

GENDER EQUALITY NOW!

Policy Entry Points for Improving Gender Equality
in the Turkish Cypriot Community

Gender SCORE Cyprus Policy Brief



Introduction

The issue of gender¹ plays a key role in how women's experiences of conflict differ to those of men. Additionally, variance in terms of historical experience is also complemented by a different perception of concepts of past and future threats and security (as proven by SeeD research findings included herein). The Security Dialogue Initiative's first wave research (SDI) conducted between October 2016 and April 2017 identified gender and gendered insecurities as crucial elements that require further research to inform Track 1 negotiations and promote a more inclusive and resilient peace process. Adopting a gender analysis to improve the resilience of the peace process and to facilitate a comprehensive and sustainable solution in Cyprus is imperative.

Research has shown that when women participate in peace processes, the resulting agreement is 35% more likely to last at least 15 years.² However, since the inauguration of the Republic of Cyprus, only 3 Greek Cypriot women and 1 Turkish Cypriot woman have had any kind of involvement and impact in the peace negotiations.³ There is an absence of appropriate regulations, incentives and accountability mechanisms that would facilitate the identification and appointment of qualified women candidates as mediators and technical experts to both negotiation teams along with adequate training and education in gender issues across the range of subjects.

SDI findings showed that Cypriot women are more sceptical than men in their approach to the peace process, and have a greater mistrust for the male leaders involved. Further, Turkish Cypriot women expect the new Federal Cyprus to be fragile with continued Greek interference in its domestic and foreign affairs. Turkish Cypriot women's expectation of peace dividends and their contact with the other community is also lower than men, and when asked about different security mechanisms and instruments, Turkish Cypriot women show preference towards traditional guarantees.

Gender SCORE data validate the positive relationship between gender equality and peacebuilding.⁴ Women's lack of participation, and the fact that their voice, needs and insecurities have long been side-lined, undermines the adoption of a holistic and inclusive

¹ For the purpose of its research SeeD refers to gender as a social construct and as such gender inequality is often embedded in institutions' values and behaviors that tend to favour a certain kind of masculine (heterosexual, elite) point of view.

² UN Women (2012). UN Women Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security.

³ See Koukkides-Procopiou, Anna, Sept, 2015. The Cyprus Problem: When we all think alike, we don't think very much, in In Depth Journal, Center of European and International Affairs, University of Nicosia. Available at www.cceia.unic.ac.cy/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=470

⁴ See Dickinson, D. Torry & Robert K. Schaeffer (2008). Transformations: Feminist Pathways to Global Change- An Analytical Anthology. Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group

approach to security, and consequently, undermines the resilience and the sustainability of the Cyprus peace process and its potential positive outcome. This is further illustrated in the Gender SCORE findings, which show that Turkish Cypriot women express lower levels of openness for dialogue and positive feelings towards the other community⁵ (See Table 1). Beyond the Cyprus peace process, Gender SCORE finding shows that while Turkish Cypriot women express significantly lower levels of aggression⁶ in daily life, they feel disadvantaged when it comes to distribution of family assets⁷, and express lower levels of economic and political independence.⁸

The SDI findings that revealed Cypriot women's insecurities and scepticism towards the peace process paved the way for the development of the Gender SCORE Cyprus research in order to further investigate and measure perceptions regarding women's inclusion in the peace process, and gender equality on the island. The evidence-based policy recommendations presented in this policy brief builds on the analysis of the SDI and Gender SCORE Cyprus findings and the multi-stakeholder consultations that underpinned the whole process.

What is Gender SCORE Cyprus?

Without data, transparency and adequate reporting on gender disparities, there can be no progress toward gender equality. The Gender SCORE methodology draws its strength from participatory action research principles, and international monitoring and evaluation standards for gender mainstreaming, which include the creation of gender sensitive indicators. The Gender SCORE is a highly tailored assessment instrument based on the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) Index methodology and toolkit, and demonstrates the benefits of quality gender data in terms of boosting peace and development outcomes.

The Gender SCORE Cyprus is based on a mixed methods approach that consolidates inclusive in-depth qualitative approaches with advanced statistical analysis. Between October and November 2017, the research team conducted 55 key stakeholder interviews, 6 mixed focus groups across Cyprus (Limassol, Paphos, Nicosia, Karpasia, Famagusta, and

⁵ Openness to engage in constructive dialogue with various groups in society and the extent to which people (Greek Cypriots/Turkish Cypriots) express warm and affectionate feelings towards each other.

