



Men, Gender Equality and Gender Relations in Mali

**Findings from the International Men and Gender
Equality Survey**



Summary Report

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Introductory Note

CARE International in Mali is pleased to share research conducted on men, gender equality and gender relations in Mali. This report provides a summary of key findings using the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES).

For the past 38 years, CARE has been contributing to national development efforts in Mali in partnership with the government and other development actors. Through its programming on women's and girls' empowerment, CARE is working to: improve girls' access to education; facilitate women's access to sexual and reproductive health services; increase women's representation and meaningful participation in community decision-making; and strengthen women's economic capacity, including increasing their access to agricultural livelihoods.

CARE's long-term experience on-the-ground has helped build a stronger understanding about gender equality and related societal norms and practices in order to develop an effective approach to working on issues of gender equality. CARE believes that the empowerment of women and girls must be accompanied by direct efforts to also support men and boys in challenging inequitable gender-based social norms. CARE engages in work that empowers both genders to stand as partners in speaking out against Gender Based Violence (GBV). To effectively work with men and boys in this aim, we must better understand the ways in which those norms we seek to transform can restrict male social identities to conform to a dominant traditional representation of masculinity. However, through working with men and boys, CARE recognizes that they are diverse in their attitudes and behaviors. Some men demonstrate positive forms of masculinity, while there is potential to change existing norms and practices that act as barriers to gender equity through evidence-based programming.

This research represents an effort to increase CARE's understanding about masculinity and gender in Mali. Our hope is that the data and analysis generated will add value to efforts by the Government of Mali and other development actors aiming to promote the rights and empowerment of women and girls.

The research findings provide evidence for attitudes, beliefs and practices that act as barriers to gender equity in Mali. For instance:

- 86% of men and 62% women surveyed believe that gender equality is an imported concept.
- 63% of men and 41.3% of women interviewed agreed with the statement “There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten”.
- 41% of female respondents reported having experienced physical violence during their lifetime while 34.9% of male respondents reported having used physical violence against a female partner during their lifetime.
- Many of both women and men reported witnessing violence by a man against their mother during their childhood.
- Childhood exposure to violence was found by to be the factor most strongly associated with women’s adult experience of Inter-Partner Violence (IPV) as well as with men’s practice of IPV in adult relationships.

Despite these concerning findings, the research also offers some hope for change through data collected from young Malian men and women aged 18 to 35. This age bracket of both men and women living in urban areas and with higher education levels demonstrated more gender equitable attitudes compared with older female and male respondents aged 36 to 59. The research also found men’s education as a key factor associated with more gender equitable norms and lower rates of violence against women. This finding reinforces the importance of providing education for girls *as well as* boys, promoting a strategic development approach that actively engages young men in gender equity promotion efforts.

CARE hopes that this research will positively contribute to the current knowledge base on gender and development at both national and international levels. We also hope that this study will encourage women’s organizations and associations in Mali to support and include men as allies in efforts to eliminate GBV and work towards gender equality.

As we say in Bambara, “Bolo Kele Tq bqlq Ta”, meaning “You cannot lift a rock with one finger”.

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Photo 1: Parents, Amadou and Parou, spending time with their children together

1. Survey Methodology

In September 2012, CARE in collaboration with UN Women and the Institut National des Statistiques /National Institute for Statistics (INSTAT) and Promundo-US, conducted a representative household study using the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES). IMAGES is a survey approach created and coordinated by Promundo, an NGO working to promote non-violent and equitable gender relations, and the International Center for Research on Women. It represents one of the most comprehensive multi-country studies ever carried out among men and women aged 18-59 to provide insight on male practices and attitudes in relation to gender equality; participation in caregiving and household dynamics; intimate partner violence and health; the impact of economic stress on gender relations; and the global gender equality agenda.¹ As of the end of 2012, IMAGES had been carried out in nine countries globally (including this study in Mali), also inspiring additional partner studies in Asia².

In Mali, the survey team conducted IMAGES in urban areas of the national capital Bamako as well as urban and rural areas of Mopti and Ségou Regions, located in the south-west.³ A sample of 1,000 men and 500 women participated in interviewer-administered questionnaires, with men interviewing men and women interviewing women. The survey applied cluster sampling performed by INSTAT which was also stratified to provide proportionate representation of two target age groups of 18-35 and 36-59. For the selection of households at the village level, a multi-stage sampling method was applied whereby sample selection was random. The sample included members from households located at different distances from the village center.

The surveyors collected qualitative data through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KII). Although the survey took place during the period of conflict in the north and east of Mali, survey respondents were not displaced people from those regions. Effects of the conflict were reported mostly in terms of economic factors and did not feature prominently in the quantitative or qualitative data collected. A separate study would be required to fully assess the effects on the conflict-affected areas in the north and east of the country. This report provides a summary of key findings related to surveyed respondents' demography, gender socialization and attitudes, violent practices, household decision-making, caregiving, and gender dynamics. It ends with overall conclusions from the research as well as CARE's specific recommendations to enable pathways to change for achieving gender equality.

¹ For more information on IMAGES, see Barker, et al. 2011.

² For more information on the studies inspired by IMAGES in Asia, see <http://www.partners4prevention.org/>

³ Following the WHO multi-country study on violence against women, IMAGES is generally applied in two or more urban areas. When conditions and funding permit, it is carried out as a nationally representative sample. In the case of Mali, funding allowed for three areas in western regions of the country. The ongoing conflict at the time of the study did not allow for research in the center and north of the country. The sample was selected to be large enough to be statistically representative of the three selected areas. The sample was stratified by two age groups of 18-35 and 36-59.

