

GENDER EQUALITY NOW!

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

Gender SCORE Cyprus Policy Brief



Introduction

The issue of gender¹ plays a key role in how women's experiences of the conflict differ to those of men. Additionally, variance in terms of historical experience is also complemented by a different perception of concepts of past and future threats and security (as proven by SeeD research findings included herein). The conspicuous absence of women from the negotiating process creates resistance, as well as legitimisation and ownership problems, not only for the process itself, but also for any peace deal which could ensue right after. The Security Dialogue Initiative's first wave research (SDI) conducted between October 2016 and April 2017 identified such gender and gendered insecurities as crucial elements that require further research to inform Track 1 negotiations and thus, promote a more inclusive and resilient peace process. Adopting a gender analysis to improve the resilience of the peace process and to facilitate a comprehensive and sustainable solution in Cyprus is imperative.

Research has shown that when women participate in peace processes, the resulting agreement is 35% more likely to last at least 15 years². However, since the inauguration of the Republic of Cyprus, only 3 Greek Cypriot women and 1 Turkish Cypriot woman have had any kind of involvement and impact in the peace negotiations.³ There is an absence of appropriate regulations, incentives and accountability mechanisms that would facilitate the identification and appointment of qualified women candidates as mediators and technical experts to both negotiation teams along with adequate training and education in gender issues across the range of subjects. Nonetheless, in the last few of years a rather successful momentum to kick start the process of a National Action Plan towards UNSCR1325 and to establish a bi-communal Gender Technical Committee to work in parallel with the Track 1 negotiating team was built and orchestrated by the Cyprus Women's Lobby, under the auspices of the European Women's Lobby. For the first time in Cyprus, Women, Peace and Security has been firmly placed on the agenda.

SDI findings showed that Cypriot women are more sceptical than men in their approach to the peace process, and have a greater mistrust for the male leaders involved. Greek Cypriot women have a heightened sense of intergroup mistrust compared to men, and express higher levels of negative stereotypes toward the Turkish Cypriot community. Overall, Greek Cypriot women have more negative expectations about a potential settlement to the Cyprus

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

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

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

problem and the transitional period. When asked about negative future scenarios, Greek Cypriot women expect the new Federal Cyprus to be fragile, dominated and disrupted by Greek Cypriot dominance and Greek and Turkish interference in its domestic and foreign affairs.

Women's lack of participation, and the fact that their voice, needs and insecurities have long been side-lined, undermines the adoption of a holistic and inclusive approach to security, and consequently, undermines the resilience and the sustainability of the Cyprus peace process and its potential positive outcome. This is further illustrated in the Gender SCORE findings, which show that Greek Cypriot women express stronger pessimism regarding the peace process⁴ and higher levels of social distance towards the other community⁵ (See Table 1). Such quantitative findings have been strongly validated by additional qualitative research, with Greek Cypriot women in fact fearing individual interaction with the other community citing reasons of personal security. Beyond the Cyprus peace process, the Gender SCORE findings show that while Greek Cypriot women express significantly lower levels of political security and aggression⁶ in daily life,⁷ they report significantly higher levels of anxiety and depression⁸.

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

⁴ The extent to which someone feels uninterested, pessimistic about reaching a comprehensive settlement or thinks that the peace efforts are futile. Qualitative research findings among the Greek Cypriot community point to disillusionment mainly due to protractedness and normalisation of the Cyprus Problem in everyday life (inverse relationship between time passed and possibilities for future solution).

⁵ Level of willingness to coexist on a daily level with members of the other community and willingness to accept them as a friend, spouse, boss, neighbour or president.

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

⁷ The extent to which one has a reliable income, equal access to employment opportunities and financial stability; and the extent to which someone feels politically independent and free to support any political party or movement they wish.

⁸ Degree to which someone feels anxious and insecure to an extent that the person finds it hard to stop worrying and relax; and/or feels depressed or very sad.

What is Gender SCORE Cyprus?