⁶ The extent to which someone feels aggression in daily life, such as frequently getting into fights and confrontations in their social relationships.

⁷ The extent to which access to material assets such as finances/savings, property and land is equally distributed in the family.

⁸ The extent to which one has a reliable income, equal access to employment opportunities and financial stability; and the extent to which someone feels politically independent and free to support any political party or movement they wish.

Morphou) and 2 women only focus groups in Nicosia. The consultations and findings from this qualitative phase informed the conceptual model and theory of change as well as the design of the context specific Gender SCORE indicators. The quantitative survey was based on random sampling and was conducted face-to-face with 1600 respondents⁹ island wide between December 2017 – January 2018. The preliminary findings were then shared with the key stakeholders for participatory interpretation and feedback via numerous reflection and consultation meetings, and 4 more focus groups were organised in Nicosia (north and south), Iskele and Limassol. The evidence-based recommendations presented in this paper build upon this multi-level participatory dialogue process.

Findings & Analysis

Overall, Gender SCORE identifies significant obstacles to women’s progress in Cypriot society. Among these are “repressive attitudes towards women”, where someone endorses husbands’ disciplinary actions against their wives or reducing a woman’s worth to that of motherhood only. Another obstacle is “toxic masculinity” which promotes a specific image of men in society, such as only real men serve in the armed forces or men should not cry. Both these attitudes are associated with belief systems among many Cypriots that encourages “support for traditional gender norms” which refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities assigned to women and men, girls and boys such as women being home-makers or should only take specific kinds of professions like nursing, teaching or secretarial work. The Gender SCORE shows that collectively these attitudes are among the key drivers that undermine support for gender mainstreaming in Cyprus.

The Gender SCORE findings presented in Table 1 show that these attitudes are higher among Turkish Cypriot men than among women. Where 0 means no one has repressive attitudes towards women and 10 means everyone in society shares these attitudes, Turkish Cypriot community average is 3.6. However, this score is much higher for men (4.4) than women (2.9). While we see a similar difference between men and women when we look at “toxic masculinity” and “support for traditional gender norms”, **high scores for “perception that gender equality is achieved” indicator highlights the lack of awareness and understanding regarding the concept of gender parity and mainstreaming, particularly among Turkish Cypriot men (7.1)**. It also helps explain the lack of male (and male-dominated institutional) champions for gender equality. Surprisingly, low “support for women in executive positions” particularly among women further highlights the need for empowerment and awareness raising on gender equality. The

⁹ 800 Greek Cypriot and 800 Turkish Cypriot respondents.

analysis presented in this section further confirms women’s lack of participation in decision making processes.

Table1. Key findings regarding attitudes and experiences of Turkish Cypriot women and men

