

# On Positive Parenting: Preventing Disciplinary Violence Against Children Within Egyptian Households

## A Policy Paper



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## Section 1: Executive Summary

Violent disciplinary practices against children is in itself a juxtaposition since violence comes from a place of safety and from those children trust the most; their parents. Parents and caregivers violently discipline their children thinking they are helping them be better. More than 1 billion children around the world, aged 4-17 years old, experience violence (Hillis et al., 2016) from those considered their source of love and safety. In Egypt, 40% of the population is made of children, and 90% of those children have experienced some sort of domestic violence from their caregivers. Using physical, verbal, and sexual violence as a means for discipline is alarming since they lead to short- and long-term effects on children. Moreover, the inflicted cost reaches \$7 Billion every year as a result of violence against children.

The problem of violence against children in Egypt is multi-layered. Parents believe it is a necessity and face societal pressure to use violence to raise socially accepted individuals. The problem is normalized since it is an intergenerational transmission where parents that use violent disciplinary practices with their children were proved to have experienced it themselves growing up. The stressful living conditions of Egyptian families and the financial struggles due to poverty cause parents to use violent disciplinary practices with their children.

Moreover, the Egyptian Child Law is in effect but there is a lack of responsiveness and awareness regarding the rights of children and the responsibility of their parents towards them. Understanding the impact of violent disciplinary practices on children (i.e. psychological, slow development and physical harm) is critical to tackling the issue while involving all stakeholders.

With very little data available on violence against children in Egypt, this can impact the policies formation and directives. However, the Government of Egypt has tried to fight violent disciplinary practices through awareness programs and response mechanisms. Awareness activities such as advertisements on positive discipline and using public figures to model positive parenting approaches have paved the way to capitalizing on existing nation-wide programs. Takafoul w Karama; poverty reduction program, gave access to community leaders to raise awareness through building trust among community members and guiding parents. Another form of response mechanism is the 16000 Egyptian Child Helpline for reporting violent incidents.

Violent disciplinary practices against children require rigorous change in the behavior of communities in Egypt. It is intertwined with different levels of awareness and requires legal reform. To break the normalization of using violence in parenting and to redirect families towards positive discipline, parents need to understand the impact of using violent disciplinary practices to break the cycle.

## Section 2: General Overview

### The Global Level

With the introduction of “the battered child syndrome” in the medical field by Dr. Kempe in 1962, child maltreatment/abuse started to gradually be globally recognized as a “social problem”, namely in the developed countries (Kempe et al., 1985). Since then, this problem has continued to exist to the extent that in 2014-2015, an alarming number of 1 billion children aged 2 to 17 years old experienced physical, sexual, and/or emotional violence or neglect (Hillis et al., 2016). More than 50% of these children were located in Asia, Africa, and North America (Hillis et al., 2016). Such forms of violence against children have a huge impact on societies, costing societies around \$ 7 trillion every year (UN, n.d.). In this context, the Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC] defines violence against children, as can be found in paragraph 1 of article 19 of the convention, as “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment

or exploitation, including sexual abuse,” encompassing forms that are “beyond those relating directly to violence” and “non-intentional forms of harm” (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner [UNOHC], n.d.a). In parallel to this definition, the United Nations has developed two specific targets under their 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to curb this phenomenon. Target 5.3 states “eliminating all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation [FGM]”, and falls under goal 5, “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.” While target 16.2 aims to “end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children,” and falls under goal 16, “promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” (UN, n.d.).

### The Regional Level

In contrast with developed countries, the problem of child abuse and maltreatment was reported to be understudied and underexamined in the Arab countries until the late 1990s (Haj-Yahia & Shor, 1995). Delving deeper into the Middle East and North African regions, the prevalence of child violence can be traced in its different forms. More than 100 million children (ages 2-14) have experienced “violent discipline” by their caregivers, 12 million students (ages 13-15) suffer from bullying at educational institutions and 70% of adolescents (ages 10-19) who died in 2015 were subjected to collective violence; “injuries due to police or military intervention and those resulting from war or civil conflict” (UNICEF, 2018).

Moreover, corporal punishment, whether inflicted by caregivers or teachers, is not forbidden in multiple countries in the region (UNICEF, 2018). Correspondingly, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child [ACRWC] advocates, in article 16 of the charter, safeguarding children “from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and especially physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect or maltreatment including sexual abuse, while in the care of the child” and the formulation of sustainable interventions such as, “special monitoring units,” to ensure the welfare of children (African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990).

## **The Egyptian Context**

Children in Egypt (ages 0-18) constitute 40% of the whole Egyptian community (Mena, 2018). A closer examination of Egyptian society shows that more than 90% of children (ages 1-14) have been subjected to violence, as stated by Khalid Darwish, Advisor to the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood [NCCM] (Al-Masry Al-Youm, 2019). In this context, the Government of Egypt [GOE] formulated a social justice pillar under its Egypt Vision 2030 strategy that promotes “protection, and support to marginalized and vulnerable groups” (Abdel-Latif et al., 2018).

According to the Ministry of Social Solidarity [MOSS], violence against children comprises multiple forms of harm inflicted on children directly or indirectly, such as: neglect, physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, malnutrition, exploitation, child marriage, FGM, human trafficking and forms of violent disciplinary practices. Guided by this definition and the recommendation from the MOSS, this policy paper will focus on forms of violent disciplinary practices against children inflicted by parents in Egyptian households.

## Section 3: What is the problem?

Child discipline is considered to be “a process to help children learn appropriate behaviors and make good choices” (All About Parenting, n.d.). In order to do so, Egyptian families (parents and stepparents) adopt either/both positive or violent disciplinary practices. However, the data demonstrate that violent disciplinary practices are more prevalent to

the extent that 93% of the children aged 1 to 14 were violently disciplined in Egypt in 2014 (Egypt Demographic and Health Survey [EDHS], 2014). It is also alarming to note that Egyptian parents ranked the highest in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to adopt violent disciplinary practices with their children (UNICEF, 2018).

### Forms of Violent Disciplinary Practices

The forms of such violent disciplinary practices in Egypt include physical, verbal, and sexual violence.

**Physical:** this practice includes, “shaking, hitting or slapping on the hand/arm/leg, hitting on the bottom or elsewhere on the body with a hard object, spanking or hitting on the bottom with a bare hand, hitting or slapping the face, head or ears, and hitting hard and repeatedly” (UNICEF, 2018). In 2014, the EDHS reported that 8 out of 10 children in Egypt were physically disciplined, and 4 in 10 children were subjected to severe physical discipline. The adoption of such severe physical disciplinary practices has been significantly increasing and reached 45% in 2018 (UNICEF, 2018) in comparison to 43% in 2014 (EDHS, 2014).

**Verbal:** this practice includes, “shouting, yelling or screaming at a child, and calling a child offensive names such as ‘dumb’ or ‘lazy’” (UNICEF, 2018). Such practice is prevalent to the extent that only 1 out of 10 children (ages 1-14) is not subjected to verbal hostility (EDHS, 2014).

*Example: According to an interview with Dr. Fatma El Zanaty, Owner, El Zanaty & Associates, physical and/or verbal violent disciplinary practices are adopted when a child steals, talks back to their parents, behaves inappropriately, doesn't listen to her/his parents, behaves in a hostile manner and/or breaks or damages something.*

**Sexual:** in the context of child discipline, FGM is considered to be a form of regulating girls' sexual behavior by restraining girls and protecting their chastity. This includes “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia” (UNICEF, 2021). The prevalence of victims of FGM expands to include almost 90% of women (ages 15-49) in Egypt who have been married before, taking into account that the percentage of urban women is around 10% less than rural women (EDHS, 2014). According to Dr. Fatma El Zanaty in the interview, a further investigation of vulnerable families shows that Qalioubia and Aswan represent the highest FGM prevalence rates.

## **Who are the Violently Disciplined Children in Egypt?**

The characteristics of violently disciplined children in Egypt can be inferred from the literature on the topic. Both genders are somewhat equally subjected to violent discipline (EDHS, 2014), with girls experiencing FGM, a form of violent discipline that boys are not subjected to. In terms of the children's educational level, children in the pre-primary stage of education are the most vulnerable to physical discipline, with children in primary, preparatory and secondary education next in line, respectively (Abdel-Fattah, 2020). When it comes to FGM, girls ages 9-12 are the most vulnerable to FGM procedures (EDHS, 2014).

Children that lie under any wealth quintile, be it the lowest or highest, and who have educated or uneducated parents, are all somewhat equal, when it comes to violent discipline (EDHS, 2014). However, girls born in poor families are more likely to undergo FGM than those born in wealthy families (EDHS, 2014). Distinctions between children in urban and rural areas are somewhat non-existent. However, it is important to note that it has been reported that children (ages 1-14) in rural areas suffer more from severe physical discipline than children in urban areas (EDHS, 2014).

## **Which Parents Use Violent Disciplinary Methods Against their Children?**

More than 30% of fathers in vulnerable families do not use any method to discipline their children, according to Dr. Fatma El Zanaty. This was confirmed by the community leaders in rural areas who further explained that fathers stay at coffee-shops all day and neglect their familial duties. On the other end of the spectrum, according to Dr. Fatma El Zanaty, more than 65% of mothers use violent disciplinary practices, while 50% of

fathers in urban and rural governorates were reported to use violent methods of discipline to raise their children. Furthermore, mothers were reported to use verbal more than physical abuse as a form of discipline. As for FGM, mothers who are more educated are less likely to subject their daughters to FGM, unlike mothers who are poorly educated or those who are not educated at all (EDHS, 2014).