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

The Gender SCORE Cyprus is based on a mixed methods approach that consolidates inclusive in-depth qualitative approaches with advanced statistical analysis. Between October and November 2017, the research team conducted 55 key stakeholder interviews, 6 mixed focus groups across Cyprus (Limassol, Paphos, Nicosia, Karpasia, Famagusta, and Morphou) and 2 women only focus groups in Nicosia. The consultations and findings from this qualitative phase informed the conceptual model and theory of change as well as the design of the context specific Gender SCORE indicators. The quantitative survey was based on random sampling and was conducted face-to-face with 1600 respondents⁹ island wide between December 2017 – January 2018. The preliminary findings were then shared with the key stakeholders for participatory interpretation and feedback via numerous reflection and consultation meetings, and 4 more focus groups were organised in Nicosia, Trikomo and Limassol. The evidence-based recommendations presented in this paper build upon this multi-level participatory dialogue process.

Findings & Analysis

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

⁹ 800 Greek Cypriot and 800 Turkish Cypriot respondents.

work. The Gender SCORE shows that collectively these attitudes are among the key drivers that undermine women’s meaningful participation in socio-economic and political life.

The Gender SCORE findings presented in the Table below show that these attitudes are higher among Greek Cypriot men than among women. Where 0 means no one expresses attitudes that can be described as oppressive and toxic regarding masculinity, and 10 means everyone in society shares these attitudes, Greek Cypriot community average is 3.3. However, this score is much higher for men (4.1) than women (2.9). While we see a similar trend between women and men when we look at “support for traditional gender norms” and “repressive attitudes towards women”, **strong “support for women in executive positions” presents a window of opportunity to push for effective gender mainstreaming among the Greek Cypriot community. Nonetheless, data shows that significantly lower scores for political security among Greek Cypriot women is strongly correlated with their lack of political representation and exclusion from political decision-making. This is also reflected in the lack of visible female political commentators on social media and the mainstream press and thus, a lack of high profile, politically-active female role models; as well as lower political security reported by women, both in the public and private/social sphere. It seems that politics is widely regarded as a predominantly male business. The score for “perception that gender equality is achieved” indicator among Greek Cypriot men (5.6) highlights the lack of understanding regarding the concept and partly explains the lack of male (and male-dominated institutional) champions for gender equality. This belief seems to be underpinned by comparisons with the past, when things were much worse, as well as the “EU membership / Europeanisation” narrative, which in return feeds the assumption that gender inequality had now been a phenomenon of the past.**

Table 1: Key findings regarding attitudes and experiences of Greek Cypriot women and men

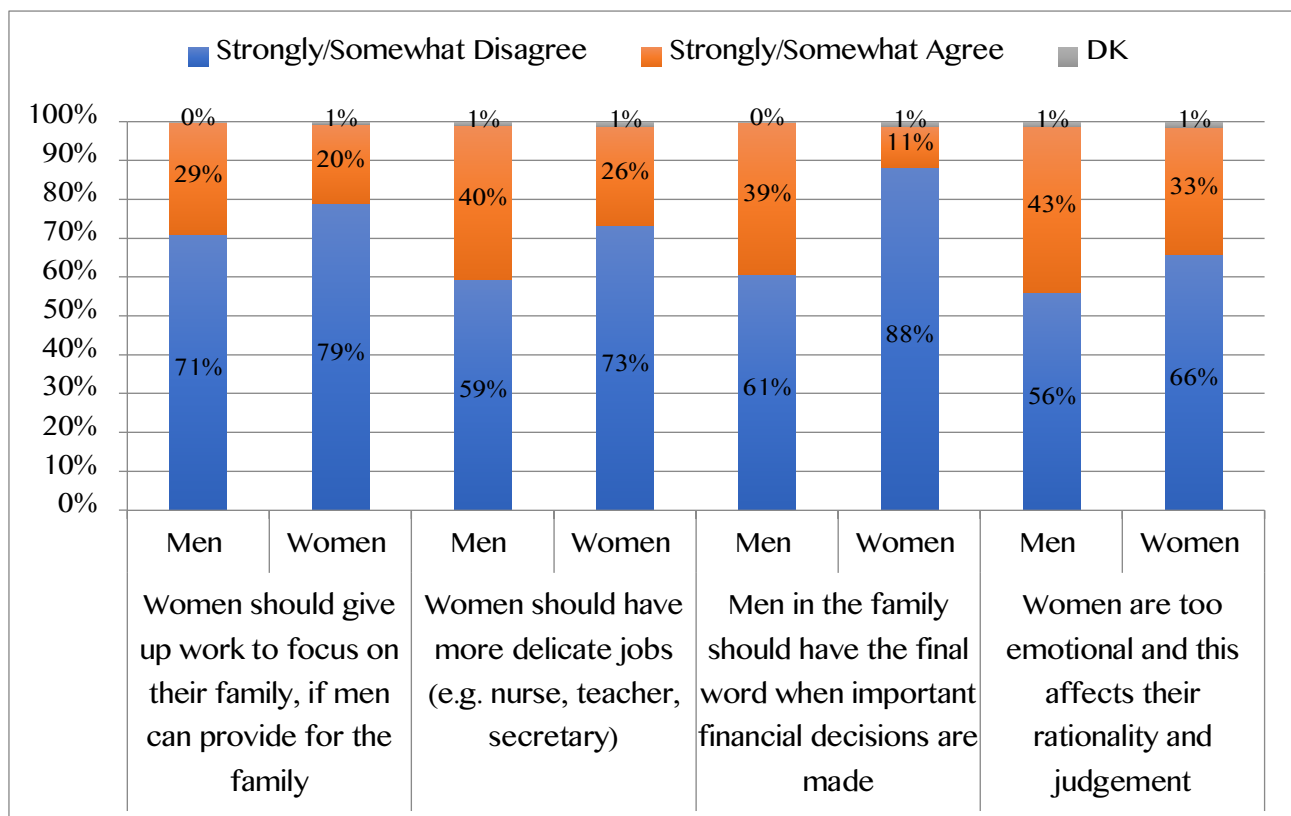
INDICATORS	WOMEN	MEN	DIFFERENCE
Aggression in daily life	1.8	3.1	-1.3
Toxic masculinity	2.9	4.1	-1.2
Support for gender norms	2.3	3.4	-1.2
Repressive attitudes towards women	3.5	4.5	-1.0
Support for women in executive positions	7.3	6.2	1.0
Anxiety and depression	3.9	3.1	0.8
Personal Security	5.5	6.2	-0.7
Perception that gender equality has been achieved	4.9	5.6	-0.7