2. Demographic Characteristics⁴

Table 1: Survey Participant Demography

Demographic Characteristics of Survey Sample	Men (n=1000)	Women (n=500)
Marital Status, Religion and Education Levels	In percentage (%)	In percentage (%)
Marital Status		
Monogamous legal marriage	21.2	12.4
Polygamous legal marriage	5.1	21.8
Monogamous traditional/religious marriage	31.3	19.0
Polygamous traditional/religious marriage	12.9	25.2
Widow	0.4	4.8
Divorced/separated	0.5	1.8
Unmarried, co-habiting	0.1	-
Single/never married	28.5	15.0
Religion		
Muslim	94.0	96.6
Christian	3.0	1.6
Animist	1.8	0.2
No religion	1.2	1.6
Education level		
No education	44.9	54.4
Primary School (Fundamental 1: Primaire)	16.2	16.4
Second level of primary school (Fundamental 2: Collège)	11.0	11.2
Secondary	13.6	7.8
Tertiary education/university	9.8	3.2
Vocational school	3.9	6.8
Other (includes Koranic schools)	0.6	0.2

⁴ Less than 1% of the survey respondents represent women or men displaced by the conflict.

2.1 Marriage trends: The survey results indicated that polygamous relationships were found to be prevalent, but might be declining over time.

Overall, 18% of men and 47% of women interviewed reported to be in polygamous relationships. This large difference between men and women is likely due the nature of polygamy in Mali whereby older men and generally men with slightly more assets have multiple wives, while younger men and men with fewer assets are either unmarried, have one wife, or fewer wives in comparison. Therefore, a relatively smaller number of men have multiples wives, resulting in a skewed percentage of women compared to men in polygamous relationships. The results showed that among the younger age bracket of 18-35, 53.8% of women are in polygamous relationships. However in the older age bracket of 36-59, a higher percentage of 64.8 % of women and 31.6% of men are in polygamous relationships. While this data cannot confirm that polygamy is becoming less prevalent over time, younger men were less likely to support polygamy. Also increased education levels for both women and men, also associated with lower rates of polygamy, suggest that polygamy may be declining. There was no significant difference found between rates of polygamous relationships for those living in urban and rural areas.

2.2 Education levels: The survey results showed low education levels for both women and men with more inequality found by residence location and by age than by gender.

Only 44.9% of men and 54.4% of women reported having any formal education at all, meaning school-based study. The gap between men and women becomes more pronounced at higher levels of education with the percentage of women enrolled in secondary education and above being much lower than men. For example, 3.2% of women reported having accessed tertiary education compared to 10% of men. The gap between urban and rural areas proved to be larger for both sexes. Of the men, 77.6% in urban areas and 38.8% in rural areas reported access to some formal education while this was also found in 62% of women in urban areas and 35% in rural areas. There was greater inequality regarding access to education found between men and women in urban areas. The age of respondents was also found to be a factor related to education levels. Access to education for younger women (aged 18-35) was found to be almost two times higher than for women over 35 (at 58% and 33% respectively) while younger men also reported higher education levels compared to older men (at 62% and 48% respectively). Overall, education data shows limited formal education for both women and men, with greater gender inequality existing at higher education levels and in urban areas. For both men and women, there is a large difference in education levels between those in urban and those in rural areas. However, younger respondents of both men and women reported higher education levels, indicating that access to education may be increasing over time.

2.3 Employment and income rates: The survey reported lower income rates for women as compared to men while women are also less likely to receive monetary payment for employment.

Of those interviewed, 17.5% of men and 22.7% of women were not employed, including the categories of “no job”, “family assistance” and “student”. Of the employed men, 41% work in agriculture and farming, including casual work (petty trading and similar activities) while 24% of employed women also work in agriculture and farming, including casual agriculture. Similarly 23.6% of women work in petty trading and selling while a much smaller percentage of 7.4% of men work in this business. Age and location were also found to be correlated with employment for men. Older men reported higher employment rates than younger men (97.4% and 66.8 % respectively). However, 75.2% of men in urban areas were employed as compared to 87.1% of men in rural areas. Although in Mali there is often migration from rural to urban areas in search of employment, this finding could suggest that such work is not always found. Employment rates also varied notably by region as per findings in the three areas surveyed. Among these areas, the highest employment rate was reported in Ségou at 88.3%, followed by Mopti at 84.7%, while the lowest employment rate was found in Bamako at 73.2%.

Approximately half of employed men and women interviewed are paid in monetary means, in-kind payments or exchange of goods. However, women are far more likely to work without pay at all – the survey found this was the case for 27.2% of women as compared to only 1.6% of men. This could suggest that a large portion of women work as unpaid agricultural laborers in their own households. This lack of income for women is both an example of gender inequality and also a factor exacerbating other areas of gender equality through acting as a barrier to the empowerment of women in Mali.

As shown in the table below, a high percentage of the sample lives in poverty or extreme poverty, with more women than men reporting no cash or monetary income. In the case of married women, those with the higher overall poverty rate may suggest that men are more likely to control household income. In the case of unmarried women, those with the higher poverty rates may suggest a lack of employment opportunities available to them. Furthermore, even if employed, the survey found that women earn lower incomes than men. This could mean that many formal sector jobs are traditionally reserved for men and that women are not viewed as having the required skills, or are denied opportunities to acquire these skills. Additionally, prevailing gender norms and household dynamics may hamper their ability to compete for and acquire formal sector work. For example, 90.1% of men reported that men are the providers for all family needs, and women should remain at home and take care of the children and household.

