



MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS *narratives on sexuality & relationships*

Gender Equality and Sexual and Reproductive Health/Rights in Cyprus: A Needs Assessment

Christina Kaili and Margarita Kapsou, Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies

March 2021

Introduction

The purpose of this desk review is to map available information and assess the situation relating to gender equality and sexual and reproductive rights (SRHR) in Cyprus. Specifically, this report focuses on current data, legislation, education and prevalent social norms on these issues, and provides insights on the current obstacles, gaps and areas of intervention for the fulfilment of sexual and reproductive health and rights. This desk review compiles available national data for the development of a discussion guide that will facilitate a series of conversations with mothers and daughters on gender equality, sexuality and relationships in Cyprus¹.

Narration and storytelling can enhance communication and alliances among mothers and daughters engaged in these conversations about gender, sexuality and relationships. In the current context of multiple socio-political and economic crises in the MENA region and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, decisions and discussions taking place about gender, sexuality and relationships often exclude women's voices. In other words, women's narratives and stories on these issues – that largely still remain taboo – are absent from public dialogue and debate. At the same time, political decisions often do not reflect women's specific realities and needs. By utilising the tools of narration and storytelling, within the framework of the *Mothers and Daughters* project, we focus on the voices of those silenced, and particularly marginalized groups of women. Thus, within this framework, we approach the mother-daughter relationship as a conduit for personal

¹ Within the framework of the ALF project “Mother and Daughters Narratives on Sexuality and Relationships”, a series of intergeneration dialogues will be conducted in Cyprus and Lebanon during March –June 2021.

empowerment, personal agency and self-efficacy in making decisions about gender roles, sexuality and relationships.

Gender equality in Cyprus: an overview

Cyprus currently ranks 21st in the EU on the Gender Equality Index (56.9/100 points – 11 points lower than the EU average) and 91st out of the 153 countries in the World Economic Forum's 2020 Global Gender Gap Report.² Cyprus has made the least progress in the domains of work, knowledge, and money. In the domain of power, Cyprus is at the bottom of the rankings among member states (MS).³ More specifically, the recent parliamentary elections (May 2021) resulted in just 8 women MPs being voted in, out of a total of 56. Since independence in 1960, the participation of women in decision-making roles in Cyprus has ranged between 0% and 20%.⁴ The recent elections also saw rising support for the far-right party; in much of the Euro-Mediterranean region, a key characteristic of such parties is the strong backlash against women's rights. In addition, the needs of women in disadvantaged groups are not sufficiently addressed in gender equality policies. Thus, it is no surprise that Cyprus scored among the lowest in Emmenegger and Stigwall's (2019) Women-Friendliness in Asylum Index (WFA), which explores the implementation of women's rights in the framework of asylum recognition and reception. The low WFA score reflects the weaknesses of gender equality and migration policies in Cyprus.⁵

A large number of female migrant domestic workers are employed in private households (often taking up childcare or elderly care duties not covered by the state and which are difficult to access or afford in the private sector). They receive wages considerably lower than the national minimum wage, and are excluded from important social benefits, that further limit their ability to secure basic rights and make any choices⁶. Another recent report in the context of the Governance and Local Integration of Migrants and Europe's Refugees project, outlines several inadequacies regarding gender mainstreaming in migration policy⁷ that increases the vulnerability and precariousness in the position of

² World Economic Forum. (2020). *Global Gender Gap Report*. Available at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf.

³ European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE). (2020). *Gender Equality Index 2020, Cyprus*. Available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2020/CY>.

⁴ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies. (2021). *Ισότητα μέχρι το 100 (Equality to 100)*. Forthcoming at www.medinstgenderstudies.org.

⁵ Emmenegger, P., & Stigwall, K. (2019). Women-Friendliness In European Asylum Policies: The Role of Women's Political Representation and Opposition to Non-EU Immigration, *Comparative Political Studies*, 52(9), 1293-1327.