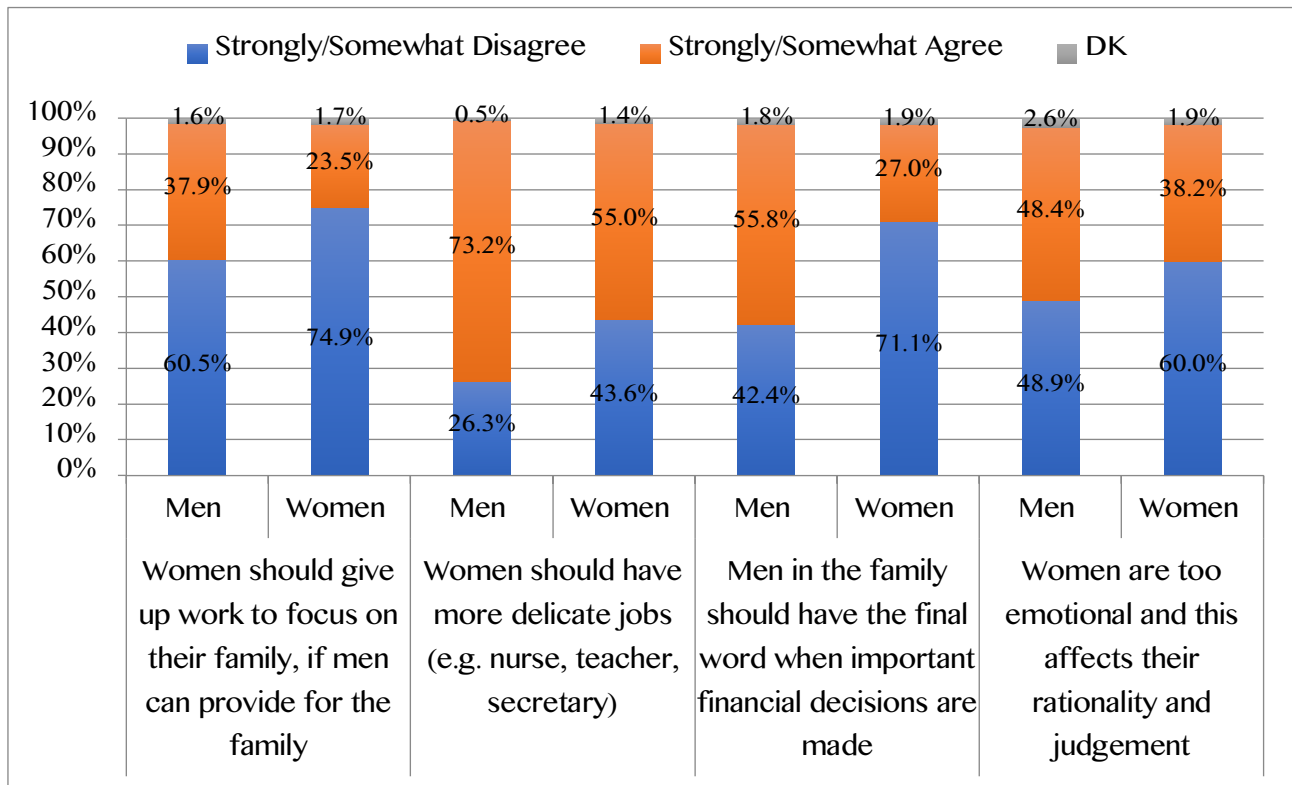
INDICATORS	WOMEN	MEN	DIFFERENCE
Repressive attitudes towards women	2.9	4.4	-1.5
Perception that gender equality has been achieved	5.7	7.1	-1.4
Economic independence	4.5	5.7	-1.2
Anxiety and Depression	4.2	3.0	1.2
Support for traditional gender norms	3.7	4.8	-1.1
Normalisation of violence	3.0	4.0	-1.1
Equal distribution of family assets	5.8	6.8	-1.0
Aggression in daily life	2.1	3.1	-1.0
Pressure towards parenthood	3.3	2.5	0.8
Toxic masculinity	2.7	3.5	-0.8
Openness to dialogue with <i>other</i> community	3.8	4.4	-0.6
Leadership skills	4.7	5.3	-0.6
Political independence	6.6	7.1	-0.5
Positive Feelings towards other community	3.1	3.6	-0.5
Support for women in executive positions	3.7	4.1	-0.4
Knowledge of English	3.6	3.8	-0.2

* The scores are calculated on a 10 point scale, where 0 indicates that the phenomenon the indicator is measuring is not observed at all, and 10 indicates that it is observed strongly and prevalently. Difference bigger than 0.5 is considered a statistically significant difference.

Further investigation into the “support traditional gender norms” indicator in the Turkish Cypriot community in the Table below reveals that the one of the strongest gender stereotypes is the belief that women should have more delicate jobs (e.g. nurses, teachers, secretaries), which is supported by 7 out of 10 Turkish Cypriot men. On the other hand, 6 out of 10 men also believe that men should have the final say in important financial decisions; and 5 in 10 men, believe that women are too emotional and this affects their judgment. Although to a lesser extent, the table below illustrates that Turkish women too share these

