

**IMAGES Country Study
Documentation**

Afghanistan

2017

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KEY OBJECTIVES

The International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) is a multi-country study on men's and women's realities, attitudes and behaviors around gender equality, including childhood experiences of violence, gender relations, partner relations and relationship satisfaction, gender-based violence and sexual behavior. IMAGES surveys are conducted together with qualitative research to map masculinities, contextualize survey results, and provide detailed life histories that illuminate quantitative findings. The questionnaire is adapted to country and regional contexts, with approximately two thirds of the questions being standard across settings.

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KEY OBJECTIVES

There is a growing understanding of how gender influences men's and women's expectations, attitudes, and behaviors and how gender is a growing determinant of social and economic wellbeing. Sustainable Development Goal #5 includes targets around the elimination of violence and harmful practices, recognizing and valuing unpaid care, ensuring women's participation in leadership and public life, and ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Gender in Afghanistan is a topic of ongoing debate, particularly in the backdrop of conflict and instability. From 1996 to 2001, the Taliban inflicted well-documented abuses and prolonged oppression of women. Nearly 13 years later, Afghans still face serious human rights abuses by the government and military officials and their agents. As reported by Human Rights Watch, these include mass killings, murder, rape, torture, beatings, enforced disappearances, theft, and arbitrary detention.

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KEY OBJECTIVES

In 2014, a majority of Afghans (65%) reported fearing for their own or their families' safety, a number which has been increasing since 2006.

The Bonn Agreement in 2001 helped to establish the Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2003 saw Afghanistan's ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan established citizens of Afghanistan as equal under the law in 2004. While gender equality is written in these laws and agreements, only 56% of Afghans surveyed in 2014 believed that women should make voting decisions on their own. Despite having quotas for providing female representation, 46% believe that political positions in government should be mostly filled by men. Men are often afforded more rights and freedoms, and gender equality is far from being achieved.

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KEY OBJECTIVES

Afghanistan is ranked 149 out of 152 countries on the United Nations Development Program's Gender Inequality Index, a measure reflecting inequality between women and men across reproductive health, empowerment and participation in the labor market.

At the root of gender-based violence are gender expectations, norms, and power dynamics which shape behaviors, opportunities, and material realities. Addressing these issues requires interventions that involve men and boys and considers deeply rooted gender dynamics between men and women across multiple dimensions of daily life. The role of men and their own gendered experiences, however, are rarely acknowledged in policies, programs, and public discourse.

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KEY OBJECTIVES

The goal of IMAGES is to provide data and insight to understand how gender and masculinities impact a wide range of well-being and development outcomes. IMAGES is one of the most comprehensive household studies ever carried out on men's and women's attitudes and practices on a wide variety of topics related to gender equality.

The study's emphasis on understanding gendered dynamics influencing a wide range of men's and women's behaviors complements existing research and policy initiatives. The data and conclusions generated from IMAGES have also served as the foundation for program development and have informed national-level discussions and the development of new policies.

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KEY OBJECTIVES

IMAGES Afghanistan aims to answer the following research questions:

- In light of the global gender equality agenda and other forces of change, what are men's attitudes, practices and the ways they live their lives in relation to women? Are they internalizing the messages and policies calling for greater equality for girls and women in education, income and work, political participation and health?
- What are men's attitudes and practices related to their own health and interpersonal relationships? How much are men participating in the care of children and other domestic activities?
- How common is men's use of violence against intimate partners? What factors are associated with this violence? What are the linkages between violence against intimate partners and violence against women? What do men think about existing laws on gender-based violence and other policies designed to promote gender equality?
- Are men's own lives improving as they embrace gender equality and take on more equitable, flexible and non-violent versions of masculinity?

2

DATA COLLECTION

The IMAGES study in Afghanistan collected data through both surveys and in-depth interviews.

Quantitative Research

Surveys were undertaken using IMAGES baseline survey tools which were prepared and configured from October to November 2016. The men's questionnaire has approximately 250 items and takes 45 minutes to an hour to administer, and the questionnaire for women is slightly shorter, taking 35 minutes to an hour to complete. Survey questions were taken from a number of standardized instruments on gender-based violence, gender attitudes, childhood experiences, the HIV/SRH field, and Promundo's and ICRW's experience in research on men and masculinities. The questionnaire is also based in part on the Norwegian study, Gender Equality and Quality of Life Survey, carried out in 1986 and 2006.