⁶ I thought I was applying as a care-giver

⁷ Angeli, M. (2020). *Gender dynamics in the reception & integration of displaced migrants*.

female migrants and asylum seekers. Gender-specific integration services and programmes are needed to support female migrants and asylum seekers that respond to their gender- and trauma-specific needs.⁸

Cyprus has seen notable improvements especially in the legal framework pertaining to women's rights, including relating to maternity, human trafficking, abortion rights, family law, and the rights of victims of crime, as well as violence against women and domestic violence. Despite these legislative improvements, considerable barriers, consisting mostly of political but also socio-economic and cultural barriers, hinder their implementation, and simultaneously the actual advancement of women in Cyprus.⁹ These barriers include, among others, a long colonial history and protracted ethnic conflict that prevented the establishment of independent feminist organising; a lack of political will with mixed agendas and the absence of a coherent, integrated national strategy with dedicated and adequate funding/budgeting; weak implementation and monitoring mechanisms; and lack of awareness and training among professionals (e.g. lawyers, judges, civil servants). Gender mainstreaming policies are inadequate, with a notable example being the lack of state-sponsored or affordable and accessible childcare, whereas parental leave (both maternal and paternal) is among the lowest in Europe. This is reflected in persisting inequalities in participation and representation in all areas of life, including sexism in the media, career choices, representation in political life, representation in senior managerial positions, salaries.¹⁰

Gender based violence (GBV) & sexual harassment/abuse

The Government of Cyprus ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) in November 2017. After years of delay, the Prevention and Combatting of Violence against

Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies. Available at <https://medinstgenderstudies.org/gender-dynamics-across-reception-and-integration-in-cyprus/> .

⁸ Kaili, C. (2021). *Mind the Gap Report: Coalesce for support in Cyprus. A needs analysis for the integration of migrant female victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation/abuse*. Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies. Available at <https://medinstgenderstudies.org/launch-of-mind-the-gap-report-coalesce-for-supporting-female-third-country-national-victims-of-trafficking-for-sexual-exploitation/> .

⁹ Pavlou, S. and Christodoulou, J. (2018). CONVENTION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN 70th Session. Cyprus Shadow report. Available at https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/CYP/INT_CEDAW_NGO_CYP_31500_E.pdf

¹⁰ European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE). (2020). *Gender Equality Index 2020, Cyprus*. Available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2020/CY> .

Women and Domestic Violence and Related Matters Law 2021 (115(I)/2021)¹¹ and the Protection from Harassment and Stalking Law 2021 (114(I)/2021)¹², were voted on by the House of Representatives in April 2021. These were long-awaited developments concerning the rights of women in Cyprus since the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. Specifically, domestic violence is criminalised under the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) laws of 2000 until 2015. For the period 2017-2019, 63 rapes and 3 rape attempts were reported to the Cyprus Police. Sexual offences including rape are punishable with a maximum sentence of life in prison.¹³ Rape within marriage is also recognised as a crime. Other forms of violence such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation are against the law. However, the processes for supporting the victims throughout the reporting and criminal proceedings are not consistently gender-sensitive, and are often inadequate for the protection of victims' rights.

At least 28% of women in Cyprus have experienced some form of domestic violence including economic violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, and physical violence. In 2012, Cyprus conducted the first nationwide survey on the Extent, Frequency, Forms and Consequences of Domestic Violence against Women in Cyprus.¹⁴ The 2014 FRA Survey data results showed that since the age of 15, 1 in 5 women in Cyprus have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner and/or a non-partner, and 31% of people in Cyprus revealed that they knew a female victim of domestic violence within their circle of friends and family.¹⁵ There is no definition of femicide in the Cypriot Penal Code, despite the increasing numbers of women and especially migrant women who are being murdered.¹⁶ From 2010-2016, 28 cases of femicide were reported, of which 21 (75%) were committed in the context of intimate partner violence and domestic violence. For the period 2019-2020, 11 cases of femicide were recorded: 7 women and 2 girls in

¹¹ Available in Greek only: http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2021_1_115.pdf.

¹² Available in Greek only: http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/indexes/2021_1_114.html.

¹³ Cyprus

Penal Code Art. 146. Available at http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/non-ind/0_154/sub-division-sd69a17ba6-f8de-4b3e-abe9-432f2d07500c.html.

¹⁴ The survey was commissioned by the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence in the Family (2012). The executive summary of the survey "Extent, Frequency, Nature and Consequences of Domestic Violence against Women in Cyprus" is available at <http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/cgibin/hweb?-A=971&-V=research>.

