



BASELINE EVALUATION REPORT

PROMOTING HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES AMONG YOUTH IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA BY CHALLENGING GENDER STEREOTYPES II

Young men initiative project II (YMI II)



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
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Young
Men
Initiative



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Short version

July 2018

*PROMOTING
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IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
BY CHALLENGING GENDER STEREOTYPES II*

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GOAL AND PURPOSE OF THE BASELINE EVALUATION

Young Men Initiative – Promoting Healthier Lifestyles among Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Challenging Gender Stereotypes II or Young Men Initiative II (YMI II) project builds upon CARE’s comprehensive and programmatic effort to fight interpersonal and gender based violence (GBV) as well as to improve gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina and address preventative issues related to youth extremism and violence. The YMI II project will be implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it will target youth, in particular young men vulnerable to violence and their anti-social behaviours by strengthening the relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes leading to improved behaviours around gender equitable norms and non-violence.

The project’s overall goal is to increase the uptake of healthy, nonviolent and gender equitable lifestyles among young men and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The baseline assessment was carried out to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of attitudes amongst young men and women (including marginalized groups such as Roma and other marginalized youth, parents, teachers and youth generally) within Bosnia and Herzegovina society participating in the program toward gender based violence, gender equity and healthy lifestyles, in the project inception phase, to work-out lessons learned and to provide recommendations for further action. We conducted a baseline assessment with the stated target groups to assess how they feel, think and how much they know about the topics that we address through our work, by using a survey as a tool in the process.

METHOD

In order to obtain detailed input from young men and women in a most cost-efficient way, we were using a self-administered questionnaire at baseline in intervention sites. We conducted the self-administered surveys among all target groups in intervention sites, before our partners started with interventions, so that a comparison on what has changed can be made at the later stage.

Number of young men and women respondents from all cities

City	Young men	Young women	Total per city
Banja Luka	251	138	389
Bijeljina	35	71	106
Brčko	87	11	98
Gradiška	67	27	94
Istočno Sarajevo	27	95	122
Jablanica	43	57	100
Mostar	187	171	358
Novi Travnik	74	33	107
Sarajevo	118	146	264
Tuzla	95	13	108
Visoko	21	49	70
Total of youth	1.005	811	1.816

RESULTS

GENDER RELATIONS

Attitudes on gender roles in almost all cities show that around **50% of young men, or even more**, have stereotype attitudes on gender roles of men and women. Thus, most of the young men feel that the role of a mother/woman has to do with children and work in a house. Positive thing is that most of young men feel that both young men and young women should take responsibility for pregnancy. When it comes to gender norms, situation is slightly better. Between 20%-40% of young men express gender unequal norms. Homophobia is quite present in our societies. Around 80% of young men, or even more, state that they would not like to have friends who are homosexuals. Attitudes of young women are more open. Between 42-65% of young women from all cities (except from Novi Travnik) state they would accept homosexual for a friend.

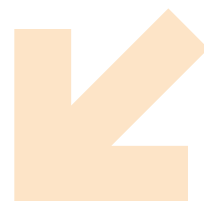
Despite the fact that women are greatest victims of gender inequality in the society, significant percentage of young women have gender-unequal attitudes. In majority of cities, between 20-30% of young women show gender-inequitable attitudes. Similar situation is with relations towards gender norms. This is probably a consequence of psychological internalization of stereotypes. Persons who are exposed to certain labelling for a longer period of time start to internalize those labels, meaning prejudice towards themselves. **Society and men often 'push' women towards unequal roles, but then they (women) also contribute to staying in those roles.**



50+%

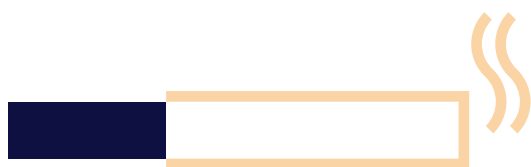
young men that have stereotype attitudes
on gender roles of men and women





HEALTH

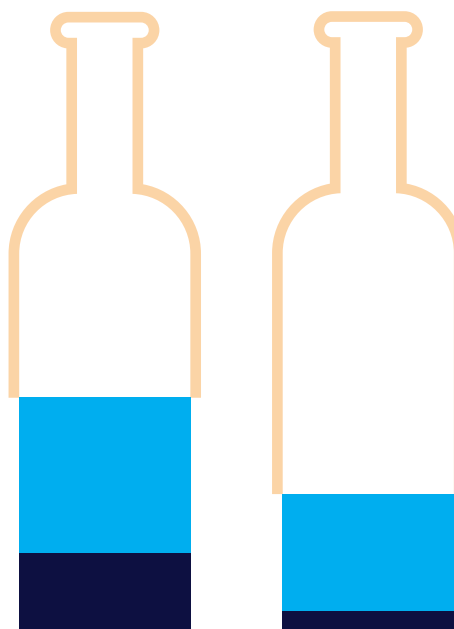
Use of psycho-active substances is somewhat less expressed than in previous researches. In majority of cities young men used psychoactive substances more than young women. [Up to 35% of youngsters smoke cigarettes](#). As expected, marijuana is less used. In majority of cities 5-10% of youngsters used marijuana. What is symptomatic is that 15%-45% of survey participants have friends who use soft drugs. This data shows tendency that percentage of youth who use marijuana is greater, but they do not want to admit that due to some possible negative consequences.