Social Distance	6.1	5.5	0.6
Pessimism about the Peace Process	5.7	5.1	0.6
Contact with other community	1.5	2.1	-0.6
Political Security	5.1	5.6	-0.5
Knowledge of English	6.0	6.2	-0.2

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

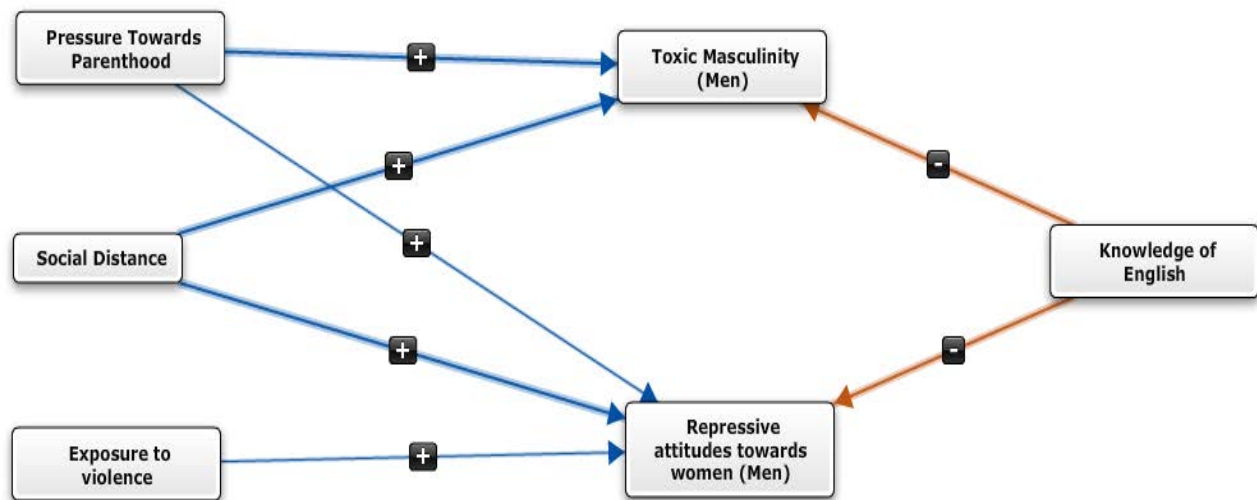
Further investigation into the “support for traditional gender norms” indicator in the Greek Cypriot community (See Figure 3). One of the strongest gender stereotypes among is the belief that women should have more delicate jobs (e.g. nurses, teachers, secretaries), which is supported by 4 out of 10 Greek Cypriot men. On the other hand, 4 out of 10 men also believe that men should have the final say in important financial decisions; and that women are too emotional and this affects their judgment. Although to a lesser extent, the table below illustrates that these traditional gender norms are also held by Greek Cypriot women, the strongest ones being related to women’s role in decision-making.