¹⁵ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014). Violence against Women: An EU Wide Survey, Main Results. Publication Office of the European Union: Luxembourg.

¹⁶ Kofou, E., Kouta, C., Pavlou, S., Shakou, A. (2021). Country report on femicide research and data: CYPRUS. Nicosia: Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies.

2019, and 4 cases in 2020.¹⁷ Indicatively in 2019 a serial killer murdered 5 women and 2 girls of migrant background in Cyprus.

There is also limited data and research within the Cypriot context on the prevalence of gender-based and sexual violence among adolescents.¹⁸ Research carried out by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2014) on manifestations of GBV among adolescents aged 14 to 17, revealed that almost 1 in 5 (18%) had experienced some form of intimate partner violence. Furthermore, 13% of respondents had experienced domestic violence (3% physical), and 21% reported having been victims of bullying. 17% of the sample reported having been perpetrators of bullying and 40% held negative gender attitudes (gender stereotypes).¹⁹

Furthermore, harmful traditional practices that affect many migrant populations such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), honour related violence and forced marriage are neither monitored nor addressed. Since 2018, it is estimated that 132 women and girls living in Cyprus are at risk of FGM.²⁰ Thus, migrant and refugee women that face multiple vulnerabilities-including increased risk of sexual violence-often do not have access to services or lack adequate specialised support due to cultural, economic and other barriers. Cyprus lacks rape crisis centres or specialized services for victims of rape and sexual assault. Thus, it is not surprising that conviction rates in Cyprus are among the lowest in Europe, despite increasing reporting rates. Furthermore, awareness raising campaigns and/or other prevention programmes on sexual violence are not large-scale nor systematic.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

In Cyprus there is a strong lack of choice, accessibility and affordability of contraception for all women, especially young girls and vulnerable groups, asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and domestic workers. The contraceptive methods available in Cyprus are

¹⁷ Kouta C., Kofou E., Zorba A. (2019). Femicide in Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities in Cyprus: A pilot study, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol.77 (102294). Available at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2019.102294>.

¹⁸ Kaili, C., & Pavlou, S.E. (2015). *Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Sexual Violence (SV) in adolescents: preventive and supportive initiatives in Cyprus*. Nicosia: Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies.

¹⁹ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, (2014). *STIR: Safeguarding Teenage Relationships: Connecting Offline and Online Risks*. Available at <https://medinstgenderstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/STIR-Exec-Summary-English.pdf>.

²⁰ EIGE European Gender Equality Institute (2018). Female genital mutilation: [estimating girls at risk in the EU](#) – focus on Cyprus. / [Female genital mutilation estimating the number of girls at risk in the EU](#) (pp.81-91).

limited to the male condom, a few brands of combined oral contraceptives, the Intra-Uterine Device (IUD), and hormonal Intra-Uterine Systems (IUS). These are not available in state hospitals but only through private clinics and pharmacies at market prices. Diaphragms, injectable hormonal contraception, mini-pills, femidoms, and other modern contraceptive options are not available in Cyprus. This scarcity of options regarding family planning, sexual protection and contraception is likely to affect the prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancy, and have adverse effects on quality of life for many women and girls. Teenage girls do not have access to contraceptive methods beside condoms or any medical and counselling services without the consent of their parents. Furthermore, there are no youth friendly SRHR services available for young people.

Healthcare services require a distinctly gender-specific approach focusing on the recovery of women from physical trauma and other conditions related to sexual violence/exploitation, including sexually transmitted diseases, pelvic infections, infertility and addiction. Gynaecological healthcare should be provided in a trauma-sensitive and culturally appropriate way. Sex education and intercultural work as part of reproductive health and rights were identified as immediate needs by affected women as well as by NGOs involved in integration. Third country national women living in Cyprus called for greater awareness-raising among the refugee community through seminars and other educational activities on family planning, sexually transmitted diseases and birth control, as well as safety in relationships, sexual violence and building healthy relationships²¹.

The National Strategy for the Sexual and Reproductive Health of Youth (2018 – 2025) has been developed by the Ministry of Health, and approved by the Cabinet. However, like many National Action Plans and strategies in place, it lacks specific indicators, an appropriate monitoring and evaluation system for its implementation, and sustainable funding for its implementation.