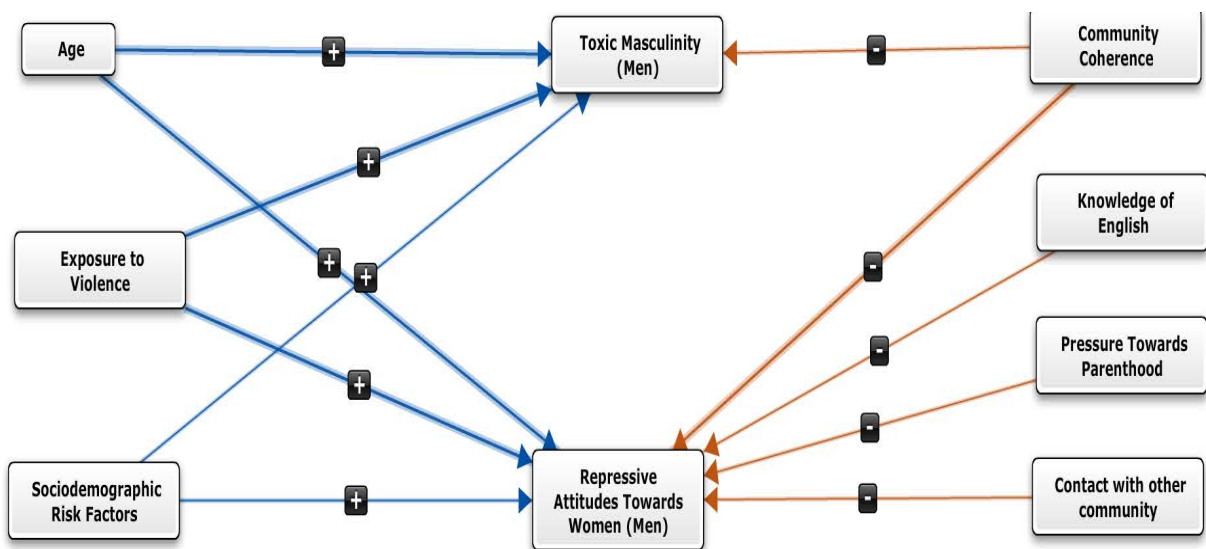
traditional gender norms, strongest of which is regarding their role in the job market.

Table 1. Gender stereotypes in the Turkish Cypriot community



Predictive analysis presented in Figure 1 illustrates how the two drivers of gender inequality, namely “repressive attitudes” and “toxic masculinity” among Turkish Cypriot men can be addressed to help enhance women’s status in society and support gender parity.

Figure 1. Predictive model for toxic masculinity and repressive attitudes towards women among Turkish Cypriot men



The thickness of the arrows in the diagram above indicates the strength of the relationship: the thicker the arrow, the stronger the relationship. The colours of the arrows convey the nature of the relationship: **blue** arrows link indicators that have a significant reinforcing

effect, whereas **orange** arrows link indicators that have significant mitigating effect. As such, we can see that “age” and “exposure to violence” are the two indicators that have the strongest reinforcing relationship. In other words, older people and people who had been exposed to violence (e.g. bullying, corporal punishment, domestic violence, assault) are also more likely to embrace the attitudes that can be described as repressive towards women and constraining about what it means to be a man. The diagram also reveals the reinforcing role of socio-demographic risk factors (household size, income and employment status), and the mitigating role of English language skills, community coherence¹⁰ and contact with the other community on repressive attitudes and toxic masculinity.

The predictive analysis above shows English language skills and meaningful inter-communal contact as a pragmatic entry point with multiplier effects, which would also help improve opportunities for multicultural experiences and diverse interactions that can help foster gender equality. It is also a key factor that can enable individuals to travel more freely, progress in their careers, and engage in civil society and peacebuilding. Further, the model not only shows the positive effect of inter-group contact beyond the Cyprus peace process, it also reveals the strong role community coherence plays for fostering gender equality. **Nonetheless, considering that knowledge of English is low across both men and women, this policy entry point could be addressed as a broader initiative, which would have positive multiplier effects for economic independence, improving intergroup relations, meaningful participation in the peace process and the likelihood of a compromise.**

Given the significantly lower scores for economic independence and poor leadership skills among Turkish Cypriot women, capacity building in leadership and entrepreneurial skills, particularly outside of the capital, would be pragmatic entry points that both empower women and boost inclusive economic growth. Such programs could be strengthened by financial incentives (e.g. micro-credits for women entrepreneurs) and neighbourhood/community initiatives in partnership with local authorities to encourage joint social enterprises, which could also be instrumental in fostering community coherence.