Table 2. Gender stereotypes in the Greek Cypriot community



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

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



The thickness of the arrows in the diagram above indicates the strength of the relationship: the thicker the arrow, the stronger the relationship. The colours of the arrows convey the nature of the relationship: **blue** arrows link indicators that have a significant reinforcing effect, whereas **orange** arrows link indicators that have significant mitigating effect. As such, we can see that “social distance” and “pressure towards parenthood” are the two indicators that have the strongest reinforcing relationship. In other words, Greek Cypriot men who feel or have felt stronger pressure regarding becoming parents, and those who feel stronger social distance towards Turkish Cypriots are more likely to embrace attitudes that can be described as repressive toward women, and constraining about what it means to be a man. Although weaker, the predictive model shows that exposure to violence (e.g. bullying, corporal punishment, domestic violence, assault) is also a significant driver. On the right-hand side of the diagram, knowledge of English, interestingly reveals itself as a significant mitigating factor.

Although knowledge of English among the Greek Cypriot community is relatively good the model above illustrates **English language skills as a pragmatic entry point with multiplier effects**, as knowledge of English increases one’s exposure to more diverse information as well as more multicultural interactions and environments in Cyprus or abroad. It is also a key factor that can enable individuals to travel more freely, progress in their careers, and engage in civil society. Inadequate knowledge of English could possibly prevent inter-community interaction in a post-solution Cyprus and act as obstacle to inclusive economic growth and entrepreneurship in a

multicultural Federal Cyprus. Qualitative findings also link inadequate knowledge of English to frustration, inferiority syndromes and exclusion. Moreover, women’s significantly lower scores for personal security (See Table 1) as well as the association between “exposure to violence” and “repressive attitudes towards women”, highlights the need for effective measures to address violent tendencies (including aggression, domestic violence, normalisation of violence, support for corporal punishment, sexual and gender-based violence) in order to achieve progress in gender equality in the Greek Cypriot community. In fact, this could result into a more sustainable peace agreement later on, as worldwide research evidence points to a link between gender-based violence, gender inequality and the possible outbreak of ethnic violence in conflict-ridden societies.¹⁰

Another Gender SCORE finding closely linked with women’s active civic engagement and participation in economic and political life is availability of personal time¹¹. This relates to the amount of time one has available to spend on personal activities such as socialising. Personal time is not only valuable for ensuring overall health and mental wellbeing, but it is also vital for productivity, creativity and personal growth. Support for traditional gender norms in the Greek Cypriot community means that women are expected to carry the burden of the household and child caring, as well as other caregiving duties such as taking care of elderly and sick family members.¹² This leaves little personal time for women to invest in personal activities and hobbies, be it socialising, sports, arts, reading, joining a civil society organisation or getting involved in politics, and exacerbate levels anxiety and depression¹³, which is significantly more prevalent among women. **An effective way of addressing this could be improving the availability of affordable childcare options to improve women’s independence and time for personal growth. Further, initiatives that focus on awareness raising on mental health problems and offer group counselling for women suffering from anxiety and depression could be effective in nurturing a constructive environment for women’s empowerment and personal growth.**

¹⁰ See Caprioli E. Melander. (2005). Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Inequality in Predicting Internal Conflict. *International Studies Quarterly* 49:2, 161–178

