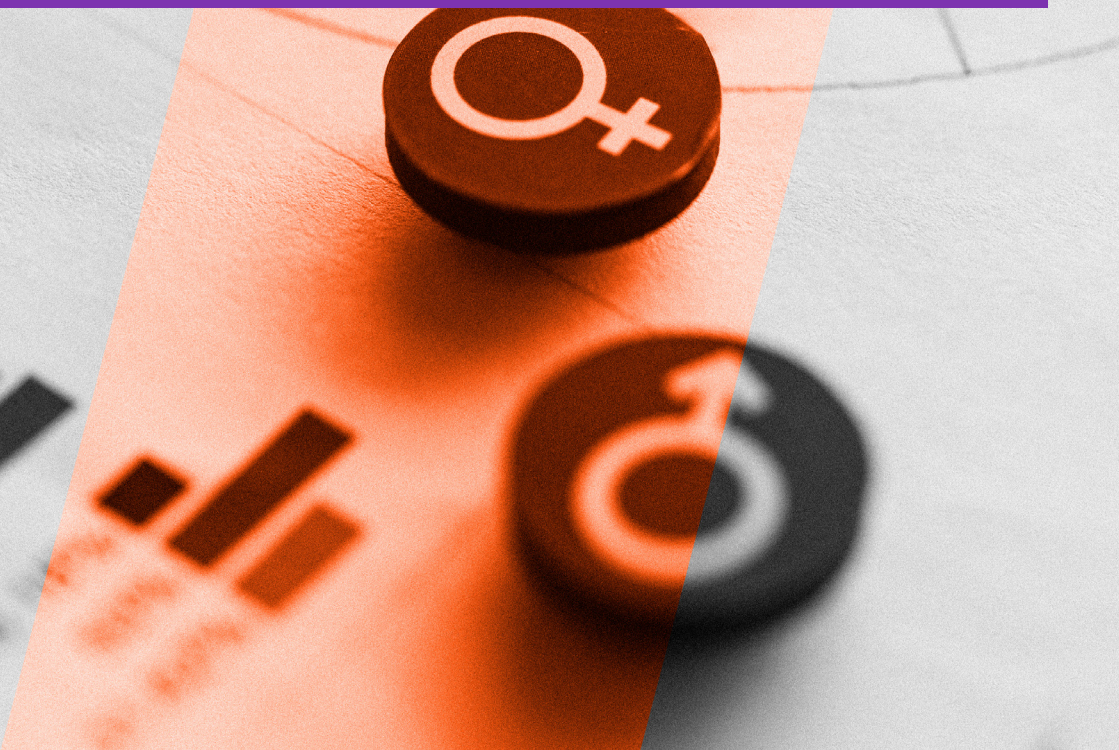


MEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA



MINISTERUL MUNCII
ȘI PROTECȚIEI SOCIALE
AL REPUBLICII MOLDOVA
MAI INCLUZIV! MAI ECHITABIL! MAI SOLIDARI!



CENTRUL DE DREPT
AL FEMEILOR



SOCIOPOLIS
CONSULTANCY

INTRODUCTION

Equality between women and men is a fundamental value that ensures equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities in all areas of life, in the family and at work, through equal pay for work of equal value, equal economic independence of women and men and equality in decision-making, thus contributing to the eradication of gender-based violence and improving the quality of life. Gender equality is also a prerequisite for an innovative, competitive and prosperous economy.

Equality between women and men is one of the objectives and core values of the European Union. *The Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025*: Striving for a Union of Equality emphasizes that gender equality contributes to the creation of new jobs which generate increased productivity and thus constitutes a potential to be tapped.



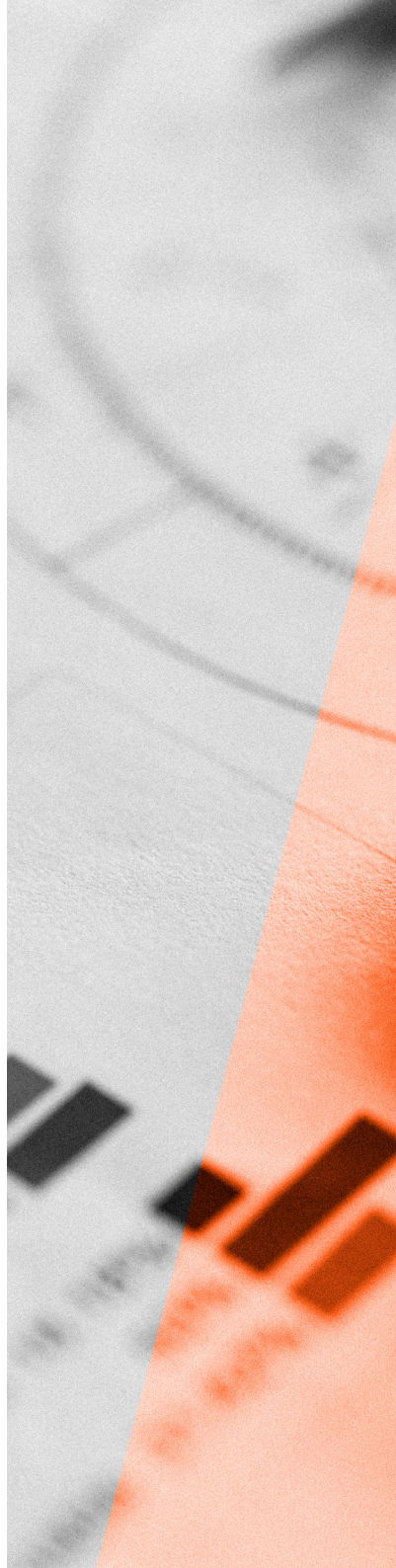


Through the *Programme to promote and ensure equality between women and men in the Republic of Moldova for the years 2023-2027*, Moldova aligns its values with the European integration aspiration, promoting the principle of equal opportunities between women and men, girls and boys. Thus, the Republic of Moldova aims to advance gender equality in the fields of education, health, labour market, entrepreneurship, social protection and local development, etc., as well as to reduce the risks associated with social, economic, cultural, political inequalities in various sectors of social and economic life.