Table 2: Poverty and income rates⁵

Income per day: West African CFA Francs and US dollars (\$)	Poverty level	Men (n=1000) (%)	Women (n=500) (%)
No cash income		42.5	49.6
<630 CFA = < 1.25 \$	Extremely poor	12.8	24.6
630 - 3000 CFA = 1.25 - 6 \$	Poor	28.3	20.0
> 3000 CFA = > 6 \$	Middle income	16.4	5.8

As noted above, the majority of men interviewed reported that they believe that their wives should not work, however in reality, many of their wives do actually work and contribute to household production and income. This suggests a gap between men’s idealized gender roles for women and the realities of their actual income and household needs. Furthermore, 72% of surveyed men agreed that a woman working outside the house would neglect their roles as wives and mothers. However, as such a high percentage of women reported working outside the home, particularly in agriculture and retail functions, this indicates that a women’s contribution to household income is important for household survival in these agricultural subsistence settings.



Photo 2: Change agent Oumar Traore fetching water for his household, Sarro Village

⁵ Respondents were asked how much money they earned per day, week, month or season. The survey team calculated a daily rate based on one harvest season of three months per year. The poverty line used is that of the World Bank, for which a per capita income of below US \$1.25 a day defines an extremely poor person.

3. Gender Socialization and Attitudes

3.1 Gender and domestic labor division: Inequitable domestic labor norms were found to be prevalent and socialized early through unequal division of household chores in childhood.

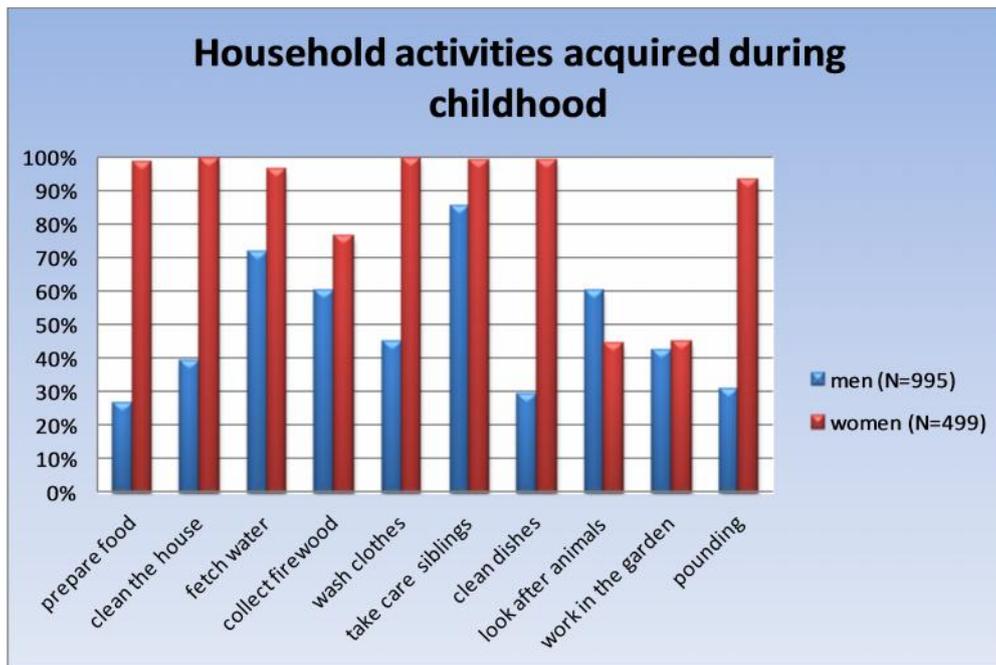
Both the qualitative and quantitative data collected from both men and women indicates a general adherence to prevalent rigid inequitable gender norms and roles. There was a strong emphasis on the traditional role of men as the heads of households and women as deferential to men's needs and demands. For example, in the FGDs, men generally agreed that a "good wife" should show respect to her husband and acknowledge and treat him as the head of the household and should also respect both her parents and in-laws. This suggests a belief amongst men that a wife should accept a subservient role in the household.

The belief that their fathers had the final word on decisions regarding household expenditure, the health of women and children, and their education when they were growing up was reported by approximately 76% of men interviewed. They confirmed that their fathers controlled decision-making in their households based on six different categories of household decisions provided. Alternatively, few men and women reported seeing their fathers perform any household chores associated with food preparation and cleaning while they were children, except for some daily childcare. More than 96% of men said their father did no household tasks, while 22.5% said their father provided care for children in the household. However, both men and women in the younger age bracket reported witnessing more participation by their fathers in household chores during their childhood compared to those over 35. This could indicate a shift over time in men's engagement in household chores.



Photo 3: Oumar looking after his children in the village of Simey

Figure 1: Household chores taught to men and women in childhood



The figure above represents household labor division according to what household chores men and women reported they were taught as children. These results show that almost 100% of female respondents learned to prepare food, clean the house, wash clothes, pound sorghum or millet, and wash the dishes. In contrast, fewer than half of the male respondents were taught these chores. Overall, the results suggest that there is only one household chore for which boys hold greater responsibility than girls, which is looking after animals. This indicates that girls are taught, and therefore likely expected, to perform all other household chores at a higher proportion.

3.2 Gender norms: The survey found wide support for inequitable gender norms, however there is some evidence for slow change over time.

To measure men’s and women’s gender-related attitudes, part of the survey questionnaire integrated the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale. This comprises a collection of attitude-based questions that is widely used in diverse settings, consistently showing high rates of internal reliability. The compiled responses to the GEM scale statements indicate a general belief among the sample that men are the “natural” household heads and decision-makers. For instance, 89.9% of men and 75% of women completely agreed with the Statement, “A man should have the final word about decisions in his home”. Furthermore, 90% of men and 77% of women also agreed with the statement, “A woman’s most important role is to take care of her home and family”.

