovo Albanian
K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian	Kosovo Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian
K-Serb	Kosovo Serb
KAS	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
VAC	Violence against children

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1   All reference to Kosovo in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

Foreword

All too frequently, violence against women and girls and violence against children becomes headline news; the subject of many reports, these forms of violence know no boundaries. As such, the Global Agenda has identified elimination of violence against women and against children as among the targets for the Sustainable Development Goals. This study is an important contribution to our understanding of what the individual and collective attitudes, social norms and behaviours are that shape and perpetuate violence particularly against women and girls, and hence that sustain patterns of inequity across generations. Social norms are found to be a most significant barrier to ending violence against women and girls, sustaining attitudes that tolerate violence against women and children.

Two important insights emerge from the study. First, the attitudes and norms that sustain gender-based violence (GBV), domestic violence (DV), and violence against children (VAC) become so deeply entrenched that they become invisible and very difficult to change. This cultural complacency allows the perpetuation of violence. Secondly, the origins of GBV, DV and VAC are formed very early in life. The women, men, and children who were part of this research have some ideas about themselves that are shaped by attitudes that dictate who they should be – there are clear expectations of boys and girls and of men and women. These attitudes are impressed on children from an early age and remain well into adulthood.

However, what also emerges from the study is that well-designed, multi-sectoral interventions to address the key drivers of GBV and VAC can make change possible. Through a companion communication plan developed through multi-sectoral consultations, UNICEF in Kosovo -together with its partners - is deepening its work on creating effective multi-sectoral interventions to address GBV and VAC to realize the rights of women and children to live in dignity and achieve their full potential.

Laila O. Gad
Head of Office
UNICEF

1. Executive summary

Following the alarming findings of previous research on the widespread tolerance of violence against women in the home, and the high rate of children being disciplined in a violent manner, this research seeks to understand gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children, what the drivers are of these practices, what keeps them as part of Kosovan society, and what supports the perpetuation of violence from one generation to another. One of the research assumptions was that there are strong social norms (a complex system of values, individual beliefs, social expectations, reinforcements and punishments) in Kosovo that support violent practices within the family and between couples. Using qualitative research methods, the research draws on 50 focus group discussions with men and women from different socio-economic backgrounds, a range of settings and different age groups, as well as 34 in-depth interviews with community leaders and service providers to explore the understanding of and attitudes towards gender roles - man/woman, boy/girl, husband/wife, parent/child - and violence. Additionally, one focus group discussion was organized with children, to gain insights into their perceptions of and attitudes towards violence. Referring to the finding of many social studies that attitudes and behaviour are not necessarily positively correlated, it was crucial to deconstruct individuals' violent behaviour by examining the reasons, beliefs and preferences that influence these unwanted practices. Although gender-based violence refers to both men and women, this research focused on violence towards girls and women. The component dealing with the physical punishment of children explored factors influencing the behaviour of parents and caregivers (men and women) towards their children – boys and girls. The research also sheds light on unequal power relations and social determinants that perpetuate gender inequality in Kosovan society.

Gender-based violence and social norms

The report concludes that gender-based violence in Kosovo is influenced by strong social norms, social expectations and factors that encourage violent practices against women and children. Gender-based violence is dependent on what others do and what others expect one to do in a specific situation. The study shows that individuals' violent practices are highly dependent on what other people think they ought to do and what other people - people they know, from their community or the environment they live in - do in similar situations. A perpetrator feels more respected and in harmony with people who matter (the reference network) when responding violently towards a partner's behaviour. The expectation from others that a man should oversee and correct the behaviour of his partner, or of the physical punishment of children by parents is deeply embedded into Kosovan beliefs and values.

Perceptions about violence

Research findings demonstrate that there is no agreement among respondents about the prevalence of violence, and no consistent definition of what constitutes violence, be it in intimate partner relationships or with regard to child discipline. The key variable that splits participants into two camps is the understanding of violence. Participants who define violence as "fights, injuries and murders" or acts that bring serious injuries and consequences report that violence is not widespread in Kosovo, whereas those who identify violent practices to include other forms of physical and psychological violence such as slapping, verbal abuse, hair-pulling, etc. consider violence to be more prevalent. Young women participating in the research tended to perceive violence as more widespread than all other groups. Most respondents do not classify sporadic violent behaviour as violence. Slapping is not considered a violent act, except when it happens repeatedly and produces severe harm. Some young men and women even gave a positive connotation to slapping, as a sign of affection.

The most recognized type of violence is physical violence. Young urban women showed greater awareness about psychological violence and young women from both urban and rural areas showed less tolerance towards violent behaviour. Nevertheless, in mixed-gender focus group discussions (FGDs), young women did not challenge the norm. The difference between their personal beliefs and their predictions about how male FGD participants would react if the young women opposed violent behaviour was evident and resulted in young women becoming less vocal about their opinions when focus groups were gender mixed. Women who participated in mixed groups were more prone to give socially acceptable answers and "I don't know" answers.

Both men and women, across all ethnic communities and age cohorts involved in the research, expressed the opinion that violence is often justified when women don't fulfil their responsibilities - such as taking care of children, cleaning, cooking - as wives or partners. Although respondents justify violence in these and other circumstances, they did not identify themselves or their close relatives as applying violent practices in their own homes. The image of a perpetrator was most often projected on the "other", normally someone with low educational attainment, who has been subject to violence, is of poor economic status, an alcohol abuser, or with mental health issues.

Factors influencing gender-based violence

Family roles and values

The study identified a strong consensus among respondents about gender roles and responsibilities within the family. The father is perceived as the main decision-maker, the head of the household, and income provider whereas the mother is primarily responsible for taking care of children, preparing food, and doing household chores. There is a lack of willingness and/or capacity from both men and women to negotiate roles within the family. Feminine and masculine gender identities are constructed, communicated and fostered in family settings and they

are further nurtured in schools and in society in general. One group that shows signs of dissatisfaction with the current status of women in the family and society is young urban women, but during the study these young women, although dissatisfied, avoided challenging these norms and principles when in the presence of men.

Changes in family roles are evident when comparing current family dynamics with the past. Women report having more freedom today to voice their opinions and decide on important matters in life such as education, and marriage. However, this is not the case for women from Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities. Moreover, across all groups, women showed high sensitivity to the norm related to participating in property and inheritance rights. There is consistent and strong opposition from women even to discussing property rights. Respondents were firmly against participating in inheritance division as they consider that by seeking to claim their property rights women would show a lack of respect for their families and they could risk losing communication with and support from their families.

Gender norms

Violent behaviour is incentivized by masculine social norms – general perceptions of what it means to be a man, what men do or what they should do in certain circumstances. Men who use violence are regarded as real men, powerful and in control. There is a strong pressure on men to align their behaviour with society's expectations. Not acting violently when spouses or partners fail to fulfil their roles and responsibilities is sanctioned with lack of respect, and being perceived as "less of a man". Both young and older women participating in the study expressed opinions that appeared to safeguard norms perpetuating gender inequality. They openly expressed harsh criticism towards women who transgress against social norms and moralized about behaviours that are not aligned with expectations of how women should behave. At the same time, the research revealed the power relations between men and women, with women having little decision-making power in the family, which also affects their capacity to (re)negotiate this dynamic.

Gender-based violence as a private matter

The discussions with participants revealed that GBV is considered a private matter, to be treated as such. The by-stander effect is prevalent across all groups. A failure to recognize the illegality of violence and to see the negative social impact of GBV, and perceiving violence as a private issue, where no-one has the right to interfere, are some factors supporting violent acts and discouraging reporting and addressing them at local level.

Factors that influence victims' decisions to remain in abusive relationships

The main reasons that influence victims to stay in violent relationships are financial dependence on the husband or partner, the responsibility and social expectations of keeping the family together, the fear that the perpetrator will harm the victim's family, and the prioritization of maintaining the honour of the family. Service providers at community level confirm that many perpetrators are recidivists and that violent practices continue with increasing severity. In addition to considerations of safety, several socio-economic factors may influence women's decisions to remain in abusive relationships. With an unemployment rate of 42 per cent[2], women's economic dependency significantly hinders their life choices. Despite disparities in economic opportunities, gender gaps in human capital are evident as well. Illiteracy rates are 10 per cent among women in comparison to 5 per cent[3] among men. Narratives from FGDs show that low educational attainment, lack of work experience and opportunities, and strong family and social pressure make women's choice to remain in abusive relationships the default decision.

Limited institutional support and legal awareness

Research participants demonstrated limited awareness of the legal framework related to domestic violence. Apart from those with a legal background, FGD participants either could not name any legal or normative act or did not know that there is legislation prohibiting domestic violence. Participants also exhibited a lack of trust in institutions (courts, prosecution, police) and in the institutions' ability and willingness to address GBV cases fairly and sensitively. Another factor that harms the respondents' faith in institutions is the media coverage of GBV cases, oriented rather towards reflecting the failed interventions of institutions in Kosovo to protect the victims of abuse.

Factors influencing the physical punishment of children

Gender norms and parenting practices

Parenting practices influence the construction and maintenance of gender norms by teaching their children the meaning of "being a girl" and "being a boy". Parents have high expectations of girls fulfilling their responsibilities, which are mainly related to shadowing and assisting their mothers in their activities. On the other hand, boys are expected to lead a carefree life with little or no domestic responsibilities. A mother is judged and sanctioned by losing respect from others if she fails to teach her daughter how to become a good wife and a good mother.

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2   Kosovo Agency of Statistics. 2014. Results of the Kosovo 2014 Labour Force Survey. p. 21
3   Ibid.

With regard to the discipline of children, there is also a public/private dimension that was highlighted in the research. Parents felt that disciplining of children should happen inside the privacy of the home, because punishing children in public is considered disrespectful towards others who may witness this form of discipline.

Definition of physical punishment

There was consensus among research participants that physical punishment is not a violent act and as such, slapping, hitting, and other forms of physical punishment have no negative connotation. Physical punishment is perceived as part of traditional parenting practices and parents' beliefs are aligned to their expectations of how other parents react in similar situations and what others think parents ought to do when their children misbehave.

Physical punishment - a default form of intervention

A belief that physical punishment is an effective disciplining tool and that when communication fails, physical punishment is the default mode of intervention shapes parents' behaviour. While the majority of participants consider beating with a stick the correct form of physical punishment, there are other attributes that influence participants' perceptions of this behaviour as appropriate. Some participants believe that one should use physical punishment only on children of a specific age range (1 to 13 years), while another group, consisting mainly of participants from Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, believes that until children get married they should be physically punished if they fail to fulfil their responsibilities. Parents believe that one should not use physical punishment in front of other people because it is disrespectful to those who witness it. For this reason, most physical punishment takes place in private settings.

Instilling fear

One of the most significant beliefs shared by all participants is that fear is an essential component influencing children's behaviour and that fear and children's motivation to act in a specific way are directly linked. They attribute children's behaviour and success as a student and as an individual to fear, claiming that without fear children don't have the motivation to behave as they should and to learn. Therefore, using physical punishment to instill fear is justified and uniformly approved by the research participants. Children are considered to learn to respect others if they know fear. Given that respecting others is one of the main attributes that participants mention when describing a good child, this explains the justification of physical punishment as an appropriate parenting practice.

Past experiences shape one's parenting decisions

The majority of participants refer to their own childhood experiences when describing the positive impact of physical punishment on them. Self-evaluation echoed by many participants in the study strengthens their beliefs that physical punishment had the desired outcome and thus that the right to discipline children through physical punishment should be granted to teachers and in rural communities even to neighbours.

Limited knowledge about alternative parenting approaches

This study reveals a remarkable absence of knowledge of alternative methods for disciplining children and influencing their behaviour. While there is an increased tendency among young urban mothers and single parents to use alternative methods to beating, the variety of sanctions described in FGDs ranging from locking the child in a room or putting a child under a cold shower highlights the urgency of designing programmes that equip parents with alternative parenting methods.

Children's perceptions of violence

The research identified significant similarities between children and adults when describing family roles in a typical Kosovo family. According to children, mothers should take care of children and everything else that falls within the household domain, whereas the role of fathers is to provide financial stability and to be the main decision-makers.

Children confirmed that boys are disciplined differently from girls. Parents are more tolerant towards boys and have less expectation of their sons than of their daughters contributing to the family during childhood. Additionally, children's descriptions of daily practices highlight the gender inequalities: girls are expected to serve their brothers and other family members.
In contrast to adults, who focused mainly on physical violence, children were more vocal about psychological violence. They also easily recalled violent acts, mainly comprising violence among peers in the school environment. Children perceive peer violence as a normal occurrence in their school lives.

When asked to imagine a community without violence, sadly, they could not. Children who grow up in an environment that tolerates violence, within both the family and the community, learn that violence is an appropriate response for solving quarrels and conflicts. The findings of this study on physical punishment as a default parenting practice and the normality with which children perceive occurrences of violence indicate the transfer of a cycle of violence not only throughout the life of a child, but also from one generation to another.

Key conclusions and way forward

The research has identified strong gender norms and expectations that influence the interaction between men and women, the roles and responsibilities within the family, what is acceptable and what is not for men and women, what is expected of boys and girls, and how children should be disciplined.

The current norms may be one of the causes of gender inequity in Kosovo, but they also discourage men and women from bringing this inequity to public debate, to renegotiate power relations and empower women in their families and communities. The girls and women from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are affected by even bigger inequalities, the harmful gender norms overlapping with high rates of illiteracy and unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. The research has also provided more insights into the intergenerational cycle of

violence. Gender norms and expectations and violence of men against women teaches children what is expected of them and how they should behave when they become men and women. At the same time, violent parenting practices teach them how children should be disciplined, taking them into adulthood where they apply them to their own children. Violence and other harmful norms are, in this way, perpetuated from one generation to another. This research, which explores for the first time in Kosovo the influence of social norms and factors on violent acts, highlights the urgency of intervening to break the cycle of violence and to challenge and change current harmful norms.

The research findings were considered and validated during a two-day event, organized from 12 to 13 April 2016 with the participation of central and local institutions, civil society organizations, UN agencies, international organization and the media. The presentation of research findings was followed by an interactive workshop (see Annex 2), with the participation of the same stakeholders, to analyze research findings and reflect on implications for Kosovo. The participants acknowledged the importance of the issue and the urgency of implementing long-term interventions to address social norms and to eliminate violence. They made recommendations for actions to be undertaken at central and local level in various sectors (education; health; social protection; law enforcement), by the media and by communities themselves to address gender issues, gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children. The stakeholders highlighted the importance of having high-level institutions leading this process and playing a co-ordination and monitoring role, ensuring that a comprehensive plan of action is developed and budgeted for in these areas, and that activities are monitored and progress evaluated.

Actions to redefine gender roles, the images of men, women, boys and girls, and parenting approaches are critical and need to be implemented in a co-ordinated and holistic manner, with the participation of all stakeholders. Men and women, including from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, need to be empowered to challenge current norms; parents and caregivers need to be supported to improve their practices and to adopt non-violent parenting approaches; children and adolescents need to be given the opportunity to participate in re-shaping their communities so that they become safe for everyone.

Motivated by the research findings and inspired by the recommendations provided by participants during the research validation workshop, UNICEF has developed a communication strategy for behaviour and social change, which aims to bring together central and local stakeholders to raise awareness about GBV and violence against children, and the short- and long-term consequences of violence for individuals and communities, and to engage in an open dialogue and action to address gender norms and to empower parents to become better in their role.

2. Introduction

In societies around the world, gender discrimination and inequitable gender norms are much more likely to limit girls' ability to go to school, live free from violence, self-direct their life-course, and enjoy a level of social status and value equal than to have these effects on their brothers and male peers. In a wide range of circumstances, gendered power structures privilege boys and men, giving them greater access to resources, greater personal freedom, and less vulnerability to the violation of rights than is the case for women and girls.

The UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017 emphasizes gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women as important results across all of the seven areas of the Plan: health, HIV and AIDS, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), nutrition, education, child protection, and social inclusion. Addressing gender inequality is integral to UNICEF's work, and in order to achieve results for women and children, especially the most disadvantaged, it is essential to address one of the most fundamental inequalities that exist in all societies – gender inequality.

UNICEF's Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2014-2017 specifies how UNICEF will promote gender equality across all of the organization's work at the global, regional and country levels, in alignment with the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017. The primary focus of UNICEF programming on gender equality is addressing the significant disadvantage that large numbers and proportions of girls face in realizing their rights because of gendered discrimination and underlying gendered power dynamics. Through its programmes UNICEF is also addressing gender norms and engaging with the range of actors who influence gender dynamics, including girls and boys, women and men, families and communities, leaders and champions.

Although no child should live in a dangerous and abusive environment, violence remains a reality for many children around the globe. This violence cuts across boundaries of age, gender, religion, ethnic origin, disability, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.[4] UNICEF recognizes through its Strategic Plan 2014-2017 the importance of protecting every child from abuse, neglect and exploitation. To do so, UNICEF works to strengthen child protection systems, increasingly taking into account the interplay between child protection systems and social norms. Efforts focus on preventing violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, including through strengthening the protective capacities of families and communities.

End Violence campaigns have been initiated by UNICEF at global, regional and local levels to raise awareness about the issue of violence against children, but also to increase the commitment of governments, civil society organizations and communities to take an active role in the prevention and elimination of violence. However, more still needs to be done. As data plays a critical role in supporting evidence-based decision-making in addressing gender inequality, gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children, UNICEF provides support to

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4   United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), State of the World's Children 2014 in Numbers: Every Child Counts. New York, January 2014. p.78-83

institutions and organizations in collecting data on these issues, and transforming data into sound policies and programmes. Although data on gender inequity and domestic violence in Kosovo was available, there was little evidence on the root causes of these phenomena. This research is an attempt to better understand social norms and the factors influencing gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children, providing the evidence for further decision-making.

Violence in Kosovo

Domestic violence, gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children are widespread in Kosovo. Studies on domestic violence show that the victims are mainly women and children[5], followed by the elderly in the family[6]. People in this demographic have high economic dependency and this reduces their autonomy as individuals.

