UNDERSTANDING, LIVING AND CONTESTING GENDER STEREOTYPES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY WITH YOUTH IN TUNISIA

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KVINFO
GENDER EQUALITY

LIST OF ACRONYMS

- **AFD** – Agence Française de Développement
- **CEDAW** – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- **CPS** – Code of Personal Status (Tunisia)
- **CSO** – Civil society organisation
- **FGD** – Focus group discussion
- **GBV** – Gender-based violence
- **KII** – Key informant interview
- **KVINFO** – Danish Centre for Research on Women and Gender
- **LGBTI+** – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (plus other diverse sexualities and gender identities)
- **NGO** – Non-governmental organisation
- **OHCHR** – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- **PSC** – Personal Status Code (Tunisia)
- **SDG** – Sustainable Development Goal
- **STEM** – Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
- **SWANA** – South-West Asia and North Africa
- **UN Women** – United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women



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FOREWORD

KVINFO initiated this study in 2025 to increase knowledge about how youth in Tunisia view, enact and resist gender stereotypes, as a step towards knowledge-based programming for, primarily, KVINFO and partner organisations in Tunisia. However, we are convinced that this study will also enrich similar work conducted in and outside of Tunisia and that the complexity of youth perspectives coming forth in this study will enrich the essential work conducted by civil society organisations, including women's and gender rights organisations, to put an end to the power of gender stereotypes and -tropes.

Realising that Tunisia has a long record of legal reforms that benefit gender justice, it is also clear that inertia has long characterized the real change pursuant to these reforms, i.e. change of social practices and privileges or implementation of legal regulation. Both are sides of the same coin, which formed the background for KVINFO's current focus on gender stereotypes as possible stumbling blocks for gender justice. They are stumbling blocks for youth, not only in Tunisia, but also in Morocco, Egypt and Jordan, three other Arab countries, in which KVINFO works. KVINFO also has programs in Denmark (see our website, www.kvinfo.dk) and it is important to stress that gender stereotypes remain stumbling blocks for gender justice and individual attainment and ambition in all societies, including the Danish society.

We want to thank the two senior consultants and the group of junior researchers, recruited from the feminist school offered by KVINFO's partner organisation in Tunisia, Association Lina ben Mhenni, for their attentive and careful research and for smooth collaboration with us in the elaboration of this rich study.



15th September 2026

Lene Steffen

International Team Director

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report explores how young people in Tunisia understand, experience, and challenge gender stereotypes. It also examines how shifting gender norms—from more flexible attitudes to more deeply entrenched beliefs—shape present and future possibilities for gender justice.

It begins from a **central paradox**: Tunisia is widely recognised for a comparatively progressive legal framework on gender equality, yet young people continue to navigate deeply entrenched patriarchal norms that shape family life, education, employment, mobility, sexuality and public participation.

The study uses a **qualitative, feminist and intersectional** methodology designed to capture youth perspectives at the level of discourse, narrated experience and everyday negotiation. It draws on a desk review of academic and grey literature, 14 focus group discussions with 105 young people aged 18–35 across diverse regional and social backgrounds, and 7 key informant interviews with activists, researchers, media actors and student organisers. The focus groups constitute the core empirical basis for the analysis of youth perspectives, while key informant interviews are used primarily to contextualise, interpret and historicise patterns emerging from the youth data.

The findings show that **gender stereotypes remain deeply embedded** in young people's lives, even where they are openly criticised. Across focus groups, and with further contextualisation from key informant interviews, participants describe a persistent provider–caregiver model in which men are expected to lead, provide and embody authority, while women are expected to care, accommodate and preserve family respectability. These expectations shape household decision-making, educational and career choices, public behaviour, emotional expression and access to mobility, and they are enforced through gossip, reputational pressure, harassment and, in many cases, physical or psychological violence.

At the same time, youth responses to these stereotypes are **ambivalent and highly contextual** rather than reducible to a simple traditional-versus-modern divide. Many young people criticise unequal norms while also finding meaning, security or recognition within certain traditional roles. Participants frequently describe moving strategically across spaces—between home and university, rural areas and cities, and offline and online environments—in order to navigate incompatible expectations and reduce exposure to harm.

The report also shows that gender stereotypes are **socially produced and institutionally reproduced** across a wide range of settings. Families remain a primary site of gender socialisation, but schools, universities, labour markets, media and digital platforms all play major roles in reinforcing or contesting norms. **Economic precarity** emerges as especially significant: unemployment, rising costs of marriage, insecure labour markets and regional inequality appear to intensify defensive attachments to traditional gender roles, particularly among young men who experience the breadwinner ideal as both socially mandatory and materially difficult to fulfil.

An important contribution of the study is to show that **disruptions do occur**, but unevenly and under pressure. University life, student organising, feminist and queer activism, migration, digital campaigns and exposure to alternative social worlds can all open space for questioning inherited gender norms. Yet these spaces are themselves contradictory: universities may expose students to emancipatory ideas or conservative backlash; activist and queer spaces can generate solidarity but also reproduce forms of internal policing; and online visibility can create both new repertoires of resistance and new forms of harassment and surveillance.

The findings further underline that gender stereotypes are **experienced intersectionally**. Rural youth, working-class youth, Black Tunisians, queer and trans youth, and youth with disabilities often face layered forms of exclusion that cannot be understood through gender alone. Region, class position, bodily ability and sexuality shape not only the intensity of social control but also the resources available for resisting it.

Overall, the report argues that gender stereotypes in Tunisia should not be understood merely as attitudes or outdated beliefs. They function as **social and institutional infrastructures** that organise power, labour, mobility, legitimacy and belonging. For this reason, efforts to promote gender justice must go beyond awareness-raising alone and engage the economic, institutional and political conditions through which stereotypes are maintained and, at times, reinforced.

For KVINFO and its partners, the study points to several broad implications. Effective strategies should **support youth as knowledge producers and political actors**, invest in youth-led feminist and queer organising, address gender stereotypes together with economic precarity and violence, and prioritise the needs and perspectives of youth facing intersecting marginalisations. The report therefore calls for **context-sensitive, intersectional and politically grounded** approaches to gender justice that recognise both the fragility of current openings and the transformative potential of youth-led change.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Gender stereotypes continue to shape social relations, opportunities and power dynamics across Tunisia, with particularly consequential effects for young people navigating critical transitions in education, employment and civic participation.

In this report, **gender stereotypes** are understood as widely shared, socially constructed ideas about what women, men and people of other genders "are" and "should be", which become attached to roles, traits and behaviours and are enforced through social sanctions and institutional practices (OHCHR, 2025). Although Tunisia is recognised internationally for its progressive legal framework on gender equality—including the 1956 Code of Personal Status and Law 58 on violence against women as well as the provisions of the 2014 Constitution that remained in the 2022 Constitution (M.Charrad, 2007), (Regional Observatory VAWG, 2025)—these formal advances coexist with deeply embedded patriarchal norms that continue to influence everyday practices, expectations and behaviours. These norms structure how young women and men understand their roles in private and public spheres, how they relate to one another and, fundamentally, how they conceptualise gender justice (Goedhuys, Mahé, Nillsen, & Reitmann, 2023).

This coexistence of formal equality and persistent patriarchal norms is not unique to Tunisia; it has been documented across the South-West Asia and North Africa (SWANA) region and in other contexts undergoing legal reform without equivalent social transformation (KVINFO, 2025). What distinguishes Tunisia, however, is a specific convergence of factors: post-revolutionary ferment since 2011; a youth-dominated population with rising educational levels (especially among women); high structural unemployment; dense digital connectivity and exposure to global ideological currents; and, more recently, an authoritarian political turn that has re-securitised debates on gender and sexuality. Young Tunisians are thus positioned at a critical juncture, with unprecedented—but fragile—opportunities to contest inherited norms and to shape future trajectories of gender justice (Bousserwel, Rishmawi, & Poch, 2022).

YOUTH ENGAGE ACTIVELY WITH GENDER STEREOTYPES

Young people are not only at the receiving end of gendered social norms. They are active interpreters and negotiators of these norms, frequently contesting, reworking or reproducing them through their actions, choices and discourse. Understanding how young people perceive and respond to gender stereotypes is therefore essential for at least three reasons (Blackman & Jackson, 2019):

- **Normative trajectories:** Attitudes, aspirations and behaviours related to gender justice are formed and consolidated during youth and early adulthood. Intervening in this period—through education, media, community organising and policy—can shift individual trajectories and, over time, broader social norms (Nillesen, Grimm, Goedhuys, Reitmann, & Meysonnat, 2020).

- **Demographic significance:** Young people represent a large share of Tunisia's population (with roughly 60% under age 35), and their collective perspectives on gender justice will shape family, economic and civic institutions for decades to come (Neji, 2024).

- **Mobilisation potential:** Young people have demonstrated their capacity to mobilise for social change, from their role in the 2011 revolution to ongoing feminist and LGBTQI+ organising. Understanding their analyses, grievances and visions is essential for meaningful solidarity and strategic action (Mutlu, 2022).

1.2 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

As noted above, progressive legal reforms coexist with deeply embedded patriarchal norms. The 1956 Code of Personal Status banned polygamy and granted women divorce rights, establishing a legal foundation for women's rights that was unprecedented in the region. Subsequent reforms, including the 2014 Constitution's gender-equality provisions and the 2017 law on violence against women, have further strengthened the formal legal framework. However, multiple studies indicate that patriarchal gender stereotypes remain deeply embedded among youth, shaping life trajectories, constraining opportunities and perpetuating violence against women (Kashina, 2021).

Rigid gendered divisions

Survey and qualitative research consistently document rigid gender divisions among Tunisian youth, with men expected to function as family breadwinners and household heads and women expected to prioritise homemaking, childcare and family duties regardless of educational attainment or career aspiration. These expectations are reinforced by legal provisions, such as the designation of men as household heads in the Personal Status Code, and by dominant social norms. Time-use data show that women aged 15 and above spend around eight times more of their time on unpaid care and domestic work than men, and research in disadvantaged neighbourhoods finds that fathers are far more often identified as key decision-makers than mothers despite women's heavier domestic workload (Ghribi, 2016).

Labour-market studies identify strong occupational segregation, with teaching, healthcare and administrative roles widely considered socially acceptable for women, while higher-paid technical, engineering and financial sectors are dominated by men. This pattern persists although women constitute a majority of university graduates and a large share of STEM students. Women's labour-force participation remains far below men's, and unemployment and wage-gap indicators place Tunisia among the more unequal contexts globally. Surveys such as IMAGES Tunisia show large gender gaps in support for women's employment and leadership, with significantly lower acceptance among young men than young women (Goedhuys, Mahé, Nillsen, & Reitmann, 2023; UN WOMEN, 2022).