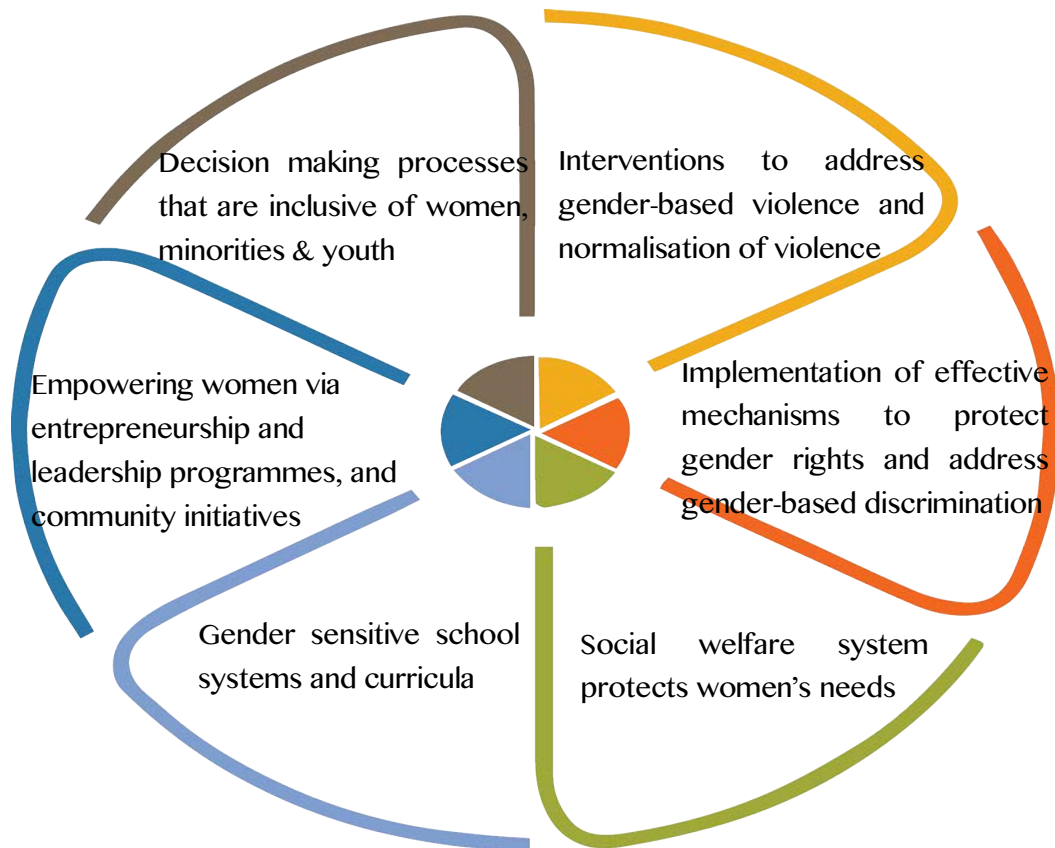
¹¹ Where 0 means no women have any time for personal activities and 10 means every woman have adequate time for personal activities, the score for Turkish Cypriot women is 4.6.

¹² This is validated by recurrent data on Cyprus, provided by EIGE (European Institute of Gender Equality) and its Gender Equality Index.

¹³ Degree to which someone feels anxious and insecure to an extent that the person finds it hard to stop worrying and relax.