## **Causes of Disciplinary Violence Against Children**

Children look up to their parents as protectors from harm and danger. They view family as a safe haven where they are raised to become healthy and productive individuals (National Council for Childhood and Motherhood [NCCM] & UNICEF, 2015). However, multiple causes hinder such development as they

influence parents to adopt violent disciplinary practices. These causes were identified as a result of a comprehensive analysis of desk research, meetings with the following stakeholders: community leaders in rural areas, representatives of the MOSS and the Owner of El Zanaty & Associates.

## Believing in its Necessity:

*Cultural Misconceptions:* violent disciplinary practices against children have been normalized through different beliefs that have been passed down across generations (NCCM & UNICEF, 2015). According to Dr. Fatma El Zanaty, 43% of parents in vulnerable families believe that both verbal and physical disciplinary practices are part of a child's education process and that its use is essential

for child-rearing. As for FGM, fathers believe that undergoing FGM is necessary to increase their daughters' chances of getting married to wealthy men as it is perceived by society as a symbol of purity (Rashad & Sharaf, 2021). Complementing these views are the commonly referred to Egyptian proverbs in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Egyptian Proverbs Dictating Necessity

| Explanation in the Context of Child Discipline  | Meaning   | Proverb  |
|---|---|--|
| The fastest way to stop a child's inappropriate behavior is through violent disciplinary practices.     | Violent expression of 'get it over with'.   | اقطع عرق وسيح دمه  |
| Violently disciplining your daughter will result in her being more developed.                           | Break one of the girl's ribs, and she'll form 24 new ones.  | اكسر للبننت ضلع<br>يطلع لها 24                             |
| Let your child feel pain now (by you), instead of feeling future pain (inflicted by someone else).      | Feeling pain for one hour is better than feeling pain every hour.   | وجع ساعة ولا<br>كل ساعة                                    |
| Those who hurt me with words to teach me a lesson are better than those who do not.                     | Those who make me cry and cry for me are better than those who make me laugh and make other people laugh at me. | يا بخت من بكاني<br>وبكى عليا، ولا ضحكني<br>وضحك الناس عليا |
| If you beat one of your children for making a mistake, your other children will fear making it as well. | Beat the person who is tied up and the person who is free will get afraid.                                      | إضرب المربوط<br>يخاف السائب                                |
| If a child cries, he is not a man.  | Men don't cry.  | الراجل مبيعيطش   |
| If a child gets afraid, he is not a man.  | Men don't get afraid.   | الراجل مبيخفش  |
| If a child gets embarrassed, he is not a man.   | Men don't feel embarrassed.   | الراجل مبيتكسفش  |

Source: Compiled by the authors from Barnameg Heya wa Bas, 2019, Ka'emet amthal masreya, 2021 & Amthal Masreya, 2021.

## **Religious Misconceptions:**

In Islamic religion, parents tend to misapprehend religious testimonies that describe forms of nonviolent physical discipline pertaining to religious prayers.

They argue that these testimonies imply that to teach children appropriate behaviors in general, parents can inflict corporal and/or psychological punishments (UNICEF & International Islamic Center for Population Studies and Research [IICPSR], 2016).

In the words of Prophet Mohamed [Pbuh]:  
 “Command your children to pray when they become seven years old and beat them for it (prayer) when they become ten years old ...”

*Source: UNICEF and IICPSR, 2016*

The Hadith states that beating is required for children, aged 10 years old, if they do not perform their prayers on a daily basis (UNICEF & IICPSR, 2016). Al Azhar University explained

that “beat” indicates “light beating” that does not instigate psychological or physical damage to children (UNICEF & IICPSR, 2016). Islam forbids, as well, the use of all forms of physical, verbal or sexual violence as methods to raise children (UNICEF & IICPSR, 2016). On a similar note, parents also refer to “weak and flawed” hadiths when justifying FGM practices (UNICEF & IICPSR, 2016). However, when examining whether or not FGM is encouraged by Islam and Christianity, it has been found that all testimonies refute the practice in its entirety. In Islam, there is not a verse in the Quran or an “authentic” hadith that states that Muslim girls are obliged to be circumcised. Correspondingly, in Christianity, FGM is disapproved by the Church and is dictated as a cruel violent practice. There is also no rationalization behind the FGM practice in the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible (BLESS & UNICEF, 2016).

## **Familial and/or Societal Pressure**

According to Dr. Fatma El Zanaty, more than 30% of parents in vulnerable families indicated that other parents will think less of them if they do not adopt physical violent practices to discipline their children when they misbehave in public. More specifically, mothers are more pressured to use such practices as a result of believing that people will think less of them if they do not, more than fathers. Additionally, and most predominantly seen in rural areas, mothers-in-law tend to force their grandchildren’s mother to circumcise their granddaughters, according to community leaders. In such

instances, fathers follow their mother’s advice blindly due to their belief that it is in favor of their daughters and while some mothers might disapprove, fathers have the final say on the action. Additionally, community leaders also explained that girls who do not undergo the procedure are shamed by their villages and do not get married as a consequence. On a national level, this is also the case for educated women who might not be in favor of FGM yet are obliged to have their daughters circumcised to conform with Egyptian social norms (Rashad & Sharaf, 2021).

## Intergenerational Transmission of Violence

The cycle of violence is mostly initiated by perpetrators who inflict violence on mothers, according to the MOSS representative. When these mothers are subjected to violence, they let it out on their children. More specifically,

mothers who experience any sort of domestic violence inflicted by their husbands, parents or siblings are more likely to use physically violent disciplinary practices (Abdel-Fattah, 2020).

### Stressful Living Conditions:

**Due to Low Economic Status:** parents' income level may not be a differing factor in the prevalence of disciplinary violence in general. However, particular forms of violence are more commonly adopted by parents from low economic levels than by others due to the amount of stress that results from lack of enough money and not having the sufficient means for living. Indeed, the rates of verbal aggression, physical punishment and severe physical punishment increase as the wealth quintile decreases (EDHS, 2014). While low economic status may be a result of unemployment, it can also be due to low educational attainment. Low educational attainment can be one of the variables that decrease the possibilities of working in high-income jobs in governorates such as Suez Governorate (El-Ellemi & Moustafa, 2013). Working in modest occupations results in a buildup of stress that eventually leads parents to use violent discipline practices with their children (El-Ellemi & Moustafa, 2013).

**Due to COVID-19:** enforced social distancing and quarantining, as a result of the pandemic, may lead to an increased risk of being subjected to violent disciplinary practices

(UNICEF et al., 2020). A closer assessment conducted in Sohag governorate shows that since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, some parents have developed post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD], which led them to exercise violent disciplinary practices on their children to nine times more than the average (AboKresha, Abdelkreem & Ali, 2021).

**Due to Irregular Family Situations:** single parents who raise their children on their own either due to the death of their spouse or as a result of divorce tend to physically punish their children, according to a study in Alexandria (Youssef et al., 1998). This occurs as a result of their agony and need to readjust their lives to perform responsibilities and duties of both parents to raise their children appropriately (Youssef et al., 1998).

**Due to Over-crowdedness:** heads of big-size households face difficulties when leading their large families. Accordingly, this heightens their chances to react violently when their children misbehave, according to an examination of preparatory and secondary school children in Alexandria (Youssef et al., 1998).

## Parental Substance Abuse

Consuming illegal drugs and alcohol, and/or smoking cigarettes by parents are other variables that could lead to the use of violent physical disciplinary practices as indicated by

preparatory and secondary school children in a study conducted in Alexandria (Youssef et al., 1998).

## Lack of Responsive Measures & Laws

Recent findings have shown that more than 80% of the parents residing in Cairo, Alexandria and Assiut, are not fully cognizant of Egypt's current Child Law and its respective clauses that regulate the life of Egyptian children and ensure they are not subjected to any form of violence (NCCM & UNICEF, 2015). In a narrower sense, according to Dr. Fatma El Zanaty, most parents in vulnerable families across all Egyptian governorates seem to lack an awareness of the existence of the

afore-mentioned child laws and regulations. More specifically, parents who live in urban governorates or Lower Egypt are reported to be the least aware of the existing legislations. Not only that, but also only 26% of parents are aware that a child can report being subjected to violence, and when these parents were asked about the existing reporting channels, only 15% mentioned the child hotline and 45% mentioned the police.

## The Negative Impact of Violent Disciplinary Practices

Children in Egypt are considered to be vulnerable and marginalized members of the community. Indeed, the use of violent disciplinary practices instigate dangerous psychological and physical implications on the children that are sometimes catastrophic. While the level of impact differs from family

to family, the impact is always negative. To provide a thorough and comprehensive image of the magnitude of the problem, this paper demonstrates the problem's both short-term and long-term effects on the child, followed by the national cost of violent discipline.

## Short-term Effects:

**Fragile Psychological Well-being:** according to Dr. Fatma El Zanaty, when children are violently disciplined, this might trigger resentment and hostility observed in the child's general behavior, shattered self-esteem, feelings of rejection, trauma, fear, anxiety, insecurity (NCCM & UNICEF, 2015) and the possibility of the child's development of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (Abdel-Fattah, 2020).

**Slow Development:** verbal and physical abuse inflicted by parents, specifically beating and shouting, negatively influences a child's learning journey (NCCM & UNICEF, 2015).

**Physical Harm:** the usage of any form of physical violence might cause non-fatal injuries, such as: minor trauma and superficial

wounds or abrasions, or fatal injuries (NCCM & UNICEF, 2015). While FGM could lead to "death, urinary problems, excessive bleeding, genital tissue swelling, infections and severe pain" (Rashad & Sharaf, 2021).

**Unhealthy Relationships:** according to Dr. Fatma El Zanaty, violently disciplined children tend to behave aggressively when interacting with others. More specifically, they tend to have unstable relationships with their parents. Such relationships are shaped by the lack of trust (UNICEF, 2019a).

**Violent Behavior:** severe physical punishment inflicted on children increases their adoption of violence through kicking or hitting other children or adults twice as often as other children (UNICEF & MENARO, 2018).