Table 3: Attitudes related to masculinity

Masculinity	Men (n=1000)	Women (n=500)
GEM Scale statement	Totally agree (%)	Totally agree (%)
I would never have a gay friend	95.1	75.1
To be a man you need to be tough	78.8	63.9
A real man in Mali is the one with many wives	27.4	32.4

It is important to note that not all of the results related to gender norms and roles were inequitable or negative. In the FGDs with both young men and women, respondents generally agreed that a man should be a “model for his children” as well as “honest and faithful”. Some of the women interviewed in the focus groups even stated that a “real” man is able to satisfy his wife sexually and treats his wife gently.⁶

The survey found that tolerance towards homosexuality was generally low, with 95.9% of men saying they would never have a homosexual man as a friend. Interestingly, attitudes toward polygamy as the norm were less pronounced, but still reported as the accepted norm by nearly a third of men and over one third of women. This could suggest that presently, polygamy may not be as central in Malian culture as it has been historically in regards to defining gender roles, masculinity and gender relations. Furthermore, the decreasing rates of polygamy as shown by the quantitative data and referred to in the qualitative data, could be due in part to economic constraints. As discussed by both men and women in the FGDs, it is possible that men are acknowledging that they cannot economically support more than one wife, even if that means resisting the socio-cultural norms of polygamy.



Photo 4: Men’s Group Discussion on masculinity, in Bara Sara

⁶ Focus Group Discussion 4, young women (Rizam, 2012).

As shown in the tables below, overall respondents reported agreement with statements of inequitable norms and traditional views about gender roles as well as meanings of manhood and womanhood. However, these attitudes co-exist with a few more positive and gender equitable norms. For example, the survey found that 76.7% of men and 85.8% of women believed men and women should jointly share in decisions about family planning while 47% of men disagreed with the statement, “It is a woman’s responsibility to avoid pregnancy”. Nonetheless, more women reported the view that responsibility for contraceptive use is a shared one while more men reported the view that this is primarily a women’s responsibility.

The belief that men have the right to punish and abandon their wives as they deem necessary was reported by both men and women. Over 50% of men and women agree that women cannot refuse to have sex at her husband’s demand while both men and women agree in nearly equal percentages that women cannot propose condom use. However, high percentages of women (80.7%) and men (69.8%) reported total agreement with the statement, “A good husband should first help his wife to be in the mood for sex” (referring to foreplay).

Table 4: Attitudes related to sexuality and power

Sexuality and power relations	Men (n=999)		Women (n=500)	
	Totally agree (%)	Partially agree (%)	Totally agree (%)	Partially agree (%)
Men need sex more than women do.	31.6	37.4	67.3	21.4
Men are always ready to have sex.	35.3	33.2	74.1	18.4
Men don’t talk about sex, they just do it.	36.3	35.3	73.0	20.7
Men should be embarrassed if they are unable to get an erection.	73.6	18.6	60.5	16.8
I would be outraged if my wife/husband asked me to use a condom.	52.5	22.9	48.1	19.8
A good husband first helps his wife to be in the mood for sex.	69.8	23.7	80.7	12.3
A man has the right to have sex even if the woman says no.	32.7	31.5	49.1	14.9
A man can repudiate his wife whenever necessary.	15.9	21.2	22.8	23.2
A man has the right to abandon his wife if he finds it necessary.	22.8	27.1	20.6	20.2
A divorced woman has no value.	37.6	23.1	28.5	17.1

In terms of household roles, both men and women reported the attitude that caring for the home is a women’s role. However around half of female respondents and approximately one-third of male ones accepted that women could work outside of the house. Over 60% of both male and female respondents totally agreed with the statement, “A girl who’s not married at a young age is a risk for her family”. In the Malian context, this implies that if she is not married young, she might have sex outside of marriage, which would be seen as negative.

When discussing gender norms in the Malian context, it is important to note that it is possible they are changing, based on the statements collected in the FGDs and the survey questionnaire data. Younger men and women and those with higher education levels tended to report more equitable attitudes on nearly all of the GEM Scale statements, with similar age differences found in the qualitative data. This suggests that there may be a generational shift taking place that development actors can help to promote and encourage.



Photo 5: Ali washing his son, Simey Village

Table 5: Attitudes related to household roles

Household Roles	Men (n=999)		Women (n=500)	
	Totally agree (%)	Partially agree (%)	Totally agree (%)	Partially agree (%)
A woman’s most important role is to take care of her home and family.	81.0	9.1	66.7	10.2
Changing diapers, giving kids a bath, feeding the kids are the responsibility of the mother.	79.1	13.2	71.6	13.0
It is a woman’s responsibility to avoid pregnancy.	30.4	23.0	15.0	16.9
A man should have the final word about decisions in his home.	89.9	7.3	75.4	16.6
A man and a woman should decide together what type of contraceptive to use.	76.7	13.4	85.8	8.2
A woman who works outside the family neglects her role as a wife and a mother.	39.1	32.8	24.4	20.6
A girl who’s not married at a young age is a risk for her family.	60.1	22.1	67.4	12.9

3.3 Gender Equality Perceptions: Resistance to gender equality and the belief that it is an “imported” concept or has already been achieved was reported by both men and women.

Table 6 shows total or partial agreement with negative statements about gender equality policies by both men and women, at almost 50% in some cases. However, more than half of men and women reported that rights and employment for women are not necessarily negative for men. This suggests that they support or could be influenced to support policies that promote gender equality.

As shown in Table 7, a high percentage of men (86.9%) and the majority of women (62%) reported a belief that gender equality is an imported, or externally imposed, concept. In addition, more men (54.5%) than women (39.7%) believe that gender equality has already been achieved in most of the country. As the data on gender equality collected does not support this claim as reality, a degree of resistance to change and acceptance of the status quo is implied.