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DATA COLLECTION

The survey included questions on men's and women's attitudes about gender and gender-related policies; childhood experiences of violence and gender inequality in the childhood home; use of, and attitudes related to, gender-based violence; health and health-related practices, including sexual and reproductive health; household decision-making and division of labor; social norms related to gender roles and relations; men's participation in caregiving and as fathers; and happiness and quality of life.

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DATA COLLECTION

Questions were categorized under sociodemographic information and status, childhood information (gender relations in childhood household, gendered experiences, discipline, difficult life circumstances), household relations (time use and division of labor in the household, final say in the household, empirical and normative expectations), parenting and relationship with children (antenatal care, time use and caregiving, non-residential biological children, child discipline techniques, empirical and normative expectations), women's participation and public life, laws and policies, violence in relationships (relationship control, violence against women, rape myths, empirical and normative expectations), health and quality of life (general health information, health seeking behavior, substance abuse, life satisfaction and locus of control, depression, sexual and reproductive health, attitudes about family planning, fertility aspirations and family planning, sexually transmitted diseases, abortion), attitudes on relations between men and women, life experiences (neighborhood violence, social cohesion), media exposure, and survey satisfaction.

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DATA COLLECTION

Quantitative tools were prepared and configured between October 12th and November 10th of 2016, and were adapted during SCG meetings in Kabul that took place November 15th and 16th 2016. Initial drafting was based on policy and literature review, and revisions were incorporated from meetings with AREU and ORCA, and inputs from a technical advisory group and UN Women. Interviewer trainings were conducted in April 2017. The approval letter from IRB was received on April 9th. Fieldwork was launched on April 25th and concluded on May 24th, and coding began on May 29th and concluded on June 9th.

The survey was piloted in 2017 with a variety of randomly selected respondents (urban/rural, men/women, young/old, literate/illiterate, etc.) in order to ensure that cultural nuances are accounted for and to finetune the questionnaire. 30 pilot interviews were conducted around the surrounding areas of Kabul in Pashto and Dari as part of the pilot. Comments on the content, length, and data collection processes were used to assess the effectiveness of the questionnaire

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DATA COLLECTION

Additionally, anecdotal evidence from the pilot was used to reflect on the experience of interviewers asking questions that provoked an emotional response from interviewees. The average interview duration was 67 minutes.

Additional modifications to the questionnaire were made after the pilot and with feedback from IRB.

To mitigate risks during fieldwork, supervisors were recruited who were well-familiarized with provincial, district, and village areas and who understood how to enter and work in high risk areas, which clothes they should wear (i.e. Hijab, Burka, Turban), and what accent to use. Afghanistan is composed of seven regions (Central, Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western, North-Eastern, and South-Western), within which there are 34 provinces. Within each province, there are a number of districts, ranging from three to twenty-eight. A few provinces also have Nahias (urban settlements) ranging from five to twenty-two.

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DATA COLLECTION

Each district is made up of villages (rural settlements), and some districts have an urban population that lives in the district center, often called a ‘bazaar’, which is similar to a town.

PPS methodology was used to select provinces to include in the sample and was useful given that the selected regions present high variance in population distribution. PPS sampling has the advantage of attributing different probabilities of selection to communities according to their respective size.

Census data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO)’s Estimated Settled Population of Afghanistan by Civil Divisions, Urban and Rural, 2016-17, was used. The nomadic population, estimated by CSO to be 1.5 million, was excluded from the sample.

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DATA COLLECTION

PPS selected provinces by giving a higher probability of being sampled to larger provinces. All provinces were listed along with their latest (2016-17) population estimates, the running cumulative population was calculated, and the number of desired provinces were decided for selection ($n=2$). The total population of central region (7,263,004) was divided by 2 (number of desired provinces), and the output number (3,631,502) was the Sampling Interval (SI). The Random Start (RS) number was determined by randomly selecting a number between 1 and the SI, resulting in 2,013,194. Output numbers corresponding with provinces were calculated (RS; RS+SI; RS+2SI; RS+3SI; RS+4SI; RS+5SI; RS+6SI). The two provinces selected for sampling were those for which the cumulative population contained the number in the calculated output numbers. An example of how provinces were selected is shown below.