Another Gender SCORE finding closely linked with women’s active civic engagement and participation in economic and political life is availability of personal time¹¹. This relates to the amount of time one has available to spend on personal activities such as socialising. Personal time is not only valuable for ensuring overall health and mental wellbeing, but it is also vital for productivity, creativity and personal growth. Strong traditional gender norms

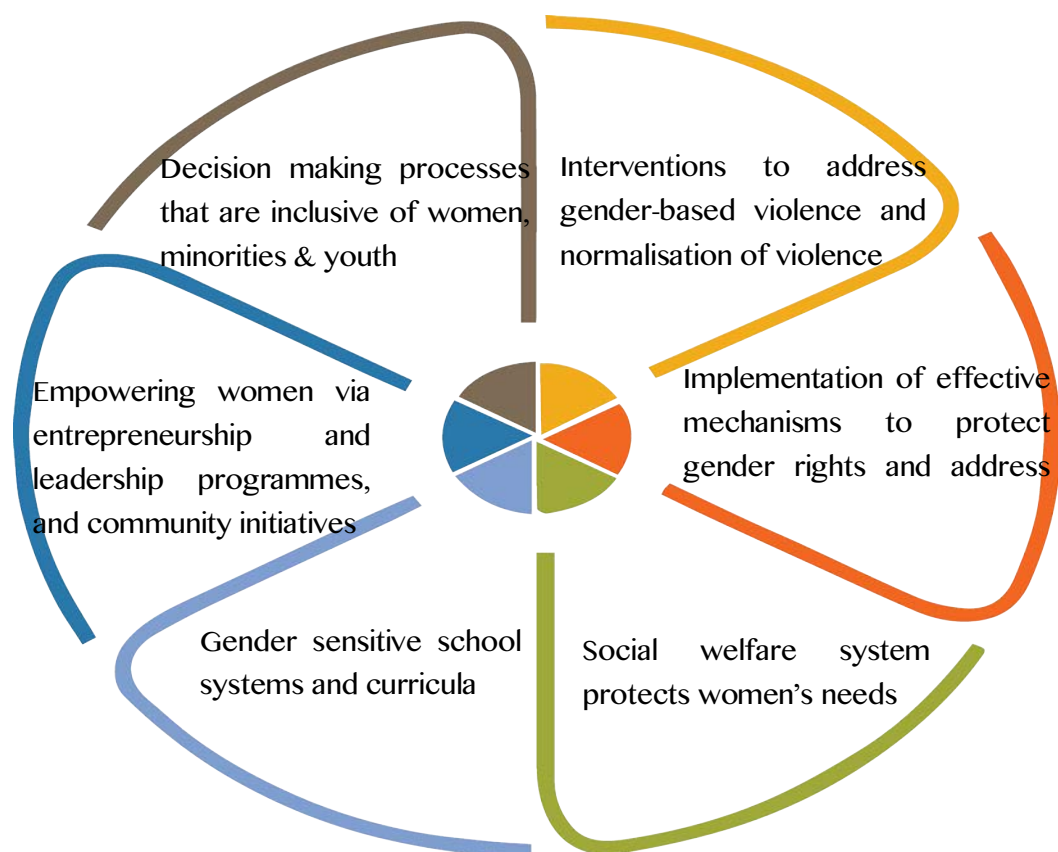
¹⁰ The extent to which someone feels cared for, understood and supported by their close community.

¹¹ Where 0 means no women have any time for personal activities and 10 means every woman have adequate time for personal activities, the score for Turkish Cypriot women is 4.6.

in the Turkish Cypriot community means that women are expected to carry the burden of the household and child caring, as well as other caregiving duties such as taking care of elderly and sick family members. This leaves little personal time for women to invest in personal activities and hobbies, be it socialising, sports, arts, reading, joining a civil society organisation or getting involved in politics, and exacerbate levels anxiety and depression¹², which is significantly more prevalent among women. **An effective way of addressing this could be improving the availability of affordable childcare options to improve women’s independence and time for personal growth. Further, initiatives that focus on awareness raising on mental health problems and offer group counselling for women suffering from anxiety and depression could be effective in nurturing a constructive environment for women’s empowerment and personal growth.**

Policy Recommendations

Gender SCORE Cyprus findings highlight the following evidence-based policy entry points:

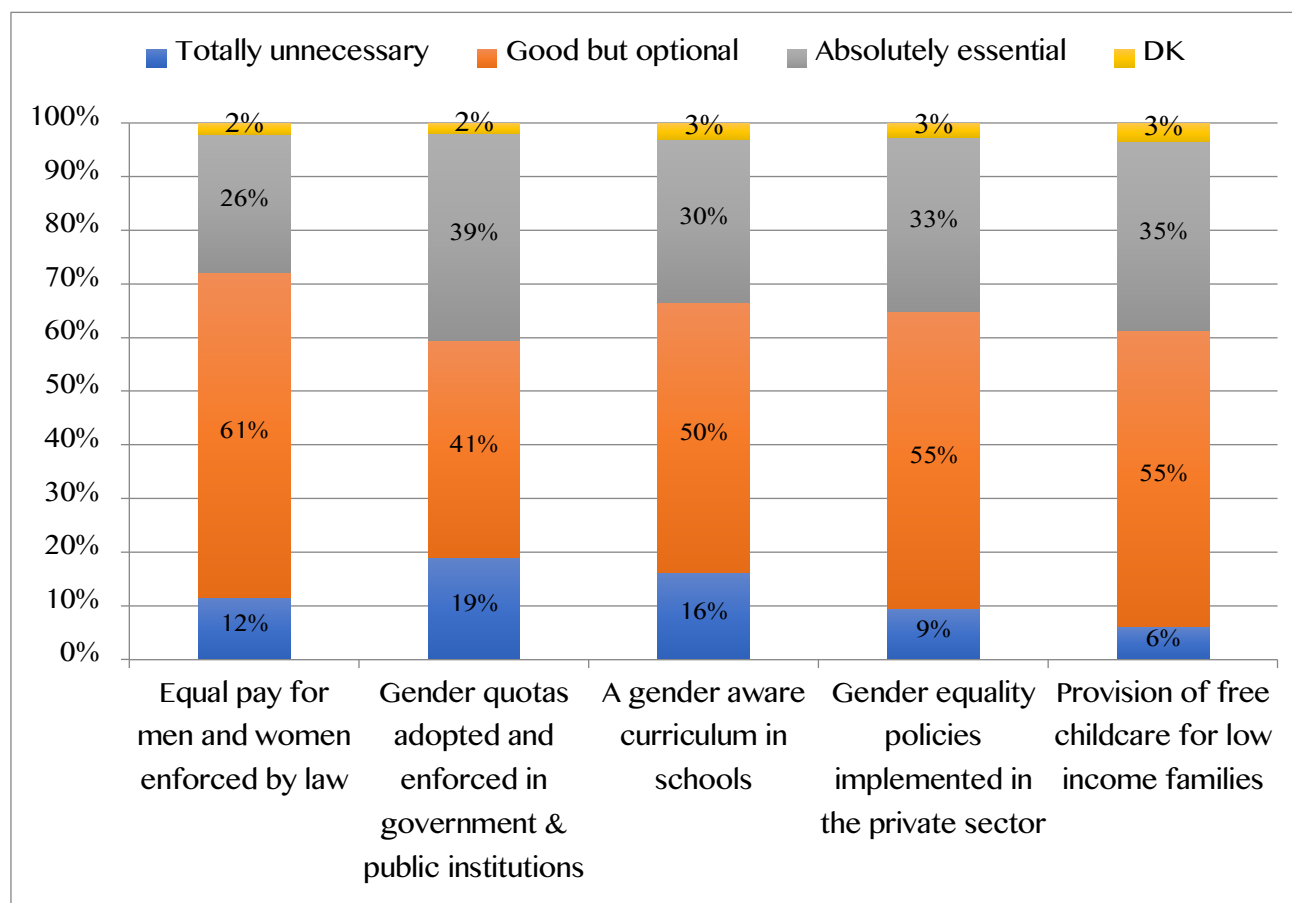


Although there is no strong resistance to gender mainstreaming policies in the Turkish Cypriot community, these policies are also not perceived as essential. Support for gender mainstreaming is consistent in that equal pay for men and women enforced by law; gender

¹² Degree to which someone feels anxious and insecure to an extent that the person finds it hard to stop worrying and relax.

quotas; gender aware curriculum; gender equality policies implemented and free childcare for low income families are perceived as good but often as optional (See Table 2). Nonetheless, 2 out of 10 both men and women think that both gender quotas enforced in government and public institutions, and a gender aware curriculum in schools with stereotype-defying female role models is totally unnecessary. The gender mainstreaming option that receives the most support is for gender equality policies in the private sector and free childcare for low-income families.