## Long-term Effects:

**Fragile Psychological Well-being:** grown-ups who were subjected to physical disciplinary violence as children suffer from unhappiness, depression and nervousness. In addition, they develop negative feelings directed at their parents (UNICEF, 2019a). Moreover, women who were subjected to FGM might experience depression, anxiety and/or post-traumatic stress disorder (Mulongo et al., 2014). Furthermore, encountering these psychological impacts as children could lead younger people to consume drugs (WHO, 2020).

**Slow Development:** another effect of subjecting children to physical discipline is that the child's brain might not normally develop to its full potential (UNICEF, 2019a).

**Physical Harm:** in the context of FGM, females might suffer from infertility, child

birth difficulties and potential risk of deaths to their new born, problems in urination, among other struggles (NCCM & UNICEF, 2015).

**Unhealthy Relationships:** those who suffered from physical and verbal abuse, as a disciplinary method, grow detached from their parents and tend to not share their problems with them (UNICEF, 2019a). It also influences their character as when they grow up, they tend to depend on violence when they treat their spouses or children (UNICEF, 2018). When it comes to these adults' interactions with society, there is a higher chance that they will be subjected to physical abuse by individuals other than their parents in the future (UNICEF, 2019a).

## The Cost of Violent Discipline

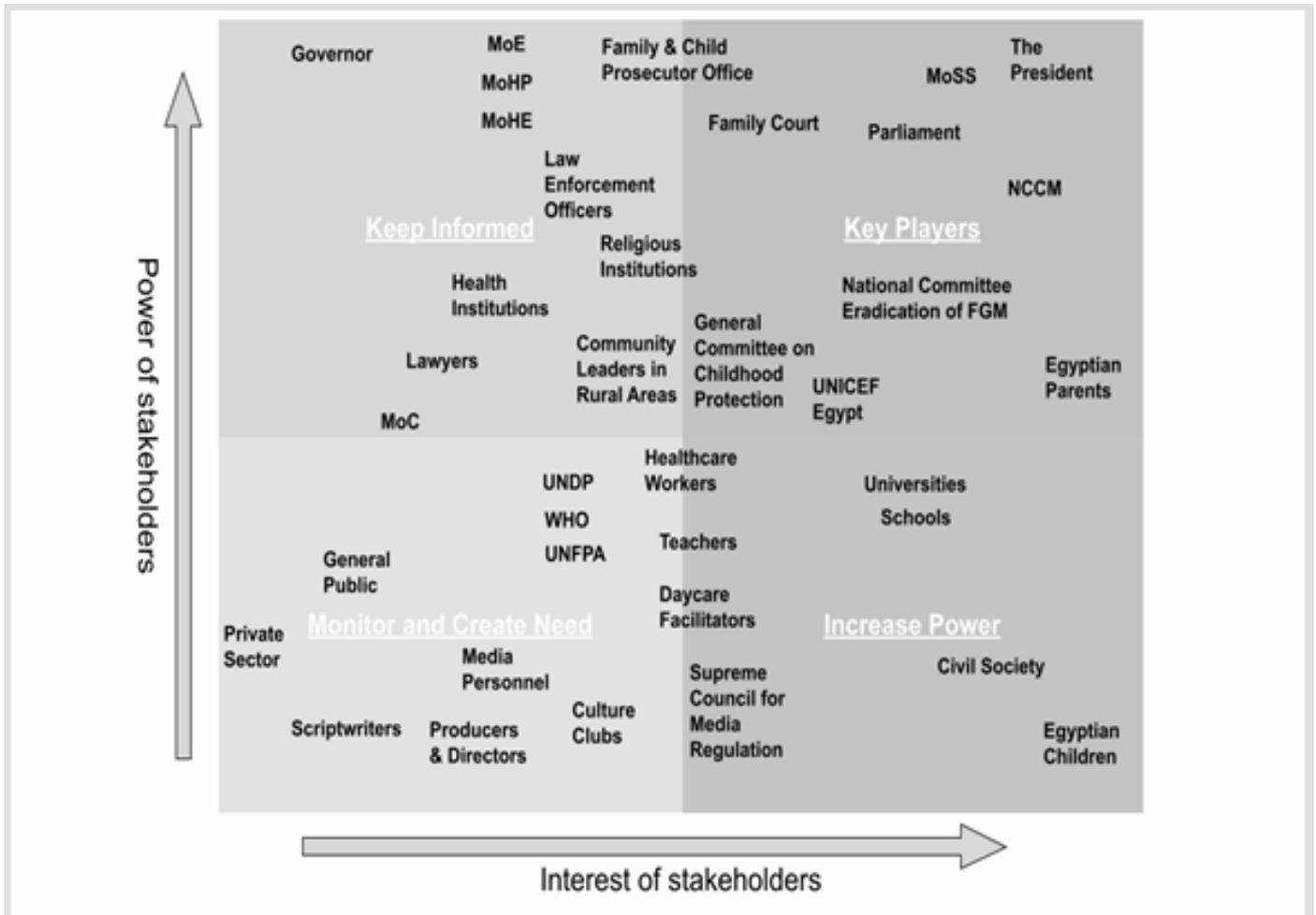
**Table 2** - The cost of violent discipline by cost bearer and cost type

| Cost Bearer   | Direct Cost  | Indirect Cost  | Intangible Cost   |
|---|--|--|---|
| Children (who are victims of disciplinary violence) | No direct cost   | No indirect cost   | Fragile psychological well-being, physical harm, slow development and unhealthy relationships |
| Parents (who inflict violence on children)          | Health services: medical professionals and medicine  | No indirect cost   | Unhealthy relationships with their children   |
| Government of Egypt [GOE]                           | <p>Child welfare response services: social care institutions, health services (hospitals, psychologists, medical professionals &amp; medical resources), legal services (police officers, police stations, prisons, public prosecution) and help hotline by NCCM.</p> <p>Policy interventions: media ads, on-ground awareness campaigns: community leaders in rural areas, RapidPro application, policy research centers and educational programs.</p> | <p>Forecasted deficit as a result of physical punishment: \$96.2 billion/year (Daily News, 2015).</p> <p>Loss of high-caliber human capital.</p> | No intangible cost  |

Source: Inspired by the 2015 Egypt Economic Cost of Gender-Based Violence Survey [ECGBVS] (CAPMAS et al., 2016).

# Section 4: How is it being tackled and what are the gaps in that?

## Stakeholders Mapping



**Figure 1** - Power-Interest Matrix

Source: Authors, based on literature review and meetings with diverse stakeholders.

## **Background Characteristics of Parents**

This section identifies and analyses the main group targeted by stakeholders, parents, to tackle the issue of disciplinary violence against children as they are the main perpetrators. It provides a general overview of the environment in which they reside, according to their place of residence: urban and rural areas. This analysis is essential to provide more insights in recommending effective policy interventions.

Strolling around an urban area in Egypt, one may notice that the typical household consists of 3.9 members, while in rural areas, the typical household consists of 4.4 members. However, most of the households, whether in urban or rural areas, are male-headed ones, as shown in **Table 3**. As one enters these households, one may notice that most of them do not own a telephone line nor a cassette, as shown in **Figures 2.a and 2.b**. However, most of them in both rural and urban areas own a color TV and a dish TV connection. As for cell phones, most of those residing in urban areas own smartphones unlike those residing in rural ones. A further overview shows that more than 50% of households in both areas own computers and have access to the internet.

Nevertheless, their extent of exposure to media outlets differs by media type and gender. As shown in **Figure 3**, most men and women in urban and rural areas tend to watch TV more than turning on the radio, reading through newspapers or scrolling through digital media. Moreover, in both rural and urban areas, most men tend to turn on the radio, read a newspaper, or navigate through digital media more than women. Moreover, in both urban and rural areas, women and men get information on female circumcision from watching television, with their partner/peers/

neighbors/family members coming next in line, with women receiving information about FGM from the latter source more than men (an average of 47% of women compared to 31.1%) (Egypt Health Issues Survey, 2015). Health care providers, community meetings and educational sessions were not commonly reported by both genders in urban and rural areas.

When it comes to their education and employment, as shown in **Table 3**, a small percentage of individuals who reside in urban areas reported to have received a university education, with no significant difference between men and women. In comparison, the percentage of individuals with a university education in rural areas is less than 8%. Moreover, one may also find that the percentage of women who are illiterate is more than the percentage of men, with 17.7% of the total urban population being illiterate. Similarly, the percentage of illiterate women in rural areas is higher than men, with 32.2% of the total rural population being illiterate. According to statistics, the number of employed persons in urban areas who are 15 years old and older is 110,670 while the average income/family is EGP 66,790/year. However, in rural areas, the number of employed persons is 151,319 and the average income/family is EGP 52,140/year. Moreover, the number of unemployed women is less than the number of unemployed men in urban and rural areas.

Gender dominance in urban-area households have somewhat equal power dynamics, while rural-area households are mainly male-dominant ones. As shown in urban areas, a rather low percentage of women (21.3%) believe that husbands have a final say regardless of their wives' opinion. However, around half the women in rural areas (50.5%) believe that, even if she is not convinced, her husband has the final say regardless of her opinion (CAPMAS et al., 2016). On a similar note, as **Figure 4** shows, the percentage of women who have been subjected to any form of spousal violence is 37.9% and 51.8% in urban and rural areas, respectively. A low percentage of women justify wives being subjected to domestic violence by their husbands in urban areas (10.5%) in comparison to rural areas (32.8%) (CAPMAS et al., 2016). This is further reflected in the statistics of women who ask for help when subjected to physical violence. According to Egypt's DHS (2014), 42% of women in urban areas have asked for help inferring that there is, indeed, hope in women reporting cases

of violence. On the other hand, women in rural areas' help-seeking behavior have been reported to be mostly non-existent, given that more than half of the women (50.4%) did not seek help nor spoke of it to anyone about it.