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DATA COLLECTION

Region	Province	Urban	Rural	Total	Cumulative
Central	Kabul*	3,839,580	684,138	4,523,718	4,523,718
Central	Kapisa	1,586	446,659	448,245	4,971,963
Central	Parwan*	60,937	614,858	675,795	5,647,758
Central	Wardak	3,172	602,905	606,077	6,253,835
Central	Logar	10,178	388,357	398,535	6,652,370
Central	Panjshir	0	156,001	156,001	6,808,371
Central	Bamyan	13,218	441,415	454,633	7,263,004

*Selected for sampling

Desired number of provinces: 2
Sampling Interval (SI): 3,631,502

2,013,194
Random Start (RS): 4

2

DATA COLLECTION

PPS Selection Table			
1	RS	2,013,194	Kabul
2	RS+SI	5,644,696	Parwan
3	RS+2SI		
4	RS+3SI		
5	RS+4SI		
6	RS+5SI		
7	RS+6SI		

Two to four districts within every province were then also selected using PPS Sampling Technique. The Sheharwali (municipal administration in Afghanistan) defines the urban population as those living within municipal limits (Nahia). By default, the rural population comprises those who are living outside the municipal limits. The rural areas are defined neither in terms of population density nor remoteness. The required number of Nahias within each city was selected using simple random sampling as population information was not available at this level. Each Nahia was assigned 20 interviews to allow for two starting points, one for each gender.

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DATA COLLECTION

Because accurate estimates of population were not available at the village level, two villages were selected randomly within each district by using a simple random step over a list of relevant villages. The supervisor, sometimes with the assistance of a local leader, established a list of locations (e.g. a mosque, school, health clinic, landmark), randomly picked one selection from the list, and assigned it to the interviewers of a particular gender. Interviewers did not have control over the selection of starting points.

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DATA COLLECTION

In the case that instability, violence, insurgent activities or fighting caused a sampling point to be adjusted or replaced to keep interviewers out of areas with active violence and/or security threats, the originally sampled district or village was replaced with one that was not already in the sampling plan and had similar population characteristics. The decision to replace a district or village was made by the General Field Manager in consultation with the field supervisor. All replacements and their justifications were documented. Shindand District in Herat Province was replaced with Karukh District through a randomized process due to heavy fighting between government forces and the Taliban. Darzab District in Jowzjan Province was replaced with Khwaja Dokoh District through a randomized process due to Taliban control.

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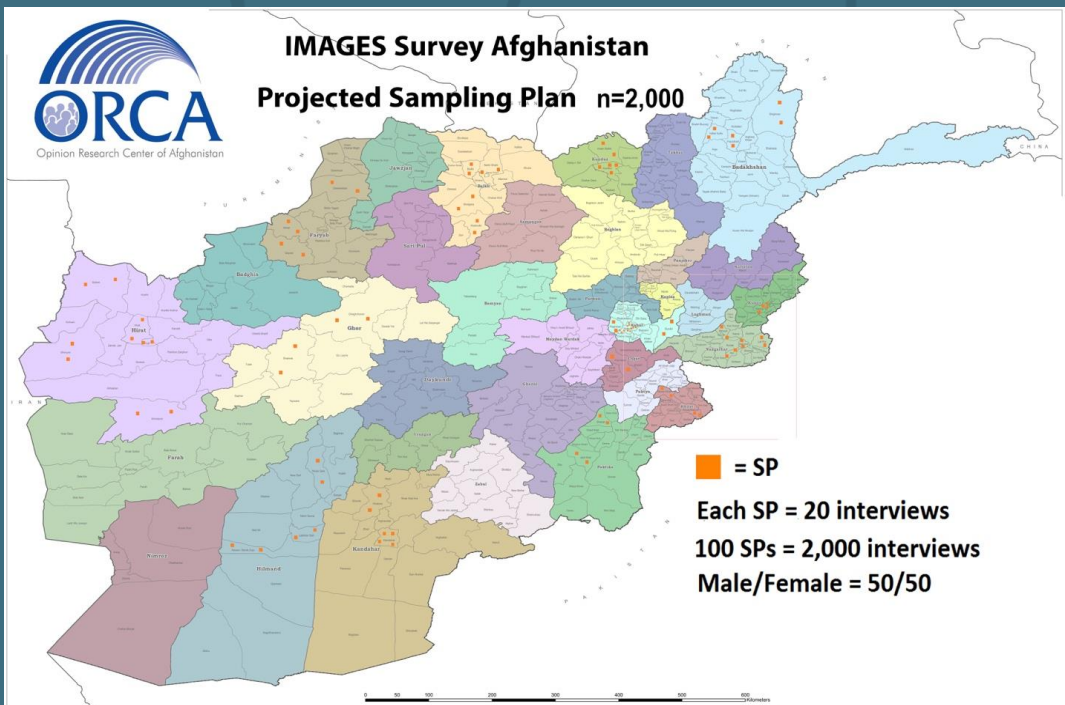
DATA COLLECTION