Spatial control

Studies on mobility and modesty norms demonstrate that spatial control is a central mechanism through which gender stereotypes structure youth lives. Research indicates that unmarried

women are generally expected to remain in their parents' homes until marriage; married women are expected to live with or near their husband's family; and both groups face strong normative constraints on movement between home, school, work and public spaces. Norms of female modesty, often articulated through religious or cultural language, regulate clothing, voice, social interactions and the use of cafés and public spaces, while men's mobility is far less constrained. Work on masculinities and schooling describes a "man box" model in which boys and young men are pressured to perform toughness, heterosexuality, sexual activity, economic provision and willingness to use physical force, with non-conforming youth facing bullying and exclusion (Blackman & Jackson, 2019).

Emerging trends

At the same time, literature identifies important emerging trends and tensions. Women's educational gains, including their numerical dominance at university and in some professional tracks, represent a significant shift from older generations and are frequently interpreted by young women as pathways to financial independence and greater autonomy from family control (Kashina, 2021). Digital activism, most notably the #EnaZeda (MeToo Tunisia) campaign, has enabled large-scale public disclosure of sexual harassment and violence (Belhassine, 2021) and has pressured institutions to respond to high-profile cases. Feminist and queer organising, feminist initiatives and the emergence of queer media platforms, has expanded the repertoire of counter-narratives available to youth (Borillo, 2020). However, these developments unfold alongside powerful regressive dynamics: the rise of Salafi movements in marginalised neighbourhoods, conservative mobilisation against inheritance and family-law reforms, gendered disinformation campaigns targeting women leaders online and evidence that younger men in Tunisia often hold more restrictive gender attitudes than older male cohorts (Nillesen, Grimm, Goedhuys, Reitmann, & Meysonnat, 2020).

Across studies, researchers identify a wide range of structural, cultural and economic drivers of gender-stereotype formation and persistence (Goedhuys, Mahé, Nillsen, & Reitmann, 2023). Legal and institutional arrangements, including family law, labour-market institutions and weak enforcement of protective legislation, embed gender hierarchies and limit the effectiveness of formal equality norms. Family socialisation, school practices, peer networks, religious discourses and media representations all operate as powerful channels that transmit and normalise gendered expectations from childhood onwards. Economic precarity, youth unemployment, regional inequalities and rising marriage costs are repeatedly highlighted as intensifying pressures to maintain traditional breadwinner–caregiver models and "men-first" employment norms. The literature also documents close links between gender stereotypes and high levels of gender-based violence and harassment, as well as significant barriers to women's economic, political and civic participation. At the same time, it points to disruptive experiences—such as university study, migration, digital activism, feminist mobilisation, legal reform and changing marriage patterns—that can destabilise or reconfigure norms for some groups of youth (Neji, 2024).

Remaining gaps

Despite this substantial body of work, several gaps remain. Existing evidence is heavily weighted toward quantitative surveys that measure attitudes and behaviours but less often examine how

young people themselves narrate, negotiate and contest gender stereotypes in their everyday lives. Intersectional experiences—such as those of Black Tunisians, youth from interior or rural regions, queer and trans youth, youth with disabilities and young people from different class positions—are unevenly explored and rarely constitute the primary focus of empirical studies. Few analyses trace how the coexistence of legal reforms, economic crisis, religious and political realignments and digital media environments is experienced differently by diverse groups of youth, or how these conditions produce simultaneous trajectories toward more fluid, egalitarian norms for some young people and more entrenched or conservative norms for others (Bousserwel, Rishmawi, & Poch, 2022).

It is in response to these gaps that the present study sets out its guiding question: **How do young people in Tunisia understand, live and contest gender stereotypes, and how do their trajectories—between more fluid and more re-entrenched gender norms—reshape current and future possibilities for gender justice?** By centring youth discourse and lived experiences across different regions, identities and social positions, the research aims to complement and deepen existing quantitative and institutional analyses and to generate evidence that can inform more context-sensitive strategies for promoting gender justice with and for young people in Tunisia.

1.3 DIVERSITY, INTERSECTIONALITY AND ANALYTICAL APPROACH

“Young people” are not a monolithic category. Tunisian youth represent broad diversity shaped by gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, geographic location (urban/rural, coastal/interior), educational level, disability status and degree of political and civic engagement. Analysing this diversity is critical to understanding how gender stereotypes are experienced, contested and reinforced differently across groups (Bousserwel, Rishmawi, & Poch, 2022).

The study employs an intersectional analytical lens, treating intersecting inequalities (gender, race, class, region, sexuality, disability) not as background characteristics but as central to how stereotypes operate and are experienced. This approach avoids homogenising “youth” or assuming that gender is the only or primary axis of differentiation. Instead, it asks, for example: How do stereotypes shape the lives of rural versus urban youth? How do anti-Black racism and regional hierarchies intersect with gender norms? What distinct risks and strategies characterise queer and trans youth? How do disability, poverty and activism mediate young people’s engagement with gender roles? The study addresses these questions at the level of discourse and narrated experience; it does not claim to measure all underlying social practices.

1.4 FOCUS ON DISCOURSE AND LIVED EXPERIENCE

Central to this study is a commitment to analysing young people’s own discourse and narratives regarding gender roles, social norms and stereotypes. Rather than treating stereotypes as abstract concepts or measuring attitudes through large-scale surveys, the research prioritises in-

depth exploration of how young people articulate, make meaning of and navigate gender expectations in their daily lives. This focus on everyday discourse enables the study to move beyond surface-level attitudes and examine the underlying values, beliefs, assumptions and dilemmas that inform young people's perspectives.

Through focus group discussions primarily, and with contextual support from key informant interviews, the study captures not only stated beliefs about gender but also the lived experiences, contradictions and strategic choices that characterise youth engagement with stereotypes. It documents the adaptations and contextualized lives many young people lead across different spaces, the psychological toll of constant self-monitoring and norm negotiation, the moments of resistance and conformity, and the diverse visions of gender justice that youth are articulating. These findings speak primarily to how young people *talk about* and make sense of gendered norms and pressures, while recognising that discourses do not always align neatly with everyday practice.

1.5 FEMINIST AND PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH COMMITMENT

KVINFO applies a feminist approach to research and studies and this study is grounded in a strong commitment to feminist research principles. KVINFO and the research team intentionally designed the work not only as a knowledge-generating exercise but also as a capacity-building process for youth researchers and local partners.

This feminist commitment was not only methodological but also positional: the lead researchers approached the study as feminist researchers and activists with longstanding engagement in Tunisian civil society, a standpoint that shaped the design of the research as well as the relationships, forms of trust and interpretive choices that emerged during fieldwork.

A key objective was to support the transfer and application of feminist research methodologies through collaborative engagement in study design, data collection, analysis and interpretation.

This participatory approach reflects an understanding of research as a relational and political process. By involving young feminist researchers from the École Féministe Lina Ben Mhenni and other youth collaborators in fieldwork, analysis and dissemination, the project sought to:

- Strengthen local research capacities and deepen ownership of findings
- Reduce social-desirability bias and improve access to sensitive topics (especially with queer and rural youth)
- Ensure that the research process aligned with feminist values of participation, reflexivity, power awareness and non-extraction
- Ground findings in lived experience and direct quotation, minimising analytical over-interpretation

- Contribute to building a cadre of young feminist researchers capable of continuing this work beyond the life of the project

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND REPORT STRUCTURE

Against this backdrop of coexisting legal advances, shifting social norms and diverging trajectories among youth, the study is guided by one overarching question: **How do young people in Tunisia understand, live and contest gender stereotypes, and how do their trajectories—between more fluid and more re-entrenched gender norms—reshape current and future possibilities for gender justice?**

This cardinal question unfolds into more specific sub-questions:

- What gender stereotypes do young people identify as dominant or emerging in their everyday environments?
- Which spaces and actors play a central role in forming, reinforcing or disrupting these stereotypes?
- How do these norms shape young people's choices, relationships, future prospects and forms of civic and political engagement, including in differentiated ways across gender, class, region, race, disability and sexuality?
- In which situations do we observe movement toward more egalitarian and fluid norms, and in which contexts do we instead see the re-affirmation or hardening of differentiated gender roles—and
- What do these contrasting movements reveal about possible trajectories of gender justice in Tunisia?

The report is structured to answer this cardinal question and its sub-questions in a progressive way. **Chapter 1** situates the study within the contemporary Tunisian context, summarises key existing evidence on youth and gender stereotypes, and outlines the feminist, intersectional and qualitative analytical framework. **Chapter 2** details the methodology, including research design, data collection, analysis and ethical considerations. **Chapter 3** sets out the empirical findings from focus group discussions, key informant interviews and observational notes, showing how young people describe, experience, negotiate and contest gender stereotypes across different social positions and regions. **Chapter 4** returns explicitly to the overarching question by synthesising the main insights, discussing how youth trajectories toward both more fluid and more re-entrenched gender norms reshape the landscape of gender justice, and outlining implications and recommendations for policy, programming and youth-led organising.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research was designed as an iterative, participatory process rather than a linear extraction of data. Research questions, tools and preliminary findings were revisited in dialogue with KVINFO and young researchers. Findings from initial focus groups informed subsequent interviews; emerging themes were tested across different regional and demographic groups; and preliminary interpretations were presented in feedback sessions with youth and partners for validation and refinement.

The deliberate integration of junior researchers from the *École Féministe Lina Ben Mhenni*, a training programme run by Fondation Lina Ben Mhenni (KVINFO's partner in Tunisia) served to operationalise a **power-shifting and capacity-sharing** approach. This organisation supports young feminist activists from different regions to develop research and organising skills. This cohort of **7 junior researchers** (mainly young women and some gender-non-conforming youth aged approximately 20–30, with diverse regional and socio-economic backgrounds) was **selected through the school's existing network** on the basis of interest in gender justice, prior activism and availability to engage throughout the project.

This design was also consistent with feminist approaches to research. This approach emerges from an understanding of research as a situated process of knowledge production shaped by political commitments, accountability and reflexive attentive to power relations. It is a priority of KVINFO, and corresponds with the lead researchers' own feminist and movement-based positioning.

Around half of the fieldwork was conducted by these locally rooted researchers, following a **two-day training** that combined an overview of the study design with practical exercises on qualitative methods, feminist research ethics and reflexivity. The training agenda (available in the annex along with a quick guide for facilitating FGDs) included role-plays on gender stereotypes, collective mapping of vulnerability and marginalisation, joint review and adaptation of interview/FGD guides, and simulated interviews to practice probing, managing power dynamics and safeguarding participants' wellbeing. This design served multiple purposes: it minimised outsider and hierarchical bias by ensuring that much of the data collection was led by peers who share participants' generational, linguistic and socio-political references; it anchored the research in existing local feminist organising; and it contributed to building durable conceptual, methodological and ethical research skills within a cohort of young feminist activists.