Violence against children

A recent study of the different dimensions of domestic violence in Dragash/ Dragaš, Gjakovë/ Djakovica and Gjilan/Gnjilane highlights the magnitude of the phenomenon and general perception in these three municipalities[7]. Half of the children aged 12-18 years who were interviewed reported having experienced physical violence from a family member at least once. Almost 15 per cent reported experiencing psychological violence exercised by a family member and one per cent reported experiencing sexual assault by a family member.

When it comes to witnessing violence, 11 per cent of the children reported witnessing physical violence at home at least once, 12 per cent of children reported witnessing psychological violence at home and one per cent of children reported witnessing sexual assault at home. At the same time, 45 per cent of children reported that they had experienced physical violence at school at least once, 32 per cent reported experiencing psychological violence at school and six per cent reported experiencing sexual assault at school.

Similar trends were identified by the recent Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)[8], which shows around 61 per cent of children aged 1-14 years experiencing violent discipline. This figure is even higher in Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, where around 71 per cent of children aged 1-14 years were violently disciplined.

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5   See the study by Ulf Farnsveden, Ariana Qosaj-Mustafa and Nicole Farnsworth, "Country's Gender Profile, Kosovo," page 2, which was funded by Sweden and can be found at http://www.swedenabroad.com/ImageVault-Files/id_20757/cf_347/Orgut_Kosovo_Gender_Profile_FINAL_2014-05-08.PDF
6   Annual data from Kosovo Police. 2012. Taken from Ministry of Justice (2015). Assessment Report on the Kosovo Programme and Action Plan against Domestic Violence 2011-2014.. Government of Kosovo.
7   UNICEF. Study on dimensions of domestic violence. Gender-based violence in Kosovo* municipalities: Dragash/ Dragaš, Gjakovë/ Djakovica and Gjilan/Gnjilane. 2013
8   The Kosovo Agency of Statistics. 2013-2014 Kosovo* Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.

Violence against women

The same study in the three municipalities showed that in the overall sample of women, 17 per cent experienced at least one form of physical violence from their husbands or partners. The most frequent types of physical violence were slapping, arm-twisting, hair pulling, pushing, shaking or throwing things at them. Around seven per cent of women experienced at least one form of psychological violence. The most common types of psychological violence were insults, making her feeling bad, and humiliation in front of other people. Three per cent experienced sexual violence. The most frequent form of sexual violence was forced sexual intercourse. More violence was reported against women from urban areas than against those from rural areas.

Around 24 per cent of men reported perpetrating at least one form of physical violence. The most frequent types of physical violence perpetrated by men were slapping, arm twisting, hair pulling, pushing, shaking, throwing things, hitting the wife/partner with a fist or something else. A higher percentage of men from rural areas reported committing physical violence against their partner. Overall, 27 per cent of men reported using psychological violence, with higher incidence in rural areas. Around one per cent of men reported perpetrating sexual violence.

Tolerance of violence

The research[9] also identified high tolerance towards violent practices. Boys showed higher tolerance towards gender-based violence than girls. Children who had experienced or witnessed physical violence, psychological or sexual violence reported higher tolerance towards similar practices. 54 per cent of women agreed with the statement that "There are times when women deserve to be beaten"; 40 per cent agreed with the statement that "A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep the family together". 64 per cent of men agreed that "Sexual intercourse can never be violent if it happens between two married adults", and 31 per cent agreed that "A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together". Men who had perpetrated physical, psychological or sexual violence showed higher tolerance of inequitable gender norms.

The same study shows that men and women also demonstrated a high tolerance of the physical punishment of children. 52 per cent of women and 49 per cent of men believe that "It is sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good, sharp spanking"; 52 per cent of women and 48 per cent of men agreed that "It is permissible to slap a child if they deserve it", while 36 per cent of women and 42 per cent of men agree with the saying that "Corporal punishment comes from heaven".

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9   UNICEF. Study on dimensions of domestic violence. Gender-based violence in Kosovo* municipalities: Dragash/ Dragaš, Gjakovë/ Djakovica and Gjilan/Gnjilane. 2013

MICS[10] findings also show that in the general population 33 per cent of women and 15 per cent of men aged 15-49 years believe a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife in some specific circumstances (when she goes out without telling him; when she neglects the children; when she argues with him; when she refuses sex with him; or when she burns the food), while the figure for women and men age 15-49 years among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities is 65 per cent and 39 per cent respectively.

There appears to be little awareness of the negative impact violence can have on the lives of children and women. Women who have experienced physical, psychological or sexual violence reported having higher symptoms of distress and difficulties in everyday functioning. Violence experienced or witnessed by a child at an early age, when the brain and body are at a crucial stage of development, can cause lifelong damage. It affects children's physical and mental health, compromises their ability to learn and socialize, and undermines their development as functional adults and good parents later in life[11].

People who experience abuse as children are more at risk of developing health conditions and chronic diseases as adults (heart disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, liver disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and overall poor health[12]). Abuse in childhood is also strongly correlated with unhealthy behaviours in adulthood, such as cigarette smoking, unhealthy eating, alcohol and drug abuse, depression, and attempted suicide[13]. This is also confirmed by a 2013 survey in Montenegro on Adverse Childhood Experiences[14], which shows that smoking was common among individuals who had been physically abused. In addition, those who were physically abused were more than three times as likely to use drugs, and more than eight times as likely to attempt suicide. The survey also highlighted relatively strong association between health-risk behaviours and the number of adverse childhood experiences.

Results from the MICS also show that, among all ethnic groups, the level of education and socio-economic status impacts perception of the use of violence: the higher the level of education and socio-economic status, the lower the support of the use of violence in any given circumstances. The proportion of women with primary or lower secondary education who believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife is 70 per cent and 57 per cent respectively, whereas of those with upper secondary education or higher education the percentages are 37 and 18 respectively[15]. Among all ethnic groups, neglecting children is most clearly seen as justifying the use of violence against women. These data show there is a strong alignment of public opinion about the expectations of how women ought to behave, and any transgression against these norms carries the threat of being the victim of a violent act.

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10   The Kosovo Agency of Statistics. 2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
11   Felitti, V. J. et al., 'Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study,' American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 1998, vol. 14, pp. 245-258
12   Ibid..
13   Ibid.
14   WHO. Institute of Public Health Montenegro. Survey on Adverse Childhood Experiences in Montenegro. 201
15   Kosovo Agency of Statistics. Survey 2013-2014: Multiple Indicator Cluster, Synthesis Report. Pristina, Kosovo. p.136

Kosovo institutions have developed and enacted a series of laws and policies, drawing on and compliant with international instruments, to address domestic violence, violence against children, gender inequalities and conditions that subordinate and discriminate against women in the public and private spheres. Laws in place addressing domestic and gender-based violence include the Kosovo Constitution, the Law on Protection Against Domestic Violence, the Law on Gender Equality, the Anti-Discrimination Law, the Law on Social and Family Services, the Family Law of Kosovo, the Law on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, the Law on Property and other Real Rights, the Labour Law, the Family Code, the Criminal Code of Kosovo, the Criminal Procedure Code of Kosovo, the Juvenile Justice Code, the Law on Civil Service, and the Regulation on Disciplinary Proceedings in Civil Service. To prevent and address violence in schools, the Ministry of Education developed and adopted a Protocol for the prevention and referral of violence in Kosovo, which covers the identification, registration and referral of cases of violence against children. Guidelines for the implementation of the Protocol have also been developed and indicators regarding violence in schools have been developed and submitted to the Office of Good Governance for approval. Identified cases are registered in the Education Management Information System database case registry module. Educational institutions are also encouraged to conduct awareness-raising and prevention activities, and peer mediation teams have been established in several municipalities.

At the same time, a series of mechanisms have been instituted to ensure implementation of legislation and protection of children and women's rights. A National Co-ordinator against Domestic Violence was appointed who is responsible for co-ordinating, monitoring and reporting the implementation of policies and programmes in this area.

The promulgation of the Law on Gender Equality in 2004 established the Office for Gender Equality, later transformed into the Agency for Gender Equality, affiliated to the Prime Minister's office. The new 2015 Law on gender equality refines the role of the Agency for Gender Equality, which has the right to modify and propose new laws and policies in the area of gender equality, and the responsibility for co-operation with public institutions and civil society organizations to raise awareness on and mainstream gender equality. At the same time, the Law on gender equality identifies all ministries and municipalities as obliged to appoint the relevant officials for gender equality with sufficient professional capacity and to allocate sufficient resources from the budget in order to co-ordinate implementation of the provisions of the law. Furthermore, at the municipal level, a number of municipalities have established or are in the process of establishing co-ordination mechanisms to develop local action plans on prevention and on the protection and reintegration of women victims of GBV and DV.

Although the current legislation provides detailed descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of a range of institutions and organizations to protect victims of domestic violence, the implementation of these provisions has proven to be challenging for various reasons, including limited financial and human resources, lack of a systematic data collection system, poor exchange of information on domestic violence between institutions, and the attitudes of different stakeholders towards domestic violence.

As was revealed by the baseline study on the dimension of violence in three municipalities[16], there are few violence prevention programmes, with those that exist usually implemented by non-governmental organizations, and no programmes to help parents learn non-violent parenting approaches. Victims of gender-based violence are often left without institutional support, when the system fails to provide even basic emergency aid. The judiciary often sanctions perpetrators with only a warning, while rehabilitation and reintegration programmes are loosely applied and do not yield expected results.

Gender inequity

A set of factors represents a great barrier to tackling the issue of violent behaviour in everyday life. The difficult economic situation and the vulnerability of women with high rates of unemployment and lower levels of education, the huge disparity in terms of responsibilities based on gender roles, and a historical context of gender inequality and discrimination are only some of the circumstances that impact the complexity of the situation.

Gender stereotypes are dominant in almost all classes and social groups: historically, the role of women in the family is connected with reproductive ability, and women are placed in a passive position for most family and community decisions. Women are trusted with attending to the needs of children, whilst being engaged in the limited support of their education, and also completing chores around the house. On the other hand, men are the uncontested family leaders, being fully responsible for the provision of income and the financial stability of the family. Males show dominance in terms of decision-making on issues important to the family. Men also have almost exclusive access to inherited wealth[17], making women dependent and with no control over essential resources.

The need for additional evidence

Although there is a series of previous studies that explored the issue of violence in Kosovo, most available data is quantitative, showing the magnitude of the phenomenon, and highlighting people's attitudes towards violence, gender-based violence and violence against children. No previous research has focused on exploring the causes of violent practices, what encourages men to apply physical force with their partners and wives, and how community beliefs, reinforcements and sanctions influence individuals' preferences for one behaviour or another.

This motivated UNICEF to undertake, for the first time in Kosovo, qualitative research to identify and explore social norms and factors influencing domestic violence, gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children. This research fills an important knowledge gap, which is critical for programming and

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16   UNICEF. Study on dimensions of domestic violence. Gender-based violence in Kosovo municipalities: Dragash/Dragaš, Gjakovë/ Djakovica and Gjilan/Gnjilane. 2013
17   See for example the gender profile of Kosovo - Farnsveden, U., Qosaj-Mustafa, A., and Farnsworth, N. (2014), Country's Gender Profile: An Analysis of Gender Differences at all Levels in Kosovo. Sweden: Orgut Consulting, where women's inheritance is at a very low level, and something between 1 in 14 and 1 in 7 women have property registered in their names.

effective measures to address these phenomena. The research findings can shed light over factors at both the individual level (one's attitudes, beliefs, values and knowledge) and the social level (power relations, the influence of reference networks, social sanctions and reinforcements, gender norms and expectations) that maintain and perpetuate violence in Kosovo. They will also help decision-makers at central and local level, civil society and international organizations, and initiative groups at local level to go beyond awareness-raising when tackling the issue of violence, and rather to encourage a public dialogue about the cause of violence, about gender norms and stereotypes and how to address them, and about how to support parents and caregivers to improve parenting practices and adopt non-violent approaches with their children. A holistic and long-term approach is needed to effectively address the issue of violence, and this research can play an important role in supporting evidence-based decision-making, with focus on changing social norms. The implementation of evidence-based programmes and interventions by both institutions and local organizations in Kosovo can help Kosovo realize its commitments with international institutions, better protect human rights and further reduce inequity.

Last, but not least, this research is expected to contribute to the regional and global evidence around gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children, providing a better understanding of what maintains violence within a society, and how it is perpetuated from one generation to another. It also provides a model of exploring these phenomena, by using the social norms lens, and supporting other similar research in the region.

The research sought to understand the individual and social factors and norms that influence the adoption of violent practices by men and parents/caregivers and the acceptance and justification of violence in general by the population in Kosovo. It used a qualitative methodology to explore and better understand the factors and processes that fuel violent behaviour both in cases of domestic violence and in the physical punishment of children.

3. Objectives of the research

The research assumption or hypothesis was that both gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children are influenced by strong social norms and that social sanctions and/or reinforcements influence people's choice of violent behaviours. The research focus included better understanding of how people define violence, their attitudes, beliefs, values and knowledge in this area, in what situations they justify the use of violence by men and parents or caregivers, who influences and supports the adoption of violent practices, and why people choose not to interfere when witnessing violence. The research also explored people's attitudes towards men and parents who prefer not to use violence, and what can be done to support non-violent communication between partners and between parents and their children.

The study thus examines the complexity of gender-based violence, applied by men against women, which is the most widespread gender-based violent practice in Kosovo (domestic violence, understood as violent or aggressive behaviour within the home, typically involving the violent abuse of a spouse or partner is integrated in the broader concept of gender-based violence) and the physical punishment of children, and the environment that enables the manifestation of these violent practices.

Although there are some common elements that apply to both of these behaviours and they are interdependent, GBV and the physical punishment of children were treated in this research as stand-alone focus areas, with unique characteristics shaping each of these phenomena.

The findings of this research complement other existing data, mainly provided by previous quantitative surveys. This qualitative research brings additional evidence and understanding of why people act in a specific manner, which will support evidence-based programming and decision-making. The collected evidence will also support further advocacy and awareness-raising efforts, empowering rights-holders and increasing the accountability of duty-bearers in addressing violence in Kosovo. It will also serve the development of comprehensive strategies and programmes focused on behavioural and social change, empowering communities, men and women to take an active part in this process.

4. Working definitions

Understanding why people do what they do is a challenging task especially when the behaviour of interest is violence. Although social scientists have given us a number of models that help us better understand human behaviour, it is the context - the environment where the behaviour is manifested - that adds to the uncertainty and complexity of this endeavour. For the purpose of this study, we have used the theory developed by Bicchieri to help us focus on the main constructs for diagnosing gender-based violence and physical punishment as social norms and to interpret the data gathered from focus groups, in-depth interviews and observations.

Social norms, as argued by Bicchieri (2006), can be understood as the grammar of social interactions[18]. In a society or a group of individuals, there is a set of rules or norms that describe what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. While in Kosovo society removing shoes when entering the house is a social norm, in other societies, such as the US or the UK, such a practice is not a norm; individuals can take off their shoes irrespective of what others do. In Kosovo, however, everybody removes their shoes and everybody expects others to do the same. Individuals who transgress from this norm show a lack of respect for their host and are considered to show a lack of hygiene. Given the interdependency of this behaviour on what others do and what others expect one to do and the potential reinforcement or punishment for not complying with the expectation, we classify the practice of removing shoes when entering a house as a social norm.

This definition of social norms will help in understanding whether gender-based violence and physical punishments are social norms.
Collective behaviours can be customs, descriptive norms, or social norms. Interventions are designed based on the type of behaviour, and differentiating between customs and descriptive and social norms is therefore crucial.

A custom is closely related to a need, which provokes a pattern of behaviour such that individuals unconditionally prefer to conform to it, irrespective of how other people behave[19].

Unlike customs, which are defined as independent behaviours, the nature of descriptive and social norms is interdependent. The norm that describes behaviours to which individuals choose to comply because that is what people in their network commonly do, is called a descriptive norm.

Social norms, on the other hand, describe behaviours where an individual's actions not only depend on what others in their network do, but also what other people think one ought to do in certain circumstances, and where non-compliance is sanctioned. General rules of conduct which are usually prevalent in social groups are called social norms. Social norms represent standards of behaviour that are subject to approval or disapproval by others.

18   Bicchieri, C. (2006), The Grammar of Society: the Nature and Dynamics of Social Norms, New York: Cambridge University Press.
19   Bicchieri, C. (2014), Norms in the Wild, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bicchieri (2012) defines a social norm as:

A rule of behaviour such that individuals prefer to conform to it on condition that they believe that (a) most people in their reference network conform to it (empirical expectation), and (b) that most people in their reference network believe they ought to conform to it (normative expectation).

Conforming to social norms is dependent on the desire or need of a person to be accepted or liked by others - rewards that one gets by conforming to collective patterns of behaviour. On the other hand, transgressing from the social norm may elicit various degrees of negative reactions whose impact will depend on the person's sensitivity to the norm.

A preference is a disposition to act in a particular way in a specific situation[20]. However, a preference does not necessarily equal liking one option better than others. It simply denotes that, considering all the circumstances, one chooses one option over the other, that is, shows preferences by selecting one of two (or many) options. In a social context, the demonstration of preferences becomes more complex and interdependent on many factors. A person may exhibit behaviours that may not reflect their beliefs, but that are rather influenced by the preferences they have, for example about public appearance over core or vital beliefs. This, on the other hand, evokes interdependent reactions, which may perpetuate behaviour or attitudes that are not in line with the genuine beliefs of the person who evoked them.

Attitudes are generally considered to be an individual's reaction to a person, object, or idea. The reaction may be positive, negative or mixed. The manifestation of attitude is usually a combination of affective, behavioural and cognitive reactions.

Expectations are a set of pre-determined assumptions or beliefs about the attitude, behaviour or affective reaction of others. Expectation is usually manifested as a belief about an anticipated turn of events. Expectations that are empirical such that people expect what others will do based on past experiences or observations are defined as empirical expectations. Normative expectations describe the expectations of individuals about other people's beliefs as to what one ought to do or what other people believe should be done.