Examining FGM, one can find that most urban women are circumcised, and almost 93% of women in rural areas are circumcised (CAPMAS et al., 2016). Also, as shown in **Figure 5**, the percentage of men in urban areas who want to carry on adopting FGM practices are more than that of women. However, the percentage is almost the same in rural areas of women and men who want to continue this harmful practice. A high percentage of men and women in rural areas also believe that FGM prevents adultery. In urban areas, most men and women know that FGM could kill girls. Second in line and equally significant, 44.1% of men and 35.7% of women in urban areas believe that men fancy women who are circumcised, more than other women.

## **The Legal Framework**

Egypt is obliged to adhere to the Convention of the Rights of the Child [CRC] and all the other relevant international covenants. Egypt, along with a few countries in the MENA region, has stipulated a rigorous child

law that supports the well-being of children and provides them with a safe environment (UNICEF, 2018). The Egyptian Child Law conforms to all international laws and requirements as detailed in this section.

## International Conventions

**Table 4** - Existing international conventions on the topic signed and ratified by Egypt

| Convention   | Description and Assessment Rules  |
|--|---|
| Convention of the Rights of the Child [CRC]                  | <b>Article 2.2, 3.2 &amp; 5:</b> The state should ensure the commitment of the state to protect children from any type of discrimination or violence perpetrated by a child's parent, legal guardian or family member while acknowledging, parallelly, both the rights and duties of the parents/legal guardian.  |
|  | <b>Article 16:</b> The state should safeguard the right of the child to not be subjected to any "arbitrary or unlawful interference with his/her privacy" or any "unlawful attacks on his/her honor and reputation".  |
|  | <b>Article 19:</b> The state should protect children from "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse" while the child is in the care of his/her parent/legal guardian by taking "all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures". |
|  | <b>Article 39:</b> The state should take "all appropriate measures" to ensure both physical and psychological recovery of any child victim of "any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse".  |
| Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [CRPD] | <b>Article 16:</b> The state should take "all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, educational, and other measures" to protect children with disabilities "both within and outside the home" from exploitation, abuse and violence.   |
| Disabilities [CRPD]  | violence.   |

Source: Authors, based on UNOHC (n.d.a), and UNOHC (n.d.b).

## Egyptian Legislations

**Table 5** - Existing legislations in Egypt on the topic

| Convention                |  | Description and Assessment Rules   |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Egypt's 2014 Constitution |  | <b>Article 80:</b> The child has the right to have a rightful emotional and cognitive development, and the state shall protect children from “all forms of violence, abuse, mistreatment, and commercial and sexual exploitation”.   |
| FGM Law                   | <i>Order No. 261 of 8 July 1996</i>                        | <b>Order 26:</b> It is forbidden to perform circumcision on females either in hospitals or public or private clinics. The procedure can only be performed in cases of disease and when approved by the head of the obstetrics and gynecology department at the hospital, and upon the suggestion of the treating physician - the operation can't be performed by non-physicians. Performance of this operation will be considered a violation of the laws governing the medical profession.  |
|                           | <i>Law No. 78 of 2016</i>                                  | <b>Article 242-BIS:</b> Provides a definition for FGM as “acts of female genital mutilation, by removing any of the external female genital organs, whether in part or in whole, or by inflicting any injuries to these organs without medical justification”.   |
|                           | <i>Law No. 78 of 2016</i>                                  | <p><b>Article 242-BIS (A):</b> criminalizes the performance of FGM to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physician &amp; nurse (2021 amendments) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- rigorous imprisonment from 3 to 15 years.</li> <li>- imprisonment for a period of not less than 10 years with hard work (if led to permanent disability)</li> <li>- imprisonment for a period of not less than 15 years and not exceeding 20 years (if led to death).</li> <li>- suspension from his/her position and facility being closed for a period not exceeding 5 years.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Non-medical practitioners (2021 amendments) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- imprisonment for a period of no less than 5 years.</li> <li>- Imprisonment for a period of no less than 7 years with hard labor (if led to permanent disability).</li> <li>- imprisonment for a period of no less than 10 years (if led to death).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Escorts (2016) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- imprisonment for a period of 1 to 3 years.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|                           | Ministerial Resolution No. 238, issued by the MOHP in 2003 | Ministerial Resolution 238: Stated that a <u>physician must inform the competent authorities of injuries and accidents of criminal suspicion</u> . Though not specifically referring to FGM at the time, it became applicable once FGM was criminalized.   |

## Egyptian Legislations

**Table 5** - Existing legislations in Egypt on the topic

| Convention |                        | Description and Assessment Rules  |
|------------|------------------------|---|
| Child Law  | Child Law No. 2008/126 | <p><b>Article 3:</b> The law mentions specifically the state’s responsibility to make sure that the child is being protected “from all forms of violence, or injury, or physical, mental or sexual abuse, or negligence, or negligent treatment, or any other forms of maltreatment or exploitation” and is aware of pertinent information that both protects and empowers him/her.</p>   |
|            |                        | <p><b>Article 7-BIS (A):</b> “With due consideration to the duties and rights of the person who is responsible for the care of the child, and his right to discipline him through legitimate means, it is prohibited to intentionally expose the child to any illegitimate physical abuse or harmful practice. The Sub-Committee for Child Protection may undertake legal procedures in the event of violations of the preceding paragraph.”</p> <p>مادة 7-مكررا (أ): “مع مراعاة واجبات وحقوق متولي رعاية الطفل، وحقه في التأديب المباح شرعاً، يحظر تعريض الطفل عمداً لأي إيذاء بدني ضار أو ممارسة ضارة أو غير مشروعة. وللجنة الفرعية لحماية الطفولة المختصة اتخاذ الإجراءات القانونية عند مخالفة نص الفقرة السابقة.”</p> |
|            |                        | <p><b>Article 96:</b> A child shall be considered at risk if exposed to a situation within the household threatening his/her safety, morals, health or life including abuse and violent practices. Punishment: any person who puts a child at risk shall be imprisoned for a period of not less than 6 months, and a fine of not less than EGP 2,000 and not more than EGP 5,000, or by one of the two penalties.</p>   |
|            |                        | <p><b>Article 98-BIS:</b> Any <u>person who finds</u> that a child is at risk <u>should provide urgent help</u> that is adequate to shield or remove this child from danger.</p>  |

Source: Authors, based on Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2018; Egypt’s Constitution, 2014; The Cabinet & National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, 2008; Egypt Today, 2021; African Child Policy Forum, 2019

## Main National Policies

For the past 10 years, the GOE made considerable strides to address violent disciplinary practices adopted by Egyptian parents. Different governmental institutions have initiated multiple collaborations with different institutions, international organizations, NGOs and the like. Nevertheless, there are a number of gaps

that can be found within recent and ongoing responsive policies given the high prevalence of violent disciplinary practices in Egyptian society today. These gaps will be illustrated below preceded by a description of each policy, if needed. Each policy is categorized under either awareness mechanisms or response mechanisms.

## Non-Digital Awareness Tools

**Religious Figures:** religious figures have a high impact on the vulnerable population, and the MOSS is aware of the influence of Sheikhs and Priests. As such, the MOSS has initiated talks with the Heads of Al Azhar Al Sharif and the Egyptian Church to deliver the intended messages pertaining to the use of positive disciplinary practices.

### Forecasted Gap:

→ Ineffective awareness delivery: some religious figures believe in the necessity of adopting physical violence when raising children (NCCM & UNICEF, 2015) and could therefore communicate false religious claims that promote such practices.

**Community Leaders in Rural Areas (Ra'edat):** according to representatives from the MOSS and Ra'edat, the ministry utilizes its large network of female social workers, who work directly with mothers and families within their vulnerable communities, to educate and raise awareness on positive parenting through "Wa'ey" awareness program. "Wa'ey" targets families in Takafol and Karama program where each Ra'eda is responsible for 100+ families. Each Ra'eda is responsible for training mothers on positive parenting based on the current problem of their children's age group. To provide these trainings, the Ra'edat are provided with training

materials and visuals to help make the topic more appealing and they also receive communication skills training and training on positive parenting to help them in creating connections with mothers and families and have a strong knowledge base to depend on. Positive parenting knowledge-delivery could be conducted in large community gatherings of 10+ women (mothers and mothers-to-be). Also, some Ra'edat use their social media accounts to raise awareness on the topic among their community. Most importantly, the Ra'eda is able to build trust and form strong relationships with mothers to the extent that she can be contacted by them for concerns and inquiries.

Additions to this program have also been planned, according to a meeting with the representatives from the MOSS. The program's target population is planned to expand to include, not only beneficiaries of the Takafol and Karama program, but also all families who fall under the poverty line. The ministry also plans to integrate university medicine/nursing/social work students within the program to train around 50-100 families to fulfill their community service requirements. Knowledge-delivery is also on the ministry's agenda to be improved where the representatives explained that the ministry is working on equipping each Ra'eda with a tablet to enable her to present the media resources she is provided in an attractive manner.

#### Existing Gap:

→ Communitygatheringsasanawarnesstool: First, conversations pertaining to parenting habits and what happens within closed doors is a very sensitive and personal topic. Therefore, it is problematic when these topics are not discussed one-to-one, impacting their effectiveness. Second, as illustrated above, mediums such as educational sessions and community meetings have not been highly reported as sources of information about FGM. Lastly, given that one of the causes of violent disciplinary practices against children is social pressure, discussing this topic on a community level might prevent some parents who wish to change their ways to speak out and ask for guidance on how to do so.

→ Ra'edats' high case-load: given that each Rae'da is mandated to be responsible for 100+ families, this could reinforce being responsible for a large number of

families rather than succeeding in altering the behavior of these families. Also, this hinders the Ra'edat from connecting with these mothers on a personal level to have a stronger impact on them.