Figure 4. Support for Gender Mainstreaming in the Turkish Cypriot community



Regional focus groups, and expert and stakeholder consultations emphasised the need to adopt and implement gender quotas effectively and holistically both in the public and the private sector. The overall strong support for these policies in the public opinion survey too highlights their pertinence. Necessary steps such as introducing gender quotas, measures to address the gender pay gap, gender-aware budgeting and mechanisms to address gender-based discrimination in the workplace (e.g. maternity and paternity leave) and provision of subsidised childcare could be initiated by local authorities, trade unions and the chambers. Further, there is a need for awareness raising regarding gender-based discrimination in the workplace and a more robust legal infrastructure that can swiftly deal with such incidents. Social corporate responsibility campaigns, information and awareness raising spots in the mainstream media, and events and activities that promote gender

equality in schools could be pragmatic and high visibility options to influence positive change.

Other recommendations highlighted in the focus group discussions and stakeholder consultations include government incentives to encourage women's participation in politics such as capacity building and financing schemes for women candidates; improving and revising the relevant legislation to effectively protect workers' rights in the private sector, incentives for women entrepreneurs and capacity building for women to develop leadership, managerial and entrepreneurial skills to improve their economic independence and positive contribution to the economy.

As the findings illustrate, provision of free or affordable English language courses is a pragmatic entry point with multiplier effects, which would help improve opportunities for multicultural experiences and diverse interactions, economic independence. To further develop economic activity and women's participation in economic life, capacity building programmes in leadership and entrepreneurial skills, could be strengthened by financial incentives (e.g. micro-credits for women entrepreneurs) and neighbourhood/community initiatives to encourage joint social enterprises. Promoting efforts that foster civil society partnerships with local authorities could also be instrumental in ensuring inclusive efforts that can foster community coherence.

Lastly, the prevalent perception that there are no challenges regarding gender disparity in the Turkish Cypriot community highlights the limited awareness and understanding of gender equality. Social corporate responsibility campaigns, information and awareness raising spots in the mainstream media, and events and activities that promote gender equality in schools could be pragmatic and high visibility options to influence positive change.

To conclude, gender must be integrated and mainstreamed throughout various sectors (i.e. government, private sector, public sector, schools, chambers, unions, media and civil society) with a special focus on the above recommendations and by identifying and responding to the needs of different groups in the Turkish Cypriot community. For an inclusive, participatory and holistic approach to gender mainstreaming in the Turkish Cypriot community, a strong monitoring and evaluation framework supported by governmental advisory groups that include civil society and key stakeholder representatives is needed to consolidate efforts and proactively push for a more equal and cohesive society.

The Time Is Now: What can YOU do?

If you are an individual:

- Read about gender, toxic masculinity, feminism and broaden your understanding about gender equality and the evolving concepts of gender, masculinity and femininity. Remember that toxic masculinity could at extreme cases lead to the perpetration of gender-based violence, rape and even female deaths.
- Talk about gender equality within your home and with your friends to stir up public debate.
- Use social media to promote efforts and initiatives that promote gender equality including this policy paper and the work of Gender SCORE Cyprus.
- Initiate, join or volunteer in a local civil society or community initiative or start a petition for a social cause that inspires you.
- Support the women around you to invest in their personal growth and become change makers. Female victims of violence and discrimination can escape such vicious cycles more easily if they have the economic means to support themselves independently.
- Become a change maker. Gender equality targets can never be reached in the absence of male champions, especially those who are social influencers or find themselves in high-ranking decision-making positions.
- Question your own conceptions of femininity and masculinity, and what your gender means to you and where you are in your life. Although female gender norms have progressively changed with time, notions of masculinity remain mostly unchanged and very traditional. Question your norms and raise your kids to do the same.
- Contact your local authority, MP or local civil society organisation to ask about their policies and mechanisms that are aimed at improving gender equality, and encourage them to take action.
- Be a watch-dog for gender rights and diversity on social media networks, and be vigilant about gender-based discrimination and sexist behaviour.
- Take this policy paper and turn it into an action, however small or big, that can foster gender equality!!

If you are a Civil Society Organisation or a business:

- Adopt and implement gender mainstreaming measures within your organisation that are in line with global gender standards and organise gender awareness trainings for your members/staff to challenge stereotypes and norms.
- Build gender sensitive indicators and outcomes into your projects and programmes.
- Organise lobbying and advocacy campaigns or support corporate social responsibility campaigns that promote gender mainstreaming and gender equality in public and private sectors.