At the same time, the involvement of activist-researchers also created specific challenges, - for example expectations from participants that the research would immediately solve problems; the emotional weight of listening to repeated accounts of violence; and occasional difficulties in separating activist and research roles -, which are acknowledged as part of the study's limitations.

2.2 RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

2.2.1 DESK REVIEW (LITERATURE SYNTHESIS)

The research began with a comprehensive desk review of academic and grey literature on youth, gender norms and gender equality in Tunisia and the broader SWANA region. Grey literature (NGO reports, media investigations, blog posts, and social media audio-visual content) was included because much of the most up-to-date empirical work on Tunisian youth and gender is produced outside academia and because it captures evolving debates and discourses that are not yet reflected in peer-reviewed publications.

The review examined almost 50 resources – although only a portion of the desk review is included in this report - and provided the analytical framework for the study by organising existing evidence around six core dimensions: ***(1) dominant and emerging gender stereotypes; (2) alignment with broader social norms; (3) main drivers and institutions shaping stereotypes; (4) effects on attitudes, practices and access to rights; (5) processes of formation and disruption across the life course; and (6) key events and actors reinforcing or contesting gendered narratives***. These dimensions informed the design of qualitative tools and were used as preliminary coding domains. The desk review was continuously revisited throughout the project to support interpretation of empirical findings and to identify convergences and gaps between desk-based evidence and fieldwork data.

2.2.2 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDS)

The core of the empirical material derives from 14 FGDs conducted with 105 young people aged 18–35. FGDs were chosen because they allow exploration of shared narratives, peer dynamics and disagreements in how gender stereotypes are articulated and negotiated in group settings, within the time and resource constraints of the study. Individual interviews with youth were not possible at scale, but some FGD participants later contributed follow-up comments through informal conversations and online exchanges.

FGDs were organised according to several principles:

- **Demographic diversity**: Inclusion of young women, young men and gender-non-conforming youth.
- **Geographic representation**: Groups in Tunis (capital, urban, coastal), Sfax (secondary coastal city, with three sub-areas: city centre, Skhira and Agareb as smaller, mainly agricultural towns), Kasserine (interior, economically marginalised), Kef (semi-urban, mountainous, mainly agricultural region), with additional participants from Gabes.
- **Social stratification**: Participants ranged from university students and employed youth to unemployed and informally employed young people, and from more privileged to marginalised neighbourhoods. Overall, the sample slightly over-represents urban and peri-urban youth and university-educated participants, reflecting the networks through which recruitment was possible.

- **Identity and experience**: Specific FGDs were organised for queer and trans youth, rural women, feminist activists, students, unemployed youth, young mothers and youth with disabilities. In these cases, homogeneous groups were used to maximise safety and openness around sensitive topics.
- **Group composition and safety**: In conservative settings or when discussing sexuality and violence, women-only or queer-only groups were prioritised. In other settings, mixed groups (e.g. men and women, activists and non-activists) were used to capture interaction across positions. This approach increased comfort and candour for many participants but also meant that some cross-group dynamics (for example, men speaking directly to queer participants) were not observed in situ; this is acknowledged as a limitation.

The FGDs explored:

- Collective narratives and shared meanings about gender roles
- Points of divergence and disagreement within youth cohorts
- Peer influence and how norms are reinforced or challenged in group settings
- Lived experiences, contradictions and strategic choices

All FGDs were conducted in Tunisian Arabic, using a semi-structured discussion guide developed specifically for this study. At the beginning of each session, facilitators used a practical, visual exercise called “gender stereotype mapping”, in which participants worked in small groups to draw a simple gender spectrum (from “traditionally masculine” to “traditionally feminine”) and then placed stereotypes and expected behaviours on this spectrum. Through this exercise, participants identified common expectations around clothing, emotional expression, work, care responsibilities and mobility, and discussed who enforces these norms (family, peers, schools, media) and how they affect their lives. Starting with this activity helped ground the conversation in participants’ own understandings of stereotypes before moving to more in-depth questions about experiences, impacts and strategies of resistance or adaptation. At the same time, the research team recognizes that the spectrum itself introduced a framing for the discussion, including an implicit contrast between “traditional” and “non-traditional” (often read as “modern”) norms, division of work and behaviours, and this was considered when interpreting the data by noting when these categories were resisted, inverted or blurred, and avoiding automatic coding of ambivalent or contextual positions as simple movement from “traditional” to “modern”.

The full FGD guide and activity description are available as annexes for readers who wish to see the detailed questions and tools used.

2.2.3 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KIIS)

Seven KIIs were conducted with activists, journalists, researchers, media actors, youth organisers and professionals working on gender and youth issues. Unlike the FGD participants, who were all young people aged 18–35 and constitute the core empirical basis for the study’s

analysis of youth perspectives, KII participants were selected for their analytical, professional or movement-based engagement with these issues rather than because they belonged to the study's youth sample. Some key informants also fall within the 18–35 age range, but the KIIs were not designed as a second youth sample and are therefore used primarily to contextualise, interpret and historicise the narratives emerging from the FGDs, rather than to stand in for youth perspectives themselves.

Within this framework, certain key informants — such as young queer activists and student organisers — also offer narratives of their **own trajectories**. When these accounts speak directly about their lived experiences of gender stereotypes, they are treated in the analysis as youth experiences as well as contextual reflections, while still remaining part of the KII material rather than the FGD youth sample.

The KIIs were used to:

- Provide broader sociological, cultural and political analysis of how gender stereotypes among youth are formed and contested
- Clarify institutional and policy environments (law, education, labour market, media)
- Document generational differences and shifts over time (pre- and post-2011)
- Gather practitioners' reflections on what has worked or failed in gender-justice initiatives with youth.

In addition to those interviewed, the research team attempted to engage other potential key informants, including religious leaders and representatives of conservative organisations. Several of these actors declined to participate or did not respond to repeated invitations. Their absence from the KII sample is therefore not a choice of focus but reflects access and acceptability constraints. This limits the extent to which the study can rely on first-hand accounts from explicitly conservative or religious community leaders (Imams) and means that some interpretations of conservative trends draw more heavily on youth narratives and secondary literature than on direct institutional voices. It also means that the report cannot fully capture how religious authorities and conservative organisations themselves articulate, justify or contest gender stereotypes, or how they understand their role in policing or reshaping norms. Where youth participants attribute specific gender expectations or sanctions to religious discourse or conservative actors, this is therefore reported as perceived influence rather than as validated positions from those institutions.

The table below summarizes the names, profiles of each KII and their particular angle of contribution to the study.

CATEGORY	PURPOSE	NAMES	PROFILE
ACADEMIA & RESEARCHERS	Provide an analytical sociological, cultural and political overview on gender stereotypes amongst youth, their formation and the contextual factors	Maryam Ben Salem	Political science expert
		Shams Radhouani	Feminist organiser, extensively working with young people, University Assistant Professor
CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVISTS	Provide an overarching, comprehensive view on issues pertaining to gender stereotypes and lived experiences	Saif Ayadi	Social justice, environment and HR queer activist (Intersectional Activist)
JOURNALISTS/ MEDIA	Provide an analysis on trends, hot topics and youth media/content consumption around gender stereotypes.	Rihab Boukhayatia	Journalist, covering social issues & SRHR
OPINION LEADERS AND INFLUENCERS	Provide various views on narratives promoted by these actors amongst youth, their level of	Essia Jaibi	Theatre producer, artist

AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE	outreach, social desirability of their discourse and what they see as practices, behaviours…	Rami Ayari	TikTok/Instagram influencer, self-identified Queer
		Liwa Eddine Nebli	General Union of Students (UGET)

In the findings and discussion chapters, KII material is therefore used primarily to contextualise youth narratives, interpret broader patterns and illuminate institutional or historical dynamics, while the FGDs remain the principal source for analysing youth perspectives.

2.2.4 PARTICIPANT SELECTION AND SAMPLING

Participant selection for FGDs followed an explicit intersectional logic aimed at capturing a wide range of perspectives rather than achieving statistical representativeness. Recruitment was carried out through local partner organisations, existing activist networks, student unions, community-based organisations and informal peer-to-peer referrals. In some sites, researchers approached youth spaces (universities, cafés, community centres) and shared information about the study; in others, local partners helped identify potential participants.

The following matrix was used internally to ensure diversity across multiple dimensions of identity and life conditions; it did not serve as a rigid quota system.

INDIVIDUAL	HEALTH & BODILY ABILITY	PEERS AND SAFETY NETS	SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE AND LIVING CONDITIONS
Age	Physical Disability	Political, human rights and other forms of rights activism	Perception of Family social class
Sex	Chronic Disease	Sports associations and groups (i.e football fans)	Parents education level

Gender identity & expression			Family geographic location
Sexual orientation			Current occupation (employed/unemployed/student)
Rural or urban upbringing and current life			Category of Revenues
Education level			Administrative documentation
			Marital status
			Access to the internet and social media

The information on these characteristics was gathered through short, voluntary background questions during recruitment and at the start of FGDs. Because recruitment relied heavily on existing networks and partner organisations, the sample likely over-represents young people who are more connected to civil society and/or higher education, and under-represents those who are more isolated or disengaged; this is an important limitation. The sample also deliberately includes a relatively high number of queer perspectives: three focus groups were organised specifically with queer and trans youth and queer activists (21 participants in total), and several queer informants were interviewed as key informants. This emphasis was intentional, reflecting the study's interest in positions that are both strongly targeted by gendered policing and centrally involved in contesting stereotypes, but it also means that experiences and analyses from queer and activist spaces weigh more heavily in the findings than those from more conservative or less organised youth settings.

As noted above, homogeneous groups (e.g. queer-only, women-only, rural women) were used for particularly sensitive themes; this fostered candour but limited direct observation of cross-group interaction. Mixed groups were used in other settings to capture exchanges across gender, class and activist/non-activist lines. For the purpose of this study, "queer" is used as an umbrella term for youth whose sexual orientations and/or gender expressions do not conform to dominant heterosexual and binary norms, including some trans women and non-binary participants, and for activists who explicitly position themselves within queer or LGBTQI+ movements. Practical accessibility was also considered: sessions were scheduled at times and locations convenient for participants; where possible, transport reimbursement was provided; and informal childcare solutions were explored for young mothers. Despite these efforts, some

youth could not attend because of mobility constraints, family control or work schedules, and in some cases because queer or activist spaces were more accessible to the research team than more isolated youth communities; these access constraints are taken into account in the analysis and conclusions.

The table below summarizes the FGDs held for the study with their main characteristics, based on the intersectionality matrix above. The grey-shaded cells in the table do not merely describe participants' profiles; they indicate intersectional criteria that were actively used to guide recruitment, highlighting those social positions (e.g. rural, Black, disabled, queer, trans, or activist youth) that the study sought to prioritise in the composition of each focus group.