→ Ra'edat communicate to women only: not communicating with fathers about positive parenting is problematic for several reasons. First, fathers need to be spoken to given that they adopt violent disciplinary practices against their children. Second, fathers might affect the effectiveness of communicating with mothers due to the fact that they are reported to have an equal or dominant say in households which could mean that they could force women not to follow positive parenting practices, if they believe otherwise. Lastly and most importantly, fathers need to participate in such conversations given that they are reported to stay in coffee-shops all day long and are not aware of parenting methods to begin with.

→ The high influence of mothers-in-law (father's mother): while the FGM practice is decreasing, mothers-in-law are very influential in the continuation of subjecting girls to this harmful practice as they consider it essential for preserving the chastity of young girls. Fathers follow the advice of their mothers blindly to avoid being shamed in their communities. Talking about religion does not have an impact since all mothers-in-law were subjected to FGM and believe in its necessity for girls to marry a good man

## Digital Awareness Tools

*RapidPro Program:* the representatives of the MOSS stated that their interactive communication platform (Manaset El Tawasol El Tafa'oly) is dependent on RapidPro [1442 SMS Hotline], which is designed to support sending and receiving SMSs using basic mobile phones. The MOSS sends out awareness messages on specific topics related to the focus of "Wa'ey" to vulnerable families under Takafol and Karama program. Moreover, vulnerable families can send inquiries to the MOSS, and the MOSS provides a guiding response accordingly.

Existing Gap:

→ **RapidPro is used to target only one sector of the Egyptian population:** while the dependence on SMSs is mainly due to the unavailability of smartphones or access to the internet, messages are not disseminated to each individual across the sectors of society, who also need awareness on violent disciplinary practices.

*Media Channels (radio, TV, social media & print):* according to the representative of the MOSS, the ministry reaches out to its target audience, who are vulnerable families under the poverty line, by placing advertisements promoting positive parenting on the Qur'aan Radio Station. Moreover, the MOSS communicates with script-writers and directors to promote the concept of positive parenting through TV series they produce. The slogan #\_السنيين\_ (EarlyMomentsMatter) in 2018 was promoted through social media videos as a collaboration between the UNICEF and the NCCM to educate fathers on positive parenting practices and their role in raising children (Deif, 2018). In 2019, the third phase of Egypt's 'اولادنا' (OurChildren) media campaign produced the slogan 'بالهداوة مش' (CalmNotHarm) as a collaboration

between the Ministry of Education [MOE], the European Union [EU], NCCM and the UNICEF to enlighten parents on positive parenting methods. This slogan was led by the two celebrities, Mona Zaki and Ahmed Helmy and comprised awareness communication content on both the TV and social media. Moreover, the NCCM, the UNICEF and The Family Experts produced mini parenting master classes that can be accessed through the YouTube and/or the UNICEF webpage to educate parents on how to deal with their children in stressful situations during COVID-19 using positive parenting techniques. Lastly, the MOSS, in collaboration with the UNICEF and the EU, also created 'دليل 'التربية الأسرية الإيجابية' (The Positive Parenting Toolkit) which included alternative practices to be adopted instead of violent disciplinary practices (UNICEF, 2019b).

Existing Gap:

→ **Radio stations do not cater to all audiences:** as shown above, less than half of the population listen to radio stations and they do not all listen to the Qur'aan radio station. Moreover, the Egyptian population are not all Muslims.

→ **Utilization of TV as a channel of communication for this issue is not maximized to its full potential:** this poses a problem given that, as shown in the target group assessment above, TV has been found to be the most frequently used channel by Egyptians. Nevertheless, this gap is due to the fact that TV advertisements are very costly, and money spent on them is utilized for direct vulnerability-tackling interventions instead.

## Responsive Mechanisms

*The Child Helpline:* in 2005, the NCCM established the child helpline [16000] as a mechanism for children to report any form of violence or abuse they are subjected to. The initiative was in partnership with the associated ministries, governors' offices, health insurance authority, the psychological service center of Ain-Shams University, NGOs and the private sector [acting as sponsors] (NCCM, n.d.). Based on the interview with the representatives of the MOSS, it was identified that the NCCM is acting more as a mediator, where the council would refer the child's case to the relevant ministry based on the nature of the complaint. The MOSS can only intervene if the referral is of a child experiencing child abuse in one of the orphanages or in a registered non-governmental organization under the MOSS. However, in the context of child abuse in families, the complaint in this case is referred from the NCCM to the prosecutor's office directly, and the role of the MOSS is only to provide psychological support and rehabilitation and/or shelter services for the child.

Existing Gap:

→ **Most children are unaware of the child helpline:** more than 90% of children in Alexandria, Assiut and Cairo reported that they are unaware of ways to seek help when being subjected to violent disciplinary practices, including utilizing the child helpline (UNICEF, 2015). As can be inferred from examining the interventions mentioned above, this could be due to the fact that most awareness messages in general are directed to parents. Indeed, it seems that there are almost no messages that directly speak to children about not-accepting such violent disciplinary practices and on how to report such practices.

→ Most children are hesitant to report: according to the interview conducted with the Ra'edat, most children are usually reluctant to report any wrongful practices inflicted by their parents.

*Psycho-social support interventions:* the MOSS provides social workers to support children at-risk according to the MOSS representatives. The ratio of social workers who provide psycho-social support to children is 30,000 to 1.

Exciting and Forecasted Gap:

→ **Insufficient number of social workers who can provide psychosocial support:** While this creates a problem for children who need such support now, this will become a bigger problem when society becomes more aware of the existing responsive measures.

*'Nabtet Masr' Mobile Application:* in the context of childhood and motherhood, the NCCM in 2021 introduced a mobile application that is divided into 3 sections and can be downloaded on both App Store and Google Play (Hesham & El Hebal, 2021). The first section provides an overview on the council and its respective contact information. The second includes guidelines on positive parenting, health, existing legislations, and COVID-19. The third section includes a mechanism for reporting the following issues: child in danger, child missing, child has been found through an application form. It also includes a form for support and consultations (Hesham & El Hebal, 2021).

Forecasted Gap:

→ **Lack of awareness of the mobile application:** guided by the argument presented above, both children and parents might not be aware of this application and therefore may not be able to benefit from its many services.

*Egyptian Legislations:* these include articles in the Egyptian 2014 Constitution, FGM law and Child Law.

Existing Gap:

→ **FGM - discrepancy between penalties for escorts and perpetrators:** while law No. 78 of 2016 was amended comprising tougher penalties for perpetrators, the review did not cover the escorts who are the main reason behind the continuation of the FGM practice.

→ **Child Law - reality does not match legislations:** interventions on this topic do not address children, as explained above, even though the law mandates that children should be granted all information necessary for their protection and empowerment.

→ Child Law - existing undefined and problematic terms: as described in Article 7-BIS (A), parents/caregivers have the right to discipline their children guided by Islamic religion. According to the law, inflicting violence on children is prohibited. However, the fact that the clause does not define clearly what is meant by “التأديب المباح شرعاً” and the use of “عمداً” pose controversies in court.

→ **Child Law - protection penalty poses a threat to the child:** given that the child’s best interest is to be cared for by his/her parents, in reference to article 96, if a parent gets imprisoned for a period of at least 6 months, this could negatively impact the child.

→ Child Law - lack of awareness of how/when to act and its consequences: citizens are unaware of how/when to report an incident of a child at-risk including FGM and other types of violence. There are confusions on when one should report an incident that is supposed to take place in the future, is taking place now or already took place in the past. The law does not clearly state the time period or the process of reporting.

## Section 5: What policy options can be implemented today?

While several policies are reaching their intended outcomes, a more holistic and comprehensive approach with a focus on specific targets is indispensable to curb the outgrowing dilemma of violent disciplinary practices. The policy options proposed in

this paper are guided by social behavioral change approaches and will be evaluated according to specific measurable criteria in order to assess and decide on the proper policy alternative to manage this problem and achieve the intended results.

### Policy Options/Alternatives:

#### #1 - Capitalizing on 'Waa'y' program:

Recruiting males from the community as [1] 'Rowad' to informally discuss parenting methods with fathers in informal communication settings, such as kahwa (coffee-shops), is recommended. As for the Ra'edat, they are recommended to [2] conduct one-on-one meetings with members of vulnerable families to complement their existing activities, which may require the number of Ra'edat to gradually increase. In the long run, based on the outcome of these conversations, Rowad and Ra'edat can organize [3] positive parenting workshops that include role-playing activities for both parents to practice the use of positive disciplinary practices. Rowad and Ra'edat can also be encouraged to [4] continue developing communication channels for members that can access them, such as social media accounts and WhatsApp groups for parents to reach out to them. On a different note, inspired by the success of GIZ Egypt's awareness campaigns on water-conservation, it is recommended that [5] children be informed about positive parenting practices through edutainment tools (games, stories) to act as a 'Al Ra'ed/ Ra'eda Al Sagheer' that both advocates for positive parenting practices and challenges wrongful disciplinary practices.

#### #2 - Building more integrated awareness outreach methods:

Regarding direct communication tools, it is recommended that awareness on [1] positive parenting text messages be disseminated to the entire population through SMSs or WhatsApp messages with the support of Corporate Social Responsibility Departments in telecommunications companies and civil society organizations. The purpose of this is to provide individuals who have no knowledge of the topic a glimpse of it to pave the way for more customized awareness tools. Also, WhatsApp as a platform was recommended by UNICEF in its recent guidance report (UNICEF, 2020). Jordan has also resorted to establishing community-based WhatsApp groups for parents of children under the age of 6 years, to respond to COVID-19 (ibid, p. 9). To ensure that the message is shared and disseminated with a wide variety of people, especially in light of the outbreak of COVID-19.

**Example: Communication messages can be personalized to ensure they are recalled and relatable enough to have an impact by including Egyptian proverbs related to parenting such as:**

”أقلب القدرة على فهمها تطلع البنت لأمها“ --- ”العلم عند الصغر كالنقش على الحجر“ --- ”ان كبر ابنك خاويه“ --- ”القفة اللي ليها ودنين يشيلوها اتنين“ --- ”إبن الوز عوام“.