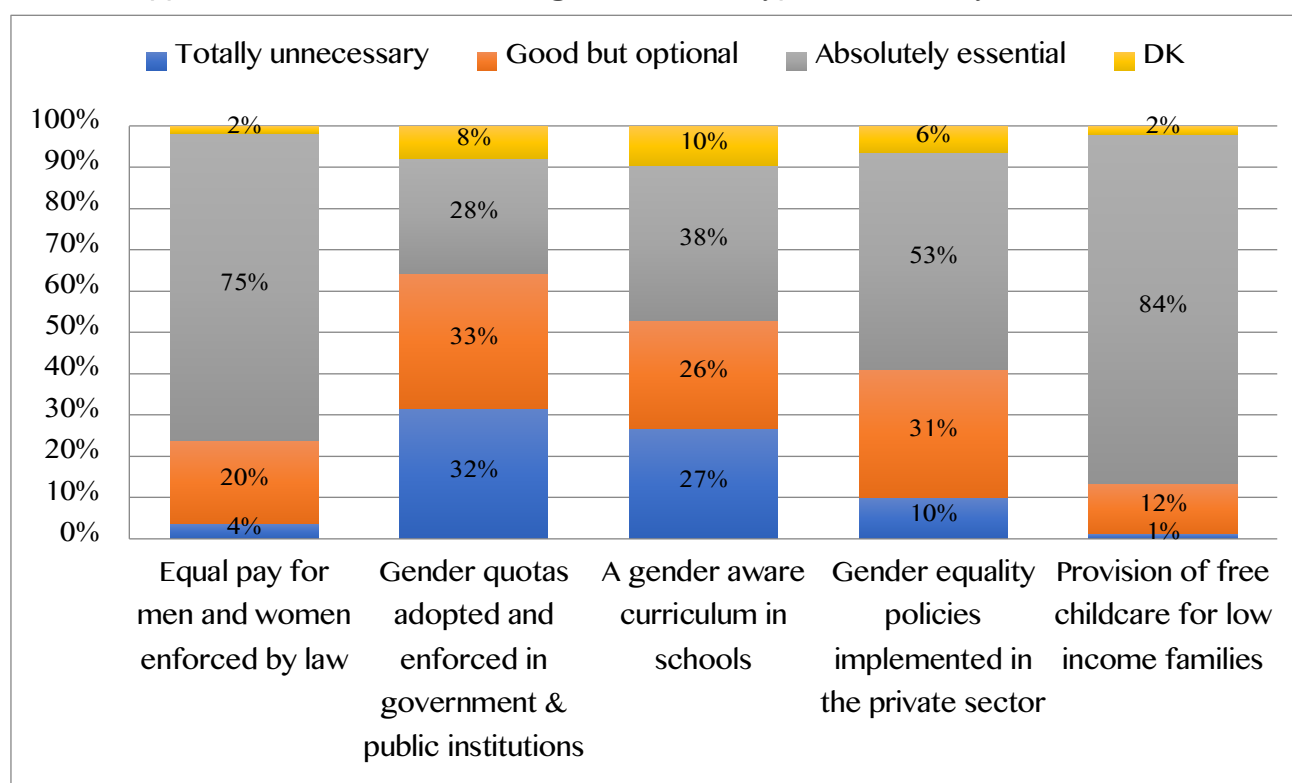
Policy Recommendations

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



Considerably strong support for gender mainstreaming policies in the Greek Cypriot community highlights that there is a conducive environment to push for effective gender equality policies. A strong majority of Greek Cypriots (84%) believe that addressing the pay gap in the private sector via effective implementation of legislation, where the law is largely ignored and employers rarely held accountable is a must. In addition, provision of childcare for low income families is absolutely essential. Interestingly however, 3 out of 10 Greek Cypriots think that both gender quotas enforced in government and public institutions, and a gender aware curriculum in schools with stereotype-defying female role models is totally unnecessary. The gender mainstreaming option that receives the most support is for gender equality policies in the private sector and free childcare for low-income families.

Table 3. Support for Gender Mainstreaming in the Greek Cypriot community



Expert groups and stakeholder consultations emphasised the need to adopt and implement gender quotas effectively and holistically both in the public and the private sector. The overall strong support for these policies in the public opinion survey too highlights their pertinence, even though strong doubts regarding their necessity and effectiveness were expressed in the focus groups, coupled with a rather widespread misunderstanding what quotas are all about and how exactly they work. Necessary steps such as measures to address the gender pay gap, gender-aware budgeting, mechanisms to address gender-based discrimination in the workplace (such as maternity leave acting as obstacle and paternity leave seen as taken only by male employees who don't conform to masculine stereotypes or who don't care much about their work)¹⁴ and provision of subsidised childcare could be initiated by policy-makers, local authorities, trade unions and the chambers. There is a need for awareness raising regarding gender-based discrimination in the workplace and a more robust legal infrastructure that can swiftly deal with incidents of gender-based discrimination. Other recommendations highlighted in the focus group discussions and stakeholder consultations include government incentives to encourage women's participation in politics such as capacity building and financing schemes for women candidates; improving and revising the relevant legislation to effectively protect

¹⁴ Such qualitative findings expressed by focus groups participants seem to validate worldwide research findings regarding maternity and paternity leave. See 2015 EU GenDiv (Gender Diversity in decision-making positions) maternity leave findings for Cyprus and 2017 European Working Conditions Survey on EU countries tracing the link between masculine stereotypes and paternity leave

workers' rights in the private sector, incentives for women entrepreneurs and capacity building for women to develop leadership, managerial and entrepreneurial skills to improve their economic independence and positive contribution to the economy.