- Use social media to support efforts and initiatives that promote gender equality including this policy paper and the work of Gender SCORE Cyprus.
- Join forces with other organisations and initiatives, and seek partnerships with local authorities to consolidate your efforts , encourage cross-learning and multiply your impact.
- Take this policy paper and turn it into an action, however small or big, that can foster gender equality!!

If you are a policy maker or a local authority:

- Consult an expert or a civil society organisation working on gender equality.
- Raise awareness and promote active policies towards gender equality in the professional bodies or trade unions which operate near you or under you. More institutional champions to equality and female empowerment are needed if change can happen on a more widespread scale.
- Organise internal trainings for civil servants at all levels to raise awareness about gender-based discrimination and gender awareness in the workplace using international statistics and good practices to show that gender equality has not been reached yet and is beneficial the closer you get to it.
- Publish booklets, brochures, hand-outs, toolkits and materials to support gender equality and public awareness at schools, public institutions and in the workplace. Make good use of available online tool kits created by international experts or organisations such as the ILO, the World Economic Forum, the OECD, UN Women, the Lean In foundation, the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women etc.
- Create subsidies and mechanisms to improve affordable childcare and to support women entrepreneurs.
- Establish mechanisms (e.g. call centres) to report and address gender-based discrimination in the workplace.
- Develop gender-sensitive budgeting measures, indicators to monitor gender equality (i.e. pay gap and gender-based discrimination) and promote adoption and implementation of gender quotas.
- Lobby for a more gender-aware curricula in schools, effective gender quotas and implementation of legislation that protect women's rights.
- Lobby for and promote incentives for social responsibility campaigns to involve private businesses to work towards gender equality.
- Provide subsidies and support for organisations and institutions to create comprehensive media campaigns and training programmes about gender issues and diversity.
- Take this policy paper and turn it into an action, however small or big, that can foster gender equality!!

Gender SCORE Cyprus Indicator Glossary

- Repressive attitudes towards women: Refers to the extent of which someone expresses oppressive attitudes towards women such as supporting that a husband can discipline his wife to correct her behaviour or believing that the only thing women are good at is motherhood.
- Support for traditional gender norms: Refers to the extent to which someone supports socially constructed traditional roles and responsibilities assigned to women and men, girls and boys such as believing that women should give up work to focus on their family and if the men can provide for the family or that women should have more delicate jobs (e.g. nurse, teacher, secretary).
- Pressure towards parenthood: Refers to the level of pressure from partner, family or society to become a parent.
- Women's limited participation in the economy and politics, as well as in high-level decision-making: Refers to gender norms that undermine support for women in business and politics, as well as their participation in high-level decision-making and executive positions.
- Toxic masculinity: Refers to the extent to which someone feels societal pressure to adhere to traditional male norms related to a specific masculine role such as only men who have served in the army are real men or men should not cry.
- Perception that gender equality has been achieved: Refers to the degree one believes that gender equality has been achieved, and discrimination against women has been eradicated.
- Normalisation of violence: Refers to the degree to which violence is accepted part of everyday life such as corporal punishment, getting into fights or arguments turning physical.
- Leadership skills: Refers to the ability to motivate a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal and to motivate people to follow a certain direction through personal skills such as having clear communication, being creative, trustworthy, responsible, innovative and capable of decision-making.



About Security Dialogue Initiative and SCORE

The Security Dialogue Initiative (SDI) is implemented by the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD), together with its international project partners, the Berghof Foundation and Interpeace. As an independent, scientific and participatory research project, SDI aims to support the Cyprus Peace Process by researching, understanding and formulating solutions for the security needs of the two main communities in Cyprus and the potential risks that may arise during a post-transition period. The project, which was launched in October 2016 had been funded by the U.S. Department of State, the Federal Foreign Office of Germany and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

SDI research is underpinned by the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) index, which is an evidence-based assessment instrument with diagnostic and predictive qualities that aims to inform strategic decision-making and policy and programme design. It draws inspiration from multiple scientific disciplines while being flexible enough to incorporate new research findings, global policy guidelines and the realities of each local and regional context. Developed by SeeD in partnership between UNDP, and funded by USAID, SCORE has been implemented in multiple contexts beyond Cyprus, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Nepal, Ukraine, Liberia, Moldova and Iraq.

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