## Policy Options/Alternatives:

As for [2] radio channels, it is recommended that more radio stations are utilized to cater to the entire population. Since [3] TV channels are the most popular communication channel used by Egyptians, the MOSS is recommended to collaborate with the Supreme Council for Media Regulation to review all series and movies before they are aired. The MOSS is also recommended to capitalize on its efforts [4] with script-writers and directors and support the creation of a new TV series, similar to the successful 'Ela-Ana', part 2 series considering its effective impact. The MOSS can further utilize [5] renowned celebrities such as: Mohamed Salah, to volunteer in a TV advertisement to promote the significance of positive disciplinary practices. This is based on his former success in the 'No Drug' TV advertisement and its respective impact. As mandated by law, it is recommended for the Ministry of Justice to work with the MOSS and the MOE to ensure that Egyptian children are equipped with all the necessary information pertaining to protection and empowerment. Moreover, [6] both the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Egyptian Endowment Authority are recommended to disseminate verses and claims from religious texts that advocate against violent disciplinary practices. To correct any possible misconceptions about disciplinary practices imposed by religion, Al Azhar University is recommended to [7] develop and implement training material and sessions for its students. Finally, the Egyptian Endowment Authority is recommended to [8] foster round-table discussions with existing religious figures with diverse views to tackle the wrongful misconceptions and put an end to their dissemination.

**#3 - Improving existing responsive tools:** It is recommended to [1] introduce additional features to 'Nabtet Masr' mobile application. It is also recommended to [2] raise the awareness of parents about the mobile application through mediums such as the MOSS' social media accounts. It is also recommended to capitalize on the existing child helpline through [3] utilizing it as both a reporting line and a national psychological support line for children. Introducing the psychological support line will both make children aware of the existence of the hotline and encourage them to seek help from others. Additionally, it is recommended to [4] increase the awareness of children about the child helpline through different channels accessible to them. It is also recommended [5] to increase the number of social workers who provide psycho-social support. Complementing the above recommendations, existing legislations that pertain to violent disciplinary practices are recommended to be amended as well. Also, new legislations are recommended to be drafted. These amendments include: [6] harshening the penalty stated in law no. 78 of 2016 for those who escort girls to perform FGM, [7] including a clear definition of specific terms in Article 7-BIS (A) and removing altogether other terms as well to avoid any controversy in that matter. Moreover, [8] mandating by law a clear explanation of how and when to report incidents that occur in different times. Also, it is recommended [9] to revisit Article 96 to include rehabilitative penalties.

## Policy Options/Alternatives - Criteria Analysis

For the purpose of evaluating the different policy options and identifying the decision rule, a value-based analysis was adopted by the authors. This approach is guided by the policy analytical framework of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], and the policy options are ranked according to the following criteria: 'Effectiveness', 'Feasibility' and 'Economic Impact' with a list of statements

to assess each criterion. The scoring also infers the advantages and disadvantages of each policy alternative. A three-point Likert scale is used to demonstrate the judgment of the authors to each statement, and an explanation of the authors' connotation of each ranking is illustrated below to provide further clarification on the basis of our decision rule.

**Table 6 - Effectiveness**

| Ranking     | Explanation  |
|-------------|--|
| Not likely  | Small reach, effect size, and impact on disparate populations            |
| Likely      | Small reach with large effect size or large reach with small effect size |
| Very likely | Large reach, effect size, and impact on disparate populations            |

**Table 7 - Feasibility**

| Ranking     | Explanation                          |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| Not likely  | Small likelihood of being enacted    |
| Likely      | Moderate likelihood of being enacted |
| Very likely | High likelihood of being enacted     |

**Table 8 - Economic Impact**

| Ranking     | Explanation   |
|-------------|---|
| Not likely  | High costs to implement or costs are high relative to benefits                                  |
| Likely      | Moderate costs to implement or costs are moderate relative to benefits (benefits justify costs) |
| Very likely | Low costs to implement or costs are low relative to benefits                                    |

Rankings are quantified as indicated below to calculate the average ranking for each criterion:

- 1 = Not likely
- 2 = Likely
- 3 = Very likely

| <b>Criteria</b>   | <b>#1 - Capitalizing on 'Waa'y' program</b> | <b>#2 - Building more integrated awareness outreach methods</b> | <b>#3 - Improving existing responsive tools</b> |
|---|---|---|---|
| <u>Effectiveness [incl. Equity]:</u>  | Likely (2.4)                                | Likely (2.4)  | Very Likely (2.8)                               |
| Will directly protect children from exposure to VDP*.   | Likely (2)                                  | Likely (2)  | Very likely (3)                                 |
| Will reach all members of the population.   | Not likely (1)                              | Very likely (3)   | Very likely (3)                                 |
| Will not burden parents for children's benefit.   | Very likely (3)                             | Very likely (3)   | Very likely (3)                                 |
| Will be of benefit to children/parents both now & in the future (i.e. ensure intergenerational equity). | Very likely (3)                             | Very likely (3)   | Very likely (3)                                 |
| Gaps do not exist in data and evidence used as a guide for formulating these policies.                  | Very likely (3)                             | Not likely (1)  | Likely (2)                                      |

| <b>Criteria</b>  | <b>#1 - Capitalizing on 'Waa'y' program</b> | <b>#2 - Building more integrated awareness outreach methods</b> | <b>#3 - Improving existing responsive tools</b> |
|--|---|---|---|
| <u>Feasibility [incl. Political, Admin. &amp; Technical]:</u>  | Likely (2.1)                                | Likely (1.9)  | Likely (2.3)                                    |
| Current political forces will allow its formulation.   | Very likely (3)                             | Likely (2)  | Very likely (3)                                 |
| It will align with the interests and values of its actors.   | Likely (2)                                  | Likely (2)  | Likely (2)                                      |
| It will align with the public's values & interests.  | Not likely (1)                              | Not likely (1)  | Likely (2)                                      |
| It will align with the population's existing social, educational, and cultural views.                        | Not likely (1)                              | Not likely (1)  | Not likely (1)                                  |
| It will positively impact other sectors & high priority issues (ex: Hayah Karima, Egypt Vision 2030 & SDGs). | Very likely (3)                             | Very likely (3)   | Very likely (3)                                 |
| Available resources, capacity & technical capabilities will allow its formulation.                           | Likely (2)                                  | Not likely (1)  | Likely (2)                                      |
| It is scalable, flexible, and transferable.  | Very likely (3)                             | Very likely (3)   | Very likely (3)                                 |

**Table 9** - Policy Options

| <b>Criteria</b>  | <b>1# - Capitalizing on 'Waa'y' program</b> | <b>2# - Building more integrated awareness outreach methods</b> | <b>3# - Improving existing responsive tools</b> |
|--|---|---|---|
| <u>Econ. Impact [incl. Budget &amp; ROI**]</u>   | Likely (2.3)                                | Likely (2)  | Likely (2)                                      |
| It aligns with the budgetary priorities of public and private entities to enact, implement, and enforce it.              | Very likely (3)                             | Likely (2)  | Likely (2)                                      |
| It will be cost-effective, granting return on investment.  | Very likely (3)                             | Very likely (3)   | Very likely (3)                                 |
| Both its costs and benefits will be distributed across different stakeholders (ex: individuals, businesses, government). | Not likely (1)                              | Not likely (1)  | Not likely (1)                                  |
| <b>Total:</b>  | <b>2.3</b>                                  | <b>2.1</b>  | <b>2.4</b>                                      |

\*VDP = violent disciplinary practices.

\*\* ROI = return on investment

Source: template retrieved from CDC's policy analytical framework and adjusted by the authors to fit the VDP's context.

## Section 6: Wrapping up

Preventing disciplinary violence against children within Egyptian households has been proven to be a very difficult and challenging policy issue with multi-dimensional factors and causes. According to our analysis in Table 9, our decision rule is to improve existing responsive tools since it will effectively protect children from hazards and ensure intergenerational equity. This option has a moderate feasibility likelihood and

its costs are moderate relative to benefits. To effectively do so, the paper referred to UNICEF's 2016 INSPIRE-Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children focusing on 2 particular strategies: [I] implementation and enforcement of laws and [R] response and support services. The implementation plan is illustrated below, and it is worth mentioning that all steps and sub-steps can occur concurrently.

### Implementation Plan

*Step 1 → Population Readiness Assessment:* before we delve into strategies that aim to eradicate this issue, we first recommend that a population-wide survey be implemented to fully understand where the population is at when it comes to this topic and the different attitudes and factors that might contribute to its prevalence. The reason we recommend this to be implemented prior to any other intervention is that it was applied in Brazil and it assisted the government in concluding informed decisions and allocating resources. Moreover, it is important to formulate interventions based on the current evidence and insights on-ground to avoid any possible gaps in the interventions proposed that could result in wasted resources, or worse, worsening of the situation.  
**→ Main stakeholder responsible: CAPMAS.**  
**→ Resources needed: skilled manpower and measurement packages (already in existence at CAPMAS).**

*Step 2 → Improve the reach of responsive tools:*

- Raise the public's awareness of the NCCM's 'Nabtet Masr' mobile application every quarter through cost-effective means such as the MOSS's social media (SM) accounts, Waa'y program, the UNICEF ambassadors' social media accounts, and during gatherings with religious figures.  
 → Stakeholders responsible: MOSS SM

team, Ra'edat, UNICEF ambassadors, religious figures.