Table 6: Attitudes related to gender equality policies

Gender equality policies	Men (n=999)		Women (n=500)	
	Totally agree (%)	Partially agree (%)	Totally agree (%)	Partially agree (%)
Employment of women takes away job opportunities for men.	19.7	18.9	11.9	17.3
When women get rights they are taking rights away from men.	20.5	23.4	13.7	17.1
Rights for women mean that men lose out.	19.8	22.2	4.1	16.5

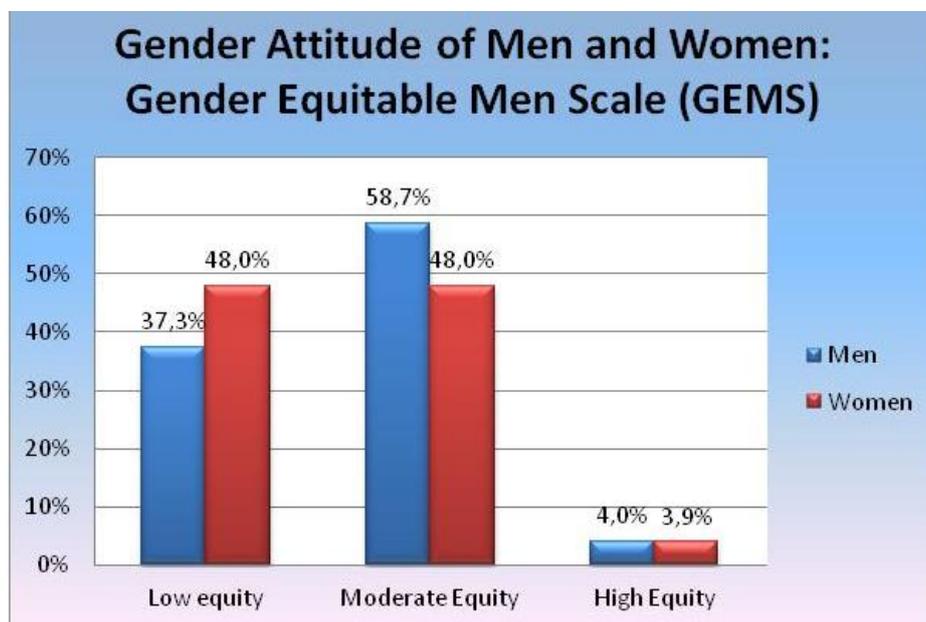
Table 7: Attitudes related to gender equality levels and benefits

Gender equality perceptions	Men (N=998)	Women (N=496)
Gem Scale statement	Agree (%)	Agree (%)
Gender equality meaning equality between men and women has already reached an advanced level.	53.8	28.9 ⁷
Gender equality has already been achieved in most of the country.	54.5	39.7
Today gender equality is only benefitting the rich.	62.8	59.0
Gender equality is an imported issue (externally imposed).	86.9	62.0 ⁸

⁷ Only 11.5 % of the women totally agree, and 26.6% of the men totally agree.

Figure 2 below provides a presentation of overall GEM Scale scores divided by groupings of low, medium and high levels of gender equity, or gender equitable attitudes. Women ranked equally in low and moderate levels at 48% for each, while only 3.9% scored levels of high equity. This is virtually the same as the percentage of men who fell into the highest equity grouping. Interestingly, the data below indicates that men scored slightly more equitable attitudes than women overall. This could suggest that women experience regular inequalities and may have internalized inequitable gender norms and power relations. In addition, the research found that women seem acutely aware of the negative consequences and risks associated with resisting or challenging the status quo of gender inequality in Mali.

Figure 2: GEM Scale equity rates compared by men (n=866) and women (n= 483)



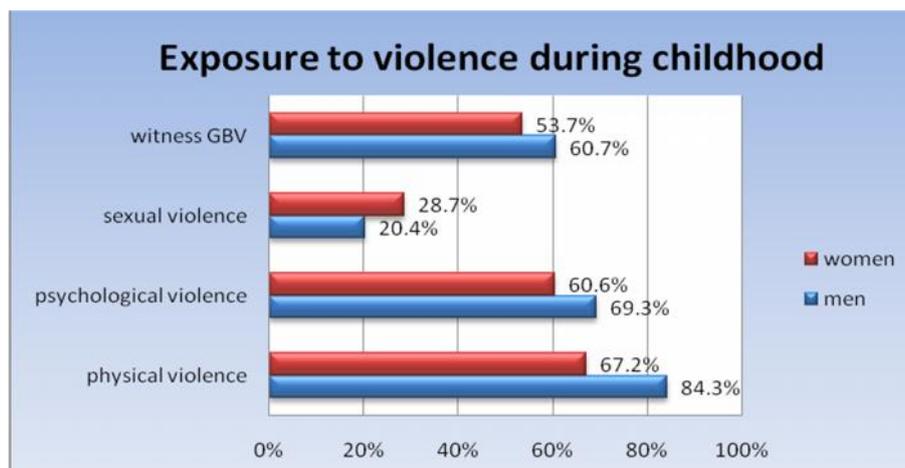
⁸ 39.1% of the women and 77.9% of the men totally agree with this statement.

4. Violence

4.1 Exposure to violence during childhood: Common for both males and females.

Over half of respondents, male and female, witnessed one or more forms of men’s use of physical or psychological violence against their mothers (nearly always their fathers), namely: slapping or beating, being chased from the house or being insulted by a male partner, as seen in Figure 3.⁹

Figure 3: Childhood witnessing and experiences of violence



Men (n= 974) Women (n = 496)

High rates of both men and women reported having witnessed intimate partner violence directed towards their mother by their father or another man in the household. Relatively high rates of men and women reported having experienced sexual violence before the age of 18. This includes unwanted touching of the genitals, family members trying to force the child to have sex or actually having been forced to have penetrative sex. Reports were also common amongst respondents of having experienced violence in school in the form of bullying and physical punishment from teachers and parents. Additionally, over two thirds of respondents reported having experienced psychological violence, including being threatened or subjected to humiliation by parents and teachers and being neglected by parents who were too drunk to adequately care for them.¹⁰

⁹‘Witnessing GBV’ refers to respondents who reported having seen or witnessed his/her father or another man in the household of origin using physical IPV against the respondent’s mother. ‘Sexual violence’ refers to respondents who reported having been the recipient of any unwanted sexual behavior or acts including touching of genitals or being forced to touch another person’s genitals as well as being forced to have sexual relations. ‘Psychological violence’ and ‘physical violence’ refer to respondents who reported to have experienced violence during their childhood (physical or psychological) at the hands of their parents, teachers or peers.