#	FGD CONDUCTED	INTERSECTIONALITY CRITERIA					
	Profile and number of participants	Geographic Location	Gender ID	Activism	Urban/Rural or marginal	Occupation	Other
1	Students in Tunis (8)	Tunis			Urban	students	Disability
2	Young females over 25 years (3)	Tunis				unemployed	
3	Shabeb El Cristal (8)	Tunis					
4	Female Queers (7)	Tunis					
5	Transwomen (6)	Tunis					
6	Young males in Kef (11)	Kef					
7	Young females in Kef (12)	Kef					
8	Young feminist activists from Tigar (10)	Kasserine				Students	

9	Young men from South (7)	Gabes					Black
10	Young women from South (4)	Gabes					Black
11	Young women from Agareb (6)				Rural	Informal/agriculture	
12	Young men from Skhira (7)				Rural	Informal/agriculture	
13	Queer activists (8)					Students	
14	Young activists (8)					Students	
Total Individuals: 105 Individuals							

2.2.5 FGD DYNAMICS AND FACILITATION CHALLENGES

The focus group process revealed markedly different dynamics depending on participant profiles and local context, which themselves became important data for analysis. Groups composed mainly of women, trans women, queer participants and students were generally the most fluid, with discussions that were more reflective and more open to questioning gender stereotypes, social expectations and unequal power relations. By contrast, some groups of young men required stronger moderation because of the expression of patriarchal norms, sexist attitudes and, at times, hostile language toward women and sexual and gender minorities.

The men's group in Kef was among the most difficult to facilitate. The discussion was marked by openly misogynistic statements, casual homophobia and strong stigmatisation of sexual and gender minorities. Several participants automatically associated young people involved in theatre with homosexuality and described this as shameful or deviant; some even suggested that violence against such youth was normal or justified. This created a tense atmosphere because the group differed strongly in terms of gender perspectives and required active reframing and boundary-setting by facilitators. The team found this particularly striking because Kef is often associated, in public discourse, with a history of cultural openness and artistic movements, which had led us to expect more progressive attitudes than those expressed in this group.

A similar, though less aggressive, dynamic appeared in a men's group in Gabes. Once only among themselves – in a coffee break, participants seemed much more comfortable expressing sexist views and defending unequal gender roles. While the discourse was not as openly violent

as in Kef, it still reflected a strong normalisation of sexism in male peer settings. In contrast, other groups challenged some of the team's initial assumptions. In Kasserine, a group conducted with members of the Tigar association—mostly women—expressed relatively bold critiques of gender roles and power relations, despite the region's reputation as disadvantaged and socially conservative. In Skhira as well, despite the area's conservative image, the men who participated were attentive and generally supportive of women's empowerment, though they tended to justify this support through economic arguments rather than a rights-based discourse.

The fieldwork also highlighted recruitment challenges, especially when trying to gather unemployed youth, and even more so in southern regions. Some FGDs were facilitated by the senior consultants (the authors of this report), while others were led by young researchers from the Lina Ben Mhenni association. At the beginning, several young researchers struggled to moderate discussions when dominant participants monopolised the floor or when harmful speech needed to be contained and reframed. Through debriefings, feedback and closer methodological guidance between sessions, they progressively gained confidence and were able to manage group dynamics more effectively. These experiences form an integral part of the methodological learning process and inform the reflections on positionality and limitations below.

Fieldwork experiences during FGDs also shaped the team's reflexive understanding of power relations in the research process. In some all-male groups, the collective setting itself appeared to enable performances of dominant masculinity that were more explicit than what might have emerged in individual interviews. In this sense, FGDs did not only produce discourse *about* stereotypes; they also made visible the power relations through which these stereotypes are enacted, negotiated and sometimes reinforced within peer groups. This has two implications. First, the group dynamic is itself treated as data and is analysed alongside verbal content. Second, the method may amplify certain expressions of hegemonic masculinity, while making it harder for more ambivalent or dissenting voices within male groups to speak, even when facilitators actively seek to open space for them.

These experiences underline the importance of strong facilitation skills when discussing gender norms, sexism and homophobia. Facilitators needed not only a clear methodological framework, but also the capacity to contain harmful speech, set boundaries and protect participants without shutting down discussion completely. The team's experience also served as a reminder that assumptions about a region being "open" or "conservative" should be handled cautiously: local gender-norm dynamics can diverge significantly from territorial reputations, and within-region variation may be greater than expected.

2.3 ANALYSIS AND TRIANGULATION

Analysis followed a thematic coding approach, structured around six analytical domains derived from the cardinal question and the literature review:

1. **Content:** Stereotypes that participants identify as shaping youth lives
2. **Sources:** Institutions, actors and processes through which stereotypes are transmitted and maintained

3. **Experiences:** Ways participants describe stereotypes affecting their daily lives and well-being
4. **Responses:** Strategies of conformity, negotiation, ambivalence and resistance
5. **Perceived impacts:** How participants link stereotypes to education, work, relationships and civic participation
6. **Alternatives:** Visions of gender justice and proposals for change articulated by youth

Transcripts and detailed notes from FGDs and KIIs were coded by the core team using this framework, with space for inductive codes emerging from the data. Regular analysis meetings were held to compare interpretations, discuss contradictions and refine categories. Triangulation was central: findings from desk review, FGDs, KIIs were systematically cross-analysed to identify convergences across data sources, highlight tensions and minority perspectives, and understand intersectional variations (e.g. by gender identity, region, class, race, disability).

2.4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND SAFEGUARDING

The research adhered to core principles of feminist and qualitative ethics:

- **Informed consent**: All participants received information—in accessible language—about the study's purpose, topics, risks and benefits, confidentiality protections and their right to refuse or withdraw at any time. Consent was obtained verbally before each FGD/KII.
- **Confidentiality**: Identifying information was not recorded in transcripts; pseudonyms are used in this report. Ground rules were discussed at the start of FGDs (e.g. not sharing others' stories outside the group).
- **Safety and non-harm**: Given the sensitivity of topics (violence, sexuality, discrimination), facilitators were trained in trauma-informed approaches. Referral pathways to local support services were identified in advance, and participants disclosing violence were offered information and, where wanted, introductions to service providers.
- **Participatory ethics**: Youth researchers were involved in the design of tools, selection of themes and initial interpretation of data rather than being limited to data-collection roles.
- **Non-extractive engagement**: Preliminary findings were shared back with participants and partner organisations through feedback meetings and summary notes. The research was conceived as contributing to collective analysis and organising, not solely to academic or donor reporting.

In practice, most FGDs lasted between 1.5 and 2 hours and took place in spaces deemed safe by participants (NGO offices, community centres, private rooms in cafés, online sessions in a few cases). Each was co-facilitated by one senior and one junior researcher, when possible, with one person leading the discussion and the other taking notes and monitoring group dynamics and emotional reactions.

2.5 POSITIONALITY AND LIMITATIONS

The composition of the research team, and the political and movement-based positioning of its members, formed part of the methodological conditions under which the data was produced and interpreted. This study was **not conducted from a position of political neutrality**. The two lead researchers identify as feminist researchers and activists and have each been engaged for more than a decade in Tunisian civil society, including feminist, human rights and democracy movements. This positioning shaped the study from its inception co-developed with KVINFO: it informed the choice of research question, the commitment to intersectional and participatory qualitative methods, and the decision to involve junior researchers rooted in feminist organising spaces. It also affected access, rapport and interpretation. In some settings, this feminist positioning facilitated trust and enabled more open discussion of sensitive issues such as sexuality, violence and everyday discrimination; in others, it may have influenced what participants chose to emphasise, soften or withhold. Rather than treating this as a bias that can be eliminated, the study approaches positionality reflexively, recognising it as part of the knowledge-production process and seeking to manage its effects through collective analysis, attention to disconfirming evidence and fidelity to participants' own words.

The composition of the research team with two senior consultants and a cohort of junior researchers (young women and gender-non-conforming persons from different regions and class backgrounds) was intentional: sharing fieldwork with researchers from the same or closely connected communities as participants helped build trust, reduce social desirability bias and ensure that analysis remained grounded in **lived experience and direct quotation**. At the same time, it meant that some participants saw the research team as allies or potential advocates rather than neutral observers, while others positioned themselves in opposition to perceived feminist or queer politics. This may have encouraged disclosure on some topics while inhibiting it on others.

The findings are therefore understood as **co-constructed**, emerging from dialogue between participants' narratives and researchers' interpretive lenses rather than as transparent reflections of an objective reality. This approach has advantages (it foregrounds power and positionality; it values participants as analysts) but also carries risks (for example, over-interpreting ambivalence as resistance, or under-representing perspectives that sit uneasily with feminist frames or activist commitments). The research team has sought to mitigate these limits by presenting extensive quotations, distinguishing clearly between youth narratives and key-informant interpretations, and signalling where participants' views sit in tension with the researchers' own analyses.

The study faced several constraints that shaped the material collected:

- **Age focus:** The research centres youth aged 18–35; younger adolescents (13–17 years old) are present only through retrospective accounts, limiting insight into real-time stereotype formation in early adolescence.
- **Time and safety constraints:** Limited time and resources, as well as ethical considerations, prevented long-term observation in families, workplaces or schools. As a

result, there are gaps between what people say they do and what might be observed in practice.

- **Regional and social coverage:** Site selection was driven partly by feasibility and existing networks rather than a representativeness logic. Interior regions and marginalised rural areas are covered but not exhaustively; some groups (e.g. out-of-school rural youth with no organisational ties) remain harder to reach.
- **Recruitment channels:** Reliance on activist and organisational networks likely resulted in an over-representation of politically engaged youth and those with access to education or civil-society spaces. Perspectives of more isolated or conservative youth are present but comparatively less numerous, and this is taken into account when interpreting how widespread certain narratives may be.

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents what youth in this study themselves say and do. It answers the cardinal question, which is ***how young people in Tunisia understand, live and contest gender stereotypes, and how their trajectories—between more fluid and more re-entrenched gender norms—reshape current and future possibilities for gender justice***, through six analytical domains, moving from content of stereotypes to trajectories of change: the stereotypes that young people identify, the origins and maintenance of stereotypes; the way young people live and respond to them, their impact on life trajectories; the variation by region, class, sexuality, and other intersecting factors, and finally, the way that stereotypes are changing and the visions of gender justice that youth articulate.

Throughout, the findings are grounded in direct quotation from participants and illustrated with specific examples from different regional and social contexts.

The presentation moves from thematic patterns (applicable across groups) to important variations and nuances.