Shinwari District in Parwan Province was replaced with Mullahee Village due to fighting between two unidentified armed groups. Sarwa Village of Hesarak District in Nangarhar Province was replaced with Miz Ghondi Village due to fighting between the Taliban and Daesh (ISIS). Dangdang Village in Jaji District, Paktia Province was replaced with Mando Khail Village due to the inability of researchers to locate its whereabouts. Mir Afzal Karez Village in Nish District, Kandahar Province was replaced with Ghani Gay Village due to the active presence of the Taliban and the existence of mines along the way to the village. Karezak Village in Nish District was replaced with Kajor Village and Asya Bad Village in Zindajan District, Herat Province was replaced with Langar Village due to security problems.

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DATA COLLECTION

In each sampling point, 20 interviews were conducted, half by female interviewers with female respondents, and half by male interviewers with male respondents. Each region, province and further strata were allocated an equal number of male and female sampling points. Interviews were conducted in Dari and Pashto to reflect the major languages of Afghanistan. The following map shows the sampling points that were selected.



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DATA COLLECTION

The study was described to communities in general terms as focusing on gender issues and family life. To ensure the safety of participants, only one person per household was selected as a participant, and separate sub-clusters of men and women were sampled such that in any one immediate community, only men or only women were interviewed. This also helped to ensure that the interview content remained confidential.

Prior to going to the field, supervisors contacted community leaders, Arbabs, heads of the National Solidarity Program (NSP), and Wakil to analyze conditions on the ground, including security conditions and safety of traveling along highways, inform them of the objectives of the survey, and seek their assistance in conducting fieldwork. If community leaders informed supervisors that conducting fieldwork would not be possible for security reasons, supervisors informed the field manager, who would contact the project manager, who contacted the client and asked for substitution of that area.

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DATA COLLECTION

In highly insecure areas, supervisors and interviewers entered villages as a group and left villages as soon as fieldwork was complete. In these areas, interviewers were limited to one callback to avoid frequent commuting to the village. Survey instruments were sent to the field separately through contracted shipping companies since supervisors did not carry their ID cards, bank cards, or questionnaires that might identify them.

Additionally, supervisors and interviewers used airlines, public transportation, motorcycles, and/or horse and mule to blend into the local populations in which they were working; worked within daylight hours; knew when to identify insurgent groups and avoid traveling when such groups were active; and did not disclose when or where they would be traveling to reduce risks to themselves. If researchers felt that there was a security problem, they immediately left the village. Researchers also kept survey questions confidential and avoided eating or drinking anything provided by strangers.

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DATA COLLECTION

The supervisor or interviewer team spun a pen or a sharp object at a point randomly selected from the list of landmarks and interviewers went in the direction in which the blunt end pointed. This ensured that the direction of the walk was random and that interviewers avoided circling wealthier landmarks, for example.

Interviewers stopped at the first street or lane on the right-hand side of his/her route. From there, the first contacted household was the first house on the right from the beginning of the street. The next selected houses were the third inhabitable house on the right side of the route. In blocks of flats, the third apartment was selected. In buildings with more than one household, no more than two households were interviewed. Compounds containing two or more houses behind a common wall were treated like detached houses counted counter clockwise from the gate to the compound.

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DATA COLLECTION

A household was defined as a dwelling in which members (at least one person aged 18 or older) lived permanently (for at least six months per year) and had cooking facilities. If interviewers encountered a retail establishment along their route, they inquired as to whether the building was a residential household.

Interviewers made up to three attempts to survey the sampled household at different times of the day or on different days unless residents refused. After three attempts, the household to the immediate right of the originally sampled household was used as the first substitute. If a successful interview was unable to be completed in this household, the household to the immediate left of the originally selected household was used as the second substitute. If the interviewer was unable to complete interviews at either of the first or second substitute houses, he/she went to the next main household which was counted as three households from the initial, main household. This process was repeated as necessary.

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DATA COLLECTION

Interviewers introduced him/herself and asked for the names and ages of each adult household member between the ages 18 and 59 to proceed with respondent selection. Female interviewers asked for the names and ages of female adult household members, and male interviewers asked for the names and ages of male adult household members.