- Increase parents' awareness of the current legislations regulating this policy issue. This can be done through legal awareness gatherings, titled "اعرف اللي ليك واللي عليك", for parents across governorates. These sessions will shed light on the existing legislations related to violent disciplinary practices against children and on the existing legislations that parents themselves could benefit from being aware of, to incentivize them to attend these gatherings.  
**→ Stakeholders responsible: civil society organizations and lawyers directed by the Ministry of Justice.**
- Increase children's awareness of the child helpline through cost-effective mediums within their reach. This could include communicating this message through printing it on the inside cover of stories/ educational books and/or integrating a fictional scenario of a child using the helpline within child plays and story books.  
**→ Stakeholders responsible: civil society organizations, publishing houses, book authors and playwrights.**

*Step 3 → Improve the operation of responsive tools:*

- Introduce new features to the NCCM's 'Nabtet Masr' mobile application such as adding a notification feature that sends daily awareness messages to parents about the topic and include a video tutorial of how to navigate the application and how to report an incident. → **Stakeholders responsible: the NCCM and app developers.**
- Introduce a secondary service within the child helpline, a national psychological support service. There are two ways this can be implemented: first, when the child calls the helpline, he/she can be met with an automated response that tells him/her to press a particular number depending on his need (to report an incident or to speak to a psychologist). The second option is that the helpline phone holder will answer the call, and he/she will be the one to refer the child to the psychologist available. This psychologist will provide the child with the necessary preliminary guidance needed to deal with the child's trauma to ensure the child's well-being is under control. → **Stakeholders responsible: NCCM, psychologists and IT personnel.**
- Increase the number of social workers who can provide psycho-social support to children at risk, whether on ground or through the child helpline. The number of social workers should be determined by the MOSS along with the Ministry of Health and Population to identify the exact need and recruit accordingly. → Stakeholders responsible: the MOSS, the Ministry of Health and Population and social workers.

*Step 4 → Amend the relevant existing legislations:*

- Amend law no. 78 of 2016 to include harsher penalties for those who escort girls to perform FGM. The suggested penalty is 10 years imprisonment similar to perpetrators since escorts are behind the continuation of the practice. → **Stakeholders responsible: lawyers and parliamentarians.**
  - Amend article 7-BIS(A) to include a clear definition of "التأديب المباح شرعاً" and remove the term "عمداً" from the clause to avoid any controversy. → Stakeholders responsible: lawyers and parliamentarians.
  - Amend the existing penalty in article 96 to only be applied if the act has been performed twice or if the first act is severe. If the first act is not severe, the following penalty will be applied: the guardian will have to attend a number of counseling sessions where a psychologist/social worker will assist them in adopting positive disciplinary practices. → **Stakeholders responsible: lawyers, parliamentarians and psychologists/social workers.**
1. Introduce legislation that clearly explains the process of how and when to report an incident that has occurred in the past, or in present or might occur in the future. → **Stakeholders responsible: lawyers, parliamentarians and police officers.**

## Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

**Table 10** - Monitoring and Evaluation plan

| <b>Activity</b>                                   | <b>Output</b>  | <b>Submitted to</b>  |
|---|--|--|
| CAPMAS Survey                                     | Monthly progress report [ <i>KPIs: no. of governorates participated &amp; no. of surveyed participants</i> ] | MOSS   |
| Awareness of 'Nabtet Masr' mobile application     | Bi-weekly reports [ <i>KPIs: percentage of app usage &amp; communication channels reach</i> ]                | NCCM   |
| Awareness of current legislations                 | Monthly progress report [ <i>KPIs: percentage attendees &amp; no. of sessions held</i> ]                     | NCCM   |
| Awareness of child helpline                       | Monthly progress report [ <i>KPIs: percentage of children calls received</i> ]                               | NCCM/MOSS  |
| Add features to 'Nabtet Masr' mobile application  | Bi-weekly reports [ <i>KPIs: percentage of positive feedback on the app and percentage of app usage</i> ]    | NCCM   |
| Add a secondary service within the child helpline | Bi-weekly reports [ <i>KPIs: percentage of children calls received</i> ]                                     | NCCM   |
| Increase the number of psycho-social workers      | Quarterly progress report [ <i>KPIs: no. of psycho-social workers' activities held</i> ]                     | MOSS   |
| Amend and introduce new legislations              | Monthly progress report [ <i>KPIs: percentage of positive feedback on the amendments through surveys.</i> ]  | MOSS -> Administrative Control Authority, Egypt (on a monthly basis) |

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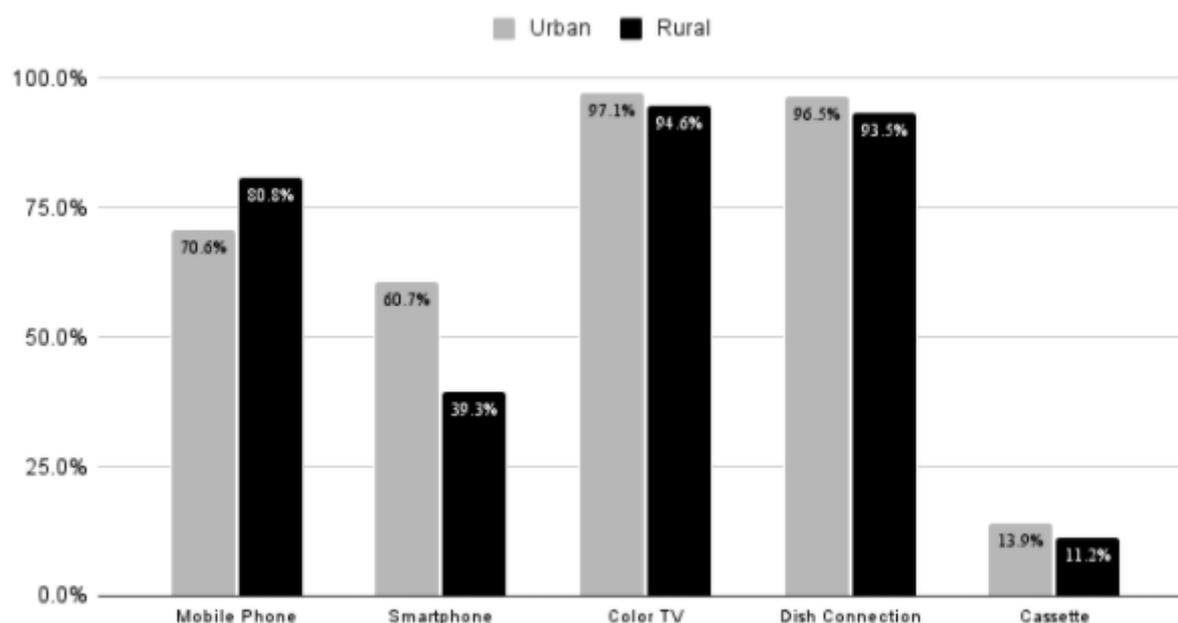
## Section 8: Appendix

**Table 3** - Target group (Parents) demographics

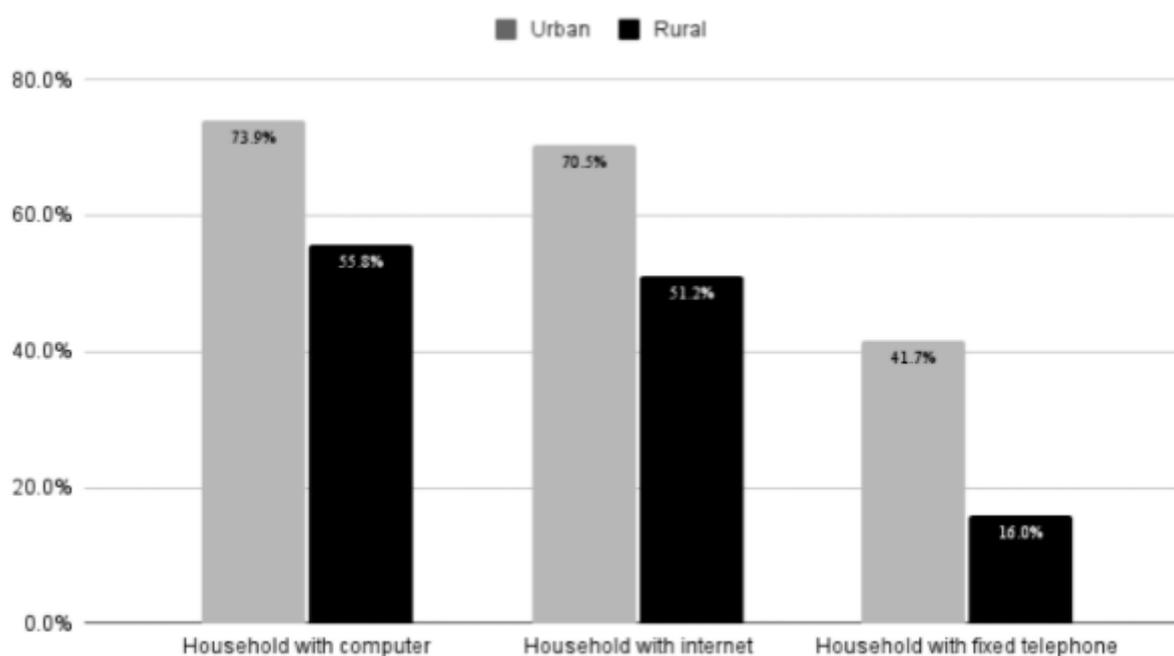
| <i>Variable</i>   | <i>Urban</i> | <i>Rural</i> |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| Average size of households (2018/2017)  | 3.9          | 4.4          |
| Percentage of male-headed households (2014)   | 83.6%        | 89.5%        |
| Percentage distributional of the population with a university level education status (2017) | 18.5%        | 6.6%         |
| <i>Percentage of males (2017)</i>   | 19.6%        | 7.5%         |
| <i>Percentage of females (2017)</i>   | 17.4%        | 5.6%         |
| Percentage distributional of the population who are illiterate (2017)                       | 83.6%        | 89.5%        |
| <i>Percentage of males (2017)</i>   | 15%          | 25.9%        |
| <i>Percentage of females (2017)</i>   | 20.6%        | 38.9%        |
| Estimates of employed persons [15 years old and over] (2020)                                | 110,670      | 151,319      |
| Number of unemployed persons (2020)   | 14,280       | 8,311        |
| <i>Number of males (2020)</i>   | 8,800        | 5,330        |
| <i>Number of females (2020)</i>   | 5,480        | 2,981        |
| Average annual income per family (2018/2017)  | 66,790 LE    | 52,140 LE    |

Source: CAPMAS, 2019; EDHS, 2014; CAPMAS, 2020a; CAPMAS, 2021 & CAPMAS,2020b.