3.1 YOUNG PEOPLE'S UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

3.1.1 DEFINING GENDER STEREOTYPES AS A LIVED REALITY

Across focus groups and interviews, young people in this study describe gender stereotypes not as abstract notions, but as sets of expectations embedded in institutions and enforced through social and sometimes violent sanctions. Liwa Eddine Nabli, a young student union leader in Tunis summarises this understanding as follows:

"Gender stereotypes is a set of social ideas and judgments created by a certain group of people within a society. When we talk about gender stereotypes, we are talking about the set of perceptions that define roles, interactions between women and men based on their gender, not on their competence, freedoms, and opinions. And these stereotypical roles affect the

distribution of tasks within the family, society, the workplace, politics, civil unionism—in all the places available to promote stereotypical roles."

KII – Liwa Eddine Nabli, Student union leader

In this perspective, stereotypes are clearly distinguished from any supposed "natural" or biological differences: they are understood as social patterns that have become normalised through repetition and institutionalisation. A queer activist in Sfax underlines that any deviation from these expectations tends to generate immediate sanctions in the form of mockery, stigma or exclusion, particularly for young women and queer and trans youth.

A particularly nuanced reflection comes from feminist activist Shams Radhouani, who stresses the ambivalence of working against stereotypes without erasing people who identify with traits that are often labelled "stereotypical":

"A stereotype is a kind of attribute attached to a certain social group, and that attribute usually exists within the group. But unfortunately, it gets used to belittle the whole group. For example, people say women are too emotional. Personally, I don't see anything wrong with being emotional—it's actually positive, especially in a world so lacking in empathy because of patriarchy. But what happens is: yes, women are emotional, alongside many other qualities, yet the whole group gets reduced to just that trait. It gets generalised. That's why I find stereotypes tricky: on one hand we need to fight against them, on the other hand we also need to accept them and sometimes enjoy them. Because if we dislike a stereotype—say, women are too emotional—we start fighting it. Then any woman who identifies with that stereotype may find herself excluded from our struggle."

KII – Shams Radhouani

Her intervention highlights a risk within anti-stereotype activism: if the work is framed only as "eliminating" stereotypes, it can unintentionally exclude women and men who recognise themselves in certain traditionally gendered traits or roles, and thereby reproduce exclusion inside feminist and queer spaces themselves. For example, women who enjoy cooking, caring or expressing strong emotions may feel that their experiences are devalued or seen as politically suspect, rather than as legitimate choices that should not be imposed or hierarchised.

A student activist with a disability in Tunis reinforces this point by emphasising how deeply such roles are naturalised:

"Only a very small group points out that these roles are not organically inherent to us. We have given stereotypes a universal veneer—a scientific-sounding justification that makes it harder for young women to question them."

FGD – Students Group including youth with disabilities, Tunis

Her observation suggests that while only a minority explicitly name gendered division of work as socially constructed, many young people are confronted with stereotypes that are presented to them as universal, rational or "scientific", which makes attempts to go against them harder.

Academic researcher Maryem Ben Salem, who has worked extensively on masculinities, adds another layer by focusing on how stereotypes are taken up and defended by some men and youth:

> *"There is a gap between what a woman should be from their perspective—woman as gentleness, femininity, maternal—and a conclusion they draw that women have become too strong because the law gives them a lot of rights. Even though these representations are not true, they are completely convinced of it."*
>
> KII – Maryem Ben Salem

In her analysis, stereotypes about "what women should be" coexist with a strong belief that women now have "too many rights" and have "stripped men of their masculinity", showing how legal reforms are refracted through existing gender imaginaries rather than simply replacing them.

Taken together, these accounts show that, in how most participants talk about their realities, there is very little distinction between "gender stereotypes" and "gendered division of work".

In analytic terms, stereotypes can be understood as widely shared ideas or images about what women, men and people of other genders "are" and "should be", while gendered division of work refer to the concrete expectations and task distributions that organise everyday life.

In the discussions, however, young people rarely separate these levels: they do not spontaneously describe stereotypes as ideas that can be questioned apart from practice, but speak of them as taken-for-granted prescriptions that define "what men do" and "what women do" in families, workplaces and public life. Statements such as "men are providers, women are caregivers" or "men are rational, women are emotional" are not presented as representations to be examined, but as normal task distributions — who earns, who cooks, who decides, who obeys.

Even when young people criticise certain "mentalities" or "traditions", they usually do so by arguing for a different division of work —for example, that men should help more with domestic work—rather than by fundamentally questioning why traits such as strength, gentleness, patience or leadership are tied to one gender in the first place. This strong fusion between stereotypes and gendered division of work has two key effects in the data: **it makes stereotypes harder to identify as stereotypes, because they are experienced as reality rather than discourse**; and it tends to shift debates toward negotiating "who does what" rather than interrogating why care, authority or economic provision are gendered at all.

3.2 DOMINANT GENDER STEREOTYPES

3.2.1 MEN AS PROVIDERS, WOMEN AS CAREGIVERS

> *"The woman runs the household, cares for the kids, cleans, cooks—and his only responsibility is 'providing.' And then she also contributes to expenses."*
>
> FGD – Kasserine, activists

Across the focus group discussions, young participants describe remarkably consistent gender stereotypes built around a rigid provider–caregiver binary. They explain that, in their environments, the dominant narrative positions women's "natural" place as the home and the emotional centre of the family, while men are cast as financial providers and household heads. In their accounts, women are expected to undertake domestic tasks—cleaning, cooking, caring for children and elders—and are often held responsible when things go wrong.

These expectations are not only described as customary but as moral duties: several participants refer to a "good mother" ideal that requires self-sacrifice, even at the expense of personal health, and note that older generations of women and men actively police daughters' and daughters-in-law's behaviour in line with this ideal.

Key informant interviews echo and deepen this picture. Journalist Rihab Boukhayatia, for example, describes how prevailing stereotypes reduce women to biological functions, with social value tied fundamentally to motherhood; in her analysis, women who do not marry are frequently portrayed as having "missed their life", and women's capacity for childbearing is mobilised to justify confining them to caregiving roles regardless of their education or professional skills. Young participants' narratives also emphasise that respectability norms regulate women's presence in public spaces, with clothing, mobility and social activities subject to intense moral judgement. Even where visible practices are changing—such as women smoking or frequenting cafés—youth in this study stress that the underlying stereotype persists, casting "respectable" women as quiet, modest and discreet, with reputation serving as a powerful tool of control. As one young queer participant put it:

"If you're a woman you shouldn't speak loudly or say too much; you should also be respectable. A woman should be modest and keep her mouth shut."

KII – Ramy Ayari

In participants' accounts, masculinity is closely tied to the role of provider and head of household, a role they describe as legitimised both by economic responsibility and by religious discourse. Young women and men alike repeatedly associate "manhood" with earning and providing, and several young men describe their sense of authority and self-worth as hinging on this capacity. At the same time, participants underline that emotional hardness is prescribed: men are discouraged from showing vulnerability and are ridiculed if they do. Queer and feminist youth in particular highlight the harm this causes to men themselves, emphasising that men, too, become victims of rigid gender expectations.

These narratives resonate with survey data reviewed in Chapter 2, which show that many young men in Tunisia support male final authority in household decisions and often perceive women's economic participation as a threat to masculinity, even as some youth in our sample explicitly question or reject these views. One unemployed woman summarised her own ambivalent position as follows:

"Honestly, I like the man to always spend; I'm happy when I see my husband providing. I don't like an irresponsible man—he must be responsible for his family."

FGD – Unemployed women

Young women in Gabes explain that, under current economic conditions, this provider–caregiver binary has translated into a "double burden" rather than a re-allocation of roles. Rather than replacing men's economic role, women's labour-force participation has added paid work to their existing domestic responsibilities. One participant describes living *"like both a mother and a father"*, handling school meetings, children's needs and household management while fathers often *"don't even know what grade their children are in."* Young men in Skhira confirm this division from their perspective, noting that *"the woman raises the kids for the home, and the man raises them for the street"*—a phrase that, in their words, captures both a spatial and a moral division of parenting labour. Young activists in Sfax offer a more explicitly critical reading, describing women's unpaid domestic work as a "historical inheritance" which is now compounded by expectations that women will also contribute financially:

"It's no longer enough for her to do unpaid work—she must also bring money and contribute to paid work."
FGD – Young activists, Sfax

Together, these accounts show that young people in this study are able both to reproduce and to critically analyse provider–caregiver stereotypes. Many describe these norms as powerful and still largely effective in structuring everyday life, while a significant number also voice discomfort, ambivalence or explicit critique regarding the gendered distribution of responsibility and recognition.

3.2.2 MEN'S JOBS VS WOMEN'S JOBS

"As a teacher, 'vacations are at home, holidays are at home, mornings or evenings are at home,' so she can take care of the kids. It's a job that doesn't take too much time or affect childcare."
FGD – Young women, Gabes

Across focus groups, young participants describe pervasive stereotypes about "women's jobs" and "men's jobs", even when they themselves can point to exceptions in their surroundings. In their accounts, teaching, care work, secretarial duties and beauty-related professions are commonly labelled as appropriate for women, while construction, driving, manual labour, technical fields and leadership roles are coded as masculine. Several young women explain that these expectations influence educational guidance and orientation, with girls subtly or explicitly discouraged from pursuing technical or STEM fields. Participants also link these norms to segmented labour markets and persistent pay gaps, noting that women often earn less for identical work and are concentrated in lower-paid sectors. Desk-review evidence discussed in Chapter 2 corroborates these perceptions, documenting occupational segregation and discrimination against young women, including those with strong educational credentials. When women do enter "men's jobs", youth and key informants report that they may be admired but are also frequently described as "tough" or "manly", revealing an ambivalent reception of non-conforming individuals.

3.2.3 EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

"Women are emotional, men are rational; men have productive roles, women have reproductive roles."

KII – Shams Radhouani

"Women are seen as sensitive, emotional, and incapable of making solid decisions, so they shouldn't be placed in positions of authority, even within family structures."
KII – Saif Ayadi

In these two cases, the speakers are key informants rather than FGD participants: Shams Radhouani is a university assistant professor and feminist organiser working extensively with youth, and Saif Ayadi is a young queer activist. Their analyses echo and systematise patterns that appear repeatedly in the youth FGDs, where participants describe women as more emotional and men as more rational, and link this distinction to who is seen as fit for authority. For example, young men in several groups argued that *"women get carried away"* and therefore *"cannot lead households or organisations,"* while young women reported being told that *"men decide"* because *"women are too emotional"* (FGDs – young men, Tunis and Kef; FGDs – young women, Tunis).

Taken together, youth discussions and key informant interviews show emotional expression as a highly gendered terrain rather than a neutral difference between women and men. These accounts highlight that emotionality is constructed not only as a distinction but as a hierarchy that underpins broader gendered power relations. By framing women as intrinsically emotional, sensitive and hormonally unstable, and men as rational and productive, stereotypes transform emotionality into a marker of weakness that disqualifies women from authority and decision-making spaces.