Interviewers listed the names and ages, from oldest to youngest, of all male and female individuals aged 18 and older who lived in the household permanently, even if they were not present, on a Kish grid. He/she then found the corresponding last digit of the questionnaire number in the Kish grid's top row. The number at the intersection of the last digit on the questionnaire and the total number of household residents resulted in the number of household members who would be interviewed. Interviewers then asked to speak to the household member selected per the Kish grid.

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DATA COLLECTION

To ensure confidentiality, the research team did not collect identifying information from respondents. Informed consent was obtained before surveys were conducted. Participants were notified of the purpose of the study, risks and benefits of participating, that participation was voluntary, consent could be withdrawn at any time during the study, and that there were no consequences for withdrawing from the study. Due to the low literacy levels among some participants, oral rather than written consent was sought. Participants orally agreed or disagreed to participate. Interviewers indicated their responses and signed their consent form, which were then given to respondents.

The potential risks for participants included embarrassment and recalling traumatic events, such as experiences of violence.

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DATA COLLECTION

Questions asked in surveys and interviews may have been upsetting, especially questions that addressed gender ideologies, attitudes, experiences, norms about gender equity, women's autonomy, violence, decision-making, sexual behavior, and other personal topics. While unlikely, this study may also cause conflict or violence against a participant. For example, if a husband is upset that his wife revealed personal information about his use of violence in an interview.

Precautions were taken to minimize these risks. Risk of embarrassment among participants was reduced by the use of trained, gender-matched interviewers and the privacy under which data collection occurred. It is possible, however, that participants may have become anxious, depressed, sad, or angry. Interviewers were trained to be attuned to participant distress and fatigue and to pause or eliminate the interview, or otherwise respond as appropriate. Efforts were made to link those to care immediately if such concerns arose.

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DATA COLLECTION

Participants were provided with a list of relevant resources in their locality and may otherwise indirectly benefit from the knowledge gained by this study. This includes the future ability of IMAGES results to inform programs and policies dedicated to the advancement of economic, social and political equality between women and men, boys and girls.

ORCA conducted exploratory analysis of quantitative results by focusing on descriptive statistics, bivariate and multivariate analyses. Data was analyzed using SPSS, and associations between variables of interest, for example between gender attitudes and use of violence against women, were analyzed through t-tests, chi-squared tests and regression analysis. Notes of major political, economic, social, and cultural events during data collection were made.

2

DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative Research

The qualitative research in Afghanistan was focused on questions surrounding violent extremism and gender relations in the context of collective trauma and conflict. Although it was originally planned that qualitative research would be done through focus group discussions with 100 respondents, Promundo and AREU decided to conduct life story interviews after looking into data from previous studies on masculinity. Interviews allowed the research team to understand the trajectories of lives leading men having more positive, equitable attitudes towards gender equality, as well as behaviors. Therefore, men who in some way defied traditional gender norms, until saturation, were selected.

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DATA COLLECTION

The study aimed at conducting a minimum of 20 in-depth interviews with men age 18 and above. The sample of respondents reflected variations in socioeconomic background, age, geography, education, and profession. In-depth interviews were used to investigate collective perceptions and positions on aspects of masculinity and identity as held by diverse groups of men.

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DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative tools and the selection criteria for informants were drafted between November 8th and 12th and adapted after receiving comments from Promundo by November 30th 2016. These tools were translated by December 12th and revised on December 18th after receiving additional feedback. Qualitative research protocols and guidelines were drafted by January 31st and finalized after comments by February 20th 2017. Interviewers were trained by March 6th and data was collected between April 1st and 30th. Interview transcripts were translated between May 1st and 30th.

Qualitative data was coded, processed, and analyzed between May 15th and June 30th. The first draft of qualitative results was completed between June 16th and July 15th. At a second SCG meeting in Kabul, attendees were briefed with key findings and the research team's communication plans. The final qualitative report was submitted to Promundo by August 30th 2017, and further dissemination meetings and events were attended in November and December of 2017.

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DATA COLLECTION

The selection of respondents was based on the identification of individuals who were different than most men in their social background and location. Respondents were identified based on AREU's experience in conducting IMAGES survey research using their contacts in the field. Interviews focused on life experiences, conceptions, attitudes and practices that led these men to be more equitable compared to other men. Discussions lasted no more than two hours and were conducted after survey data had been collected and analyzed.