A reference network is the term used for describing a network of significant factors that influence an individual's attitudes, behaviours or preferences. The reference network may consist of close family members, extended family, community members, religious figures or any other agent that matters to the person, whom that person looks up to or whom they use as a resource of information for concerned matters. One's reference network usually constitutes a sufficient number of persons to alter behaviour or attitude, influencing the individual to adhere to the norms followed by others.

20   Bicchieri, C. (2014), Norms in the Wild, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 5.

Domestic violence and gender-based violence

Gender-based violence is understood as "Violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty."[21]

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence offers the following definitions:

- *"violence against women" is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life;*
- *"domestic violence" shall mean all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim;*
- *"gender" shall mean the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men;*
- *"gender-based violence against women" shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately.*

Kosovo legislation defines domestic violence as any act, intentional or unintentional, against a person, related by family in the past or present, through a physical force, threat or instilling of fear, being physical aggressive or humiliating or using derogatory terms, sexual relations against a person's will, restriction of movement, damaging property, and forced entry into entrance or violent expulsion from a joint dwelling.[22]

For the purpose of this research, gender-based violence will be understood as "a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts". The bystander effect greatly contributes in public behavior. This concept is largely based on the works of Latané and Darley23, who while performing observation studies have found out that the presence of others in an unfortunate situation inhibits helping interventions.

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21 General Recommendation No.19 of the United Nations Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women.
22 Kosovo Assembly, Law on Protection Against Domestic Violence, No. 03-L-182, 2010.
23 See for example Latane, B., and Darley, J. M. (1970) The unresponsive bystander: Why doesn't he help? New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

The physical punishment of children

The research examined the physical punishment of children through the definition provided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- *any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. Most involves hitting (smacking, slapping, spanking) children, with the hand or with an implement – whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. – but it can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding or forced ingestion (for example, washing children's mouths out with soap or forcing them to swallow hot spices). In the view of the Convention, corporal punishment is invariably degrading. In addition, there are other non-physical forms of punishment which are also cruel and degrading and thus incompatible with the Convention. These include, for example, punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child.[24]*

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24   UNCRC Committee, General Comment no. 8 on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment, CRC/C/GC/8, 2 June 2006.

5. Methodology

This study gathered qualitative information through focus group discussions, observation (during the focus group discussions) and in-depth interviews.

Focus group discussions

A qualitative research methodology was chosen to give context to the quantitative data about the prevalence of gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children. Given the complex nature of the topic studied, focus group discussions have the potential to reveal drivers of behaviour that may otherwise be omitted in quantitative research methodology. Additionally, studying social norms requires analyzing data from multiple angles, such as reasons, perceptions, beliefs, social rewards and punishments, sensitivity to the norm, and reference networks, which is better captured through structured but flexible discussions.

During focus group discussions the researchers paid special attention to the non-verbal cues that it was possible to observe during the discussions. These observations were used to provide a contextual background to the recorded information, either when non-verbal cues were not congruent with the content of the discussion, or adding additional elements to individual or group statements. In each focus group, there was a researcher and an assistant researcher present to observe the interaction and group discussion. Notes from all groups were utilized to analyze the gathered data and trends across FGDs.

A total of 50 focus group discussions[25] were organized with Kosovo Albanians (K-Albanians), Kosovo Serbs (K-Serbs) and Kosovo Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (K-Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian) communities. In order to examine differences between people based on age, gender, ethnic group, marital status, and type of settlement, the focus groups were structured to encapsulate representatives of each of these groups. There were a total of 480 men and women (264 women and 216 men) involved in the focus group discussions, with an average of 9.6 participants per group. Additionally, one focus group was organized with children 12-14 years old with the aim of getting a sense of children's perspective on violence in general and physical punishment in particular. The inputs from the focus group discussion with children made the findings from focus groups with adults more robust and enriched the value of the study by giving insight on the factors maintaining violence from children's perspective.

Some of the groups were homogenous in terms of gender and age cohort, and some groups were mixed. Different gender and age group compositions were chosen with the aim of gathering information from group interactions of participants when discussing the topics of the study, but also with the assumption that some participants, depending on age, gender and background, might be influenced by other participants during discussions. This approach of having both ho-

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25   The focus group discussion guides used for researching both gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children are attached in Annex 1 of this report.

mogenous and mixed groups allowed the capture of both the opinions of participants and their interaction in different contexts. Dependent on the composition of the groups, group interaction and nonverbal communication were observed. The focus group discussions were moderated by a small team so that there was consistency on how the work was done.

Table 1: Focus Groups Composition

REGION																					
	Ferizaj/ Urosevac			Gjakove/ Djakovica			Gjilan/ Gnjilane			Mitrovice/ Mitrovica			Peje/Pec			Prishtine/ Pristina			Prizren		
Age group/ Gender	F	M	Mix	F	M	Mix	F	M	Mix	F	M	Mix	F	M	Mix	F	M	Mix	F	M	Mix
18-25	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	3	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
26-35	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	3	1	0	0
36-50	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
50+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Mixed age	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	3	1	0	0
Total	5			5			8			8			5			15			4		

Table 1 reflects FGDs for both components: GBV and the physical punishment of children. 14 focus group discussions were focused on GBV, 17 on physical punishment and in 19 FGDs the discussion covered both components. Additionally, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants for the topic of GBV, 7 in-depth interviews focused on the physical punishment of children, and 12 covered both topics.

As part of the research methodology, two exercises were conducted during the focus group discussions. In the first exercise, participants wrote synonyms of violence or things they associated with violence. In the second exercise, focus group participants were asked to record any important source of information that they use for six different areas: family issues, education, community, health, parenting and life issues. Participants were free to write whatever resource they use for any of these aspects. The objective of the exercise was to capture their reference networks and identify social groups that influence people's behaviour. In cases where participants were not able to write, the research team provided assistance recording their answers on the reference network map.

During focus group discussions, women seemed to be more prone than men to giving socially-acceptable answers when discussing the prevalence of violence in their communities and society in general. In addition, they were more prone than men to answer with "I don't know." The pressure to give the "right" answers and to have doubts about the quality of their answers may indicate a lack of self-esteem and lack of encouragement to voice their opinions about sensitive matters. To overcome this mental barrier, moderators paid special attention to creating an environment where women would not feel judged. The presence of woman in the research team was a positive factor in creating the comfortable setting. Showing curiosity and passion about the things that seemed to matter to the women focus group participants, even when topics drifted away from the main subject of discussion, proved crucial in making them feel valued and comfortable.
At the end of the focus group discussion, in most cases women asked if there would

be additional, follow-up discussions because they enjoyed the experience of being listened to and meeting other women.

In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with community members, religious leaders, social workers, and civil society organization representatives, to add more depth and richness to understanding of the phenomena.

Ethical aspects

At the onset of the study, the research methodology and survey tools were submitted for review to an Ethical Review Panel, composed of Vlora Nushi from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality (UN Women) Kosovo, Linda Hoxha and Rudina Ademi Shala from Save the Children Kosovo, Professor Artane Rizvanolli, Lecturer at Riinvest College Kosovo and Maya Kurtsikidze, Communication Officer, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Georgia. Additionally, the UNICEF Kosovo Research and Evaluation Committee examined the research methodology and data collection tools. All recommendations coming from the ethical review panel and the research committee were reflected in the research methodology and data collection tools. The research report was submitted for review to UNICEF Kosovo Research and Evaluation Committee before finalization.

The research company has carefully evaluated the ethical concerns and presented mitigation measures to potential ethical risks. The issue of confidentiality was treated responsibly, so that all data obtained from the participants were coded, classified and treated with utmost care. Focus group discussions were moderated by trained researchers, who skilfully managed the group discussion and maintained group dynamics to yield balanced information from all participants. Each focus group and each respondent was assigned a unique code as a means to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Only the core research team has access to the code that links to the identity of each participant. Talking about violence or physical punishment is a sensitive matter, so particular attention was given to phrasing the questions to match participants and context.

Researchers approached all focus group discussions sensitively and maintained vigilance to notice any discomfort on behalf of participants in discussion of any specific matter. Focus group participants were informed in writing about the voluntary nature of their participation, including the anonymity and confidentiality of the data obtained, as well being provided with contact details of the research company in case they need further information or care resulting from their participation in the group discussion. A signed consent form was obtained from each participant. For participants who had difficulties with literacy, the content of the participation consent sheet was explained verbally. In the focus group of children, parental consent was obtained prior to the discussion. A formal verbal agreement was obtained from each child participant.

Pretesting of instruments

All research instruments were pretested in the field before finalization. They were adapted based on pretesting and on the recommendations from the members of UNICEF Kosovo Research and Evaluation Committee and of the Ethical Review Panel.

Data analysis

The primary aim of analysis of the data gathered in the focus group discussions was to identify common themes and relationships among ideas and concepts across groups sharing the features of settlement type, gender, age cohort or ethnic background. The factors that guided the analytic process were frequency, extensiveness, intensity, specificity, consistency, and participants' perception of importance of the key concepts researched. The research team also observed particularities which were specific to certain social groups included in the sample, identifying recurrent patterns, content or idiosyncracies in different social groups. Additionally, systematic and sequential analysis were employed. The research team had debriefs after each focus group to make sure that all relevant topics, hypothesis and themes observed during focus group discussions were exploited at length, as well as to investigate whether there were points that were over-explored or where discussion had reached saturation point. All focus group discussions were transcribed and summarized. Data was analyzed based on transcripts and the observations during focus group discussions, highlighting any discrepancies that were not corroborative in content or nature.

6. Diagnosis and measurement of violence

In order to understand GBV and the physical punishment of children, this study focuses on the reasons why people act violently and the preferences and beliefs that support violent behaviour. The framework used for deconstructing GBV and the physical punishment of children is Bicchieri's[26] diagnostic diagram that describes collective patterns of behaviours as customs, descriptive norms or social norms depending on the beliefs that support the particular behaviour.

Graph 1. Bicchieri's social norms diagnostic diagram
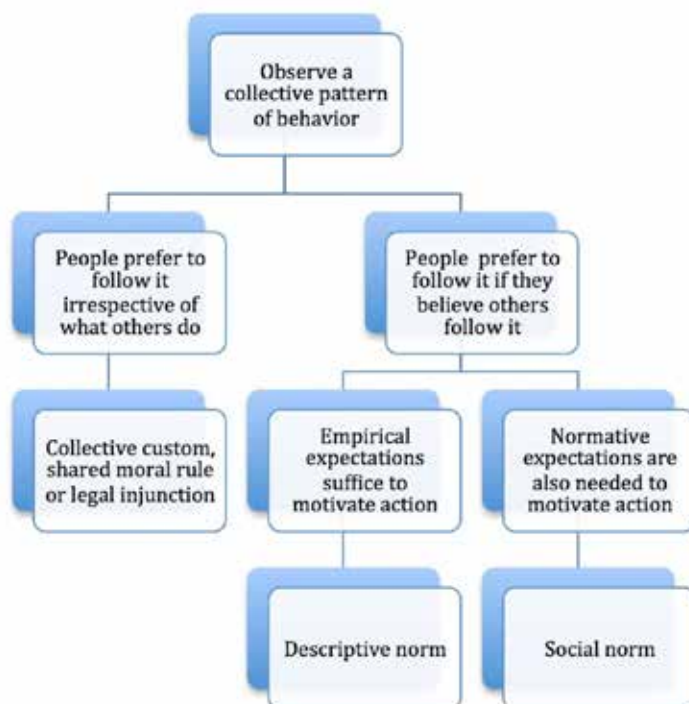
The research findings show that people prefer to use violence in specific situations under the strong influence of others (the reference network); they expect other people to react violently too (empirical expectations), and there are sanctions and rewards coming from family and community members (normative expectations) to adopt and maintain these violent practices.

Before we delve into an individual's decision-making process resulting in violent behaviour, it is important to situate GBV and the physical punishment of children in a broader landscape of norms by analyzing the roles and responsibilities of family members and the mechanisms that enable the family to function.

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26   Bicchieri, C. (2012), Social Norms, Social Change. Penn-UNICEF Lecture.

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7. Gender-based violence and social norms

7.1 Family values, roles and responsibilities

"A father has the main responsibilities because most wives don't work and they have no other obligations except raising children." (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Rural)

Eliciting participants' perceptions about roles and responsibilities within the family proved to be a valuable tool for describing the family setting that creates and cultivates feminine and masculine gender identity. Research participants across all strata of society generally agreed that a woman's roles and responsibilities are bounded within the household, whereas the head of household - the man - is the person who provides for and protects the family. The role of women was defined as raising children, cooking, cleaning, taking care of family members and "keeping the family together". Women's participation in the labour force, and income-generating abilities were not mentioned by respondents when describing a woman's role in the family. While married women identify that they have greater responsibilities than other family members, this opinion is not shared by men or unmarried women. Unmarried girls in rural areas view a father's responsibilities as more demanding, an opinion aligned with men of all age cohorts. This evidence suggests that marital status or a change in it, from single to married, impacts the definition of roles in the household more strongly than age. One exception is the group of urban young girls with higher academic attainment, who do not agree that the father's role is the most important one. They recognize that "providing for the family is very stressful but nevertheless, mothers have more responsibilities than fathers because everything else falls into their set of tasks." (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Urban)

"Women have to obey. They should not go to work. That's how things are here in our country; that's our tradition." (Male, 18-25, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)

When discussing family roles, participants showed acceptance of these roles and there seemed to be no willingness to negotiate the roles or challenge them. The expectations of how one ought to behave are evident even in young women:

"Once I get married, I'll stop using my phone. I won't need one. When I want to communicate with someone, I'll do it through my husband's phone." (Female, 18-25, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)

Girls are taught the Dos and Don'ts early in life by their mothers, and the model of girls as the ones who take care of others, and boys as providers is further perpetuated throughout their lives.

"The role of the mother is to do household chores. And the role of the father is to go out, to work, to provide for the family. The role of the child is to respect their father and mother, and to do well in school, to get a trade and follow the right path. [...] The role of the son is to follow in his father's footsteps, to go out and work, so that he can bring money to the family. And the role of girls is to work at home, do the household chores and help their mother. This is the main difference." (Male, 18-25, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Rural)

"My mother knew I had a lot of problems. I knew [my husband] had other women. But my mother would say, 'let it go, they all cheat. Stay for your children.'" (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

In Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, the involvement of a husband in his wife's responsibilities is mentioned only on occasions when the wife has a health condition that prevents her from fulfilling her duties.

Interestingly, participants easily listed the responsibilities of girls, but this was not the case for boys. The discussions revealed a carefree life for boys, who are protected by their grandparents or parents and discouraged from participating in activities that "belong" to girls and women.

"The kitchen is not a place for boys." (Female, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)

"My in-laws don't like it when I give tasks to my son. They want him to play and not have any responsibilities. Even when I ask him to do homework, I have to do it quietly so my in-laws don't see it otherwise they will encourage him to play and ask me not to burden him." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

"Girls are the ones who ask for more work. As they say, girls care more about the family. Boys are lazier. Sometimes they do work but whenever something requires more effort, they can't be bothered. That is not the case for us girls. We think, 'Let's work and help our parents'. Girls are always more thoughtful." (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Rural)

"I will take a simple example. If a girl goes out to have a coffee, her father will tell her that she has an hour or an hour and a half and she should be back home. If a boy goes out and doesn't come back home for hours, no one expects any responsibility from him." (Male, 18-25, K-Albanian, Urban)

Young, urban, unmarried girls are the least satisfied with the current status of girls and women. They recognize that the father is still the final decision-maker, even for trivial everyday things.

"In Kosovo, the father's role is still the most important one. When your father tells you that you cannot spend the night at your friend's house, there is no point in asking your mother. Or when you do ask your mother, she says 'go and ask your father'. And of course you don't dare ask your father because you know that you will get a big NO. Unfortunately, girls are oppressed." (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Urban)

Besides acquiring the skills of cooking, cleaning, and caring for siblings, girls learn from their mothers the meaning of respect which is portrayed in various ways: girls are taught to ask before they leave the house as this is a sign of respect; they are taught not to become owners of property as this is how they show respect for their parents and brothers.

The discussions from focus groups reveal that men have respect by default while women, on the other hand, have to earn the respect of others, especially their husbands. They have to prove that they are trustworthy and then respect will follow. Reaching a state where a woman is respected and has a sense of belonging is dependent on marital status as only when the woman is married, is she "set" in her role, fulfilling the responsibilities assigned to her, maintaining the perpetual cycle of gender identity differences.

> *"A woman is born in a foreign household and dies in her home." (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Urban)*

> *"A woman needs time until she gains respect from her husband. She needs to deserve his respect." (Female, 18-25, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)*

> *"I think that once a girl gets married, there is no need to go out alone. She can have someone accompany her." (Female, 18-25, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)*

> *"Women in my community are free to go out in public but newly married women usually don't go out alone. If they don't have children of their own, they take a child from the family to accompany them." (Female, 18-25, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)*

A few women participants in urban areas expressed the need for men to be more involved in household-related activities. They would like their husbands to help them more, especially in sharing the responsibility for caring for children. Nevertheless, there is little or no willingness or capacity from women to expand their scope of responsibilities to activities that are traditionally allocated to men.

> *"I hope all our husbands will find jobs and we will stay home, just like our mothers did." (Female, 36-50, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)*

> *"Some husbands say: 'We are bringing food home; it is your responsibility to take care of the children.' But I think that fathers have to find some time, maybe in the evenings when they are free. I know that they are tired but what about us? We get tired too but we still deal with the children." (Female, 25-35, K-Albanian, Urban)*

It is in the institution of the family where girls and boys early on acquire feminine and masculine gender identities and as they grow older the inequalities that seem very innocent deepen and embed profoundly in their set of beliefs and as such, shape their feelings, values, and behaviours. Reformers must focus on shedding light on inequalities and the disadvantages these inequalities cause to individuals, the community, and society.

Finding out what makes family roles so inelastic was crucial as this provided direction to identifying the factors that maintain GBV in our society. Across all ethnic communities, inner group protection of traditional customs was manifested. The participants exhibited conformity to certain traditions, such as the role of the husband and wife in the family, even if the means to maintain and preserve such traditional values is the use of violence.