Gender SCORE data validate the positive relationship between gender equality and peacebuilding.¹⁵ Findings show that improving women's representation and meaningful participation in politics as well as designing activities that address social distance to promote quality inter-group contract are strategic entry points to improve gender equality in the Greek Cypriot community. Moreover, the prevalent perception that there are no challenges regarding gender disparity in the Greek Cypriot community as well as the traditional gender norms regarding women's role in decision making highlights the limited awareness and understanding of gender equality. Social corporate responsibility campaigns, information and awareness raising spots in the mainstream media, and events and activities that promote gender equality in schools, in association with the Ministry of Education which has in the past undertaken similar campaigns concerning sexual education, for example, could be pragmatic and high visibility options to influence positive change.

To conclude, gender must be integrated and mainstreamed throughout various sectors (i.e. government, private sector, public sector, schools, chambers, unions, media and civil society) with a special focus on the above recommendations and by identifying and responding to the needs of different groups in the Greek Cypriot community. For example, an important stakeholder to the process is the Cyprus Women's Lobby, which has been a long-standing platform of women's civil society organisations on the island and the rapporteur for the shadow CEDAW report on Cyprus has been monitoring such actions for a number of years. For an inclusive, participatory and holistic approach to gender mainstreaming in the Greek Cypriot community, a strong monitoring and evaluation framework supported by governmental advisory groups that include civil society and key stakeholder representatives is needed to consolidate efforts and proactively push for a more equal and cohesive society. Civil society needs to work hand in hand with the newly-appointed Equality Commissioner and the National Machinery for Equality under the Ministry of Justice, as well as the committees dealing with sexual harassment and equality at the workplace recently established under the Ministry of Labour, as well as women's organisations within the mainstream political parties and the LGBT community. Gender equality should be approached as a widespread, multi-stake public-private enterprise.

¹⁵ See Dickinson, D. Torry & Robert K. Schaeffer (2008). *Transformations: Feminist Pathways to Global Change-An Analytical Anthology*. Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group

The Time Is Now: What can YOU do?

If you are an individual:

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

If you are a Civil Society Organisation or a business:

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

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

If you are a policy maker or a local authority:

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

Take this policy paper and turn it into an action, however small or big, that can foster gender equality!!

Gender SCORE Cyprus Indicator Glossary

- Aggression in daily life: The extent to which someone feels aggression in daily life, such as frequently getting into fights and confrontations in their social relationships.
- Toxic masculinity: The extent to which someone feels societal pressure to adhere to traditional male norms related and to a specific masculine role such as only men who have served in the army are real men or men should not cry.
- Repressive attitudes towards women: The extent of which someone expresses oppressive attitudes towards women such as supporting that a husband can discipline his wife to correct her behaviour or believing that the only thing women are good at is motherhood.
- Support for traditional gender norms: The extent to which someone supports socially constructed traditional roles and responsibilities assigned to women and men, girls and boys such as believing that women should give up work to focus on their family and if the men can provide for the family or that women should have more delicate jobs (e.g. nurse, teacher, secretary).
- Women's limited participation in the economy and politics, and in high-level decision-making: Refers to gender norms that undermine support for women in business and politics, as well as their participation high-level decision-making and executive positions.
- Anxiety and depression: The degree to which someone feels anxious and insecure to an extent that the person finds it hard to stop worrying and relax; and/or feels depressed or very sad.
- Personal Security: The degree to which one feels safe from violence in daily life such as walking alone in the street at night and crime.
- Perception that gender equality has been achieved: The degree one believes that gender equality has been achieved, and discrimination against women has been eradicated.
- Perception that gender equality has been achieved: The degree one believes that gender equality has been achieved, and discrimination against women has been eradicated.
- Social Distance: Level of willingness to coexist on a daily level with members of the other community and willingness to accept them as a friend, spouse, boss, neighbour or president.
- Political Security: The degree to which people feel free to associate and express their political views both collectively and individually.



About Security Dialogue Initiative and SCORE

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

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

This policy brief was prepared by: Dr Ilke Dagli Hustings, Sophia Papastavrou Faustmann, Karin Schuitema, Dr Alexandros Lordos, Christopher Louise and Anna Koukkides Procopiou.

Translated by: Fatma Tuna (Turkish) and Multiglossa (Greek).