35%

[youngsters smoke cigarettes](#)

In terms of alcohol use, between 15-45% of young men and 4-27% of young women drink alcohol (several times a month or more). Similar percentages are of young men who experienced drunkenness. Highest percentages are in cities in Republika Srpska. These differences could be linked with social status families, different peer norms in different schools, education, and religious background. In cities in Republika Srpska citizens are mostly Orthodox Christians. Religious differences can have an impact on use of alcohol as in Christianity use of alcohol is treated differently (more liberal) than in Islam.



15-45%

[young men drink alcohol](#)

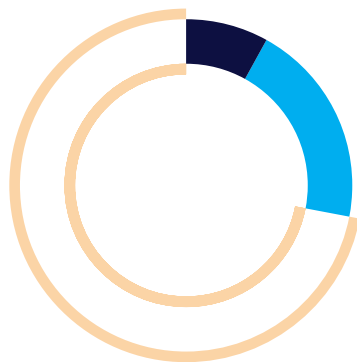
4-27%

[young women drink alcohol](#)





In statements on mental health during last month state of happiness (67%-86% of young men and 56%-77% of young women) dominate. **Between 8%-28% of young men and 21%-49% young women have dark periods of nervousness.** Young men and women usually get support from their friends, mothers or closer relatives. On average, they have three to five friends they can go to when they feel bad. It appears that fathers could and should participate more in emotional support of their children. This result is in accordance with previously identified problem on traditional gender norms and roles. Results also contribute to programmes and campaigns that encourage more active paternity. In general we can conclude that positive mental conditions prevail. That is also logical as in this period, i.e. in early adolescent phase, youth are mostly filled with optimism and satisfaction. It is to be expected that in years to come they would face some serious challenges that can then jeopardize their mental health.



8-28%

young men have dark periods
of nervousness



21-49%

young women have dark periods
of nervousness

Knowledge of young men and young women about sexual-reproductive health, sexually transmittable infections, and contraceptives is on a very low level. In most of the cases percent of correct answers, in average, is around 30%-50%. There are no significant and consistent differences considering gender or place of residence. Vast majority of young men and young women state they did not have intercourse. Among those who had intercourse, greater percentage is of those who used contraceptives. **We can see that majority of young men and young women (75%-92%) never visited a doctor in order to check their sexual-reproductive health.** Results show that youth are not well informed about sexual-reproductive health, thus it is very important and good that future program envisages active work on sexual-reproductive health.



75-92%

young men and women that never visited
a doctor to check their sexual-reproductive health



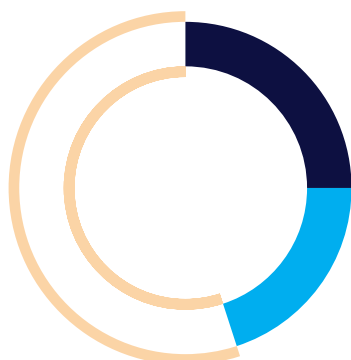
EXPERIENCE WITH VIOLENCE

Significant percentage of young men and women (10%-50%) had misconception of violence. This data should be taken into consideration when working with the youth since misconception of violence can later lead to increased violence or tolerance of violence. Educational programs should familiarize youth with different forms of violence, including psychological violence. Between 10%-68% of young men and women feel it is acceptable that parents physically punish their children. This is probably a consequence of traditional and patriarchal norms that usually imply autocratic style of parenting with elements of violent 'upbringing' measures. Educational activities with youth should be conceptualised so to raise awareness of youth that physical punishment of children is not an optimal way of upbringing.



10-50%

young men and women had
misconception of violence



25-45%


young men that committed
verbal or psychological violence



15-37%

young women that committed
verbal or psychological violence

Between 25-45% of young men and 15-37% of young women committed verbal or psychological violence. Physical violence was confirmed by 25-48% of young men and 14-29% of young women. Group and cyber violence was noted to a lesser extent (up to 20%). In general, percentages of perpetrated violence may not be high, but one should take into consideration that that this covers period of three months. Especially worrying is psychological violence in Bijeljina, Gradiška, Jablanica, Sarajevo and Visoko; physical violence by young men in Bijeljina, Istočno Sarajevo and Sarajevo; physical violence by young women in Visoko; sexual violence by young men in Sarajevo and Visoko; group violence by young men in Bijeljina, Brčko and Novi Travnik; group violence by young women in Gradiška and Istočno Sarajevo; violence towards persons perceived as homosexuals in Mostar, Novi Travnik and Sarajevo. Level of violence, especially physical violence, perpetrated by young



women is interesting. In some previous researches level of violence perpetrated by young women was way smaller (researches by CARE from 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017). Opposite to previous findings (CARE researches from 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017) it appears that physical violence is more and more present with young women. This data is supported by data on violence in relationships. Psychological violence in a relationship, committed by young women, in form of insults, humiliation, and limitation of contacts varies between 9%-29%. Physical violence is differently represented. With young women it varies between 13%-38%, and with young men from 8-27%. Level of violence in relationships is not excusable, especially having in mind a fact that majority of youth of this age do not have steady relationships. Among those who experienced violence in a relationship, majority claims they successfully solved the problem. Through work with youth it would be necessary to check the level of exposure to violence in steadier relationships. Anyhow, through educational activities greater attention should be paid to violent behaviour of young women then it was the case before.