> *"It is known what the role of a man is in the family, and the woman is there to look after the children. That's how things must be." (Male, 26-35, K-Serb, Urban)*

Within urban areas, participants from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities tend to reference religion when explaining the reasons why a husband's role in the family is different from his wife's.

> *"God created men to protect the family." (Male, 25-36, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)*

> *"Our religion is governed by the premise that women have to obey men, and a man has to respect women as he respects himself. If men respect women, then there is no space for disagreements and problems in marriage. In cases where people really live that way, there are no problems." (Religious leader)*

7.2   Changes in family functions

> *"Life is much better now in comparison with how it used to be when I was little..." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)*

When participants were asked if there are differences in how families function now in comparison to the past, they uniformly agreed that there have been significant changes. Even though women reported having more freedom to express their opinions and participate in decision-making, instead of inspiring a willingness to fulfil their full potential, these changes have created a sense of satisfaction with the current position of women in the household and society. This can be explained through the context women use to evaluate their current condition. As is identified in behavioural science on relativity and irrational human behaviour, everything is relative and people "tend to focus on comparing things that are easily comparable"[27], and thus participants in our focus groups compared the past with the present. When comparing the current and past status of women, the changes are evident and these changes are sufficient to create a sense of satisfaction with the current situation.

> *"Nowadays, young couples communicate, co-operate and share more than in the past." (Male, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)*

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27   Ariely, D. (2010). The Upside of Irrationality: The Unexpected Benefits of Defying Logic at Work and at Home. Harper Collins Publishers

"In the past, women were not even allowed to talk out loud. They were not allowed to express their opinions. Now, women have the right at least to express their opinions, even if this changes nothing." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

"Things have changed now. There is equality. Women have advanced; technology has influenced this progress but I also think that TV serials have opened women's eyes. Women have started becoming more educated. When the president is a woman and leads us, then we have to respect women." (Male, 26-35, K-Albanian, Rural)

The difference in describing family roles is greatest between participants from urban communities and those from rural settings. Although participants in urban areas confirm that the father has a more crucial role in the family, they acknowledge the changes that the urban family is undergoing with the participation of women in the labour force. Couples now have less time as they are busy with work; nonetheless, the wife remains in charge of taking care of the children and household chores in addition to generating income. As the majority of women in rural settings are unemployed, the expansion of responsibilities for women is not evident.

7.3   General perceptions about violence

"Our society does not have a problem with violence. Unemployment is a problem. School drop-out is a problem." (Female, 18-25, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)

There is no agreement across participants when evaluating the prevalence of violence in Kosovan society. While some participants agree that violence is widely present, others disagree. There is a significant difference between young men and young women living in urban areas. While young men express with more certainty that violence is not as prevalent as it used to be, young urban women report that violence is widespread in our society. This may be an indicator that young urban women feel more vulnerable and insecure in public settings, where they are subject to other forms of violence, such as harassment and name-calling. In addition, young urban women show greater sensitivity to psychological violence.

"What bothers me the most is that psychological violence is not given sufficient attention. People always think of violence as a physical act. But on the other hand, someone can affect your mental well-being, and you hit rock bottom." (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Urban)

"I think that in Kosovo violence is an answer for almost anything when it comes to relationships between men and women. And I am saying, an answer for almost anything -even for stupid, irrelevant issues men think that they will solve them through violence." (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Urban)

"Gender-based violence is present in all three ethnic communities that live here. Nevertheless, in some communities it is more widespread. There are some cultural norms that I heard dominate in a certain ethnic community, which makes it a custom for them to be physically aggressive, to take it out on women, no matter how many children a woman has given birth to. We were asked to intervene in a case when a man had beaten his wife with

a stick, without any reason whatsoever. His response was that he is the captain of the family. So, this community needs to be more involved, since their women suffer the most. Women [of this community] are thankful, but I think we need to include all family members, not only women." (Community Police Officer)

Participants who are unsure about the prevalence of violence point out that even if violence were widespread, they would not know because it is kept private. The key variable that splits participants into two camps - those confirming that violence is widespread and those who disagree - is the definition of violence. Those who report that violence is not common in their communities are the ones who define violence as "fights, injuries, murders." Milder forms of physical and psychological violence such as slapping, verbal abuse, hair pulling, etc. are not considered as violent acts by the majority of focus group participants, in both urban and rural areas. Interestingly, younger participants, both women and men, sometimes see a positive connotation to slapping. For some participants, slapping demonstrates affection and showing someone you care.

"There are two types of slapping: one that shows love and one that is intended for punishment." (Male, 18-25, K-Albanian, Rural)

"Slapping is not violence. Men do it because of love." (Female, 18-25, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)

Most married women, likewise, do not consider slapping as a violent act. There are participants who classify slapping as a sign of violence only if it happens repeatedly and if it becomes more severe. On the other hand, participants who confirm that slapping is a violent act seem to give an answer that they consider to be correct, but their attitudes towards violence are not aligned with their verbal confirmation. Focus group moderators noticed the mismatch: participants initially condemning violence, but later on justifying slapping if the victim has not fulfilled her obligations.

"Women accept violence as a normal occurrence. These behaviours are learned within family settings." (Mental Health Service Provider)

"I don't see how other forms [other than physical] can be considered violence. If you come home and take it out on the women and children because you had a bad day, now that is violence. But if I scold my wife or she yells at me because I did not do what I was supposed to do, if I am harassed about why I sit around all day, and so on, now that is not violence. You know the things you can scold one another for. Violence is if a man comes home drunk and abuses his wife and children." (Male, 36-50, K-Serb, Rural)

"Every woman in the world has to endure [violence] because of her obligations to the children and the family. Even if blood spills from your body, we have to endure." (Female, 25-36, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)

There were two variables that had an impact on women's level of comfort in voicing personal opinions about violence: marital status and focus group composition. Unmarried women were more vocal in expressing their freedom to decide on important matters and the right not to tolerate violence. However, this level of comfort was exhibited only if the group's gender composition was homogenous,

that is, women-only groups. When groups were heterogeneous, unmarried women switched to "conformity", leaving the men in the group a leading role in the discussion. The presence of men was sufficient for women to take a "back seat". This interaction was observed in different FGDs and across different regions. Women's participation in important discussions mimics the dynamics that are typical at household level. Encouraging "agree to disagree" modes of discussion may be an important area of intervention for reformers.

7.4   Key components of gender-based violence

Breaking down GBV into multiple attributes made the understanding of this behaviour slightly more manageable. Although there is a complex and thick web of factors that impact one's decision in using violence, we have focused on three components that helped us understand how decisions are shaped. The main constructs that we have assessed are reasons, preferences or choices, and expectations. The following diagram explains the interdependent nature of GBV by exploring the relation between reasons, preferences, and expectations.

Graph 2. Key components of social norms related to GBV
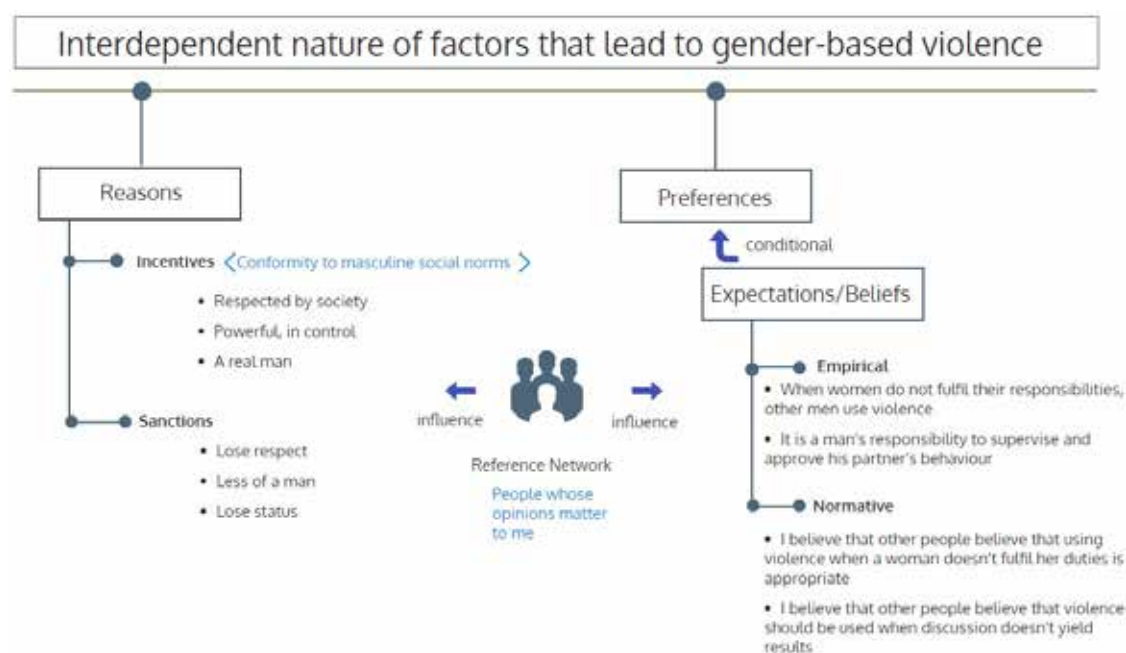
> *"She did something and he slapped her. That is what he should do."* (Female, 50+, K-Albanian, Rural)

It is crucial to understand the reasons that make violence the preferred choice of an individual in certain circumstances. We have looked at the reasons from two perspectives: the social rewards and the punishments for complying or not with the social expectation of using a violent reaction when a woman fails to meet her responsibilities. What are the incentives that motivate perpetrators to act violently and what are the barriers that disincentivize the use of violence?

7.5 Social reinforcements for gender-based violence

Discussions with focus group participants point to gender norms, or more specifically society's expectations on men's behaviours in relation to women, as one of the main incentives for using violence. When a perpetrator exhibits violent behaviour, he shows that he is in control, he is powerful and he is a "real man". He receives praise from men and women. Not using violence, on the other hand, makes him vulnerable; he loses the respect of others and he is less of a man.

> *"[He would be considered as a] Coward. Look what his wife did to him. He was not capable of dominating his wife."* (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

The meaning of masculinity is constructed, communicated, and supported in all settings: home, school, work, and community. Gender norms that fuel the need to be in control and be powerful serve as rewards that shape men's feelings and actions. Nevertheless, the decision-making processes that lead to violent acts cannot be explained solely by proving that gender norms maintain GBV. What makes people prefer to use violence, i.e. choose violence among alternatives, is an important question that leads to more insight into the complex process of decision-making.

> *"Women here [in Kosovo] are dependent, they can't live on their own. So they keep their mouth shut. Women who generate income enough for themselves most of the time call us much faster than the others [who are financially dependent]."* (Kosovo Police Officer)

Apart from the hardships that families face when only men are income providers, a lack of access to financial resources puts women in a very vulnerable position as this is an important variable that increases the likelihood of women staying in violent relationships.

Apart from the hardships that families face when only the men are income providers, a lack of access to financial resources puts women in a very vulnerable position as this is an important variable that increases the likelihood of women staying in violent relationships.

> *"My husband used to beat me. I had nowhere to go. I had no money so I had to stay."* (Female, 36-50, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)

"I started working before I got married. When problems with my husband began, one thing that kept me in this marriage was a lack of financial resources. I waited for six years, suffering psychological violence, because I had nowhere to go. I thought to myself, 'If I go to my parents' house, I will ruin their lives. I have two children and their house is small'. So I waited until I managed to have a studio for myself and the kids and left him. If I did not have my salary and this place, I would have no choice but to stay or not live." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

There are a myriad of self-imposed constraints on women's participation in public life and the labour force. First and foremost, women demonstrate a high level of scepticism when considering employment. They doubt that their knowledge and skills are sufficient for the workplace and they attribute this to lack of education and experience. This limitation is further magnified when they acknowledge the high number of unemployed young and educated people. A lack of opportunities coupled with a long list of responsibilities within the household further discourages women from changing their roles within the family and community.

Findings from the Labour Force Survey published in 2014 show that six out of ten working age people are not economically active.[28] In addition, a portion (12%) of the working population did not seek employment because they considered employment was not available.[29] The unemployment rate is higher for women than men (39% and 27% respectively). From the economically active population, labour force participation is only 21% of women in comparison to 60% of men. The most common reasons that influence women's lack of activity in the labour force are personal or family responsibilities (36%), currently attending education or training (15%) and belief that no work is available (14%).[30]

Thus another factor in the interdependency of women's behaviour with their empirical and normative expectations is the right to ownership of assets. Cases of women's property ownership are rare.

"My cousin is an only child. Even though she has no brothers, she did not take her parents' assets. She decided to give them to her male cousin." (Female, 18-25, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)

Women are aware that they have the right to participate in sharing their family's wealth but nevertheless even discussing it triggers unpleasant self-image and a strong opposing reaction. Their body language and their vocal protection of their decisions reflect high sensitivity to the norm.

"I would never ever take wealth from my family. No! How could someone do that to her own family?" (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Rural)

By opting out of sharing family property, women are seen to show respect for the family, especially to their brothers. The punishment is too high for deciding to transgress from this norm. They will be abandoned and left without any support or love. The feeling of loneliness and the thought of having no place to go, and no family to visit, outweighs any monetary value that an asset can have.

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28   Kosovo Agency of Statistics. 2014. Results of the Kosovo 2013 Labour Force Survey. p. 9
29   Ibid. p. 24
30   Ibid. p. 22

"There would be no place for me any more in my family. I would not be able to visit them again." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

Interestingly, the fact that families are willing to halt all communication with their daughters if the girl decides to exercise her right to property does not generate negative feelings. Instead, this is redefined and communicated as "respecting the family." Male participants confirm that even when they offer the option of sharing property, women do not want it. Given the strong negative reaction of women towards such an action, it is no surprise that some men offer participation in asset sharing because they are certain that women will not exercise their rights.

"Now in this village, even if I give my daughter one part of the land, she will not be able to do anything with it. No-one would buy that property [from her]. She couldn't transfer that land anywhere else." (Male, 50+, K-Albanian, Rural)

"There is a case in our village where property has been divided and girls were included. The owner lives in Germany. But none of the girls wanted the land. They refused to participate in dividing the property." (Male, 50+, K-Albanian, Rural)

Although right to property is still a taboo, most participants feel that girls now are free to make decisions about important matters such as their education. This is less prevalent in Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Focus group participants from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities acknowledge that there are many cases where the parent is the final decision-maker when it comes to girls' education.

"There are cases where a girl wants to go to school and continue her education but her father doesn't allow her. He tells her, 'This is the limit and it is sufficient for you because you are a girl. It is that simple.'" (Male, 36-50, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)

7.6 Attitudes towards gender-based violence

It is common for researchers, reformers, policy-makers and other relevant stakeholders to try to understand a particular behaviour by looking through the lens of attitudes towards it. Nevertheless, as many studies show[31], attitudes are often negatively correlated with people's actions. The evidence from our fieldwork attests that when respondents were asked about their attitudes towards GBV, the majority did not hesitate to declare that they were against GBV and they don't like it.

"I don't like violence and I don't think that people should use it." (Male, 18-25, K-Albanian, Urban)

However, as the discussion progressed and the questions were no longer about whether people like violent behaviour or not, a pattern becomes visible: people say they don't like using violence yet in some circumstances they justify it, approve it, and prefer it.

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31   Bicchieri, C. (2014), Norms in the Wild, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

"I would justify violence if, for instance, a wife is at home all day long, her husband is out. When he comes home, he finds that the household chores are not done; he doesn't find lunch or dinner prepared and the reason why the wife did not do her part of the work was because she was watching television." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

"I don't think that slapping should be removed [as an option]. One should slap his wife at least once. This is what religion says. If she doesn't listen, you slap her for the second time. If she continues not to listen, you let her go." (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Rural)

"Violence is used where there are no solutions for solving a problem." (Male, 18-25, K-Albanian, Urban)

"Some preventive, mild forms of violence are justifiable when one goes beyond boundaries. Otherwise, gender-based violence or physical punishment of children cannot achieve the objectives you're hoping for." (Religious leader)

8. Factors that reinforce gender-based violence

8.1 Empirical and normative expectations

The data from the focus group discussions reveals that people's default preference is not using violence. Instead, there is a set of beliefs that leads people to choose violent behaviour in some circumstances. The conditional nature of these choices or preferences becomes clearer when analyzing the beliefs that people have about other people's actions, which Bicchieri (2012) defines as empirical expectations, and people's beliefs about other's people's beliefs on what one ought to do, or normative expectations. Eliciting participants' beliefs through discussions established the conditional nature of the relationship between beliefs and preference. The decisions of both men and women are influenced by what other people do and what other people think they, as individuals and members of a community, ought to do. Individuals who don't obey the norm are sanctioned by losing respect from the community. They are perceived as weak and people feel pity for them. Such punishments serve as strong motivators to keep individuals in compliance with the norm.

> "We simply live our lives for other people. We don't live the lives that belong to us." (Female, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)

> "In my neighbourhood there was a case where a wife cheated on her husband and he just told her that she could leave and go back to her own family. He didn't beat her. Everybody was talking about him, saying that he is not a man, how can you let your wife cheat and not beat her? A similar situation happened to another neighbour a few months later. And the second guy, in order not to do things that the first guy did, he beat his wife until she could no longer move." (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Urban)

In the community context, there is no evidence about social disapproval or punishments that condemn the perpetrator. At the same time, through understanding both the interdependent nature of GBV and the type of dependency we can classify GBV as a social norm.

First we looked at the profile of the perpetrator as seen by participants. The majority of participants painted a picture of a perpetrator as uneducated, someone who had been subject to violence, of poor economic status, an alcohol abuser, a stressed individual that struggles to live a good life. Through these descriptions, participants created a distance between a perpetrator and themselves: "It is not me; it is others who do this." Nevertheless, when participants started describing what other people do when they had conflicts with their partners, violent practices became more present and less distant. The perpetrator was no longer the man who abuses alcohol and is poor, but also the employed and well-integrated individual.