Access to abortion and contraception

Abortion in Cyprus is regulated under the Penal Code (Article 169A for the termination of pregnancy), amended in 2018 after lengthy discussions and lobbying by a number of NGOs and members of the Cyprus Women's Lobby, as well as women Parliamentarians.

²¹ Kaili, C. (2021). *Mind the Gap Report: Coalesce for support in Cyprus. A needs analysis for the integration of migrant female victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation/abuse*. Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies. Available at <https://medinstgenderstudies.org/launch-of-mind-the-gap-report-coalesce-for-supporting-female-third-country-national-victims-of-trafficking-for-sexual-exploitation/> .

Abortion in Cyprus was fully legalised in March 2018. It can be performed on request up until the 12th week of pregnancy and until the 19th week in rape cases. It was previously performed only if there was a risk of physical or mental harm to the mother, a risk of fetal deformity, or if the patient was raped or otherwise sexually assaulted.

Abortion services are not provided at the state hospitals. The only viable option for obtaining abortion services is through the private sector at a relatively high market price. In addition, no pre- and post- abortion counselling services are currently available, either in the public or private sector. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the healthcare landscape remains uncertain: there are no protocols on family planning, no modern contraceptive services currently available and no evidence whether trainings are provided to health care professionals on SRHR issues.

In the absence of any reporting mechanisms, there are no statistical data on abortion, contraception, unwanted pregnancies, STIs, and other SRHR issues in Cyprus. For example, statistics on abortion are neither collected by the public sector nor the private sector for any age group.

Secondary literature/research identified by the I'M SET²² situation analysis in Cyprus revealed that initiation of sexual activity in Cyprus occurs approximately at the age 16.²³ However, adolescents have minimal knowledge about contraception, do not habitually use contraception and/or consider it a sin.^{24 25} Even though the birth rate amongst adolescents is the fourth lowest in the EEA (5.5 per 1000 women 15 to 19 year old in 2011),²⁶ the scarce data on contraception reveal that adolescents have significant obstacles in accessing and using contraceptives.

²² Cyprus Family Planning Association, (2015). Situation Analysis: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) of Adolescents in Cyprus. Nicosia, Cyprus. Available at: <https://www.familyplanning.org.cy/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Situation-Analysis-Sexual-Health-and-Reproductive-Health-and-Rights-of-adolescents-in-Cyprus.pdf> .

²³ Cyprus Youth Board and Cyprus Institute of Reproductive Medicine, (2006). Relationships and Sexuality of Youth. Cyprus Youth Board: Nicosia. www.youthboard.org.cy .

²⁴ Lesta, S., Lazarus, J., Essen B. (2008). Young Cypriots on sex education: sources and adequacy of information received on sexuality issues. *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning*, 8 (2), 237 – 246

²⁵ Kouta, C., & Tolma, E. L. (2008). Sexuality, sexual and reproductive health: an exploration of the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of the Greek-Cypriot adolescents. *Promotion & education*, 15(4), 24-31.

²⁶ European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (2013). A Comprehensive Approach to HIV/STI Prevention in the Context of Sexual Health in the EU/EEA. ECDC: Stockholm. <http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/HVI-STI-prevention-comprehensive-approach-in-thecontext-of-sexual-health-EU-EEA.pdf> .

Consultations in the form of focus discussions with young people (16-30 years old) in the context of the project “Empower Youth: Sexual Rights for All” (Lesta, 2018) explored their awareness of sexual rights, gaps, barriers and sexual rights violations, while capturing recommendations for actions. This study is especially relevant, as it is among the few studies that placed particular emphasis on young people with fewer opportunities (who comprised 3 from the 4 focus groups conducted), taking the intersectionality of their experience into account. Specifically, the study included young people who identified as LGBTQI+, young female Philippino domestic workers, and young people with hearing loss or vision loss. According to the findings, young people describe the information they have on SRHR as “practically non existent” due to prevailing taboos and social norms, and even among peer groups there is often a nonverbal/subliminal message that these topics are best avoided, and the primary source young people themselves turn to for information is the internet. Young participants also considered that lack of public discourse is a barrier to the effective safeguarding of sexual rights. They also appear concerned about the absence of involvement of young people in policy making, and express that SRHR is not given adequate attention in National Youth Policy.