¹⁰ Some of the questions used originate in the widely used ‘Childhood Trauma Scale’.

Respondents were asked if during their childhood, they knew a child who had experienced a form of sexual violence. In response, 10% of women and 6% of men said they knew children or adolescents forced by other children or adolescents to have sex, while 7.2% of women and 5.7% of men said they knew other children or adolescents forced to have sex with other children or adolescents or their teachers.¹¹ Due to local sensitivities, the questionnaire did not include questions directly asking respondents about their own childhood experiences regarding being forced to have penetrative sex.



Photo 6: A men's group in Bara Sara committing to reduce Gender Based Violence

4.2 Physical violence against women by male partners: As highly reported by both women and men.

As shown in Table 8, 40.7% of currently or ever married women report ever having been a victim of physical violence from a male partner. The related figures for currently or ever married men approximately correlate, with 34.9% reporting having ever used physical violence against a female partner. However, men consistently reported less use of all types of violence than women reported having experienced such violence. For instance, 11% of all currently or ever-partnered women reported having been forced to have sex by their husband; this rate is low as compared to other settings where IMAGES was conducted¹². One possible explanation for this is that women do not perceive forced sex to be a type of violence, or that it is “normal”.

¹¹ These numbers are somewhat low compared to other settings where IMAGES has been conducted. This suggests the possibility of under-reporting due to the sensitivity of the questions and the difficulty of the interviewers to talk about these topics.

¹² Barker *et al.*, 2011

Table 8: Women’s lifetime experiences of IPV and men’s lifetime use of IPV

Types of Violence	Percentage ever-partnered women who ever experienced (n=389)	Percentage ever-partnered men who ever used (n=710)
Psychological	58.6%	12.7%
Physical	40.7%	34.9%
Economic	4.9%	0.8%
Forcing partner to sex	11.1%	Not asked

4.3 Exposure to violence as children (witnessing and experiencing): Of all variables, this bore the strongest association with women having experienced IPV and men having perpetrated IPV.

In multivariate analysis, the three factors most strongly correlating with women’s experience of any forms of IPV were rural status, age and having been a victim of or witnessed violence as children. The strongest single predictor of women’s experience of any form of IPV was having witnessed or been a victim of violence as a child. With regards to men, having been a victim of violence during childhood was the strongest single factor associated with later use of IPV.

4.4 Exposure to violence: Rates were higher amongst women with an income than those without an income.

As seen in Figure 4 below, higher rates of women with some income reported experiencing IPV than women with no income. This may suggest that the shift in household power dynamics occurs when women earn an income and may be a trigger for men’s use of IPV. This would potentially have important implications for the design of women’s economic empowerment programmes in Mali.

Figure 4: Relationship between earning salary and experiencing IPV



Women (n=390), Sign. 0.016

4.5 Tolerance towards GBV: Found to be high amongst men and women.

The majority of men (63%) and 41.3% of women agree that “there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten”. High percentages of women and men also agree that women should tolerate violence from a male partner to keep the family together. Similarly, as seen in Table 9, attitudes by women and men show support for the notion that women may be at least partially to blame when they are raped. Almost half of men and one third of women totally or partially agreed that a woman should be expelled from the family if she were raped.

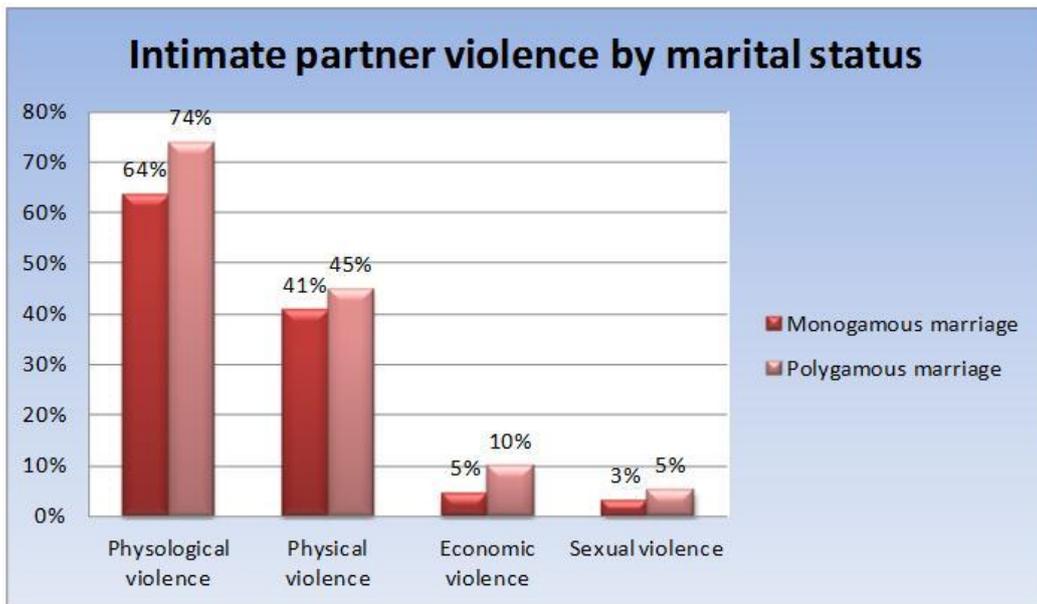
Table 9: Attitudes towards rape and GBV

Rape and Gender-Based Violence	Men (n=999)		Women (n=500)	
	Totally agree (%)	Partially agree (%)	Totally agree (%)	Partially agree (%)
There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.	31.3	31.3	23.4	17.9
A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together.	78.4	15.1	72.7	14.5
A woman who does not dress decently seeks to be raped.	68.4	17.2	53.8	23.1
A man should chase his wife out of the family if she is raped by another man.	17.1	29.5	23.4	9.3
Rape is always committed by a man against a woman.	47.3	26.9	64.5	26.3
In any rape case one would have to question whether the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation.	41.0	33.8	20.3	39.1