"I was a victim of domestic violence. In our marriage, I had to do everything - pay the bills, take care of my parents-in-law - and again, in the end, I was observed as the one who did not do anything, because, in his opinion, he was doing it all. He wasn't available at all as a man, he wasn't helping me at all with the kids, nor with other work. And he didn't have any issues with alcohol; he wasn't even a smoker. If somebody got on his nerves while he was at work, he would take it out on other people, and that would usually be me; me and his father, whom he still harasses to this day. When the children come to me during weekends, they keep telling me that. Children see all that and they experience trauma." (Female, 36-50, K-Serb, Urban)

8.2   What prompts conflict between partners?

Participants name jealousy as one of the main sources of conflicts between partners; lack of communication, infidelity and women's failure to meet a set of social expectations, i.e. taking care of the household and children. Additionally, women's interest in participating in public life may lead to conflict. The narratives from focus groups define an array of reasons that lead to violent outcomes. The dire economic situation and lack of opportunities is causing young, educated individuals to believe that future is not bright and as such, they become pessimistic and more prone to getting into conflicts and violent outbursts. When violence was discussed without any specific details of circumstances, participants believed that the victim deserved it and that was why there was violence.

"Maybe she did something wrong. She must have done something, she knows that she made a mistake." (Male, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

"We all know that for Albanians, the family is still sacred. Now, when you cannot afford to provide for your children, problems arise. What should I do? ... Conflict begins. The wife blames the husband saying that 'You are the husband, you should do more'. He says 'You are my wife, you have to help me'. And these cases where one cannot provide end up with conflicts" *(Male, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)*

"Jealousy between partners is what creates conflicts most of the time." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

"If there is infidelity between partners, for sure there will be a violent outcome" (Male, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)

8.3   Perception of gender-based violence as a private matter

The belief that others know what they are doing becomes evident when participants are asked whether they would interfere if they witnessed a violent act. The majority of participants declared that they would not interfere to resolve a violent conflict for several reasons. The most frequently mentioned reason is that family problems are private and should be treated as such. Even a law enforcement officer confirmed the pressure that comes from bystanders when intervening in violent incidents:

> "'Why do you interfere in family matters?' they say. 'Go catch a thief'" (Community police officer)

Participants believe that they don't have the right to interfere. The bystander effect is evident across all ages and areas. One group of participants would not react because they suspect that the woman's behaviour may have caused the conflict.

> "It is difficult to know the cause of the conflict. Maybe she initiated it." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

Although narratives from focus groups confirmed that there were signs of distress when participants faced violent events, intense negative emotions were not sufficient to prompt them to interfere. The belief that GBV does not create negative externalities and that its consequences are private shows that people do not understand how a private violent conflict impacts society. An intervention programme that helped people understand the link between "private problems" and negative public consequences may bring GBV onto the list of problems that people care to solve.

Male respondents anticipated negative reactions from the perpetrator and that they could easily become part of the conflict because an intervention could raise suspicion about the relationship between the victim of violence and the stranger. As such, any intervention could magnify the problem. The other reason given for taking an observer's role rather than interfering was being subject to violence and initiating a conflict with the perpetrator. Men said that if someone decided to intervene, then it should be a woman because the element of jealousy would not be present and the perpetrator might feel bad causing harm to a stranger. However, women also said they would take a bystander role. One subset of participants who expressed readiness to intervene was of urban women from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

> "If a man intervened, the outcome could be different. Men would get into the fight. But when women intervene, it is different." (Female, 36-50, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)

> "From the perpetrator's perspective, it is more acceptable if a woman tries to stop them than if it was a man. If a man tries to intervene, it is a problem, unless the man is a family member." (Male, 36-50, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)

One indicator that signals an opportunity to challenge empirical expectations is the difficulty with which participants recalled the last time they witnessed a violent act. Given the statistics of the prevalence of GBV, one would expect that participants would easily recall situations of violent practices. The narratives from the focus groups suggest the opposite. Many participants declared that they did not have any experience of violent behaviour. From the pool of participants who witnessed violent acts, the scenarios described more often involved strangers than people from their reference network. The experiences participants recalled also more often occurred in the distant past rather than recently. One reason may be the fact that violence is kept in private settings. But what if there is a dose of 'pluralistic

ignorance', a term coined by social psychologist Floyd H. Alport and Daniel Katz[32] that describes situations where there are discrepancies between one's private beliefs and one's public behaviour. In order to avoid being ridiculed by family and peers, there may be a mismatch between one's beliefs and behaviour.

> "There is a case: a mother-in-law; as soon as her son comes home, she starts complaining about her daughter-in-law. The son goes to another room with his wife and he pretends that he is beating her. In this way, he keeps the mother happy and good relations with his wife." (Female, 36-50, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)

Participants believe that the majority of victims of violence keep their situation private. They don't share their problems with others because "they want to maintain the honour of their family, their father, and their brothers. They are also afraid that their brothers and father will be killed." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural). This is echoed by a victim of violence who confirmed that threats from her husband about killing her brother and father were one of the factors that made her keep her problem to herself for a long time, until she could no longer endure.

> "[The victim of violence] is afraid that the perpetrator is going to kill her brothers or father." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

> "This was her fate and she needs to adapt to it. She needs to endure as long as she lives." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

8.4 Legal awareness and the perceptions of institutions

> "I saw on TV a case where a woman was abused by her husband. She escaped from home a hundred times. Both her husband and her sister-in-law beat her. Then she gave birth to a son but they continued to beat her. When the case went to court, the prosecutor just wrote him a warning. They just wanted to finish the case and that's it. He continued to abuse her and nothing changed. The police sent her back home and that's it. Nothing changed for her." (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Rural)

Participants showed limited awareness of the legal framework related to violence. Those, such as police officers, who have legal academic backgrounds or work with perpetrators or victims of violence, mentioned the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence. Some participants knew that there is a law but didn't know the name of the law.

We noted the impact of how victims of violence are treated by the institutions. This was mentioned even by the institutional officers interviewed, who confirmed that there is prejudice toward victims, based on gender and background. The use of violence is justified when women are seen as immoral or when men empathize with the male perpetrator.

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32   Floyd, H. A, and Katz, D. (1931). Student Attitudes. Syracuse, N. Y.: The Craftsman Press.

"Women victims are not treated the same, even by officers in the institutions, if something from their past may suggest that they have a 'bad history'. They don't see a victim and how to help the victim, but the woman's past is immediately brought to the forefront of the discussion. I am not interested in her past, I consider her a victim. […] The judgment experienced by the victim is the worst. The worst is when a man defends another man, just because of the background situation." (Community police officer)

Participants in focus groups did not hesitate to show their lack of trust in institutions. The least trusted system is the judiciary, followed by the Kosovo Police. The main source of dissatisfaction with the services that these institutions offer to their citizens is the number of real cases portrayed by the media where the Kosovo Police, prosecution and courts failed to protect the rights of victims of GBV.

Participants easily recalled cases with a tragic ending.

"Her family shared the story of how she was subject to violence. She's not alive anymore. She was 27 and left 3 children. You know, when a case like this happens, people lose trust. There is another case that involves some students using drugs. When the police came, we saw that nothing changed. It didn't have any impact. The same people continued to use drugs. We weren't motivated any longer to share our problems with them." (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Rural)

"I am speaking from my own personal experience but also in the name of many other women. Who is the one that protects you? No one protects you. I have lived under a protection order for a year. And what did the state do for me? What help did it offer? I had to do it all by myself. I worked two jobs, I worked 24 hours." (Female, 25-36, K-Albanian, Urban)

The perception of the public and the experiences of victims are aligned when it comes to trust in public institutions. Participants who had no personal experience of the services of the judiciary and police built negative perceptions primarily from the media coverage of stories of failure. The ease and fluency with which failed cases come to mind among members of the public has impacted their perception of institutions. In psychology terms, this phenomenon is named the 'availability heuristic'[33]. This is the process of judging based on the ease with which one retrieves information about the topic. The choices of journalists to portray only stories where a victim's life deteriorates and is hopeless highly undermine the faith of public in state institutions. This makes people susceptible to bias towards institutions even though there may be successful stories of rebuilt lives but, because they have less drama, the media chooses not to cover them. That is why an essential step of any intervention programme is including independent media as an important stakeholder in eradicating GBV by being aware of the impact that the media has on cognitive bias among public. The consequences of influencing the public's faith in institutions are harmful and the individuals who are damaged are the victims of violence: because they lack trust in institutions, the intention-action gap increases and although they intend to seek help, they never act.

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33   Kahneman, D. (2011). Thinking, Fast and Slow, Penguin Books.

8.5 The repetitive nature of gender-based violence

The other important aspect of GBV is the repetitive nature of the behaviour. The interviews with law enforcement officials and representatives of public institutions that deal with GBV highlight that most perpetrators are recidivists. This shows that the goal of sanctions for perpetrators is not achieved, failing to provide services for the "re-socialization and reintegration of the convicted person into society and preparation of him or her to conduct his or her life in a socially responsible way."[34] Not only do perpetrators continue with violent practices, but the severity of violence increases.

> *"The majority of people imprisoned for gender-based violence are recidivists. They don't usually regret what they have done." (Social worker)*

The dignity and masculine identity of perpetrators has suffered and they want revenge. The victim is, again, the wife or partner. The social approval of violent behaviour is also reinforced in prison. The signals that perpetrators receive from other prisoners while in prison are dual in nature: they serve as incentives because perpetrators are praised for what they did, but at the same time, ending up in prison for a criminal offence that is not considered a crime by the majority instils a sense of shame.

> *"People who have committed crimes of gender-based violence tend not talk about what they did because gender-based violence is considered a private issue and it shouldn't be a public matter." (Social worker)*

Apart from the rich supply of reinforcement for the idea that GBV is not an offence, the work of behavioural scientists in understanding the effect of emotions in decisions may give us more insight into the repetitive nature of GBV. The findings of numerous experiments in this domain suggest that "decisions we make on the basis of a momentary emotion can also influence related choices and decisions in other domains even long after the original decision is made"[35]. When couples go through conflicts, "they don't only discuss the problems at hand, they also develop a behavioural repertoire. This repertoire then determines the way they will interact with each other over time"[36]. This suggests that individuals that begin using violence when dealing with conflicts are prone to fall into behavioural patterns that scientists call "self-herding." Sadly, altering violent practices may be an extremely challenging undertaking for recidivists to tackle alone. They need support from professionals to exit from "self-herding" mode and become aware of the trap that we humans are prone to fall into. The lessons from the studies on how emotions have long-term impact on decision-making are valuable and should be part of any programme that tackles prevention of GBV. The more that people are aware of the long-term impact of what initially seems a one-time decision, the more they will consciously give themselves time to think about the subsequent actions.

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34   Kosovo Assembly. Law on Execution of Penal Sanctions, article 4.
35   Ariely, D. (2010). The Upside of Irrationality: The Unexpected Benefits of Defying Logic at Work and at Home. Harper Collins Publishers. p. 265.
36   Ibid. p. 268.

9. Findings from reference networks analysis

information in matters related to family life. As a second source of information for family issues participants chose their partner, and as a third source opted for either their father (most often among male participants), or mother (female participants). Interestingly, the data from the reference network exercise differs from the discussions with participants. Female participants believe that mothers are the main source of influence for men, but disaggregation of data based on gender does not depict mothers as a chosen source of advice for men. Women chose the internet as a source of information about health significantly more than men (22.2% compared to 5.4%).

Figure 2. Reference network data collected during FGDs[37]

Top 3 sources	MALE		FEMALE	
	Category	%	Category	%
Advice on family issues	Family/Parents	39.0	Family/Parents	38.8
	Wife	14.3	Husband	14.5
	Father	10.5	Mother	10.3
Information regarding education	School staff	21.2	Family/Parents	19.6
	Father	11.1	Internet	13.1
	School	10.1	Friends	9.5
Information regarding community	Neighbors	32.6	Friends	17.1
	Community leader	19.8	Neighbors	14.6
	TV	11.6	Internet and social media	14.0
Information regarding health	Doctor	63.0	Doctor	33.0
	Mother	5.4	Internet	22.2
	Internet	5.4	Medical centers	9.1
Information regarding parenting	Family/Parents	34.4	Family/Parents	24.3
	Father	20.4	Mother	12.4
	Mother	14.0	Husband	8.9
Advice on life	Family	29.2	Family/Parents	22.4
	Friends	22.5	Husband	11.5
	Wife	10.0	Friends	10.9

A considerable difference between rural and urban areas is that participants coming from rural areas mention community leaders (who are mainly heads of village councils and school directors) more often in their reference network regarding information about the community. Almost one third (30%) of participants coming from rural areas consult village leaders for information regarding the community. The vast majority (74%) of urban participants get information about the community from their neighbours.

Despite the assumption that religion influences people's behaviour, religious institutions were mentioned only sporadically across the vast majority of focus groups. Among all participants, only 2% mentioned a religious leader as a source of information regarding the community, and marginally (0.4%) regarding information for parenting and advice for life. During focus group discussions, many participants

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37   The data in this figure is relative and cannot be generalized to the whole population. However, they present an indication of most probable source of information.

referred to religious practices in the discussion, but this is not reflected in the reference network exercise. This finding suggests that although religious practices may be present in everyday life, religious leaders are not portrayed as significant agents for providing information and advice.

The religious leaders interviewed report that many people approach them for advice and information, however this statement is not supported by the data obtained from the reference network exercise. Narratives from the discussions reveal that information obtained from religious figures is referred to as long as it fits a participant's set of beliefs and expectations; if there is a discrepancy, it is common for participants to seek advice from other sources that will be more aligned with the participant's convictions.

In a focus group with young participants in a rural area while discussing religion and the role of the religious leader in their community, some participants for the first time publicly challenged the role of the religious leader. The heated yet constructive discussions shed light onto the suppressed needs of young people for opportunities to debate topics of high interest.

No significant differences were observed when comparing the results about reference networks from focus groups discussing GBV and the physical punishment of children, nor from participants with different backgrounds.

9.1 The opinion of other women

For women in rural areas, the opinions of other women in the community matter. Women feel they are more judged by women than men.

> "Other women say 'look at her, she went out. She is all made up, her hair is done, she is well dressed, and she went out!'" (Female, 36-50, Albanian, Rural)

> "It would be better if instead of going out, a wife checked if there was something that needed to be done in the house, and educated her family, rather than go out while her husband is at home." (Female, 36-50, Albanian, Rural)

Women seem unaware that by preserving norms and moralizing about the behaviour of other women they are also influencing the actions of men in their communities and maintaining gender inequalities. Nor do men admit that their beliefs depend on other women's beliefs on how women ought to behave. However, the discussions reveal that in rural areas, men's beliefs are influenced by normative expectations of other women.

> "What can I say? People are unemployed and have time to spend on these [judgments]. 'The wife of that man went out [they say]... She is stupid....' Well now I am 50 years old, but my husband would say 'Wife, do you realize that when they say bad things about someone's wife, what are they going to say about you?' These things are not allowing us to move forward. Well, you are from a city and may not know, but for us in villages, we suffer from these things." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

> *"I observe my neighbour, whose wife can easily go out and put on make-up and stuff. As if she is still not married. I don't understand that. I don't let my wife go out naked, literally speaking, because everybody in our neighbourhood would laugh at me, everybody would say 'what kind of wife does he have?'" (Male, 26-35, K-Serb, Urban)*

These narratives highlight that a man cares about what other women and men think about how his wife ought to behave because the punishments his wife may get from her peers for not following the norm will shake his reputation as a man. He will therefore take the necessary steps to avoid a situation where his manhood is questioned. This is the case in all ethnic communities.

9.2   The opinion of other men

It is no surprise that participants perceive violent behaviour as a negative outcome and just speaking of violence invokes negative emotions. Why then do individuals who have the ability to think rationally choose violence as a means to deal with difficulties (conflicts) although their basic values and their rational mind would not encourage causing harm to others? Part of the answer lies in the beliefs that individuals have about what others who matter to them do or would do in similar situations. These are empirical expectations and they are a major driver for an individual's actions. Men believe that they are in charge of making sure that their partner's behaviour is aligned with her role and responsibilities. It is socially required that men supervise and approve the behaviour of their partners. Any transgression beyond these boundaries which are set out clearly by society is a signal that a man must act and "correct" the unwanted behaviour of the partner. And a man is likewise judged if he gives more freedom to his wife or daughters.

> *"At the beginning of the marriage [participant grabs a napkin and draws boundaries] he showed me where the boundaries were. I didn't go beyond these limits and I never had problems." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)*

> *"I have an uncle and everyone is glad that he doesn't have a daughter because she would live as a prisoner. When my uncle sees my parents, who are very ok, letting me go out, he becomes very judgmental towards my father. 'Why do you let your daughter go out? She is going to become crazy.' Or for instance when my father decided that we would not finish primary school in the village but move to Prishtina, he was very much against it. He would say to my father, 'You are sending your children there. They will get spoiled and become crazy.'" (Female, 18-25, Albanian, Urban)*

They believe that other men also act in the same way and as such the norm remains stable, without being questioned. Although individual participants admit that violence should never be used, for many, following the herd seems to be the default action. Behavioural scientists have explained conformity effects in numerous experiments that show flaws in people's decision-making process. Individuals like to believe that their decisions are independent and well thought-through, but in reality, for complex and emotionally-charged decisions that put humans under cognitive strain, people tend to delegate the decision-making to the group[38]. The belief that guides individuals is that if others practise this behaviour, then this is the right thing to do.

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38   Kahneman, D. (2011). Thinking, Fast and Slow, Penguin Books. p. 59.

10. Key considerations about gender-based violence

The focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews have demonstrated the complexity of gender-based violence and the dependence of the practice on both individual factors (personal attitudes, beliefs, knowledge) and social factors (community norms, social expectations, sanctions and rewards, influence of reference networks). There are strong gender norms and expectations that influence the interaction between men and women, their roles and responsibilities within the family, and what communities find acceptable for men and women and what they do not.