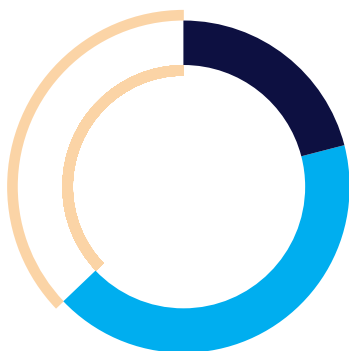


20%

young men approve violence against a woman if a woman cheated on a man

It should also be mentioned that attitudes of some young men show approval of gender based violence. For example, in some cities (e.g. Banja Luka, Bijeljina Gradiška, Novi Travnik) around 20% of young men approve violence against a woman if a woman cheated on a man.

Attitudes of young women towards violence against women are more negative, which is logical. In majority of cases, agreement with statements is below 10% (except in Novi Travnik and Banja Luka). Interesting fact is that significant percentage of young men (21-63%,) and women (18%-43%) feel that the way young women dress is a cause for sexual violence. A significant number of young women feel that women are to be blamed for sexual harassment.




21-63%

young men who feel that the way young women dress is a cause for sexual violence



18-43%

young women who feel that the way young women dress is a cause for sexual violence



Positive thing is that majority of young women (81%-91%) and young men (52%-77%) claim they would try to stop violence, in case it occurs. Problem is that around one third of young men would join the fight instead of trying to stop it. [Problem of bystanders during violence between their peers should be taken seriously](#). With outburst of smart phones, trend of the so called 'neutral behaviour' increased. Instead of stopping the violence, youth usually watch, do not get involved in the conflict, or record it with their phones. Within future preventive programs attention should also be paid to this phenomenon.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

We can note that in most of the activities there are no major differences between the cities. The highest percentage of young women and men spend their free time socialising with friends, watching television, searching the internet, helping parents. Slightly smaller percentage of young men and young women spends time studying, doing sports or in café. Youth spend the least time doing voluntary work or working in political parties. [Young men are more involved in sports activities; spend more time in bookie, and café; or walking around without a special purpose](#). Young women spend more time studying.

So, we can conclude that some of the activities are useful and creative (e.g. sport, studying, helping parents, etc.), while some others, like hanging out in bars, could be less present. It would be important to secure activities in each city that would provide for quality free time of the youth. That is probably one of the main mechanisms for healthy upbringing and growing-up of youth that would further contribute to prevention of asocial behaviours of youth.

PRIORITIES IN DIFFERENT CITIES

If we compare the cities, we can see that the image is a bit colourful and that we cannot generalize that youth from certain city live better or worse. Some characteristics are mutual for all cities.

Common characteristics

Attitudes and behaviour in the area of gender norms was identified as a problem in all cities. That more concretely relates to stereotype gender roles, domination of man in the area of sexual relations, decision making within a family, participation in family obligations, relations towards homosexuals, etc. Homophobia is present in all cities, slightly less with young women.

[In most of the cities around 30% of youth \(especially young women\) are confronted with periods of nervousness or anxiety](#). More types of negative mental statuses are noted with young women. In that situations, the biggest support to youth are their friends (usually 3-5 friends) or parents, especially a mother. Father is not an adequate support to his children

as he should be. Positive thing for all these cities is that they would participate in preventing violence in their surroundings, if that would happen.

Knowledge of young women and men about sexual and reproductive health topics is generally low in all cities.

Significant percentage of youth in all cities has misconception of violence. Certain types of physical and psychological violence are not perceived as violence.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

A number of interesting and useful data had been obtained in this research. Data from different areas of the research show that one of the **central problems in the life of a young man are traditional norms that directly stereotype social norms**. *Stereotype roles are further manifested through unequal gender attitudes, violent behaviours and behaviours that are risk to the health and that include use of alcohol or some narcotics*. Because of that, in future it would be good to tackle several priority areas. **It is important to work on reducing these phenomena, especially as it leads to other problems, such as violence. One of priorities is work on prevention of violence perpetrated by young men and young women. Youth are generally quite uninformed about sexual-reproductive health**, so this data can be a starting point and measure to confront overall problem identified in this research.

It is undeniable that some preventive programmes that deal with these issues can bring certain positive results. Still, additionally to these concrete programmes **greater social community should secure an ambient where youth could, undisturbedly and with minimal expenses, creatively fulfil their free time and develop pro-social values**. Available creative alternatives such as sports, art or culture, are definitely better way for development of youngsters than some guided methods that youngsters either do not understand or simply do not want to adopt. *We feel that the programme implemented by CARE Balkan's represents positive model how to work with youngsters in one spontaneous, creative and unobtrusive way.*