The International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)

is one of the most comprehensive surveys exploring men's practices and attitudes toward gender equality, alongside those expressed by women. It includes a comprehensive research methodology, including the Gender Equitable Men Scale (GEM), a standardized instrument that uses a series of statements to measure attitudes about gender norms in intimate relationships and differentiate social expectations between men and women in the areas of domestic responsibilities, reproductive health and in the area of gender-based violence. The results of IMAGES are used to assess men's and women's attitudes and behaviour, to inform, direct and monitor efforts to promote gender equality, to develop information campaigns in this field on the involvement of fathers in the upbringing and education of children, to prevent and combat gender-based violence, etc., at the international and national level.

IMAGES was carried out for the first time in the Republic of Moldova in 2015 by the Women's Law Center in partnership with the Sociopolis, funded by the OAK Foundation. Its data contributed to the development of policies in gender equality and related areas. After 9





years, in 2024, with the financial support of UNFPA Moldova, in partnership with Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova, the Women's Law Center has set out to conduct a new ***International Men and Gender Equality Survey 2024 (IMAGES-2)*** to identify the changes that have occurred in the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of men and women regarding gender equality from 2015 to 2024. The survey was conducted by Sociopolis Consultancy.

IMAGES-2 allowed the monitoring and evaluation of the results of the policies implemented during the period under research in the field of gender equality in the Republic of Moldova and can help to streamline efforts in this field. The findings of the survey can contribute to the development of evidence-based programs for the training of professionals in the field of gender equality, guide the design of public awareness campaigns and the development of activities to promote men's involvement in household responsibilities, parenting and education of children, as well as campaigns to prevent and combat gender-based violence.



RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the sociological study ***Men and Gender Equality in the Republic of Moldova, 2024 (IMAGES-2)*** was to evaluate and understand the behaviour and attitudes of men and women in the field of gender equality, the changes that have occurred from 2015 to 2024, to track the results of policies in this field and contribute to their further development.

The sociological study objectives included:

- 1** Assessment of men's attitudes and behaviour concerning various aspects of gender equality (time spent with children, household activities, the manifestation of violence, access to health services, communication and negotiation with wife/partner on the family dimension, sexual relations, etc.);
- 2** Comparison of men's attitudes and behaviour with women's attitudes and behaviour, regarding the nominated aspects;
- 3** Analysis of trends in changing attitudes and behaviours of men and women from 2015 to 2024;
- 4** Analysis of the factors explaining changes in men's and women's behaviour and attitudes towards gender equality;
- 5** Assessing men's and women's knowledge and attitudes towards policies promoting gender equality.

The survey data are intended for governmental and local authorities, and representatives of the non-governmental sector for the development of gender equality policies, organization of advocacy activities and development of social services.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The sociological study was conducted following the principles and rules set out in **IMAGES** by Equipundo (formerly Promundo). It comprises the most comprehensive tools developed on the topic of gender equity used to assess the attitudes and behaviour of men and women, before and after the implementation of policies or program initiatives.

At the international level, IMAGES survey data are used for (i) advocacy activities; (ii) the development of a global and national database for assessing men's behaviour and attitudes with a standardized tool; (iii) data analysis for monitoring men's behaviour and attitudes in different countries; (iv) development of international awareness-raising campaigns.

The IMAGES-2 sociological study conducted in the Republic of Moldova was based on the complex methodology applied at international level, supplemented with qualitative sociological methods to gain in-depth knowledge of the opinions of men and women. It is worth mentioning that during the data interpretation a comparative analysis of the changes that occurred in the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of men and women between 2015 and 2024 was applied with the *Men and Gender Equality Sociological Study in the Republic of Moldova*, conducted in 2015 (IMAGES-1), as a reference point.

RESEARCH METHODS



men

Quantitative Methods



women



1014

Sociological
survey
based on a
questionnaire



515

$\pm 3.1\%$



Maximum
margin of
error



$\pm 4.3\%$

62%



Participation
rate



68%

Qualitative Methods

6 FGDs
57 men



Focus group
discussions

2 FGDs
23 women





The quantitative research

involved 1529 people aged 18–59 years. Interviewers conducted the interviews face-to-face in respondents' homes, using tablets (CAPI). Following international methodology, two distinct samples were drawn: a primary sample of 1014 men and a secondary sample of 515 women, to analyse differences in perceptions, attitudes and practices. The samples were probabilistic and stratified.

Survey data were complemented

by qualitative data

collected in focus group discussions with men and women separately. The qualitative research sample consisted of 80 people: 57 men and 23 women. 8 focus group discussions were conducted – 6 with men and 2 with women. In the focus group discussions, the aim was to investigate in depth some of the issues identified in the quantitative study.





KEY FINDINGS

Gender perceptions and attitudes

Gender equality is interpreted differently by the people of the Republic of Moldova, being associated both with equal opportunities and legal rights and with the distribution of family and social responsibilities. Gender equality is seen by many research participants as an indispensable element for an equitable society, indicating a gradual evolution in the public mentality regarding the role and status of women and men. A part of the population perceives gender equality as an active step towards breaking down traditional hierarchies and guaranteeing equal rights and opportunities for all. There are differences in perceptions between women and men, with women more likely to perceive gender equality as a fundamental right.

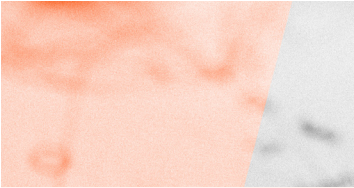
However, it is important to emphasize that for some men, as well as for some women, the perception of gender equality is a mistaken one, being confused with same-sex equality. This view determines their reluctance or even negative attitude towards gender equality and has an impact on the degree of acceptance of legislative or social initiatives for equality, suggesting a clear need for education on the real meaning and purpose of gender equality.