Although there were no significant differences in the opinions expressed by participants from different backgrounds (whether grouped by age, coming from urban or rural areas, or of different ethnicities), the participants from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities showed stronger endorsement of current gender norms and stronger opposition to revising them. Girls and women from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities appear to suffer a 'double burden' – on one hand there are the gender norms strengthening the inequity between men and women, and on the other hand these women and girls are part of a group that is already excluded and marginalized in Kosovo, due to poverty, high illiteracy rates, unemployment and other factors.

Women involved in the research demonstrated little willingness and capacity to challenge and renegotiate the status quo. Both men and women endorsed gender norms, and the distribution of roles and they justified the use of force by men against their partners and wives in certain circumstances. The current norms may be one of the causes of gender inequity in Kosovo, but they also discourage men and women from bringing this inequity to a public debate, to renegotiate power relations and empower women in their families and communities.

Family and community members play a crucial role in modeling the behaviours of men and women, which makes it particularly important to ensure community dialogue and engagement to discuss and address the current situation. Challenging current gender norms and promoting different models of what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman in Kosovo should be considered as part of planned interventions. It is important to acknowledge the interdependence of domestic violence and gender-based violence with gender norms and expectations in order to develop and implement actions that would address both. Without tackling gender issues and changing current power relations, it will be difficult to achieve progress in the area of gender-based violence.

11. The physical punishment of children and social norms

Bicchieri's diagnostic diagram that describes collective patterns of behaviours as customs, descriptive norms or social norms was also used as a framework to deconstruct and analyze the physical punishment of children, as it had been used for the analysis of gender-based violence. The research explored people's attitudes towards the physical punishment of children, their beliefs and knowledge of the effectiveness and consequences of this practice, identifying who has an influence over the parenting practices used by caregivers and what are the potential consequences if parents opt for non-violent parenting approaches. The research has identified links between parenting methods and community norms and social expectations, although some parents have shown willingness to adopt new approaches in their communication with children.

11.1 Families today

The opinions of the public are aligned to a significant extent when evaluating the current status of families in Kosovo. They agree that children nowadays show less respect for adults, and are less motivated to learn, they are less sociable and – sadly - less happy. Participants provide vivid stories of their happy childhood days with a few handmade toys, whereas now children have many toys, but they don't enjoy them much. As children know more about their rights, they don't accept a role where they should not challenge adults' decisions and advice.

Participants easily highlight the negative impact of technology in making children less sociable and hindering their enjoyment of activities not related to technology. The positive changes that technology has brought to society appear to be trivial.

"Children now stay in front of the computer all the time and they think that they know more [than adults]." (Female, 50+, K-Albanian, Rural)

"With the appearance of telephones, the internet and computers, children are spoiled. I think that democracy has come to us too fast." (Male, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

"Nowadays, children are educated more by the internet than by their families. This was not the case back in our day." (Male, 36-50, K-Serb, Urban)

Interestingly, the impact of technology on parents is not perceived as positive by the younger generation either. In a focus group discussion with 12-14 year-olds, when children were asked about other topics they would like to discuss in a focus group format, the role of technology in lives of children and their families was the most favoured topic.

"Well, for example when parents come home from work, they either put the TV on or grab their phones or sit in front of the computer. They are too lazy to deal with activities that relate to the home. I think that in the past, doing

household chores was the first thing they did, but not now." (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Urban)

"We would like to have this kind of discussion about technology and its role in our lives and in families in general." (Male, 12-14, K-Albanian, Urban)

During the 1990s, family sociologists became aware that within the family, relationships between parents and children suffered more significant changes than partner relationships, and brought instability to the family (Milic, 1994). A patriarchal, authoritative parenting approach was replaced with a paternalistic approach, and permissiveness in the upbringing of children became more and more visible.

"Relationships in the family have changed. Before, the pace of life was somewhat different: parents could dedicate more time to children, to educate them. There are exceptions, but it's evident that parents are less engaged with their children than during the past decade. It's the lack of time, and the euphoria of chasing money and fast living; parents leave their children to watch cartoons for two to three hours and have no control over what children see on TV. That's how many children form a frame of reference for how to behave. That's one of the problems. For these reasons - fast living and going after money - parents do not pay much attention to their children, in the sense of educating them and nurturing values." (Service provider)

11.2 Gender roles and the impact on parenting styles

Narratives from the focus groups reveal the significant pressure on mothers to educate their children, especially their daughters, in accordance with norms. If a daughter doesn't know how to do household chores and take care of siblings, it is not only her that will be criticized but the main person responsible for this is seen to be the mother. She will be seen as having failed to teach her daughter the skills she needs to fulfil her responsibilities.

"I educate my daughter differently from my son. My poor daughter works a lot. She goes to school and when she comes back, she does all the work that I couldn't finish during the day. In addition, she cooks dinner if I am not home. And she is only 15. It is normal in our society to educate your daughter differently from your son. She will go to another home when she gets married. In her new home, no one will care about her education; they'll care whether she can do the work she is supposed to know how to do. If she doesn't know they'll blame her mother." (Female, 36-50, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)

"I have close friends who have boys and girls. I believe that all favour male children, and I don't consider this to be OK. It has something to do with the Balkan mentality. I think we ought to remove the automatic right that only male offspring should inherit property from parents. We forget that female offspring have the right to inherit and they should be treated equally with male offspring." (Female, 36–50, K-Serb, Urban)

Opinions of parents are aligned with those of service providers, who confirm that parenting practices vary depending on the gender of the child. Boys are taught to be tough and not gentle, while girls are taught the opposite: be gentle and always ready to serve others.

> *"Masculinity and aggressiveness is reinforced in boys from a very early age by parents. Girls are taught to be gentle and polite, and that way of behaving is very present in our community."* (Service provider)

> *"Yes, some punish their daughters in a different way; boys can blow the house up, and suffer no consequences."* (Female, 18-25, K-Serb, Urban)

> *"Later on, the same child feels that he does not have to work, does not have to do the dishes, to clean up after himself, because someone else - his sister - has to do that. This is seen as the children grow up, if there is another girl in the family who has to do something for the boy."* (Community police officer)

The focus group discussions with children confirmed the finding that male children are disciplined differently from female children. When asked what exactly is the meaning of "different parenting", children highlighted more tolerance of parents to wrongdoing by boys, high expectations of girls' behaviour, and being more strict with girls. Children confirmed that boys are taught to be aggressive.

> *"In our society, you are not a man if you don't raise your hand and beat someone."* (Female, 12-14, K-Albanian, Urban)

Interestingly, although girls who participated in the focus group discussion were aware of gender-based differences and were vocal that there should be gender equality, their behaviour showed that they comply with social norms and that the inequalities in their daily life are not perceived as inequalities.

> *"When we are eating and we are all at the dining table, my brother asks for a glass of water and of course I bring him the water. My parents expect me to serve him. And I don't feel bad about it. I don't think that there is anything wrong with that."* (Female, 12-14, K-Albanian, Urban)

It is not only women but also men who exhibit high sensitivity to how one should raise children. Although men generally delegate the task of raising and educating children to their wives, they also feel the pressure from society of how one's child should behave. The guiding motivation for having well-behaved children is to be perceived as capable and respected parents.

> *"The role of the father is always to take care of the family and provide food for his wife and children. Whereas the wife – the mother – she should clean and educate the children, so that when they go to school, they are not spoiled. They shouldn't bring themselves to the attention of the director of the school or of other children. Children should be well-behaved and well-prepared, with appropriate and clean clothes and not be known in school for bad behaviour."* (Male, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

"When my daughter was sick, my husband took her to the doctor. He took her to the doctor two or three times. I heard my neighbours saying, 'Oh my God, her husband took the child to the doctor. How is he going to undress the child? Does he know how to put her clothes back on?' I was surprised when I heard these things but here this is the mentality." (Female, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)

The evidence from the discussions paints a picture where boys have carefree lives with little or no responsibilities whereas girls shadow their mothers in cleaning, cooking, and other house-related activities. It is therefore easy to check whether girls have fulfilled their obligations or not; boys, on the other hand, with no defined responsibilities, are less susceptible to being judged against a norm.

"In general, Albanians love and care more for their sons than their daughters." (Female, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)

"You can punish girls, but not boys." (Female, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)

The perception that there is favouritism between male and female offspring is also evident among childcare and child protection service providers who strongly support the idea that male offspring are treated differently from a very early age.

"Well I think that parents in this area educate boys in a special way, and this is noticeable from the time the child is born. Here the family fires a gun when a boy is born, and from the earliest age boys are given priority over girls. Parents and the family make mistakes from the moment the child is born." (Community police officer)

11.3   The role of grandparents

Participants perceive grandparents' role as positive and important in children's upbringing. Parents feel comfortable delegating the authority of disciplining to grandparents, even if disciplining includes physical punishment. Participants repeatedly demonstrated that grandparents protect their grandchildren by placing children's happiness – or their perception of what this is – above everything. Grandparents tend to criticize parents when children are engaged in work or school-related activities. Sometimes they reinforce and perpetuate gender-related stereotypes in children's up-bringing.

"Grandparents like to see their grandchildren happy. They like to see children resting and not working." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

"[In-laws] say to you, 'why do you make the children work? They should be playing and not working…' especially for boys. Boys should never take a cooking pot in their hands. They ask you, 'what kind of mother are you to let your son have a cooking pot in his hands?'" (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

Mothers of different age groups, in both urban and rural areas, acknowledge that in-laws observe and judge mothers' parenting practices and this creates an environment that sometimes hinders honest communication between a woman and her children.

"When your in-laws are present you cannot discuss things with your children. I wait for a more opportune time when the in-laws are not there because I don't want to make them angry. That is when I give advice to my children." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

"The problems arise when you want to beat your child but they don't let you." (Female, 25-35, K-Albanian, Urban)

"I don't feel comfortable giving advice to my children in front of my in-laws. I am cautious when they are around. I don't know if this is the right thing to do or not." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

Grandparents' interference in parenting practices occasionally becomes a field where in-laws and their daughter-in-law exert control and signal who is the decision-maker.

"There are cases when mothers beat their children because they live with their in-laws. Just to evoke rage and make her mother-in-law angry, one woman would beat her child. Because the mother-in-law says 'don't slap your child', she does it even more severely just to annoy her." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

Children perceive the role of grandparents as positive and they dearly recall how emotionally rich their lives are because of the presence of their grandparents in their lives. Children report that things that they cannot discuss with their parents, they feel more comfortable discussing with their grandparents. They feel less judged and have someone to rely on.

"I have been lucky to live with my grandparents. My grandmother has been like a friend to me. She always gave me advice and was there for me. Sadly, she passed away a month ago and I miss her so much." (Female, 12-14, K-Albanian, Urban)

11.4   Attitudes toward the physical punishment of children

The research identified that parents usually don't like slapping or hitting their children. Yet they choose to do so because it is the default preference when dealing with disobedient children or inappropriate behaviours. Physical punishment of children is not perceived as child abuse. It is rather a common, quick reaction that requires little or no effort. The narratives from the focus groups show that physical punishment rarely comes as a result of effortful and deliberate thought processes. Instead, there is a set of beliefs that impacts the decisions of parents to use physical punishment as an automatic reaction in situations when children deviate from expected behaviours.

What is the expected behaviour? Referring to Bicchieri's model for diagnosing collective behaviours, we will set out the beliefs that make physical punishment a routine decision for most of parents.

12. Factors that maintain the practice of physical punishment

12.1 The definition of physical punishment

"Violence [towards children] is not acceptable. However, I don't call it violence when a parent uses a stick that does not cause harm." (Male, 26-35, K-Albanian, Rural)

Across all economic and social groups, adult participants do not classify physical punishment as a violent act. This is aligned with the public's general perception towards slapping and hitting. The term "violence" is used to describe actions that have severe consequences on one's health and well-being. One reason that may explain the public's high tolerance towards violent acts is the history of the people of Kosovo. Having experienced decades of uncertainty and economic hardship and being exposed on a daily basis to traumatic events, it is predominantly practices that have detrimental effects which are classified as violent behaviour. Slapping and hitting are not perceived as violent acts and thus there seems to be no negative connotation to physical punishment as a practice and no sense of guilt among parents. In participants' responses, there was no condemning voice, but rather explanations provided by all. There were few exceptions to the rule, with no specific profile of respondents who were firmly against the use of physical punishment.

"I don't think that slapping is violence. I think it is violence more if you don't hit them and let them do whatever they like. I consider that to be more violent. Because when you slap children they are changed. If my father slaps me today, I know I am wrong, and I tolerate it. I cannot say anything to him – I cannot disagree with him." (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Rural)

During the focus group discussions, children – in contrast to adult participants - did not express any ambiguity when they classified physical punishment as violence. However, in some circumstances they justified the use of violence when other methods do not yield positive results. In contrast to adults, children were more prone to mention psychological violence when talking about violence in general. More specifically, name-calling, verbal aggression aiming at humiliating the child, or presenting superiority in the power relationship between the adult and the child were frequently mentioned by children as synonyms for psychological violence. Children could recall situations when they were punished and they never repeated the same mistake again. It is not so much that they learned that what they did was wrong, but rather that avoiding being humiliated in front of others was an incentive not to repeat the same behaviour.

> *"Being scolded and criticized in front of others made me feel really bad. I don't repeat the same behaviour again because I don't want to be humiliated in front of my classmates and friends."* (Male, 12-14, K-Albanian, Urban)

> *"When a child misbehaves, or does not behave how a parent expects him to behave, parents have no other way of controlling him but to use physical punishment."* (Girl, 12-14, K-Albanian, Urban)

When asked to recall the last time they witnessed a violent act, children most easily recall physical violence among their peers. While all of them have recently witnessed violent behaviour exhibited by peers, some of the children present in the focus group had also participated in a violent act. They perceived it as a normal occurrence of their lives at school. It is not only boys who behave violently but girls also try to solve their conflicts using violence.

> *"I think it is important that when someone tries to bully you, you respond physically because if you don't, they will just continue to bully you more. In this way, they know that they cannot treat you badly because you will get into a fight."* (Girl, 12-14, K-Albanian, Urban)

Children were asked to imagine a community where there is absolutely no violence. Sadly, they could not imagine such a community.

> *"A place without violence would be total chaos. Everyone would do crazy things and no one would care."* (Male, 12-14, K-Albanian, Urban)

> *"I cannot imagine our community without violence."* (Female, 12-14, K-Albanian, Urban)

12.2 Physical punishment as a default mode of intervention

> *"I believe that a parent never hits a child without the child deserving it."* (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

The majority of participants agree that physical punishment is an effective disciplining tool when done moderately and correctly. There is a difference between participants on the meaning of "correctly" applying physical punishment. The perception of the correct use of physical punishment depends on several aspects: the tool used, the age of the child, and the setting. While most participants agree that using a stick is the most appropriate way of physically punishing children, others prefer slapping rather than using any objects. Participants who object to slapping provide compelling stories of harm that can be done when slapping children.

> *"They say that beating children by hand can damage their veins."* (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

> *"When you get angry, you hit your children. The biggest problem I have with my husband is when he uses his hand. I tell him, 'don't ever use your hand when you beat the children'. Now, we always have a stick above the door."* (Female, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)

"I beat my children; I hit them on their hands and thighs... I've also used stinging nettles." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

The narratives of parents who prefer using a stick to physically punish their children are abundant. Interestingly, there is a common understanding among parents that there are no negative consequences when one uses a stick.

"It's best to use a stick [when physically punishing children], since it gives a burning sensation but does not have long-lasting consequences. When you hit with your hand, you cannot control how hard you are hitting. The concern is that you may hit them behind the ear and break the child's neck." (Male, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

"I always use the stick. And I measure how much I should hit. Some people use shoes. I think using shoes is really bad, because you can miss the target." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

"[Beating children] with a stick? Of course I beat my children with a stick. There is no mother who hasn't hit her child at least once." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

"If you beat children with a stick, there are no consequences. But if you beat them with your hands, there may be consequences." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

There is a great alignment of parents and community representatives who influence the norms on the use of physical punishment of children for discipline. Religious leaders generally accept, and in some instances favour, physical punishment of children. Furthermore, parents from all ethnic groups often refer to a saying with a religious connotation, claiming that 'beating came from heaven'.

"Physical punishment of children exists as a disciplining measure. Moreover, in the holy book it is stated 'he who spares the rod, hates his son'. Simply speaking, in some circumstances, when a child misbehaves continuously, which can even endanger his life, a parent has to embrace extreme measures." (Religious representative)

"Physical punishment in our society has traditional roots. We always like to say, 'the stick came from heaven', and parents most often resort to beating because that's the easiest form of punishment. Children do not understand anything except that their parent is physically stronger than they are. You may punish the child but the likelihood is that you will not achieve anything. That's the shortcoming of parents who would rather drink coffee and when a child asks something, they lose their temper and beat the child. Whenever I have friends over, when my children call me I always respond. My friends comment that they would beat the child [because of the interruption] – that's how parents usually are; they do not want to spend time with them." (Female, 36-50, K-Serb, Urban)

12.3 Parental perception regarding the appropriate age of children for physical punishment

Focus group participants do not agree on what is the appropriate age to use physical punishment as a means to discipline children. At the extremes some go as young as the age of one, when a child is taught good behaviour, specifically when a child is penalized for not following rules set by the parents, whereas at the other extreme parents expect to use physical punishment as long as they provide for the child. Even when children establish their own family as adults, the parents of the child are encouraged to use physical punishment to express any discontent about the child's misbehaviour.

> "[Children may be physically punished] until they get married. As long as they eat in my house, as long as they stay under my roof, I can beat them. You have that right to educate them." (Male, 50+, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)

> "Children may be beaten until about 13 years of age. If they do not understand when they reach that age, than you can just open the door and ask them to do whatever they want. When they reach the age of 15, then don't even think about beating them." (Male, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

> "As for the age, physical punishment can be used from about 7 until 10 years of age." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

A common theme across all participants who support the use of physical punishment is the result anticipated from the use of violence. Basically, participants expect that a sense of fear will be ensured by the use of physical punishment.