Migrant women express concerns stemming from their experiences also as domestic workers. Their lack of access to SRH services due to discriminatory working conditions, work schedules, poverty, as well as lack of personal transportation, raises serious concerns about unsafe abortion practices due to lack of access to safe options. Migrant women are also particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation by employers due to the asymmetry in the power dynamic that stems from their status as employees in a precarious situation whereby severe limitations: financial, social and cultural attitudes expressed by authorities often prevent them from reporting such exploitation or seeking help.

HIV/AIDS

According to the National AIDS epidemiological report covering the period 1986-2018 at the Ministry of Health, the cumulative total of HIV/AIDS cases reached 1226 by October 2018 (912 men-74.4% and 314 women-25.6%).²⁷ The 70.7% of identified cases in 2018 are in the age range of 20-39 years. The main transmission type is sexual intercourse (93.5%) including heterosexual intercourse (48.8%) and men with men intercourse (44.7%). The key forms of transmission in men is men having sex with men (60.1%) and heterosexual intercourse (33.6%). In women, heterosexual intercourse is the key form of transmission (93%). With regards to gender distribution, in 2018 among the 658 Cypriot

²⁷ Ministry of Health. (2018). [HIV/AIDS Epidemiological Report](#) 1986-2018. Republic of Cyprus.

nationals, 593 were men and 65 women, giving a male-female ratio of 9: 1. In contrast, among the 568 foreign nationals, 319 were men and 249 women giving a male-female ratio 1:1. These results point to inconsistent condom use and the lack of access to sexual healthcare services and education from reliable sources such as school, university and public health programmes/structures. Even though there is no gender-specific research and data available, the socio-economic and migrant status is important because often women's lower testing rate is due to socio-cultural norms about sexual activity and the associated stigma, while migrant women face challenges in accessing healthcare services. In 2019, the number of new cases of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) diagnosed in Cyprus was 100, the highest number of cases in the provided time interval. Cases of HIV have, aside from some fluctuations, generally increased in Cyprus since 2006.²⁸

There are no specific HIV programmes targeted to migrants and women in prostitution. Apparently, no surveillance studies have been conducted on prisoners, women in prostitution, or foreign nationals, and information about HIV in these groups is very limited. There are no estimates about the number of members of key populations with undiagnosed HIV infection. There is only limited data on HIV testing practices. No data is available on the number of HIV tests conducted in the private sector, and there is no breakdown available for the rationale behind HIV testing in the state-run sector. The state does not provide to women and other people living with HIV any support services beyond healthcare, neglecting as a result their needs and difficulties related to their chronic health condition and the social stigma associated with HIV in all aspects of their lives. Lastly, no discussion has been made yet for the development of a new National AIDS Program or Strategy since 2015 even though it is included as a target in the National Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health of Youth 2018-2025.

Comprehensive sexuality education

The Republic of Cyprus has signed and ratified a number of international and European conventions, agreements and treaties which promote and secure the right of children to sexuality education.²⁹ In national laws general references are made to the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture for the provision of information on sexuality

²⁸ Stewart, C. (2020). New cases of HIV diagnosed in Cyprus 2006-2019, Statista (December 2020). Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/645552/new-hiv-cases-diagnosed-cyprus/> .

²⁹ These include: the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ([UNCRC](#)) and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse ([Lanzarote Convention](#)).

education to children and provision of trainings to educators.³⁰ However, sexuality education is not legally mandated or regulated in Cyprus, although some improvements have been noted in the past decade regarding its inclusion in the educational system. Specifically, as of 2011, sexuality education is mandatory within the health education curriculum as a thematic area entitled “Family Planning – Sexual and Reproductive Health”. Sexuality education should be gender sensitive, with educational material integrating an understanding of the importance of gender equality. Certain mandatory sexuality education themes have been included under the Health Education curriculum for some levels of primary and secondary education. However, there are still substantial gaps in the inclusion of these issues in the curriculum for comprehensive sexuality education at all levels of education. Monitoring and evaluation systems for its implementation are nevertheless lacking, resulting in limited evidence about its actual implementation and effectiveness.³¹