27% of men and 29% of women believe that giving women rights means that men have something to lose from this (*total and partial agreement*), and 37% of men and 38% of women believe that once women gain rights, they reduce men's rights (*total and*

partial agreement). Inequitable and stereotypical views are even more pronounced in the context of the labour market as 53% of men and 59% of women believe that

employing women in the workforce means that women are in jobs that are actually meant for men (*total and partial agreement*).

Perception of gender equality, %


	Men		Women	
	Total agreement	Partial agreement	Total agreement	Partial agreement
Women's rights mean men have something to lose	10	17	12	17
When women get rights, they take away men's rights	15	22	17	21
When women are employed in the workforce, they take a share of men's jobs	22	31	30	29

The gaps in the correct perception of gender equality lead 73% of men and 75% of women to consider that gender equality has been largely achieved in the Republic of Moldova (*total and partial agreement*). As arguments, in the focus group discussions, changes in the normative

framework on ensuring gender equality, campaigns to promote gender equality, the increase in the number of women involved in politics, as well as in the number of women employed in various public entities, were highlighted.



Attitudes towards responsibilities within the family, %

	Men		Women	
	Total agreement	Partial agreement	Total agreement	Partial agreement
For a woman, the most important thing is to look after the house and cook for her family	56	30	41	30
Changing diapers, washing and feeding babies is a mother's responsibility	34	32	30	31
Men must have the final say in family decisions	38	26	18	25

A large proportion of men see a woman's role in the family as closely linked to the care and upbringing of children. 86% of men and 71% of women *agree totally and partially* with the statement that *"for a woman, the most important thing is to take care of the house and cook for her family."* The proportion of men who believe that changing diapers, washing and feeding babies is a mother's responsibility is 66%. This indicator is also quite high among women – 61%. It should be noted that 64% of men say that they should have the final say in family decision-making (*total agreement and partial agreement*), compared to 43% of women who agree with this. Such perceptions depend on the upbringing in the respondents'

family, as well as on certain traditions and customs that exist in society.

Men's views on sexuality and sexual relationships do not differ from women's. 61% of men and 61% of women (*total and partial agreement*) believe that men need sex more than women. Also, according to 70% of men and 69% of women, men don't talk about sex, they act. However, tolerance towards men who cannot get an erection during sex is characteristic for a higher number of women, which could be explained by stereotypical views of men that they must always be strong.

86% of men

71% of women


totally and partially agree that the role of women in the family is closely linked to the care and upbringing of children.

61% of men

61% of women

believe that men need sex more than women.

Attitudes towards sexuality and sexual relationships, %

	Men		Women	
	Total agreement	Partial agreement	Total agreement	Partial agreement
Men need more sex than women	31	30	37	24
Men don't talk about sex, they do it	44	26	44	25
Men should feel embarrassed if they can't get an erection during sex	18	19	11	14

Contraception should be a shared decision between partners to ensure a responsible approach to health and family, according to 81% of men and 81% of women (*total agreement*). However, 22% of men and 26% of women believe that it is a woman's responsibility to protect herself from becoming pregnant.

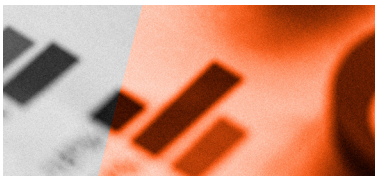


22% of men

26% of women

believe that it is a woman's responsibility to protect herself from becoming pregnant.

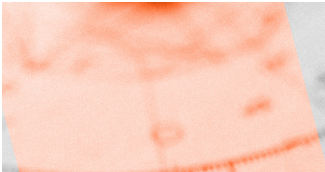
Attitudes on reproductive health, %

	Men		Women	
	Total agreement	Partial agreement	Total agreement	Partial agreement
Men and women must decide together which method of contraception to use	81	10	81	12
It is a woman's responsibility to protect herself from becoming pregnant	22	31	26	31
The man/woman should be offended if his/her spouse asks him/her to use a condom	–	–	10	8

In the Republic of Moldova, some stereotypes about sexual violence continue to be present, both among men and among women. Research data attests to views, such as that *“if a woman is raped, it means that she has done something to get into this situation”*, an opinion shared by

33% of men and 21% of women. The number of women and men who say that *“if the woman has a bad reputation or does not physically resist when raped, these cases cannot be considered rape”* is also high.

Attitudes on rape, %,

	Men		Women	
	Total agreement	Partial agreement	Total agreement	Partial agreement
If a woman is raped, she must have done something to end up in that situation	8	25	6	15
In some cases of rape, the woman herself actually wanted it to happen	9	24	3	14
If a woman does not physically resist being raped, then we cannot say it was rape	23	13	20	12
It's not rape if the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation	20	13	16	12



70% of men

85% of women

recognize and correctly understand the issue of gender-based violence.



62% of men

77% of women

have a correct perception in the field of reproductive health and the rights associated with it.

The research identifies significant differences between men and women in terms **of the correct perception of gender equality in the Republic of Moldova**, while revealing a higher rate of correct perception among women in the four areas analysed.

Gender-based violence is the area where correct perception is highest. Thus, 85% of women and 70% of men correctly recognize and understand the issue of gender-based violence, which reflects a relatively high awareness of gender equity issues related to violence, and this is most likely

due to frequent activities and discussions on the topic in society.

In the area of **reproductive health and rights**, 77% of women and 62% of men have a correct perception. The differences in perceptions are explained by the fact that women are directly affected by reproductive health issues and are more informed about these issues, on the one hand, and traditional gender attitudes of men that men have the power to decide over women's bodies and that women should respect the decisions made by their husbands/partners, on the other hand.



Correct understanding of gender equity in the context of **sexual relationships** is slightly higher among women (65%) than among men (60%). Although the gap in perceptions between men and women here is smaller than in other areas, it suggests that there are still differences in how each gender perceives roles and equality in intimate relationships, and further education and awareness-raising efforts are needed.