> "If you exercise authority up to the age of 5 or 6, then they will have fear. We all know what [the consequence of using] the stick is." (Male, 26-35, K-Albanian, Rural)

> "I see that we are all in favour of using a stick to educate children. Children should know fear. You cannot explain to a little child what he can and cannot do. I have a nephew that is one year old: you cannot explain anything to him. From the age of two, you should be hitting a little on the hand, so the child will start to understand." (Female, 25-36, K-Serb, Urban)

12.4 Setting – public versus private

Participants generally agree that the use of physical punishment is almost exclusively reserved for a private setting. Children similarly agree that physical punishment most commonly happens in a private setting. Parents usually refrain from using any form of physical punishment that may make them look as if they do not have control over the situation. Participants explained that disciplining children is a private matter, and there is no strict restriction as to what means are allowed in order to achieve their goal.

"I try to [use physical punishment] only in the home, not in public. It may have occurred that I've scolded the child when he was misbehaving, perhaps even pulling his hair or ear when we are out in the market. Usually I try to punish the child only when we are alone. It may have a negative impact on the child, where the child feels bad if others are present when he is punished." (Male, 26-35, K-Albanian, Rural)

On many occasions, it was noted that parents are very careful about their public image. They want congruency between their public appearance and the actions they take when they want to discipline their children. Participants who reported having the need to be perceived as caring and affectionate parents generally consider the setting where they exhibit violent behaviour to discipline children. Any situation when other people are present is considered a limited environment to use for physical punishment. In such circumstances, parents usually refrain from physical punishment, but rather resort to verbal communication that elicits a sense of fear in the children so that they exhibit behaviour that is acceptable to the parent.

"I don't beat my child in front of others because I don't want to leave the impression of myself as a harsh person." (Female, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)

During discussions, it became apparent that public sanction (in the form of a social punishment) has greater impact than any personal satisfaction or social gain (reward) that may be elicited when reacting publicly against a manifestation of violence. Participants generally show that they are more inclined to maintain cohesion in their social context, rather than go against a practice that is generally considered a private matter – such as disciplining of children.

"When you beat them in private, then only your neighbour can report you. It's not that big of a deal. But generally people avoid interfering in 99 per cent of the cases; they would rather keep their mouth shut than quarrel with a neighbour and report him." (Male, 18-25, K-Serb, Urban)

"The last time I witnessed a parent physically punish a child I did not intervene, and I didn't comment. If I had intervened, my behaviour would have encouraged the child because he would have felt that he had my support. But the child was very disobedient; he was throwing toys all over the place. First the parent tried to keep him quiet by raising his voice, and when that didn't prove to be successful, he hit the child. For a moment, the child was silent, but again he went on with his misbehaviour. But I realized that I shouldn't interfere, because that would encourage the child. Every person has a right to educate his child, except when the physical punishment exceeds all limits." (Male, 18-25, K-Serb, Urban)

Situations that prompt physical punishment are mainly related to children not respecting adults, misbehaving, saying bad words, getting bad grades, not studying, and so on. In situations where there is emotional strain, parents' use of physical punishment is not an outcome of a child's behaviour, but rather an outlet for the adult's intense personal tension.

"When I had problems with my husband, I used to slap my children. I was just too angry and couldn't control myself." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

"[Physical punishment] exists, we face it; it would not be too much to say that we come across it almost daily, especially among the Roma population, where parents beat their children for not going to buy them cigarettes or for not going out to beg for money; they punish the child for not doing their homework, or for any reason whatsoever. They punish them, not through talking to them, but by beating them." (NGO representative)

Some caregivers delegate the physical punishment to teachers or neighbours.

"For three of my children I went to school and told their teachers, 'I beg you, if you need to beat my child, do it'." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

"It happened several times. [The teacher] has one goal, to make my child understand better, so she beats him just like I do. I have been beaten till I started crying. But I was different. Now, if you say just one harsh word to children, they leave the class. I went to the teacher and told her not to tolerate it. This is what teachers did to me and I was an excellent student". (Male, 36-50, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)

"I would let the teacher beat my child. Of course she [the teacher] doesn't do it because she likes it, but because she wants to discipline my child. I would let her do it". (Female, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)

"My neighbour beat my child. I told him 'you did a good thing.' He asked me, 'Why don't you ask what she [the child] did?' I told him, 'If she hadn't done anything, you wouldn't have beaten her. You have my permission.'" (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

"A teacher is like a parent. She or he tries to teach your child, to give him advice, to discipline him. We should grant them the permission to beat our children because ultimately it is the children who will benefit." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

12.5   The law of least effort

There are many behavioural scientists who assert that laziness is embedded deep in human nature[39]. As such, people have the tendency to choose the least demanding set of actions to achieve their goals. An effort to change the default set of actions when dealing with children is perceived as an additional mental cost whose benefits cannot be seen immediately.

It was the younger unmarried participants who had more tendencies to explain physical punishment as the preferred choice for lazy parents. They identified that slapping or hitting your child with a stick is the easiest way to discipline children. They recognized that using other alternatives is more demanding and the outcome does not yield short-term reward.

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39   Kahneman, D. (2011). Thinking, Fast and Slow, Penguin Books.

"If you teach a child with punishment from the beginning, the child will be the one to punish others. But today's parents are lazy about looking after their children, and they apply easy solutions – hitting a child when they're disobedient." (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Rural)

"Physical punishment is widespread. I understand this phenomenon coming from a lack of will to find any alternative; parents do not have time to spend with their children; parents don't have the necessary skills to educate their children; there were moral teachings that were handed down for many generations." (Service provider; professional associate of a pre-school institution)

This finding is very valuable as it highlights the fact that some young individuals are aware that physical punishment is not the best method for controlling a child's behaviour, but it is perceived as the easiest and most common parenting practice. The challenge for reformers who target first-time parents is to help young people not to default to physical punishment as the preferred choice, but instead to focus on the long-term benefits that a violence-free environment provides children and families.

Focus group discussions provided evidence that young parents are now more focused on children and make extra efforts to provide them with better opportunities. Nevertheless, in the public's mind, better opportunities are linked to providing better financial conditions, better clothing, more toys, and the fulfilling of a child's dreams, and not so much the relationships that are cultivated or the support and coaching that children need in order to reach their full potential. That is why, apart from encouraging young parents to put significant effort into choosing a non-violent parenting style, reformers must focus on raising parents' awareness of the benefits to children and families from being raised in a non-violent environment and the negative outcomes of physical punishment.

12.6   Instilling fear

The discussions with participants with a wide range of profiles - unmarried, young couples, parents, grandparents, single parents, etc. - revealed a surprising acceptance of fear as an essential element that impacts motivation, learning, respect towards others and positive behaviour. The fear of unpleasant consequences, and the fear of the teacher, is presented as healthy fear and a powerful motivator that is indispensable in one's personal development, and as such guides parents' decisions to instill fear in their children.

"I am against this new way of not beating children in school. No teacher would hit a child without a reason. I am now speaking openly. Children used to be much more obedient and disciplined when students were afraid of the teacher." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

"I learned more when I was beaten." (Male, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

"Today, I tell myself that it is better that I was afraid. I was married and I was still afraid of my father. That is respect. One has to listen to [adults]. Today, for instance, we say, 'I feel sorry.' Well, one should not feel sorry for children - even when you slap them." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

"When a child doesn't listen, you should beat him. You should scare him. If a child doesn't know fear, he won't be a good child. Without beating, there is no good child. We have spoiled children." (Male, 50+, K-Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Urban)

When children were asked what they think about fear, their primary responses highlight positive aspects of fear. Only a few children, once all the positive outcomes of fear were discussed, mentioned the negative impact that fear may have on children.

"I think fear is good. If there is no fear, children will go crazy and no-one would care about good behaviour." (Male, 12-14, K-Albanian, Urban)

"When one has fear, then he or she listens to others and respects others. I think fear makes you better." (Female, 12-14, K-Albanian, Urban)

"Because of fear we learn and we behave well but we have to know that fear also has a negative impact. Maybe, because of fear, you cannot be the best and cannot perform well because you are so afraid of the consequences. I think there is something negative about fear." (Female, 12-14, K-Albanian, Urban)

12.7   Learning how to respect others

The positive connotation of fear is linked to two important elements, (1) family composition and dynamics, and (2) self-assessment and the reflection of one's behaviour as a result of fear. As shown in the section on family roles and responsibility, in a typical Kosovar family the head of household is the father. The mother is responsible for all the tasks that fall within the household domain. When a son gets married, he brings his wife to his father's house and they live together. It is common to have several generations living under one roof: grandparents, sons and their wives, grandsons and their wives, and so on. In order to manage the household, decision-making is a function centralized in the oldest man in the family who uses authority to lead and manage the family.

"Children are different now; they don't respect relatives or grown-ups. There is no fear even though you fulfil all their needs." (Female, K-Albanian, 26-35, Urban)

Children learn to respect adults and they are required to show this respect by never questioning the authority of the head of household and other adults in the family. Children are expected to stand up when an older family member enters the room. The consequence for children of not obeying the norms is physical punishment. At a very young age, children are taught to fear adults and consequently they are considered to have learned to respect the adult. This direct representation of fear as respect continues to shape beliefs about parenting practices.

"In the past, children used to be more educated and more obedient. When our grandfather and grandmother talked, we would shake and be terrified. We would never say a word back to our elders." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)

12.8 Perceptions influenced by past experiences

Participants tend to reflect on their own experiences and confirm that they know how to behave and respect others because they knew fear. They were subject to physical punishment and they see positive results and don't consider themselves to be violent individuals. Although studies confirm that being exposed to violence may impair a child's capacity for partnering and parenting later in life, continuing the cycle of violence into the next generation, this is not aligned with respondents' beliefs.[40] Participants also attribute the motivation to learn to fear of their teacher. The self-sustaining chain of perceived positive outcomes from fear makes it seem necessary for parents to use physical punishment as the preferred strategy to teach children the notion of fear.

> *"A slap awakened me. Because of that slap, I am now what I am. Therefore, I justify physical punishment. It depends where, how, why, and all that because violence in the family from parent to child is sometimes reasonable and sometimes not." (Female, 18-25, K-Albanian, Urban)*

> *"Not beating children? I am against that. I am not staying that we should beat them till they go insane. We have also been beaten but none of us is insane." (Female, 26-35, K-Albanian, Rural)*

12.9 The expected outcomes of physical punishment

While some participants believe that physical punishment has long-term benefits, another group doesn't overstate the benefits of this approach. The latter is more convinced of the short-term benefits but they are sceptical that children actually correct their behaviour because of physical punishment. The participants who believe in long-term outcomes are older men. Mothers tend to acknowledge that children repeat the same mistakes and behaviours even when they are physically punished, hence their scepticism about long-term benefits.

However, when it comes to evaluating the negative outcomes of physical punishment, participants don't believe there are any, when physical punishment is applied correctly.

> *"The child will not forget the punishment and the child won't repeat the same mistake again." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Rural)*

The fact that participants can see the relative success - long-term or short-term - of using physical punishment but little or no negative effects, explains in part the adherence to this method as the preferred choice given the lack of alternatives. Participants who mention the disadvantages of physical punishment tend to focus on the emotional cost that both mother and children suffer. However, the emotional intensity that parents, especially mothers, experience after physically punishing their

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40   National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2008).

children dims over time and they revert back to the option that has been traditionally the main tool in parents' toolkits. They acknowledge that after they physically punish their children, the parent-child relationship deteriorates. Some mothers admit that revitalizing the relationship with children requires extra efforts because children nowadays tend to be more aware of their rights and aren't easily reconciled.

> "After beating your child, your heart feels like it's about to explode." (Female, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)

The reaction of children now to physical punishment is different from previous generations. They know their rights and know that they should not be subject to violence.

> "It was better in the past when they used to beat us, especially teachers. You were afraid and didn't make mistakes because you could end up at the principal's office. The principal would also slap you once or twice. We would stay quiet. Now, when a student is slapped, he threatens that he will sue the teacher." (Male, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

> "When we were beaten, we reacted differently. Now, children react differently. When I was beaten I thought that I should never make that mistake again. Now, it is the opposite. You beat the child and he repeats it and he make even more severe mistakes." (Male, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

12.10 Disciplining children with alternative methods

There were two groups of participants who had integrated alternative methods into their parenting practices: single parents and young urban mothers. Single mothers who had been victims of GBV showed less inclination to use physical punishment as their children had already been traumatized.

> "I don't beat my children. They have been traumatized enough and I don't want them to be afraid." (Female, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

> "[When using physical punishment] children calm down for a while, but soon after they go back to their old behaviour. I consider [using physical punishment] to be very bad. They can become something that nobody wants them to become. From an early age, one should communicate with children. There is no need to hit them. Children should be treated with care." (Male, 25-36, K-Serb, Urban)

Participants who use alternative methods to discipline their children usually come from urban areas. Judging from the voice of parents who were proudly describing their use of alternative methods, there was no sign of hesitation or reflection on whether there is a side effect to methods such as locking children in a room or putting them in a cold shower.

> "I've put my child in a cold shower. I put her in the bathtub and turn the cold shower on. This method is 99.9% successful." (Female, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)

"I've used the chair method. I let my child sit in the chair for two hours. I turned the chair to face the wall and I told him to stay there." (Female, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)

"When my children are disobedient I punish them. I lock them in the bathroom but I don't leave them long. Now, I just tell them 'I will lock you in the bathroom' and they don't misbehave." (Female, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)

"When I punish my children, I don't let them go out or I don't give them money. I usually punish them when they get a bad grade or don't do their homework." (Female, 26-35, K-Albanian, Urban)

"I once got in a fight with a friend, and as a punishment, I was not allowed to go out of my room for 72 hours. My parents would bring me food. I never repeated the same mistake again." (Male, 12-14, K-Albanian, Urban)

"When my parents punish me, I am not allowed to go out for couple of weeks. I just go to school and back home and I am not allowed to go anywhere else." (Female, 12-14, K-Albanian, Urban)

A child advocacy officer expressed her concerns that young parents do not have many opportunities, outside of advisory centres, to get advice on parenting. Advisory centres are located within Family Medicine Centres and mothers usually visit advisory centres for routine checks of their newborns.

"In these advisory centres they are mostly informed about the children's physical development and not their psychological development. Let us be honest, if today you tell a parent who is using corporal punishment that they should change their behaviour they will ask you 'what should I do?'" (Child Advocacy Officer)

"I considered myself to be a very knowledgeable person even regarding parenting techniques however during these sessions I understood how uninformed I was." (Male, positive disciplining trainee)

Parents who have tried alternative methods and achieved astonishing results still need confirmation from others of whether their alternative approach is right or wrong. The opinion of others seems to matter more than personal experience of the outcomes. Parents seek consensus and want to know if other people respond similarly. The need for guidance and reinforcement appears to be important to parents.

"I have a specific example. I beat my son one day. It was a simple mistake but you know, when you get angry with the news, then you react and slap someone. I have noticed that my son practises football. He loves football very much. Now, whenever he misbehaves, I don't let him go to football practice. So, not letting him go to football training has made my son change. He's never repeated the same mistake again. In the past, I used to beat him but he would repeat the same mistake. From the moment that I stopped letting him go to the training, he has not repeated that mistake. Now, I would like to hear from you, am I right or wrong?" (Male, 36-50, K-Albanian, Urban)

"Well, those who are better educated physically punish their children less and I haven't noticed that their children are not well-behaved, nor they are worse than the children who are physically punished. Even worse, children who are physically punished are worse, rebellious; they have this aggressiveness that they will later take out on other children." (Community police officer)

13. Key considerations about the physical punishment of children

The research has identified strong beliefs among respondents that physical punishment is an appropriate, necessary and effective way to discipline children. It is believed that through physical punishment children learn how to behave and learn fear and respect. This conviction makes some parents believe that the right to carry out physical punishment should be delegated to other adults in the community – teachers and neighbours too. At the same time, it was possible to identify a group of young parents, predominantly from urban areas, who do not agree with violent forms of child discipline, and who are willing to adopt a more positive approach to parenting. However they lack knowledge of non-violent parenting approaches, and the techniques they use, although not including physical punishment, remain abusive. Grandparents seem to disapprove of the punishment of children and they may be considered as important allies in challenging harmful parenting practices, and helping parents to choose non-violent parenting methods.

The findings also show a strong influence of gender norms and stereotypes when it comes to parenting approaches used with girls and boys. Girls are taught from early childhood 'women's roles' and there is a strong social pressure on mothers to transmit these roles to their daughters. Boys, on the other hand, are educated differently, preparing them for their adult life as men.

This research gathered additional evidence on the intergenerational aspect of violence. By witnessing (gender-based) violence in the family and by being disciplined in a violent manner, children learn that violence is the right way to act in certain circumstances. It 'shows' how they should act when they become adults and parents, perpetuating violence from one generation to another. Gender inequity is also perpetuated by parents and grandparents who teach children how to become good men and women, husbands and wives. This highlights the importance of addressing the issue of physical punishment of children in conjunction with addressing gender-based violence and gender inequity. Parents and caregivers should be informed about the negative consequences of physical punishment on a child's health and development, and be supported to learn and adopt new positive parenting approaches.

14. Data validation and the way forward

UNICEF organized a two-day workshop with the participation of institutions in Kosovo (Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education, Office of the Ombudsperson, Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Kosovo Police, Prosecutor's Office), local public authorities, civil society organizations (Save the Children, Terre des Hommes), UN agencies and the media to present and validate the research findings and to elicit recommendations for interventions to address gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children in Kosovo. The UNICEF Gender Advisor for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Maha Muna, and the UNICEF New York Communication for Development Specialist, Ketan Chitnis, attended the event, providing overview and guidance in the area of gender and communication for development.

Workshop participants endorsed the research findings, highlighting the magnitude and complexity of the issue, the interdependence of gender norms and gender-based violence and the widespread norms and beliefs supporting GBV and the physical punishment of children in Kosovo. They proposed a series of actions which need to be implemented at central and local levels to address gender inequity and violence. An inter-sectoral approach – with the involvement of the police, education, health and social protection sectors – was highlighted as critical in efforts to prevent and address violence, along with the mobilization of communities and the media, who can help make violence visible and engage in an open dialogue about actions to eliminate violence from family and community lives.