To ensure confidentiality, the research team did not collect identifying information from respondents. Informed consent was obtained before interviews were conducted.

2

DATA COLLECTION

Participants were notified of the purpose of the study, risks and benefits of participating, that participation was voluntary, consent could be withdrawn at any time during the study, and that there were not consequences for withdrawing from the study. Due to the low literacy levels among some participants, oral rather than written consent was sought.

Participants orally agreed or disagreed to participate. Interviewers indicated their responses and signed their consent form, which were then given to respondents.

Interviews were analyzed through sorting and coding of data in Nvivo. Matrices were constructed from answers provided by themes and sub-themes. Data was organized and re-organized as they were converted into concepts, and from concepts into relationships and behavior. Content analysis and use of quotes from anecdotal experience of people interviewed was used to summarize what was expressed by respondents.

3

SAMPLE SIZE AND LOCATION

Data from the IMAGES baseline survey was collected from 2,000 respondents from ages 18 to 59, 1,000 of whom were male and 1,000 who were female, seven regions of Afghanistan. This sample size was determined to allow for an error margin lower than 5% and to allow for substantive stratified analysis of different outcomes by age, education level, marital status, etc. These regions were Kabul, Kapisa, Parwan, Wardak, Logar, Panishir, and Bamyan.

4

RESPONSE RATE

A total of 2,000 interviews were conducted for the IMAGES survey with a 73% response rate. Information about the number of partial interviews, non-interviews (including respondents who refused or were unable to complete the interview), and other cases of ineligibility are unknown.

5

WEIGHTING PROCEDURE

No additional information available in this section.

6

MISSINGNESS ASSESSMENT

No additional information available in this section.

7

QUALITY CONTROL

Interviewers checked data collection to verify accuracy and supervisors checked questionnaires. ORCA checked all questionnaires for coherence and completeness.

All survey data was encrypted for storage and sent through protected file transfer. Qualitative transcripts and notes were kept on password protected computers, shared only among the research team through protected file transfer, and did not include identifying information.

Feedback between supervisors and ORCA was provided throughout the research process.

Several changes in site selection were made due to various security risks that interviewers faced. These changes, along with their justifications, were noted (and are described above).

8

INTERVIEWER TRAINING

Training sessions were held for the field teams of seven provinces at ORCA headquarters in Kabul from April 1st to 5th 2017 for group 1 and from April 8th to 12th for group 2. Each training had around 35 participants each. Refresher trainings were held by regional managers in all 14 provinces on April 22nd to 24th.

Interviewers received training on maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of respondents, including techniques to identify and check for private spaces in which to conduct the interview and to pause if privacy was disrupted. Interviewers were also trained to be attuned to participant distress and fatigue and to pause or eliminate the interview, or otherwise respond as appropriate. This included training on identifying and reporting adverse events that occurred as a result of the research. Reporting procedures and response mechanisms involving the study PIs and local partners were established prior to the commencement of the research.

9

DATA COLLECTION PARTNER

After meeting with several key NGOs and researchers, Promundo decided to partner with the Opinion Research Center of Afghanistan (ORCA) and the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU). Implementing partners were selected after a process of in-person, phone and email conversations with potential research organizations. AREU was selected for partnering in qualitative research given the explorative research on masculinity in Afghanistan they previously conducted, and ORCA was selected for partnering in quantitative research due to their expertise fielding large surveys and working with high quality research and academic institutions. ORCA is also 100% Afghan-owned and operated, with positive relationships with community leaders, permitting access to all areas of the country.

10 ETHICAL APPROVAL

Survey instruments and research protocol was approved by ICRW's institutional review board (IRB), which was also assured by Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health.

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NOTES ON STUDY

IMAGES data from Afghanistan has been presented in seminars and briefings at The US Institute of Medicine; USAID; The World Bank; Inter-American Development Bank; The US State Department; SIDA; NORAD; DFID; CSW; The US Institute of Peace; UNHCR; WHO; UN Women; UNFPA; The MacArthur Foundation, and others, as well as numerous international NGOs such as CARE, World Vision, and Concern Worldwide.

ORCA noted various challenges that interviewers faced, including respondents not feeling relaxed or comfortable while being asked questions about their relationship experiences and expressing fear that if they responded honestly they would face abuse from their family members. Some female respondents were not permitted to participate by their families. In some cases, village leaders wanted to screen questionnaires word for word, or introduced the most educated or knowledgeable local persons to be interviewed.



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International
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Equality Survey