The area of **household responsibilities** is the one in which

the correct perception of gender equity is the lowest, with only 64% of women and 55% of men recognizing the equitable distribution of household responsibilities as a gender equity issue. The situation reflects the fact that in many households in the Republic of Moldova, the traditional division of household responsibilities still prevails and perceptions of gender roles remain strongly influenced by cultural norms.

60% of men

65% of women

have a correct understanding of gender equity in the context of sexual relationships.

55% of men

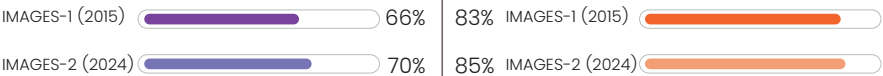
64% of women

recognize the equitable distribution of household responsibilities as a matter of gender equity.

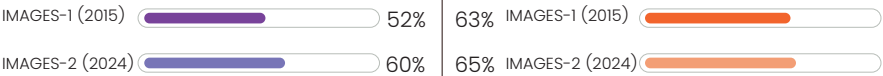
Rates of perception and acceptance of gender equity (GEM) by sex, 2015 and 2024, %



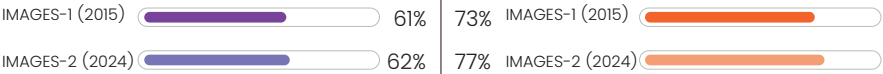
domain of gender-based violence



domain of sexual relations



domain of reproductive health



**domain of household responsibilities
in daily family life**



100 represents full understanding and acceptance of gender equality.



Childhood experiences of men

The family has a special role in the formation of conceptions in the field of gender equality because it is there, in the family of origin, that the first actions in the field of education and personality formation take place and family and social values are internalized. In the family of origin, more men saw their mother's daily respect for the father/other man she lived with than the father/other man's respect for their mother. Of note is the increase in the number of men who reported daily respect from their father/other man to their mother growing up, from 49% in 2015 to 66% in 2024, and from their mother to their father/

other man they lived with, from 54% in 2015 to 71%, respectively.

The analysis of men's household activities revealed increasing trends in men's involvement from one generation to the next. The fathers of men born in the 1960s were less involved in household activities than the fathers of those born in the 2000s. Thus, within the generations mentioned, the number of those who never: took care of the children, from 10% to 5%; prepared food, from 20% to 12%; tidied up the house, from 27% to 16%; washed clothes, from 37% to 31%, decreased.

Family decision-making is becoming more participatory. There is a slight increase from 2015 to 2024 in the number of families in which both partners decide on investment expenditure (from 52% to 59%), current consumption expenditure (from 41% to 56%), and schooling or other child-related activities (from 44% to 55%).



The person who had the last say in family decision-making in childhood, 2015 and 2024 (men’s opinion), %

● mother ● father ● both equally



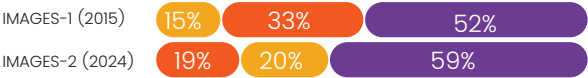
Purchases for children



Purchases for current consumption
(food, clothes)



Expenses for investments (the acquisition of long-term assets
– costly equipment, cars, etc.)



The difference up to 100% represents situations where the decision belongs to another person, such as the grandparents.

PRACTICES IN EVERYDAY FAMILY LIFE

Family financial insurance

In the opinion of 75% of men and 70% of women who participated in the research in 2024, the main responsibility for day-to-day family material provision is perceived as being on the shoulders of the husband. The situation reveals traditional views that perpetuate inequalities in the family and society. Only 1 in 4 men and 1 in 3

women believe that both spouses/partners should be responsible for the material provision of the family. Such views are specific to a higher number of urban, highly educated men and women in couples where both partners are active in the labour market.

Agreement with the statement “The main responsibility for the family’s material provision lies with the husband”, 2015 and 2024, %

Responsibility for ensuring family’s financial well-being is on the shoulders of the husband



men



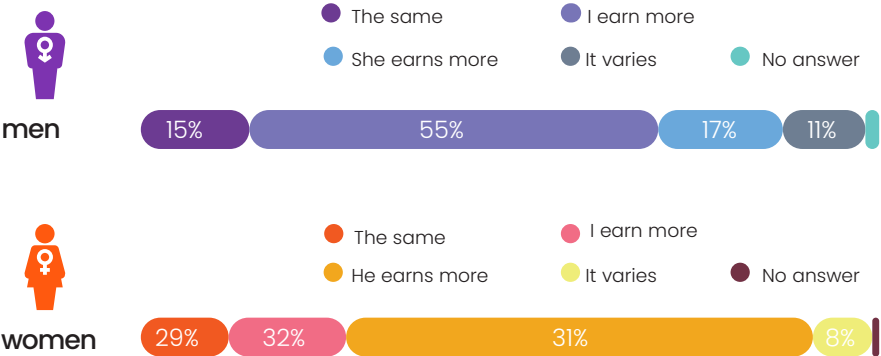
women



Analysis of household income provision practices reveals a clear trend in perceptions that men remain the main source of income, but with significant gender variability. 53% of men say that they are responsible for the main income, while 34% say that both partners provide the main income, and another 4% point to the wife/partner as the main source of income in the couple's budget. But women's responses reflect more signs of changing social norms and the shift towards modernity. Only 32% of women say that the main source of income is provided by their spouse/partner. A further 31% of women believe that the main income is provided by both partners, and 29% say that they themselves are the main income providers. The differences in men's and women's

answers on the contribution to the monthly household income can be explained by a number of cultural, economic and psychological factors. On the one hand, men continue to perceive themselves as the main income earner in the couple's budget, reflecting a traditional mindset and social pressure on them to maintain that role. On the other hand, the divergence in responses is also influenced by subjective perceptions of the value of each partner's work and how each individual perceives financial contributions in the couple.