4.6 Relationship type and violence: Polygamous relationships tend to include more violence.

Statistically significant higher rates of women married with a husband who has more than one wife reported sexual and psychological violence by male partners than women in monogamous marriages (see Figure 5). The trend was similar for physical IPV, but was not statistically significant. Statistically significant higher rates of men married with more than one wife report use of IPV than men in monogamous relationships (never married men were not asked about their use of IPV). Being in a polygamous relationship is a significant factor in men’s use of physical IPV even when controlling for age, gender norms, childhood witnessing IPV or experienced violence as a child, rural/urban, age, and educational attainment. One possible explanation for this is that polygamous relationships create additional economic and household stress for men. This could manifest itself in the use of IPV.

Figure 5: Intimate partner violence by marital status



Women (n=390)

4.7 Harmful traditional practices: These continue to be prevalent in Mali.

Table 10 shows the percentages of women and men who have experienced a number of traditional cultural practices in Mali (excision and dowry being the most common), and their attitudes toward these cultural practices. Among these are: (1) levirat, the practice of a widow marrying a male relative of the deceased partner; and (2) sororat, the practice of a widower marrying a female relative of the deceased wife. Table 11 shows the findings of perceptions around female circumcision, or excision¹³, as related to age of men and women.

¹³ The WHO defines excision as: "partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora (the labia are "the lips" that surround the vagina)" (2013).

Table 10: Opinions and experiences of harmful traditional practices

Harmful Traditional Practices Men (n=999) Women (n484)	Experience d: men (%)	Practice should continue: men (%)	Experienced: Women (%)	Practice should continue: women (%)
Excision	44.5	85	95	77.8
Sororat	1.7	63.5	0.2	51.9
Levirat	2.8	69.1	0.2	51.7
Force-feeding (fattening or overfeeding of girls before marriage)	0	24	0.2	10.8
Tattooing	2.4	40.1	21.4	28.7
Scarifications	2.3	27.3	10.4	25.8
Confinement	3	28.5	4.6	18.4
Early marriage	1.4	15.3	6.8	15.8
Arranged marriage	0.6	3.3	4.4	4.4
Polygamy	13.4	83.5	41.2	73
Dowry	67.6	97.1	80.6	96.8
Abduction (capturing or kidnapping a woman or girl to force her to marry the man)	2.6	3.0	2.6	1.5

Table 11: Perceptions on excision reported by age group

Statement:	Totally Agree (%)	Partially Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	No idea (%)
A woman who is not circumcised cannot be faithful to her husband				
Men, 18-35	30.4	15.0	37.0	17.6
Men, 36-59	30.8	12.4	28.0	28.8
Women, 18-35	30.0	14.8	40.8	14.4
Women, 36-59	35.2	8.8	41.2	14.8

Men (n=1000) Sign. 0,000; Women (n=500) Sign. 0,182

5. Household Decision-Making, Caregiving and Gender Dynamics

5.1 Household decision-making: Men reported to dominate with some exceptions.

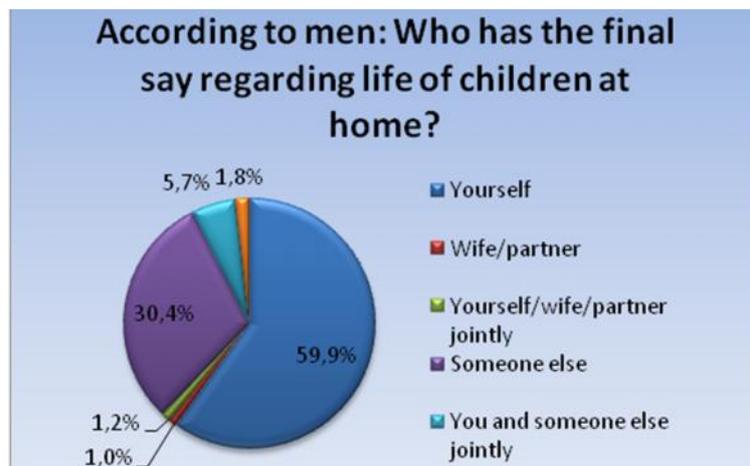
Both men and women predominantly perceive men as the main decision-makers in households, although in certain types of household decisions women have a greater voice, albeit limited. However, women more often perceived themselves as having a greater role in decision-making processes than men perceived them as having. Also, women are more likely to believe they make decisions together with their partners. Figures 6 and 7 confirm that a large portion of men believe they have the final say regarding the lives of women and children (meaning they make major life decisions for their wives and children), even though women are the main caregivers for children.

Figure 6: Final decisions about the lives of women



Men (n=998)

Figure 7: Final decisions about the lives of children



Men (n=1000)

5.2 Men and caregiving: Men carry out limited caregiving, however men in monogamous relationships do more domestic and caregiving than those in polygamous relationships.

Table 11 shows that fathers’ roles are mostly as providers and decision-makers, while women are overwhelmingly responsible for the daily care of children. More than half of the men accompanied their wife for some pre-natal care visits, though the data does not specify whether this included waiting in the waiting room or consultation room. Only 16.5% of men (who are fathers) report being involved in the daily care of their children.