## Section 9: Appendix

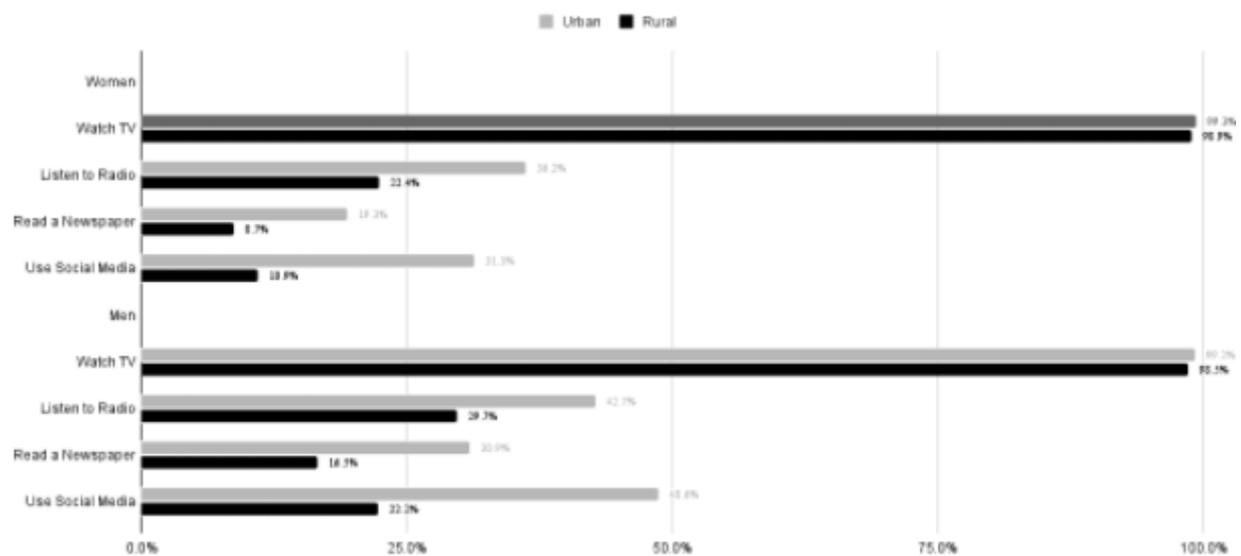


**Figure 2.a.:** Household possessions (2017/2018) Source: CAPMAS, 2020c.

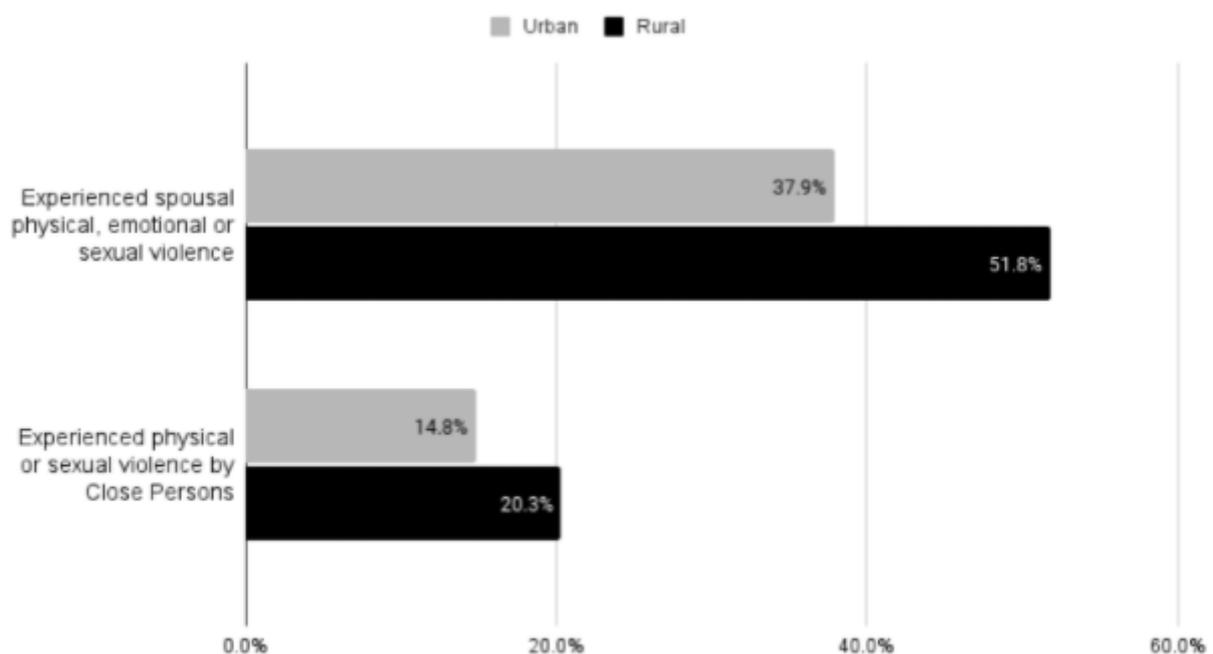


**Figure 2.b.:** Household possessions (2019/2020) Source: Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, 2021.

## Section 9: Appendix

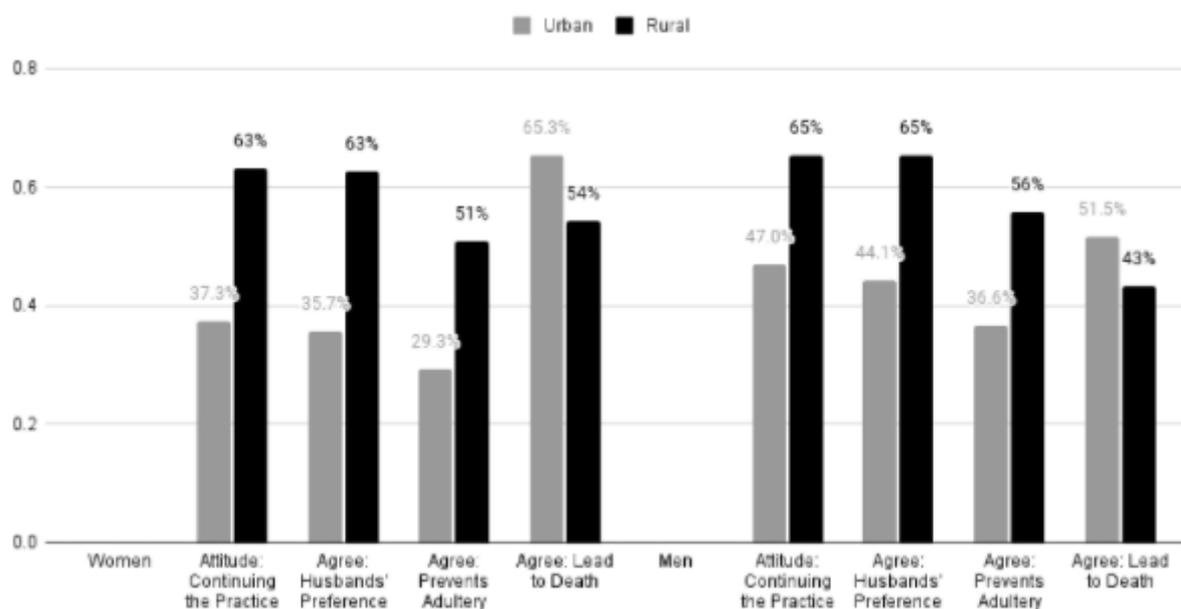


**Figure 3:** Exposure to media outlets (2015) Source: Egypt Health Issues Survey, 2015.



**Figure 4:** Percentage of ever-married women age 18-64 who have experienced violence (2015) Source: CAPMAS et al., 2016.

## Section 9: Appendix



**Figure 5:** Attitudes and beliefs about female circumcision (2015) Source: Egypt Health Issues Survey, 2015.

# THE PUBLIC POLICY HUB

## Where Rigour Meets Creativity

The Public Policy HUB is an initiative that was developed at the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy (GAPP) in October 2017. It was designed to fill in the policy research gap in Egypt. It provides the mechanism by which the good ideas, plausible answers, and meaningful solutions to Egypt's chronic and acute policy dilemmas that are proposed by the country's best minds, the experienced and the creative from different age brackets, can be nurtured, discussed, debated, refined, tested and presented to policymakers in a format that is systematic, highly-visible and most likely to have a lasting impact.

It is designed to develop a cadre of well-informed and seasoned policy developers and advocates, while simultaneously fostering and promoting creative solutions to the challenges facing Egypt today. The project provides a processing unit or hub where policy teams are formed on a regular basis, combining experienced policy scholars/mentors with young creative policy analysts, provide them with the needed resources, training, exposure, space, tools, networks, knowledge and contacts to enable them to come up with sound, rigorous and yet creative policy solutions that have a greater potential to be effectively advocated and communicated to the relevant policymakers and to the general public.

Since its establishment, the Public Policy HUB has been supported by Carnegie Corporation of New York, UNICEF Egypt, and Oxfam. The Hub had partnerships with different ministries and governmental institutions like the Ministry of Social Solidarity, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Local Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Environment, National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, National Population Council, and General Authority For Transportation Projects Planning.

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