Participants describe this logic as operating across scales: if women are "tearful and confused", they are deemed unfit to lead not only in politics or the workplace but even "within family structures", legitimising male control over household decisions and resources. At the same time, the idea that men are naturally rational and unemotional reinforces a narrow, restrictive model of masculinity that denies men the possibility of vulnerability, care or openly expressed distress. Emotional expression is thus not treated as a neutral trait but as a gendered boundary: when associated with women, it is pathologised and used to justify exclusion; when reserved for men in muted, controlled forms, it becomes a criterion for legitimate authority and leadership.

3.2 ENFORCEMENT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

3.2.1 MORAL DOUBLE STANDARDS AND GENDERED POLICING

"If a woman makes a mistake, it's amplified a thousand times compared to a man. The comments are very violent."
FGD, Young Women, Agareb

Across focus groups, young participants repeatedly describe asymmetrical moral accountability as a central feature of gender stereotypes: women's behaviour is heavily policed, while men's transgressions are minimised or excused. Young men in Kef openly acknowledge this disparity.

"Now both men and women drink and smoke, but women are judged more harshly—'She smokes—she's ill-bred, her parents didn't raise her, she's disobedient.' For men it's 'May God guide him'—they find a hundred excuses."

FGD – Young men, Kef

According to young women in Gabes, this double standard extends to everyday mobility: they report that they cannot go out alone at night, sit in cafés without judgement, or move freely through public space, while men in their communities face no such restrictions. Young men in Skhira describe valuing local women's "modesty", defining an ideal where women do not raise their voices in the street, do not laugh loudly, and maintain a muted public presence.

Key informant Meryem Ben Salem, drawing on her own research with women of different generations, adds that these moral double standards become particularly acute around sexuality and family honour. She recounts interviews with women who experienced forced sex on their wedding nights but still expressed pride in having preserved virginity for their husbands, which she interprets as evidence of deep internalisation of honour ideology. In her analysis, violence against women is frequently excused through narratives portraying men as "not fully in control" of their emotions, framing violence as reactive rather than intentional.

3.2.2 EVERYDAY MICRO-REGULATION OF BODIES AND MOVEMENT

Beyond images or abstract attitudes, both youth participants and key informants insist that gender stereotypes are lived and enforced through mundane, bodily practices that begin in early childhood. A young student activist and union leader explains how play and appearance are gendered:

"Before the moment they are born, the baby boy wears blue, green and navy, and the baby girl wears pink. A pink doll for a girl and a Batman doll for boys. From two years old through kindergarten to schools, teachers divide the girls and boys."

KII – Liwa Eddine Nabli – Student Union Leader

In his account, parents and teachers—key adult figures in children's lives—project gendered expectations onto children long before they can question these categories, so that gender becomes literally inscribed in the body and in daily routines. Participants describe how sanctions for cross-gender interaction send a powerful message: gender segregation is equated with safety and normality, while integration is read as transgression.

Across the focus groups, young people explain that stereotypes are enforced through constant micro-regulation of hair, voice, clothing and movement. Women, in particular, report intense scrutiny: short hair can provoke what they describe as family "crises"; clothing choices are said to invite harassment; and even the volume of one's voice becomes a marker of respectability. A disabled student activist in Tunis describes this as generating intense "self-censorship", where women constantly monitor their behaviour to avoid violence or judgement, "doing things [they] don't believe in" simply to survive.

Queer youth also narrate how these norms shape their bodies and self-presentation. Young Queer Activist and social media figure Ramy Ayari interviewed as key informant, recounts being marginalised at school for having long hair and a high-pitched voice as a boy—bodily characteristics that violated local norms of masculinity:

"I was marginalised at school for having long hair like a girl."
KII – Ramy Ayari

He further notes that even food becomes gendered, recalling fathers telling sons to *"eat spicy food to be a man",* thereby embedding masculinity into everyday bodily practices. Young men in Gabes, for their part, highlight their own constraints: they say they cannot cry publicly, cannot carry children in front of their fathers, and face judgement if they fail to perform stoic masculinity. In Skhira, young men state explicitly that *"women must not raise their voice in the street, not laugh loudly in the street"*, describing this muted female presence as a positive marker of local modesty.

These micro-regulations also govern movement and use of public space. Unemployed young women from small towns explain that *"girls live between school and home"*; going to a café often provokes gossip, so some resort to telling parents they are at school or studying simply to meet friends. Queer activists in Sfax note that even within universities—generally seen as more liberal—women with short hair or visible piercings attract heightened attention:

"A woman with short hair or piercings will be asked 'boy or girl?' and turned into a spectacle."
FGD – Queer activists, Sfax

Taken together, these accounts reveal a constant self-monitoring of posture, dress and routes. One student summarises this dynamic as "self-censorship"*—"I don't believe in these rules but I do it simply to avoid violence."* (FGD – Students including youth with disabilities, Tunis).

3.2.3 VIOLENCE AS AN ENFORCEMENT MECHANISM

Across focus groups, young women and queer participants describe gender stereotypes around sexuality and bodies as particularly harsh and often enforced through violence. They report a strong double standard whereby men's premarital sex, infidelity or drinking are frequently excused, while the sexuality of girls, women and queer youth is tightly policed as a matter of family honour. Participants share stories of sexuality being controlled through gender-based violence, including forced sex on wedding nights (marital rape), and queer and trans youth recount facing compounded stigma and threats, with some peers and relatives describing homosexuality as immoral or "against nature". Despite this, queer youth in the study portray their public existence and visibility as acts of resistance, and describe the emergence of new, contested identities and stereotypes within queer communities themselves.

Critically, participants stress that gender stereotypes are maintained not only through social disapproval but also through humiliations and physical and emotional violence. A queer youth in Sfax illustrates how ridicule and shaming operate as enforcement:

"When I was at school wearing flared pants, my uncle told me 'that's not men's clothing' in front of the whole family. They all stayed silent."

FGD – Queer activists, Sfax

Others explain that those who try to break stereotypes often face sustained social or physical attacks, offline and online:

"Anyone who tries to break these stereotypes finds themselves in a very bad bubble. Even if they go work to earn a living, they find themselves attacked because of their choices."

FGD – Queer activists, Sfax

In educational spaces, young women describe how institutional responses can reinforce gendered expectations and punish resistance. One participant recalls confronting a classmate who repeatedly touched her chest with a pen under the pretext that "it slipped":

"I smeared ink on his face. The teacher told me 'you're not in the street, you're ill-mannered.' I replied, 'you're ill-mannered to ignore harassment.' She covered for him."

FGD – Queer activists, Sfax

Several participants emphasise that what is striking is not only the harassment itself but the reactions of adults and institutions: teachers covering for harassers, staff urging victims to stay silent, and families tightening control on girls and queer youth instead of confronting perpetrators.

"If you're harassed, they tell you to keep quiet, or 'what will people say about you?' And even if you're harassed, you can't tell your parents because they'll lock you down more. The problem is always you."

FGD – Queer activists, Sfax

These accounts reveal how harassment and violence operate through a system of silence and victim-blaming, in which those who deviate from prescribed gender and sexual norms—whether girls, women or queer and trans youth—bear the primary costs of others' transgressions.

3.2.4 Geographic and class stratification

"Gender-role stereotyping is a collection of customary judgments. They can evolve. In Tunisia, we can say that part of them has become institutionalised within the legal and governance system, while the stronger, more rigid part comes from long-standing social constructions. These stereotypes differ from region to region."

KII – Saif Ayadi

FGD participants, supported by key informants, emphasise that the intensity and form of gender stereotypes vary significantly across region, class and race, creating layered hierarchies of acceptance and exclusion. In several FGD discussions, anti-Black racism is widely acknowledged as intersecting with gender, affecting social value and marriage prospects for Black Tunisians. Regional stereotypes are also strong: youth report that interior regions are often

portrayed as “backward”, while coastal cities and certain northern suburbs are framed as more “modern” and free. Class further conditions how much non-conformity is tolerated, with educated individuals in better-off urban neighbourhoods generally afforded more space to deviate from norms than young people in working-class or rural settings.

Young women in Gabes explain that gender roles in the South in general, and in Gabes in particular, are experienced as more restrictive than in the North, with control tightening the further south one travels. They also note important contrasts within the governorate itself: urban neighbourhoods tend to be more open than rural areas, and new rural settlements differ markedly from traditional ones. Young men in Skhira describe an especially intense surveillance culture where *“everyone knows everyone”,* making gossip and social control particularly powerful; they associate this with clan-based social structures that reinforce endogamy and limit women’s mobility, with girls again *“living between school and home”* and unable to go to cafés without provoking gossip.

By contrast, students from interior regions who travel to Tunis and other northern cities describe these spaces as offering anonymity and freedom:

> *“When we go north, everything changes, even our style, even our outlook.”*
> FGD – Students including youth with disabilities, Tunis

Young men in Gabes note that cities with more public facilities—municipal services, schools, universities—make women’s presence in public space more visible and normalised, whereas rural areas lacking such infrastructure make it easier to maintain traditional gender segregation. Their accounts suggest that investments in infrastructure and public institutions can directly reshape the “possibility space” for gender relations by changing how and where women and men can be present in public.

3.2.5 Internal policing within activist and queer spaces

> *“Being feminine is itself made into a stereotype. If I remove makeup and wear a hoodie I am suddenly read as ‘mask’ and interrogated: ‘Which one (of the genders) are you?”*
> FGD – Queer activists, Tunis

Queer participants’ accounts also show that so-called “safe” or alternative spaces are themselves traversed by gendered and sexualised policing rather than existing outside stereotypes. Queer women in Tunis report that even within LGBTQI+ circles, femininity is treated as a suspect performance that must be decoded; small changes in dress or make-up are enough to trigger demands to clarify “which one” you are, as if gender expression must map neatly onto a masculine/feminine binary within the community.

Bisexual participants describe similar dynamics. Several recounts being told that *“a bi man will always end up with a woman”* or that bisexual women will eventually “return” to heterosexuality, with peers joking “we lost you” when someone identifies as bisexual. One queer activist illustrates how this translates into exclusionary practices:

“They say a bisexual man will always end up with a woman, same for a bisexual woman. And you see this exclusion practiced by queer people themselves. A guy I thought was gay told me ‘I’m bisexual’ and I rejected him.”

FGD – Queer activists, Sfax

These stories underscore that alternative and activist spaces do not simply escape mainstream stereotypes; they can re-inscribe them through new boundary-making practices that police who is “really” queer, masculine or committed. Rather than functioning as stereotype-free zones, these spaces show how deeply classificatory habits are embedded in consciousness, and how struggles over authenticity and belonging can reproduce the very hierarchies they seek to contest—a pattern also discussed in critical queer literature. The internal reproduction of stereotypes, even in spaces explicitly committed to fighting them, highlights the depth and resilience of gender categories in everyday life.