Contribution of spouses/partners to the average monthly household income, %



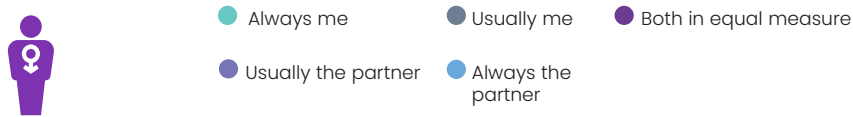
Children’s education

Men’s views on equal involvement in the upbringing and education of children differ from those of women. Men report more involvement and participation in these activities. Fathers’ overall involvement in the upbringing and education of children is also trending upward, from 55% in 2015 to 68% in 2024. The research data indicate an increase in fathers’ involvement in various child-rearing activities: (i) daily childcare, from 26% to 50%, (ii) taking the child/children to or from

extracurricular activities, from 28% to 49%, (iii) taking the child/children to or from kindergarten/school, from 26% to 48%, (iv) including staying at home with a sick child, from 15% to 33%.

The involvement of fathers in carrying out various activities with children aged 0–4 years has increased on a daily basis playing from 60% to 74%; bathing – from 21% to 36%; changing diapers or clothes – from 9% to 30% and cooking – from 7% to 23%.

Distribution of tasks related to raising and educating children, 2015 and 2024 (men's statements), %



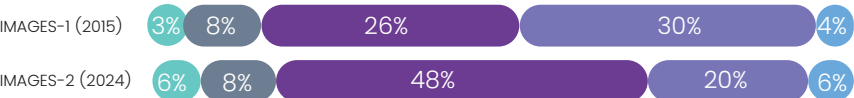
Daily child rearing



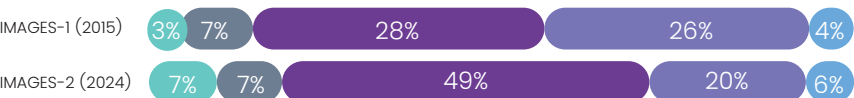
Staying home when a child is sick



Taking children to and from school or kindergarten



Taking children to or from extracurricular activities





Important changes are also attested regarding fathers' *daily involvement in activities with children aged 5-13 years*: playing – from 31% to 57%; discussing personal problems – from 11% to 39%; helping with homework – from 11% to 32%; practicing physical activities – from 4% to 26%, etc. However, the focus group discussions provide evidence that some prejudices and stereotypes regarding fathers' involvement in the upbringing and education of children continue to persist in men's minds, with childcare and child-rearing being considered 'feminine' activities.



Household responsibilities

More and more household activities are done by both partners together, as reported by 30% of men in 2015 and 58% in 2024. Men's involvement alongside their partners in household activities is multi-faceted, with increasing trends in the number of men participating in grocery shopping (from 45% to 64%), cleaning (from 22% to 50%), cooking (from 17% to 40%), minor repairs (from 24% to 40%) and laundry (from 14% to 35%) over the period analysed.

The decision-making process

Decision-making within the family/couple is becoming increasingly participatory. The number of men in today's families who make decisions together with their spouse/partner on current (69%) and investment (75%) spending is much higher than it was in their families of origin (56% and 59% respectively), and is also higher for 2024 than the 2015 generations.

Last say in family decision-making today, 2015 and 2024 (men's statements), %

● Wife/female partner ● Husband/male partner ● Both in equal measure



Purchases for current consumption (food, clothes)



Purchases for investments (the acquisition of long-term assets - equipment, cars, etc.)



Decisions regarding leisure activities with the family, friends or relatives



The difference up to 100% constitutes the non-responses or cases where the situation does not correspond to the respondent/respondents.

There has also been an increase in the involvement of men alongside their spouses/partners in making decisions about the health of family members. 72% of men in 2024 compared to 69% in 2015 said that they made health decisions together for their child, and 58% in 2024 compared to 49% in 2015 said the same about their wife/partner's health decisions.

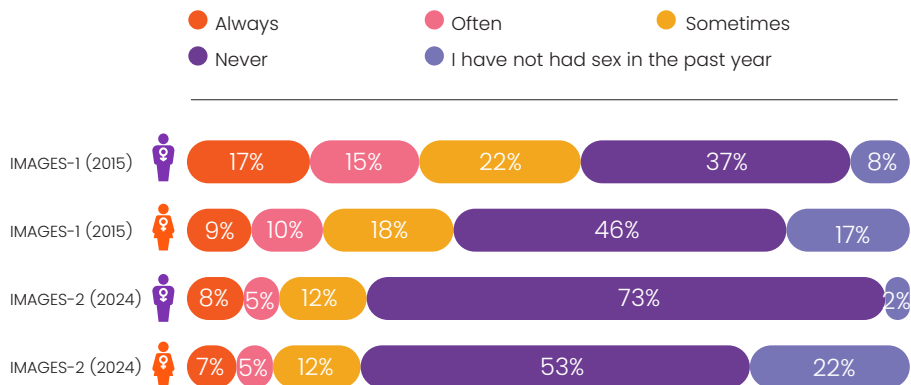
In 2024, 80% of men (compared to 63% in 2015) and 75% of women (compared to 56% in 2015) indicated that the decision to have the last child was made in agreement with their partner. The number of men also increased - to 50% in 2024 - who regularly accompanied their wives to the doctor during pregnancy (up from 23% in 2015). However, men's attendance at the birth of their child did not change, with only 18% of men present in the delivery room and supporting their wives

at the birth of their last child. The reasons given are varied and reflect prejudice and stereotypes.

IMAGES research data show a significant increase in the number of men and women who do not use condoms as a method of protection in sexual relations from 2015 to 2024 - from 37% to 73% among men and from 46% to 53% among women. Basically, ½ of women and ⅓ of men said they have not used this method of protection in the past year. Condom use is higher among men aged 18-29 years, this is less characteristic of men in other age groups or married men. There are also significant differences in condom use by residence - 64% of urban men and 79% of rural men said they never use condoms.