Following the workshop and taking into account participants' recommendations, UNICEF has developed a behaviour and social change communication strategy to address gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children. The long-term strategy focuses on challenging current norms, including those around gender, addressing people's attitudes and knowledge related to violence, supporting parents to adopt positive parenting practices, and empowering communities to take an active part in the prevention and elimination of violence. The strategy will be implemented in partnership with institutions in Kosovo, local authorities, civil society organizations, support groups and communities themselves. Progress will be measured and results documented to ensure additional evidence is available of effective approaches to address gender norms and violent practices.

15. Recommendations

A series of international treaties guarantee all children, girls and women the right to be protected from violence. Yet violence remains a reality for children, cutting across boundaries of age, gender, religion, ethnic origin, disability, socio-economic status, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.[41] Witnessing or experiencing emotional, sexual and physical violence or gender inequity drains that potential and affects a child's health, wellbeing and future. Exposure to violence can alter the development of the brain and affect a child physically, mentally, emotionally and socially.[42] In the case of domestic violence, it is not just individual children or families who are affected, but all society. People who experience abuse as children are more at risk of developing health conditions and chronic diseases as adults. Risks include heart disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, liver disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and overall poor health.[43] Abuse and household dysfunction in childhood is strongly correlated to unhealthy behaviours in adulthood, such as cigarette smoking, unhealthy eating, alcohol and drug abuse, depression, attempted suicide, and sexual promiscuity[44]. The stress of chronic abuse often leads to anxiety, which makes victims more vulnerable to post-traumatic stress disorder, conduct disorder, and learning, attention and memory difficulties[45], and can lead to reduced school performance, including an increased likelihood for children to drop out or repeat a year.[46] Some forms of violence, including sexual violence and bullying, may also lead to social stigma and discrimination that has profound consequences not only on the child but also on his or her family.[47] At the same time, many girls and young women may not realize that the violence they experience is abuse, or they may not see it as a problem because of discriminatory social norms that make violence against women acceptable. The consequences of violence can also obstruct economic growth because of lost productivity, disability, and decreased quality of life. These consequences are also passed down from one generation to the next.

Protecting children, girls and women from violence requires a comprehensive approach, since many types of violence are linked to other factors, including poverty, disparity in wealth, conflict, lack of education, and social norms. At the same time, legal reforms are unlikely to have a substantial impact unless social norms begin to change regarding gender roles, family honour and privacy, the status of children in the family and in society, and the acceptability and effectiveness of violent punishment.

41   United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), State of the World's Children 2014 in Numbers: Every Child Counts. New York, January 2014. p.78-83

42   Erickson, M. F., and B. Egeland, 'A Developmental View of the Psychological Consequences of Maltreatment', School Psychology Review, vol. 16, no. 2, 1987, pp. 156-168. http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/1987-29817-00

43   Felitti, V.J. et al., 'Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study,' American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 1998, vol. 14, pp. 245-258.

44   Ibid.

45   See for example Dallam, S.J., 'The long-term medical consequences of childhood maltreatment', In: Franey K., Geffner R., Falconer R. (editors), The cost of child maltreatment: Who pays? We all do, San Diego: Family Violence & Sexual Assault Institute, 2001; Perry, B.D., 'The neurodevelopmental impact of violence in childhood,' In: Schetky D., Benedek E. (editors), Textbook of child and adolescent forensic psychiatry, Washington, American Psychiatric Press, 2001, pp. 221–238.

46   Together for Girls, Technical Action Framework, December 2011.

47   Ibid.

Based on the research findings, there are a series of actions that can and should be undertaken to prevent and address gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children. These recommendations should be seen as complementing each other, as only a holistic approach can produce the desired change in addressing harmful norms and practices in Kosovo.

a) **Addressing and changing gender norms.** The research has demonstrated strong ties between gender-based violence, parenting practices and gender roles and expectations. The actions to address gender-based violence should be implemented in the context of addressing harmful gender norms. Debates at central and local level organized by decision-makers, local authorities, community leaders, civil society organizations, and the media have the power to bring people into an open dialogue to reflect on current norms and their impact on women, men, children and families. The traditional roles of men and women need to be challenged, and positive models (young successful women; business women; fathers spending time with children etc.) should be promoted, to encourage and support change. Programmes for the empowerment of girls and women need to be developed and implemented to offer women additional opportunities to develop their competences and to develop projects that would challenge current gender norms.

b) **Raising awareness and addressing social norms.** As research participants showed little awareness of the negative consequences of violence on the health and development of women and children, information and awareness-raising programmes are necessary to address current false beliefs. Improving people's knowledge of the harmful consequences of violence would constitute a first step in changing their attitudes and the social norms that encourage violence and discrimination. School and community programmes that engage influential, trusted individuals to act as agents of change, supported by mass media/social mobilization campaigns, should be considered. Informing people about the existing legal instruments in the area of violence prevention and encouraging them to report the cases of violence to relevant authorities, can also put pressure on decision-makers and service-providers to act and address reported cases in a timely manner. Service-providers should take actions to prevent violence, enhancing the unacceptability of violence for the community.

c) **Strengthening policies and laws.** Governments and policymakers have a responsibility to create safe environments for children and women, to protect victims of violence, and to deal with perpetrators. Strengthening policies and laws that protect children and women can send a strong message to society that violence is not only unacceptable, but also punishable by law, and that victims or witnesses have the right to receive appropriate assistance. Services for children and their families that identify and offer help, support and care, as well as mechanisms to report incidences of violence, should be promoted. Such services help children cope with their situation, and also break the cycle of abuse and reduce further harm.

d) **Development of support programmes for parents and caregivers.** Educating families, caregivers and parents on their child's early development increases the likelihood that they will use positive disciplining methods, reducing the risk of violence within the home. Parenting programmes and community support groups can help parents identify, learn and adopt new, non-violent parenting approaches, ensuring the healthy development of their children. The media should play a more active role in disseminating positive parenting practices, contributing to the diffusion of innovative practices and modeling non-violent behaviours.

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Annex 1: Survey instruments

Focus group discussion guidelines

Domestic violence and gender-based violence

Introduction: Introduce yourself and explain the ground rules. Describe the nature and extent of confidentiality and anonymity. Everybody has the right to express their opinion freely, even when it doesn't fit with the responses from other participants. There is no right or wrong answer; everybody is entitled to his or her own perspective. Please wait for your turn to speak. Treat others with respect. Your participation is voluntarily and anonymous.

General information – 10 min.

- Please introduce yourselves,
  - *Name*
  - *Employment status?*
    - Position and years of experience.
  - *Marital status?*
  - *Other members of the family – family composition? Children – what age? Attending school?*

Family composition – 15 min.

- What are the roles of the family members?
  - *What is the typical role of a husband? A wife? Parents and/or in-laws?*
  - *How about roles and responsibilities of children? What is the difference between male children and female children?*
- What families in your community do not obey these roles – is there any specific profile of people or families that do not follow these norms?
- In the time since you were younger – say 20 years ago? – what are the major differences that you have encountered in the way families function, including family dynamics and the roles and responsibilities of each family member? What were the norms (usual behaviour) and what was (in)appropriate for each to do?
  - *What position in the family has been transformed the most?*
- To what extent are women free to decide about matters that concern them, such as whom to marry, their education path, the upbringing of children, health, inheritance, etc.?
- Thinking about the use of violence/ abuse: do you think violence is more or less prevalent now than it used to be? Is it more prevalent in public settings or private settings?

Attitudes towards violence - schemas and scripts – 45 minutes

Please use the blank sheets in front of you for the following exercise. Our staff will help you write down any of your thoughts/opinions in case you need their assistance. Write all the words that come to your mind when I say "violence." There is no need to write sentences; just words that you associate with "violence."

Extent and characteristics of violence

- How often do people use violence in everyday life?
    - ○ *How about in your community? How about in our country?*
    - ○ *How is the manifestation of violence different in public and private settings? Are violent acts that may occur in private settings unacceptable in public settings, or vice versa? (Possible prompts: arguments/beatings/ scolding of partner/children occur only in private settings?)*
- Why do people use violence? (Possible prompt: do not know how to act differently, to exercise power, are not good with words, cannot express themselves?)
    - ○ *What is the profile (socio-economic status, employment status, alcohol abuse, etc.) of people who use violence (perpetrator) in their relationships with others?*
- What is the profile (socio-economic status, etc.) of people who are victims of violence (the injured party)?
- How often are wives/women/girls abused in your community?
    - ○ *By whom/ How? In what circumstances?*
- How do women/men (other members of the family) usually respond to abuse/ violence? Do they deal with it silently, become depressed, take it out on children or others who are inferior to them, in substance abuse, etc.
- Do people feel comfortable talking about violence? Why? With whom?
- Why do men/boys abuse their partners? Who did they learn it from?
    - ○ *In what situations does violence/abuse occur?*
- When is the last time you witnessed a violent act? Can you describe the situation?
    - ○ *How did you react? How did you feel?*
    - ○ *How did others react?*
    - ○ *What is the right thing to do in these situations?*
    - ○ *Were you able to do what you thought was right to do?*
    - ○ *What were obstacles that stopped you from doing what you wanted to do?*
- Under what circumstances is the use of violence justifiable? Describe a scenario.
    - ○ *In case participants hesitate to describe a scenario, prompt with pre-prepared situations: What if a partner hits/slaps/scolds/is aggressive toward his wife/other female member of the family in public? Is violence against women/girls supported or encouraged? By whom?*

○ *What do other family members think about violence against women/ girls?*

○ *Is justification of the use of violence dependent on whether it happens in private or public settings?*

- What if a man does not respond in the manner that is expected from him? What if he does not beat his wife in circumstances when other men would react that way?

  ○ *How will he be perceived? What will others think of him/say about him?*

  ○ *What if someone close/friend reacts against the violence/abuse? How would this reaction be considered by the perpetrator?*

Response to violence

- What do you do when someone treats you badly?
- Under what circumstances should people approach formal authorities (the courts, police) and informal authorities (older people, parents, other family members) when someone treats them badly?

  ○ *How trustworthy do you find each of these authorities?*

- How is people's response different to violence when it happens in private or public settings?

  ○ *Do people have more/less tolerance about violent acts in public or private settings?*

- Is the use of violence illegal? Do you know if there is a law that prohibits domestic violence? If yes, do you know what the penal sanctions are for domestic violence?

Exercise – Transmission of Information and Reference Network – 25 minutes

Please use the sheet in front of you to describe who plays an important part in your life when you have to make a decision (any decision that is important to you). You are positioned in the centre (under 'Me') and there are other nodes that you need to fill. You have a couple of minutes to complete this task. (A blank sample of the map is attached.)

- Who do you take advice from when it comes to family issues?
- Where do you get information from regarding school, community life, parenting skills, health, and so on?

Reference network

Let's discuss the results of your work:

- Where do you get the information for things that matter to you?

  ○ *Who and/or what is the most important source of information?*

○ *How trustworthy do you consider this information? Why do you think so?*

- With whom do you discuss your most serious/intimate concerns/issues/problems? What if you are a victim of violence (exercised by a family member or someone outside the family – for example a neighbour, community member, stranger, etc.)?

- How important are each of the following people/groups in important matters of community and personal life:
  - ○ *Close family members (who in particular?)*
  - ○ *Village/neighbourhood leaders*
  - ○ *Religious authorities*
  - ○ *Colleagues at work*
  - ○ *Who else?*

- Who do men/women tend to listen to or ask for advice when it comes to family issues?

Conflict resolution – 20 minutes

- How are the conflicts resolved in your family? Provide an example.
  - ○ *Can you describe the process in as much detail as possible?*
  - ○ *Who usually initiates the discussion?*
  - ○ *Who usually ends the discussion and takes the decision?*

- What happens if somebody in the family does not follow these rules?

- What are the main sources of conflict in your family? Money-related, children, adolescence, marriage, and so on?

End remarks

Thank you for your participation.

Focus Group Discussion Guidelines

The Physical Punishment of Children

Introduction: Introduce yourself and explain the ground rules. Describe the nature and extent of confidentiality and anonymity. Everybody has the right to express their opinion freely, even when it doesn't fit with the responses from other participants. There is no right or wrong answer; everybody is entitled to his or her own perspective. Please wait for your turn to speak. Treat others with respect. Your participation is voluntarily and anonymous.

General information – 10 min.

- Please introduce yourselves,
    - ○ *Name*
    - ○ *Employment status?*
        - ▪ Position and years of experience.
    - ○ *Marital status?*
    - ○ *Other members of the family – family structure (nuclear family, single-parent, extended family, etc.)? Children – what age? Attending school?*

Family composition – 15 min.

- What are the roles of the family members?
    - ○ *What is the typical role of a husband? A wife? Parents and/or in-laws?*
    - ○ *How about roles and responsibilities of children? What is the difference between male children and female children?*
- In the time since you were younger – say 20 years ago? – what are the major differences that you have encountered in the way families function, including family dynamics, the roles and responsibilities of each family member? What were the norms (usual behaviour) and what was (in)appropriate for each to do?
- What about differences in how children are raised? What are the main differences between the way you were raised and how children are raised nowadays?
- How did your parents discipline you?
- Can you describe what are the qualities of a good parent? Of a good child?
- When children have problems, with whom do they discuss their concerns? Mother, father, sibling, friend, grandparent, etc.?

Exercise –Transmission of Information and Reference Network – 15 minutes

Please use the sheet in front of you to describe who plays an important part in your life when you have to make a decision related to children. You are positioned in the centre (under 'Me') and there are other nodes that you need to fill. You have a couple of minutes to complete this task. (A blank sample of the map is attached.)

- Who do you take advice from on issues about children?

- Where do you get information about parenting (discipline, education, health of children, and so on)?

Reference network – 15 min

Let's discuss the result of your work:

- ○ *Who and/or what is the most important source of information on children-related issues/topics?*

- ○ *How trustworthy do you consider this information? Why do you think so?*

- Who in your family decides about the education of children, healthcare, and discipline?

- With whom do you discuss problems related to your children?

- Do you think that the relations between parents and their children are influenced by:
  - ○ *Close family members (who in particular?)*
  - ○ *Village/ neighbourhood leaders*
  - ○ *Religious authorities*
  - ○ *Colleagues at work*
  - ○ *The internet*
  - ○ *The media*
  - ○ *Who else?*

The Nature and Context of Physical Punishment - 50 minutes

- What do other mothers/fathers think of physical punishment?

- What do other people do when children misbehave and/or disobey an adult's orders?

- In your opinion, to what extent do parents use physical punishment to discipline and control their children?
  - ○ *Where does it happen? Home, school, playground, etc.?*
  - ○ *Is use of physical punishment more prevalent in private or public settings?*

- - *Who else has the authority/responsibility to discipline children? Grand-parents, siblings, uncles/aunts, teachers, etc.? Are they allowed to use physical punishment?*
  - *Is there a difference between poor and wealthy families in using physical punishment? Differences in urban/rural setting?*

- What is the most commonly used method of physical punishment?

- Do you think that parents discipline their daughters differently from their sons? If so, in what way?
  - *What about you? Do you use different forms for disciplining your daughter/son?*

- Is physical punishment a necessary form of disciplining children? When? In what situations?

- What if mothers/fathers do not discipline their children using physical punishment? Are they good parents? Incapable parents?

- What do others think of the parent when they see a child misbehaving and the parent:
  - *Spanking*
  - *Slapping, pinching, pulling*
  - *Hitting with a stick or other object?*

- Are more boys or girls subject to physical punishment? Is there any difference? If so, explain why.

- Who is to be blamed (victim or perpetrator) for situations where physical punishment is used?

- For what age of child is physical punishment justified?

Outcome of physical punishment

- How do children usually respond to physical punishment?

- What is the most common outcome of physical punishment? Compliance with adult directives, even more rebellious behaviour, no changes, etc.?

- Are there any positive outcomes from the use of physical punishment? What about negative outcomes?

- Are there any alternatives in order to achieve the desired outcome?

Occurrence of physical punishment and knowledge of the legal framework

- When is the last time you witnessed a situation where an adult physically punished a child? Can you describe the situation?
  - *How did you react? How did you feel?*
  - *How did others react?*
  - *What is the right thing to do in these situations?*

○ *Were you able to do what you thought it was right to do?*

○ *What were obstacles that stopped you from doing what you wanted to do?*

- Under what circumstances is the use of physical punishment justifiable? Describe a scenario.

○ *If participants hesitate to describe a scenario, prompt with pre-prepared situations (academic failure, misbehaviour, etc.)*

- Is use of physical punishment lawful if used for the purpose of control, discipline, and correction of a child's behaviour?

End remarks

Thank you for your participation.

Annex 2: Research validation workshop agenda

WORKSHOP

to present key findings of the qualitative assessment on social norms and factors influencing domestic violence, gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children

AGENDA

Day 1	
09:00 – 09:30	Registration
09:30 – 09:40	Opening remarks Laila Omar Gad, Head of Office, UNICEF
09:40 – 10:20	Presentation of the key findings of the qualitative assessment on social norms and the factors influencing domestic violence, gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children. Vigan Behluli and Blerta Berveniku, DOTS
10:20 – 10:45	Discussion. questions and answers
10:45 – 11:00	Coffee break
Workshop on exploring approaches to addressing social norms and factors influencing domestic violence, gender-based violence and the physical punishment of children	
11:00 – 12:15	Understanding social behaviours and practices: customs and descriptive norms
12:15 – 13:00	Lunch
13:00 – 14:45	Social norms – definition and key components
14:45 – 15:00	Coffee break
15:00 – 16:30	Social norms – how they work. Changing social norms
Day 2	
09:30 – 10:30	Re-shaping gender roles and expectations: image of women and image of men Group work – identifying actions. Presentations
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee break
10:45 – 12:00	Being a good parent: what does it mean? Group work – identifying actions. Presentations
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch
13:00 – 14:45	Identifying interventions to address gender-based violence Group work – identifying actions. Presentations
14:45 – 15:00	Coffee break
15:00 – 16:30	Identifying interventions to address the physical punishment of children Group work – identifying actions. Presentations

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