3.4 FORMATION AND PERSISTENCE OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

3.4.1 FAMILY AS PRIMARY TRANSMISSION SITE

“The family is the first cell in which a human being is formed. From the beginning, we opened our eyes to a completely stereotypical context where everyone has a role, everyone has a color they are assigned, like the pink and blue we had when we were young.”

KII - Essia Jaibi

According to youth in this study, families reproduce stereotypes through everyday practices that begin before birth and intensify throughout childhood. A student union leader in Tunis describes the process systematically: gender reveal parties assign blue or pink before birth, infant clothing reinforces color coding, toy choices are rigidly gendered (dolls for girls, action figures for boys), and by kindergarten teachers punish children who sit with the opposite gender, teaching cross-gender interaction as transgression.

Young Women in Gabes and Kef describe intergenerational patterns where mothers model female subordination while fathers model male authority and control. Young men in Kef note that their own fathers are changing—becoming less violent, allowing more freedom—as exposure to society and technology shifts parenting practices (FGD, young men, Kef). Yet these changes remain incremental and contested.

“These stereotypes come from the elders, from customs and traditions—‘Mom and Dad did it this way’—and we inherited them.”

FGD Women, Kef

Meryem Ben Salem explains how not only the family, but also school curricula reinforce family patterns, with textbooks teaching children *"I obey my father because he gives me money, and I obey my mother because she makes my bed and stays up when I'm sick"*—explicitly assigning men to economic provision and women to caregiving. Mothers occupy contradictory positions as

both victims of gender hierarchies and enforcers who socialize the next generation into these same hierarchies.

3.4.2 EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS AS ENFORCEMENT INSTITUTIONS

This is confirmed by youth in FGDs who observed that schools function as major sites of stereotype reproduction despite theoretically being institutions for enlightenment and social mobility. Teachers separate boys and girls in the classrooms and playgrounds, assign gender-specific tasks, and model gendered expectations through their own behavior.

A student union leader notes that most kindergartens lack professional training, with teachers reproducing stereotypes through punishment - *children who cross gender lines face disciplinary action, teaching conformity through fear* (KII, Student Union Leader).

Physical education classes particularly reinforce gendered bodily dispositions, encouraging boys toward aggressive, competitive physicality while teaching girls restraint and passivity.

Disabled students in Tunis note a paradox: *women now constitute the majority of university students (67%), dominate in medicine because men pursue faster degrees to start earning, and are entering fields once reserved for men* (FGD, Students incl. with disabilities, Tunis).

Yet this educational dominance has not translated into proportional economic or political power, suggesting education alone cannot dismantle structural constraints.

Journalist Rihab Boukhayatia critiques the fundamental failure of education reform: *comprehensive sexuality education was promised but never implemented, curricula remain essentially unchanged, and the system fails to equip young people to critically examine gender norms* (KII, Rihab Boukhayatia).

3.4.3 MEDIA AS DOUBLE-EDGED INFLUENCE

Interviewed youth find that media operate simultaneously as stereotype reinforcers and potential disruptors. Traditional media—television, radio—largely reproduce stereotypes through sitcoms presenting rigid gender roles, news programs featuring male experts on "serious" topics and women for "soft" stories, and advertisements depicting women exclusively in domestic roles.

A student union leader critiques Tunisia's most famous sitcom "Choufli Hall" for reinforcing the image of men as doctors who earn money and make demands, a woman who is a sort of a “charlatan fortune-teller” and the other women providing domestic labor (KII, Student Union Leader).

Social media presents more contradictory effects. Young men in Skhira note that Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok "changed a lot of things," exposing them to different societies and opening their eyes to alternative ways of living (FGD, Young Men, Skhira).

Students with diabilities describe how algorithms can either reinforce stereotypes (feeding users content that matches existing biases) or expose them to unfamiliar images that challenge assumptions (FGD, Students incl. with disabilities, Tunis).

Yet Rihab Boukhayatia warns that social media also enable dangerous new forms of stereotype reinforcement through influencers and podcasters who present rigid conventional gender norms ideas in modern packaging. She notes these figures are *"more dangerous than radio or television now because they touch young people"* directly, without the regulatory oversight that traditional media face (KII, Rihab Boukhayatia). Young men in Gabes confirm this, describing how they imitate what they see on TV and social media, normalizing behaviors through repeated exposure (FGD, Young Men Gabes).

3.4.4 ECONOMIC CRISIS AS CATALYST FOR REACTIVE CONSERVATISM

Economic precarity emerges as powerful driver intensifying rather than weakening gender stereotypes and resentment around equality. Participants describe how unemployment and declining living standards make traditional gendered divisions of work emotionally and ideologically important when material markers of success become unattainable. A student union leader explains:

> *"The economic crisis played a role in people coming against equality. The male who was to inherit a thousand olives—if you want equality and divide with his sister, he reduces his money. If the opportunity existed—any income that preserves human dignity—if the situation were better, the need to preserve these structures has decreased."*
>
> KII, Student Union Leader

Young men in Skhira describe divorce as having become "like a business," with women extracting alimony and men feeling exploited (FGD, Young Men, Skhira). Young men in Kef and Gabes express anxiety about marriage becoming unaffordable yet socially mandatory, creating intense frustration. They describe women as threats once they gain education and earning capacity—lawyers and doctors are feared because *"she studied and surpassed him,"* while women in agriculture are praised because they pose *"no threat"* (FGD, young men, Kef) (FGD, Young Men Gabes).

Maryam Ben Salem, a university professor in political studies and member of the IMAGES Tunisia research team, highlighted a striking perception among young men: they believe women find jobs more easily *“because they are pretty,”* despite objective data showing women’s unemployment is significantly higher than men’s. This misperception — that women have unfair advantages — fuels resentment and resistance to equality measures (KII, Maryam Ben Salem).

Women in Gabes articulate the paradox: when women work, they don't replace men's domestic contributions but simply add a second shift. Men *"have withdrawn from duties but not from rights,"* relying more heavily on women for bills and responsibilities while maintaining authority and refusing childcare and housework (FGD, Young Women Gabes).

3.4.5 RELIGION AS JUSTIFICATION AND CONTESTATION SITE

Religion operates as both a source of legitimacy for stereotypes and a potential site of contestation, with different actors interpreting religious texts to support competing claims. Young men in Gabes insist that *"an ideal society should be founded on Sharia,"* arguing that Islamic law

elevates and honors women while secular equality discourse commodifies them (FGD, Young Men Gabes).

Young men in Kef debate whether religion truly mandates gender hierarchy, with some arguing religion establishes complementarity without privilege, while others cite specific hadith to justify male authority (FGD, young men, Kef).

Women in Gabes describe how religious language is weaponized to control them—references to *"each of you (meaning men) is a shepherd responsible for his flock"* are invoked to justify male authority and female submission, thus *"twisting religion to protect themselves and maintain power"* (FGD, Young Women Gabes).

A student union leader, as a young person himself, offers a more nuanced view: Tunisia's moderate Islamic reading *"does not call for the marginalization of women economically, socially or violently,"* and the legal duty of obedience was eliminated in the 1990s. The problem lies not in religion itself but in how customs and traditions are falsely attributed to religious mandate. (KII, Student Union Leader).

3.4.6 STATE POLICY AND THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP

A critical observation aligned with literature is that egalitarian laws exist but remain largely unenforced, creating a gap between formal rights and lived reality. Multiple participants cite Law 58 on violence against women as exemplifying this problem. A student union leader explains that while the law *"protects women and consolidates gains and clarifies concepts,"* the fundamental issue is implementation.

Academic researcher Maryem Ben Salem details what meaningful enforcement would require: accessible listening centres across the country, specialised police units with adequate training, shelters for women fleeing violence, and sufficient resources for investigation and prosecution. She stresses that these measures *“remain very insufficient for the law to be truly effective*” and argues that Tunisia has become *“very good at passing laws”* while failing to build the material and institutional infrastructure needed to make those rights real in women’s lives (KII – Maryem Ben Salem).

Journalist and researcher Rihab Boukhayatia goes further, questioning the depth of political commitment to gender equality. In her assessment, state feminism often operates as an *“instrumentalisation of gender equality to project the image of a developed, modern country”*: women are appointed to visible positions as a modernising façade, while underlying power relations and resource distribution remain largely unchanged (KII – Rihab Boukhayatia).

Some young men in Kef note that laws now *“protect women and prevent men from hitting them”*, and that this is often felt as an external constraint that generates resentment rather than genuine change in beliefs about male authority. In their accounts, legal norms restrict certain behaviours through the threat of punishment, but do not necessarily transform the patriarchal assumptions that underpin those behaviours (FGD – Young men, Kef).

3.5 PARTIAL DISRUPTIONS AND MOMENTS OF RESISTANCE

3.5.1 EDUCATIONAL SITES AS DISRUPTIVE SPACES

University attendance represents a significant moment of disruption for many young women, particularly those from smaller towns and rural areas who experience, for the first time, some physical distance from family control and local reputational economies. This spatial and social shift can open room to experiment with new friendships, dress styles, political ideas and relationship norms that would be difficult to sustain at home. One activist notes:

> *"At university, they (students) are far from the family, it is an opportunity to discover the world and to emancipate themselves."*
>
> KII, Student Union Leader

However, this disruption is neither automatic nor universally emancipatory. Access to transformative experiences depends on field of study, campus location, economic constraints and whether students encounter supportive peers and educators or, instead, hostile or conservative environments. As one activist cautions:

> *"Whether students encounter progressive or conservative ideas depends entirely on the teacher. I may write 'LGBT, feminism, progressive' on the board, but the teacher next door may be pushing the opposite agenda."*
>
> KII, Shams Radhouani

In practice, universities function as contradictory spaces where patriarchal norms are both questioned and reproduced: some students use the relative anonymity of campus to explore more fluid gender performances, while others experience heightened moral policing, harassment or surveillance, especially when they transgress local expectations around modesty and respectability.

3.5.2 STUDENT MOVEMENT ACTIVISM

The student movement provides a space where young people can collectively challenge stereotypes and link personal grievances about gender roles to broader struggles over democracy, economic justice and academic freedom. One student leader describes:

> *"The student movement has always played its role as a political, social and economic actor. Within the university, the role of the union is presenting seminars, intellectual workshops to discuss gender, actively participating in demonstrations to break stereotypes, publishing research, and simplifying academic research. Students are the youth, the dynamic ones, and their effectiveness in society means that working to influence them and break the classical narrative is an irreplaceable task."*
>
> KII, Student Union Leader

Within student unions, women's leadership has been central, both numerically and symbolically. One activist notes:

> *"Most of the people in the university today are female students. Our administrative body, most of its members are half or more women. Our National Council, which*

includes more than a thousand members, has a large percentage of women's representation. We are one of the most unionised organisations that have women's leadership."