Condom use, past year, 2015 and 2024, %



Knowledge, attitudes and practices on violence

Men and women's attitudes towards domestic violence are gradually changing. Fewer and fewer people believe that women have to tolerate violence in order to maintain their family or that there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten. However, 13% of women and 21% of men still believe that women should tolerate violence to maintain their family. Also, 23% of men believe that there are situations when a woman should be beaten, while only 12% of

women agree with this statement. It is important to note that 11% of women are willing to accept the application of force by husbands/ partners in situations when they do not want to have sexual relations, with a slight increase in this indicator compared to 2015, when the share of women who shared this opinion was 7%.

Attitudes on domestic violence, 2015 and 2024

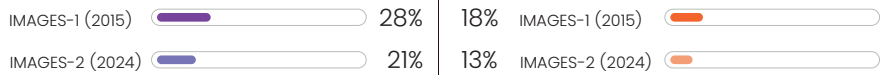


men

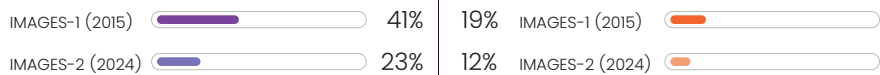


women

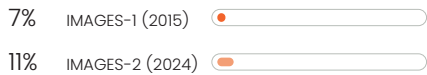
A woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together (total and partial agreement)



There are times when a woman should be beaten (total and partial agreement)



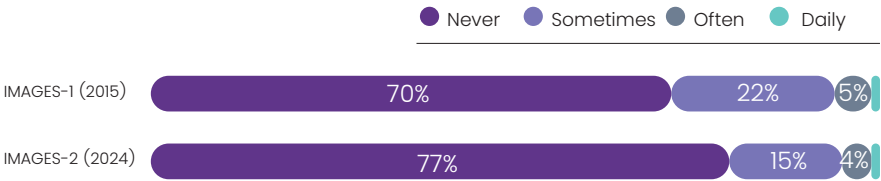
A man may hit his wife if she doesn't want to have sex with him (total and partial agreement)



Numerous researches highlight that witnessing acts/scenes of violence against one's own mother as a child is one of the strongest predictors of future violence. Comparative analysis of data from IMAGES-1 and IMAGES-2 reveals

an increase in the number of men who did not witness physical violence by their father (or their mother's partner) against their mother by the age of 18, from 70% in 2015 to 77% in 2024.

Change in the proportion of men who witnessed violence against their mothers, 2015 and 2024 (men), %




The difference to 100% represents non-responses or cases where the described moment does not correspond to the respondent's situation.

The present research data demonstrate that men who have been exposed to violence in childhood are more likely to perpetrate violence against their partner/spouse and thus perpetuate the cycle of violence. There was a 3 times higher frequency of violence reported by men who had witnessed violence against their mother than those who had not witnessed such behaviour in their family of origin.

The analysis of the causes of domestic violence shows important changes, highlighting the increased influence of substance use as a factor associated with violence. This aspect is frequently mentioned by both men and women in the context of identifying causes, alongside other significant factors.

Percentage of men who said they have applied violence in the family/couple at least once, %

	They slapped	They pushed or shoved	They punched	They beat, dragged, suffocated	They threatened with a gun, knife or other weapon
Men who said they are/ were in a relationship with a woman	19	18	4	2	1
Men who said <u>they</u> <u>witnessed</u> their mother being subjected to violence at the hands of her husband/partner as a child	37	31	10	5	2
Men who said <u>they had</u> <u>not seen</u> their mother being subjected to violence by her husband/ partner as a child	13	14	3	1	0

35%

women reported certain consequences of physical violence inflicted by their husbands/partners.



online violence

- Phone control
- Monitoring and geo-location
- Online distribution of intimate materials
- Online harassment

The number of women who reported consequences of physical violence inflicted by husbands/partners increased. Thus, the number of wives/partners who reported pain, bruises, has risen from 22% in 2015 to 35% in 2024, the number of those who reported sprains from 3% to 10% and the number of those who reported fractures from 2% to 10%.

A new type of violence practiced by some men is online violence, manifested by intimidating and controlling the privacy of their wives/partners. The IMAGES-2 study looked at four forms of online violence: (i) phone or computer control, (ii) installing monitoring and geo-location software on devices, (iii) threatening to share intimate video/photo material online, and (iv) online stalking. Of these, controlling a phone or computer proved to be the most common form, reported by 11% of men and 16% of women.

Comparing IMAGES-1 data with IMAGES-2 reveals that the number of women who are aware of services available for victims of violence has increased from 68% to 74%. At the same time, the number of men who are aware of the availability of such services has decreased from 61% in 2015 to 49% in 2024.

Data shows an increase in the number of women using existing services for victims of violence from 3% in 2015 to 11% in 2024. But the numbers continue to be small, as virtually only 1 in 10 victims use existing services. The police continue to be the most requested institution in cases of domestic violence, i.e. in 8 out of 10 cases of violence women turn to the police.

Counselling services for perpetrators of domestic violence are less well known, falling from 42% in 2015 to 35% in 2024 among women and from 38% to 26% among men.

The level of awareness of the possibility of a protection order being issued by the courts shows a significant decrease among men, from 50% in 2015 to 36% in 2024. For women, the level of awareness remains unchanged (44% in 2015 and 43% in 2024).

Men's attitudes toward complying with the provisions of the protection order show small





improving trends in 2024 compared to 2015: 88% reported that they would contribute to child support while away from the family (86% in 2015), 87% would cover expenses and damages caused by violence (74% in 2015), 85% would respect the visitation regime of minor children (76% in 2015), 73% would participate in counselling programmes to reduce domestic violence (65% in 2015), 77% would stay away from the victim for the period of action of the protection order (64% in 2015) and 69% would temporarily leave the shared residence (61% in 2015).

Awareness of the possibility of a police emergency restraining order among women (40%) is slightly higher than among men (38%). 69% of men who are aware of the possibility of a police emergency restraining order believe they would temporarily leave the shared residence and 75% think they would keep their distance from the victim or enter a counselling programme to reduce violence. About 2 in 10 men said they would not comply with an emergency restraining order.

KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES ON GENDER POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

Policies that empower women in leadership positions

From 2015 to 2024, there was an increase in the share of men (from 55% to 69%) and women (from 73% to 78%) who agree with policies that allow women to assert themselves in leadership positions. The number of male employees who are bothered by the fact that their superior/boss is or could be a woman has decreased from 13% in 2015 to 8%

in 2024. In focus group discussions participants emphasized that the professionalism of employees should determine the choice of bosses, and some of the men pointed out that women put more effort, manage to find better ways to communicate with other people and have better-developed organizational and leadership skills.

Divorce policies and childcare rights

The IMAGES-2 data show a reduction in the number of men and women who share misperceptions about the laws related to divorce and obtaining

custody of the child/children after divorce. Views that the Moldovan legal framework related to divorce favours women decreased from 49% in 2015 to 30% in 2024 among

men and from 37% to 23% among women. Similarly, opinions that women would be more likely to get custody of the child/children in the divorce process decreased from

57% to 42% among men and from 50% to 42% among women for the period analysed.



Policies on violence against women

In recent years, the Republic of Moldova has made notable progress in eliminating violence and developing social services by improving the existing legal framework and ratifying the *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating*

violence against women and domestic violence. However, the IMAGES-2 data show a decrease in the number of men and women who are aware of the fact that the Republic of Moldova has a legal framework regulating violence against women.

Share of men and women aware of the existence of legal norms on violence against women in the Republic of Moldova, 2015 and 2024, %



men



women

I know about the existence of legal norms regarding violence against women in the Republic of Moldova.



During the reporting period, the number of people who believe that it is too easy for a woman to accuse a man of violence has

increased among both men (from 63% to 75%) and women (from 62% to 58%). At the same time, the number of people who believe that

current laws contribute to greater
stigmatization of female victims
has increased, from 59% to 65%

among men and from 69% to 78%
among women.

Evolution of men’s and women’s perceptions of the
normative framework on violence against women in the
Republic of Moldova, 2015 and 2024, %

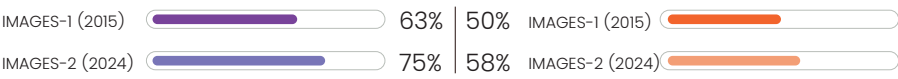


men

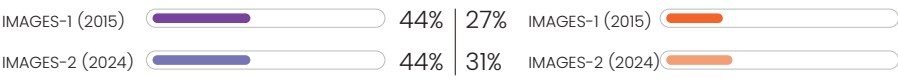


women

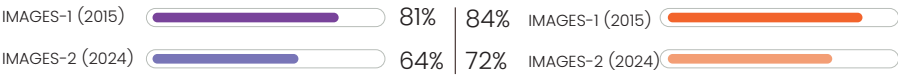
It is too easy for a woman to bring charges against a man on the
grounds of violence *(total and partial agreement)*



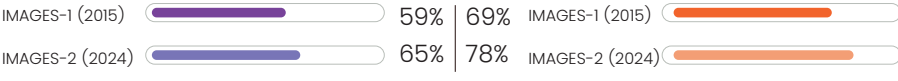
The legal framework is too harsh for the perpetrator
(total and partial agreement)



The legal framework does not provide sufficient protection for victims
of violence *(total and partial agreement)*



The legal framework exposes women to greater stigmatization and
shame *(total and partial agreement)*



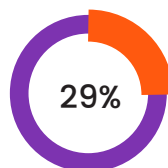
The research data show a reduction from 2015 to 2024 in the number of men who have heard about campaigns to prevent violence against women (from 45% to 29%) and in the number who have seen at least once on TV a commercial or news report interviewing a man who has been violent towards a woman (from 67% to 46%). In contrast, there

was a slight increase in men's participation in individual or group actions, organized in their locality or at work, in which discussions with men who have perpetrated violence against women were held, from 11% in 2015 to 14% in 2024. Younger, urban men with higher education participated in such activities in higher numbers.

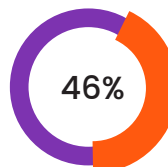
Men's exposure to campaigns, spots and activities on the prevention of violence against women, %



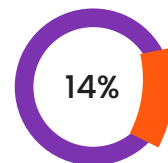
I have heard about campaigns on preventing violence against women at work or in the community.



I have seen a commercial or a news story where a man who used violence against women was interviewed.



I participated in an activity (individual or group) where discussions were held with men who used violence against women.





LGBTQ+ non-discrimination policies

The population does not have access to sufficient information about sexual diversity, which perpetuates intolerance. In 2024, there was an increase in the population's negative attitude towards sexual diversity issues, a situation explained by its *"massive propagation"*. We will highlight in this context the refusal of men to answer the questions on sexual diversity, as well as their refusal to participate in the research because of those questions during the piloting of the questionnaire. This led to the decision to exclude such questions from the men's questionnaire.

IMAGES-2 reveals an increase in the number of women who are against laws to protect gay people from discrimination (from 49% in 2015 to 64% in 2024) and against introducing laws to allow same-sex marriage (77% say no).

Practices and attitudes towards social deviance

Criminal behaviour and violent tendencies are often influenced by factors such as traditionalism and norms of masculinity. IMAGES-2 data show that the number of men who said they had committed theft at least once decreased from 46% in 2015 to 33% in 2024. The number of men who said they had been arrested also decreased slightly over this period, from 17% to 14%. The number of men who drink

alcohol has remained constant (73%), while the number of women has decreased slightly from 63% in 2015 to 56% in 2024. At the same time, among drinkers, the proportion of both men (from 20% to 28%) and women (from 43% to 57%) who never have five drinks at a party has increased.