Table 12: Men’s involvement in caring for children

Men’s practices in the care of children (n=705)	%
Making decisions about the health of the children	59.9%
Providing food for the child	95.8%
Accompanied wife on prenatal visits	53.3%
Daily care of the child	16.5%
Washing the baby	0.4 %

6. Conclusions

6.1 Key conclusions from the IMAGES research

The support for inequitable norms by men and women is extremely high in Mali: The survey and qualitative results confirm that prevailing notions of masculinity in Mali are largely based on norms rooted in unequal power relations. This includes: men's control of household resources and domination of decision-making; limited educational attainment for women and girls (although also highly limited for rural men); an acceptance of men's use of physical violence against women; and correlating with a high prevalence of polygamy.

Younger men and women, those in urban areas, and those with more education generally show support for more equitable norms: The finding that men's educational levels are a key factor related to support for more gender equitable norms (as well as lower rates of violence against women) suggests that ensuring boys receive an education, along with girls, is an important strategy for the achievement of gender equality.

The vast majority of men continue to be resistant to women's work outside the home: One possible consequence of this attitude is the higher rates of use of IPV by men against women with an income. As these men are more likely to be in urban settings, this may explain the higher reported rates of IPV in urban areas. This has important implications for women's economic empowerment initiatives. Initiatives may be required to engage men to reduce IPV, alongside those aiming to promote women's economic empowerment.

Polygamy, which is the reality for 18% of men and 47% of women, continues to be supported by many women and men: However, it is declining slowly among women and men with more education and in the younger cohort. The data suggests a correlation between polygamy and higher rates of some forms of violence.

Exposure to violence as children (witnessing and experiencing directly) is strongly associated with women having experienced IPV and men having perpetrated IPV: Rates of physical IPV against women are high as reported by both women and men. In multivariate analysis, having witnessed or been a victim of violence during childhood was the single strongest factor associated with women's experience of, and men's reported use of, violence.

High rates of violence both witnessed and experienced during childhood (in the home, in communities and in schools), including sexual violence, suggest the urgent need for programs to address this trend: This could include the provision of psychosocial support, parent training and other evidence-based approaches for reducing children's experiences of violence and helping break the cycle of violence.

Economic stress was reported frequently in qualitative results, particularly the pressure on men to provide for their families: It is reasonable to assume that this pressure may be even higher in the case of polygamous men. This may present an entry point in which to engage men, and may also be contributing to declining rates of polygamous marriages among the younger generation of men.

Gender socialization of children in Mali continues to reinforce gender inequality: Among a list of tasks carried out during childhood, the only one that boys carried out at rates almost equal to girls was care for children. This could present an entry point for engaging men in a task that they carried out as children.

There is extremely limited participation by men in domestic chores and the care of children: The one area where men showed higher levels of participation was attending prenatal visits, which was reported by more than half of men (who are fathers). This too suggests an entry point for engaging men: prenatal visits could be used as an opportunity to promote men's involvement in maternal health and caregiving of children, and to engage couples in birthing courses or couple consultations both before and after child birth.

There was high support for some traditional practices, including excision, which 95% of women interviewed say they have experienced: Although support continues to be high for this practice, younger men and women and those with more education were less likely to support the practice.



Photo 7: Mr Mamadou Farota, Imam of *Soumouni* and president of a men and boys group, holding his newborn baby, Rakiétou Farota

6.2. Pathways to Change

The factors most consistently displaying a positive influence on gender equality in the survey were higher levels of education, living in urban areas and coming from the younger age cohort. There is some evidence, that gender norms and relations in Mali are becoming slightly more progressive in line with higher rates of educational attainment and increased urbanization. However, the findings also suggest extremely limited space available for women to alter household dynamics. Men's limited recognition of women's contributions to household income and decision-making is combined with higher rates of violence associated with women earning an income. This suggests firstly, that the transition to women's empowerment (including economic empowerment) in Mali is slow, limited and meeting resistance. Secondly, it suggests a clear need to engage men and educate them on the benefits of women's economic empowerment. The results also indicate women's internalization of the very gender norms that oppress them. There is therefore an equally urgent need to work with women to transform unequal gender norms.

There are few spaces and examples encountered of women and men sharing power, and even fewer in which they share power equally. Women and men agree that men mostly dominate household decision-making and that women are the "executors" of men's wishes. A key challenge existing in Mali is to establish an approach to engaging men that originates from within Mali. It is critical that such an approach is not perceived as externally imposed and that it is culturally appropriate. The data suggests that women are exposed to more violence when they make some gains in education and income. An effective approach should aim to increase Malian men's understanding relating to the multiple benefits of gender equality for both women and men. These include for example, positive impact on family health, child survival, and household income. Such an approach should also include reaching out to the few men who support at least some aspects of gender equality. These men could be engaged to act as champions, promoting gender equality and transforming concepts of masculinity within their communities.



Photo 8: Mr Mamadou Farota, in the company of his wife and family

6.3 Recommendations

As final recommendations, this report suggests development approaches aiming to achieve gender equality should include the following:

- Build on the more positive aspects of Malian masculinity noted by respondents, thereby encouraging positive definitions of masculinity are formulated from cultural elements of Mali;
- Create more spaces and opportunities that enable men to discuss the stresses and responsibilities commonly associated with “being a man”;
- Direct efforts toward the legal context for the development and implementation of national strategies to promote gender equity and the protection of women’s and girls’ rights, acknowledging the current policy environment in Mali to be unfavorable to gender equity;
- Develop and implement national strategies that integrate men and boys in a meaningful manner; and
- Strategies aiming to change traditional assumptions about men, for example, by changing how men’s roles regarding sexual and reproductive health are perceived by health providers and creating more male-friendly health services.