In line with the Report of the National Commissioner for the Rights of the Child (2017), and the Shadow Reports to CEDAW (2018, 2021 forthcoming), there is a lack of systematic scientific research on the issue. Moreover, training for parents, teachers and educators on issues of sexuality and gender-based violence is available but optional and at the discretion of the individual educator. The Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus – Ministry of Education and Culture occasionally offers optional trainings to teachers at all levels of education on sexuality education, sexual violence, gender based violence and other issues, usually in collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations. Non-formal educational interventions in primary and secondary education are mainly led by civil society organisations and specialised NGOs. Although the Ministry of Education and Culture also has a Policy on Sexuality Education, and the Health Education Program is considered to be an outstanding program in theory, sexuality education is insufficiently and inadequately implemented.

Taking into consideration that Cypriot society remains highly patriarchal and conservative, the implementation of sexuality education is left to the will, skills and sensitivity of each educator separately. Finally, experts and specialized civil society

³⁰ Position paper by Ms Koursoumba, the Cyprus Commissioner for the Rights of the Child for the children’s right to sexuality education. Available in Greek only:
<http://www.childcom.org.cy/ccr/ccr.nsf/All/5FAD923DDE1A016EC22582D3003A7EC3?OpenDocument> .

³¹ Pavlou, S. and Christodoulou, J. (2018). CONVENTION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN 70th Session. Cyprus Shadow report. Available at
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/CYP/INT_CEDAW_NGO_CYP_31500_E.pdf

organisations report that there is no meaningful involvement of children and young people in the design, implementation and evaluation of needs-based, age-and-culturally-appropriate, as well as gender sensitive, sexuality education programs and activities. It would be key to ensure that educational programmes on gender equality and gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence, rape, human trafficking, FGM, forced marriage, are implemented in schools in an intercultural and intersectional perspective.³² For this purpose, teachers and educators, health professionals, youth workers and parents, must be trained as well on these issues as they hold joint responsibility to provide comprehensive sexuality education children and youth.³³

Emerging topics to be addressed in intergenerational dialogue with mothers-daughters:

Evidence regarding how sexuality (especially female sexuality) is discussed in the national context is scarce, and when available is mostly limited to formal sexuality education in schools, our selection of topics to be discussed will be informed from three sources: (1) indicators of the status of women and evidence on discourses (or lack thereof) of sexuality on a national level, as discussed in the sections above; (2) available statistics, research and empirical data from the civil society sector on gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights; and (3) international literature pertaining more specifically to how sexuality is (not) being discussed and how intergenerational alliances are formed among mothers and daughters (Brock & Jennings, 1993; Lesch & Kruger, 2005).

Topics for recollections of experiences/narratives within the mother-daughter dialogues:

- Gendered roles, expectations and social norms in their upbringing (family, school, religion, culture and society).
- Gendered power relations in patriarchal society that influence sexual and reproductive choices: sexual expression/behaviour, childbearing/pregnancy, consent.

³² Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies and End FGM European Network. (2021). Joint Shadow Report – Cyprus, p.4. Available at https://www.endfgm.eu/content/documents/reports/MIGS_EndFGMEU_Shadow-Report_CYPRUS.pdf

³³ Cyprus Family Planning Association. (2015). Policy Paper on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (Εγγραφο Πολιτικής για την Περιεκτική Σεξουαλική Διαπαιδαγώγηση. Available in Greek only: https://www.familyplanning.org.cy/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CFPA_PositionPaper_CSE_2015.pdf .

- Key messages and topics about sexuality and relationships: body image, menstruation, pre-marital sex, birth control, anatomy/physiology, sexual orientation, gender-based violence, including sexual violence and domestic/intimate partner violence.
- Approach of mothers in the dialogue (e.g. open and comfortable manner, warnings, pleasurable aspects of sexuality, discussion of feelings).
- Mothers' and daughters' reflections of the relationship as a conduit to agency/empowerment: challenges and strategies. For example, lack of access to sex education, conservative family backgrounds, lack of experience with sexual pleasure, personal problems, lack of time, desire for closeness, healing wounds/trauma, desire for understanding.