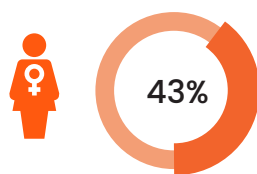
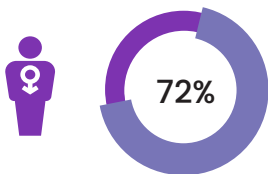
Trends in alcohol consumption among men and women, 2015–2014, %

Sometimes drinks alcohol





Sometimes happens to drink more than 5 glasses
at a party



The data collected in IMAGES-2 reflect the successes and challenges in ensuring gender equality in the Republic of Moldova from 2015 to 2024. These results allow the following **recommendations** to be

formulated for government authorities, local public authorities, civil society, media, as well as the private sector, in order to improve the situation in the field of gender equality.



IN THE FIELD OF ENSURING GENDER EQUALITY

- 1** Strengthening partnerships between governmental authorities, local public authorities, media, employers and civil society organizations in the field of gender equality and women's protection in order to expand the impact of the various programmes and projects implemented;
- 2** Development and implementation of targeted educational programmes to explain what gender equality entails and to dismantle persistent stereotypes, especially in rural areas and among people with low levels of education and low incomes;
- 3** Mainstreaming gender equality and non-violence education into the school curriculum to influence attitudes and behaviours from pre-adolescent age and eliminate gender stereotypes, thus contributing to more informed and tolerant generations;
- 4** Promote the active involvement of men in the upbringing and education of children, through parenting education programmes that encourage equitable sharing of family responsibilities and building mutually respectful relationships at national and local levels;
- 5** Setting up support groups for fathers (Fathers' Club), providing resources, support and activities to strengthen their parenting role and promote positive fatherhood role models;

- 6** Organize campaigns that directly involve men as agents of change by promoting positive models of masculinity;
- 7** Developing programmes to support couples in developing communication skills and building relationships based on respect and partnership;
- 8** Organizarea unor campanii de informare despre concediul paternal și beneficiile acestuia pentru familie;
- 9** Forming community-based support groups to promote gender equality and non-violence and providing logistical and financial assistance to this end;
- 10** Educating correct and responsible behaviour among media representatives to promote a responsible discourse on gender and reduce stereotypes perpetuated in the public space;
- 11** Promote intergenerational dialog by creating intergenerational discussion platforms to tackle stereotypes and facilitate the exchange of experiences and perspectives.



IN THE FIELD OF PREVENTING AND COMBATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- 1** Organize information campaigns to raise awareness and increase prevention of gender-based violence and information on women's rights, including on forms of violence on the digital dimension;
- 2** Developing promotional materials and resources, with the involvement/participation of women victims, to help them identify the different forms of violence and know where to go for help;
- 3** Extend the network of specialized services and promote existing services for victims of violence to increase awareness and use of these services by people in need of help;
- 4** Organize workshops and interactive discussions for men in work collectives and in communities to reduce tolerance towards all forms of violence and to increase the level of intervention in cases of gender-based violence;
- 5** Develop and expand specialized long-term psychological and economic support programmes for victims of violence, especially in rural areas where such services are less available;



- 6** Organize training programmes for women to help them develop their skills and financial independence, thus decreasing their dependence on partners and lowering the risk of remaining in abusive relationships;
- 7** Provide grants or financial incentives to women victims of violence to help them leave the abusive environment and start a new life;
- 8** Monitor and evaluate the quality of social services for women affected by violence, including the involvement of women beneficiaries in these activities;
- 9** Ensure strict enforcement of laws on the protection of victims of violence, with regular monitoring and clear sanctions for non-compliance;
- 10** Development of effective offender rehabilitation programmes that prevent recidivism and provide support for behavioural change;
- 11** Organize training courses for members of multidisciplinary teams (police, social workers, medical staff, etc.) to improve the intervention and support offered to victims of gender-based violence.





IN THE FIELD OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

- 1** Introducing sexual and reproductive education programmes in schools to improve knowledge about reproductive health and prevent teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases;
- 2** Information campaigns promoting the importance of using condoms and modern contraceptive methods to prevent unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases among adolescents and young people;
- 3** Promoting the active participation of partners in the pregnancy monitoring process and in supporting their wives in the postnatal period, including by capitalizing on the right to paternity leave;
- 4** Organize awareness-raising campaigns about the benefits of men's presence at childbirth, to reduce prejudices and stereotypes, to encourage involvement and emotional and physical support for the wife/partner.




IN THE FIELD OF SEXUAL DIVERSITY POLICIES

- 1** Initiate education and awareness-raising programmes to combat prejudices and misperceptions about sexual diversity;
- 2** Organize awareness-raising campaigns to promote respect and tolerance for sexual diversity and thus counter homophobia and discrimination.

The research data, in particular the focus group discussions, suggest that proper gender equality information should focus on the need for balance and inclusiveness, so that the promotion of gender equality is carried out in a way that would avoid polarization and support harmonious understanding and cooperation between the genders.

Activities in this area could therefore:

-  Maintain a balance and promote women's rights in a way that supports collaboration and mutual respect between the genders, avoiding any perception of competition or unwarranted tensions. The focus would be on the idea that advancing gender equality can benefit society as a whole, thus creating a more inclusive and just environment for all.

-  Include both genders. Training sessions and activities on gender equality should be balanced, including both men and women, to ensure a common understanding and to avoid situations where women only discuss equality amongst themselves.
-  Promote equitable access to opportunities. Programmes and opportunities for women should be accessible and visible to all, including men. Greater transparency can reduce the sense of marginalization that can arise when one group perceives that the other group benefits more.
-  Include positive and constructive messages. Awareness-raising campaigns should emphasize the benefits of spouses/partners interacting and raising children together to create an atmosphere of mutual support.
-  Carefully identify target groups. It is important to segment the population to tailor messages to different target groups and opt for the best information channels. For example, in rural areas or in communities where the population is older, it is advisable that the first options for promoting messages/campaigning are radio, television and/or leaflets, while using for young people modern social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, etc.

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