KII, Student Union Leader

At the same time, interviewees underline that these spaces remain contested: women and queer activists still encounter sexist and homophobic resistance within unions themselves, and the policing of campuses exposes them to surveillance and repression by university administrations and security forces. Student activism thus operates as a powerful but precarious arena of normative disruption, where new gender-justice imaginaries are forged in constant negotiation with institutional and ideological pushback.

3.5.3 DIGITAL ACTIVISM AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

Digital platforms emerge in the data as powerful but ambivalent tools for contesting gender stereotypes. On one hand, activists emphasize how online campaigns like #EnaZeda created unprecedented visibility for sexual harassment and violence, shattering the idea that such experiences are confined to *"immoral women who let themselves go"* and forcing recognition that they affect "respectable" women across classes and regions. Digital storytelling, hashtags, and viral testimonies allowed survivors to speak collectively rather than in isolation and gave youth a language and repertoire for naming abuse and linking individual experiences to structural gender injustice. One activist notes:

"The Ena Zeda movement revealed a lot and helped people understand that this doesn't only happen to immoral women who let themselves go."

FGD, Queer Activists, Sfax

On the other hand, participants insist that these same spaces are deeply contested and often hostile. The limited "*bit of freedom of expression*" gained after the revolution brought previously invisible lives—queer people, outspoken feminists, non-conforming youth—into the public eye, but visibility also attracted harassment, hate speech, and moral panic. Activists describe a paradox where social networks both expose oppressive stereotypes and amplify them: communities *"receive a lot of harm"* precisely because they become visible, and every attempt to push back against dominant norms online risks backlash, doxxing, or intensified offline stigma. Digital activism thus operates as a double-edged terrain where gains in awareness and mobilisation are inseparable from new forms of exposure and vulnerability.

"The revolution put them under the spotlight. Because there were things we never talked about before, things we had never even heard of. With a bit of freedom of expression we gained, we discovered these stereotypes, and we discovered that people actually live like this."

FGD, Queer Activists, Sfax

3.5.4 TRANSGRESSIVE EMBODIMENT AS RESISTANCE

The young women and queer youth in FGDs reported how they actively resist and renegotiate stereotypes in their daily lives. Resistance can be quiet and pragmatic, involving negotiations with partners to maintain employment or informal agreements to share responsibilities. Some

adopt double lives, adjusting their behavior and appearance depending on the space (village versus city, home versus campus). Open confrontation, such as calling out harassment or challenging discriminatory practices, also occurs, often at personal cost, including ostracism and family conflict.

Some individuals are deliberately challenging stereotypes through bodily practice. One (male) queer activist describes:

> *"I started growing my hair, for about ten years, and I faced a lot of resistance from my family, my friends, from school, and even on the street. In Sfax, we don't have many "men" with long hair, but when one passes by, if you don't like it, you throw a comment. Now it's not as much. I don't know if it's because when you're a kid it's easier to bully you, and now that I've grown it has become harder. Or maybe people have become more open."*
>
> FGD, Queer Activists, Sfax

Another (female) describes clothing as resistance:

> *"At school, I studied in a boys' highschool. I smoked in class, and asked classmates for a cigarette. They ignored me. I went out in front of the school, lit one. Suddenly everyone stared like 'how dare you.' I stayed silent. That cigarette made one classmate spread rumours I was a slut."*
>
> FGD, Queer Activists, Sfax

However, this "negotiation" of gender stereotypes exacts a significant psychological cost, with youth reporting fatigue, suffocation, and anxiety linked to constant self-monitoring and fear of judgment. Exposure to violence and harassment - domestic, street-based, school-based, workplace, and online - is widespread and functions as a mechanism of norm enforcement.

3.6 DIVERSE YOUTH EXPERIENCES OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

The FGDs reveal multiple ways in which young people respond to gender stereotypes, including conformity, internalisation, ambivalence, resistance and psychological strain. Some participants describe accepting or normalising stereotypes, particularly those relating to provision, domestic roles and modesty. Certain young women express comfort with male headship and financial responsibility, while others emphasise "justice" rather than equality and view differentiated roles as legitimate when they align with perceived natural capacities. Many accounts show ambivalence, as individuals negotiate the security and symbolic comfort of traditional roles while simultaneously recognising the unequal burdens they impose. Several students and queer women in FGDs, in particular, report confusion about their genuine desires versus actions undertaken to break stereotypes, illustrating how legal equality coexists with internalised domestic patriarchy in everyday life.

Other participants focus on negotiating spaces and red lines with varying levels of confrontation, rather than straightforward acceptance or rejection of norms. This ongoing negotiation is described as carrying a significant psychological cost: youth speak of fatigue, suffocation and

anxiety linked to constant self-monitoring and fear of judgment. Across groups, exposure to violence and harassment — domestic, street-based, school-based, workplace and online — is reported as a central mechanism of norm enforcement. Queer and gender-non-conforming youth in specific focus groups recount heightened risks, including assaults, forced outings (being pressured to disclose their non-heteronormative sexual orientation or gender identity or having their sexual orientation and their gender identity disclosed without their consent) and sexual violence, at times even within civil society spaces.

3.6.1 RELATIONSHIPS, MARRIAGE, SEXUALITY AND FAMILY LIFE

Many young women in FGDs reported experiencing stereotypes as a **confinement to domestic and caregiving roles while simultaneously being held responsible for men's behavior.** One participant notes:

> *"If a child is sick, the father doesn't stay up with them—I do. I'll be the one staying up all night, missing work, and they might fire me. He can't—he always has work."*
> FGD, Unemployed Women

Another describes the psychological burden:

> *"I know lesbian girls who lived five, six, eight years together, but in the end one of them marries a man. She's lesbian, but she has to have kids because of social pressure. And I've seen this not just once or twice, but several times."*
> FGD, Queer Activists, Sfax

According to another youth, women are expected to maintain a public presence of sexual purity while managing men's sexuality:

> *"If a man and woman are in a sexual relationship outside marriage, the woman is called a whore or adulteress, and the man is celebrated as a stud. In reality, we are all equal."*
> FGD, Queer Activists, Sfax

3.6.2 OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION AND STEREOTYPED COMPETENCE

Occupational segregation appears in the data not just as a pattern of who ends up in which jobs, but as a mechanism that continually proves and reproduces gendered ideas about competence. Participants describe entire sectors as effectively closed to one gender: construction sites, taxi driving, and market vending are imagined as inherently masculine, while housecleaning, childcare, and nursery work are seen as "naturally" feminine, to the point where the absence of men or women in these roles is taken as evidence that they do not belong there. This circular logic— *"you don't see women there, therefore they can't do it"*—turns social exclusion into supposed biological or psychological fact.

Athleticism has become another site where this boundary is enforced. Men in sports are taken for granted, but women who build muscular, "overly athletic" bodies are treated with suspicion and warned not to *"destroy [their] own home,"* signaling fears that physical strength will translate into social independence, diminished desirability, or refusal of traditional roles. In this way, occupational segregation and norms around the body work together: they sort women and men

into different types of labor, then stigmatize anyone whose skills, appearance, or aspirations cross the gendered line. One young activist explains:

> *"Men in sports are accepted, but we don't accept overly athletic women. And women are told 'don't destroy your own home.'"*
>
> FGD, Queer Activists, Sfax

3.6.3 MALE PRESSURE AND DEFENSIVE MASCULINITY

Young men experience stereotypes as **expectations to dominate, provide and control—an emotional and economic burden made worse by economic crisis.** One activist notes:

> *"Even men get harassed by men a lot, but we can't say it. If we do, it questions our masculinity—'are you gay, or did you not seize the chance?'"*
>
> FGD, Queer Activists, Sfax

The marriage crisis exemplifies this. Young men face mounting economic pressure to prove worth through provision, yet economic conditions make this increasingly impossible. Another activist notes:

> *"Men now fear educated women such as lawyers and doctors because they 'became a threat' once they could file cases, earn salaries and 'surpass him.'"*
>
> FGD, young men, Kef

3.6.4 QUEER AND GENDER-NONCONFORMING YOUTH FACE COMPOUNDED PRESSURE

Queer and gender-nonconforming youth in this study describe living under compounded pressure, where all the constraints attached to normative masculinity and femininity are layered with additional scrutiny, stigma and risk. Simply becoming visible—by posting online, attending events, or being seen in queer-coded spaces—can trigger severe backlash. Participants recount how screenshots of their posts circulate on social media accompanied by comments that they *"brought it on [themselves]"*, illustrating how cyber-violence works to punish non-conformity and to warn others against coming out or speaking publicly. This digital exposure often spills into offline harassment, family conflict and professional insecurity, making visibility both politically important and personally dangerous:

> *"Cyber violence against queer people—screenshots are taken and the usual reactions are 'she brought it on herself.'"*
>
> FGD – Queer activists, Sfax

Participants also stress that queer and trans youth do not experience a single, unified "safe space". Some activist and community circles reproduce gender stereotypes and binary assumptions—for example, by valuing certain expressions of masculinity or femininity over others, or by marginalising non-binary identities—while other circles deliberately create more critical and discursive environments. These more reflexive spaces encourage participants to question binarity, to name links between gender, sexuality, class and race, and to develop language that makes their experiences intelligible to themselves and others.

Within such spaces, some queer youth describe a trajectory of "evolution" rather than a simple before/after change. Early feelings of rejecting rigid binarity, shaped partly by family experience and partly by self-reflection, are strengthened and refined through activism and collective sensitisation:

> *"Whenever you mingle with people, you adopt some of their ideas, and they adopt some of yours. Both the good and the bad. I didn't change, but I evolved. The broad lines of rejecting binarity through awareness raising and actions."*
>
> FGD – Queer activists, Sfax

Taken together, these accounts show that queer and gender-nonconforming youth often bear disproportionate costs in the struggle against gender stereotypes but are also among the most articulate and reflexive agents of change. At the same time, their narratives caution against assuming that queer spaces are automatically free of gendered hierarchies: the same communities that offer protection and affirmation can also mirror wider norms, making the work of questioning and transforming stereotypes an ongoing, contested process rather than a given.

3.6.5 GENDERED STEREOTYPES AT THE INTERSECTION OF DISABILITY

> *"Even with disability, stereotypes about gender roles persist. You're expected to perform femininity/masculinity while dealing with physical limitations."*
>
> FGD - Students with Disability

Participants with disabilities describe experiencing gender stereotypes in intersectional ways, where disability does not erase gendered expectations but intensifies them. Disabled women in particular face *"multiple layers of stereotyping"*: they are simultaneously perceived through sexist assumptions about women's fragility, caregiving roles, and emotionality, and through ableist views that cast disabled people as dependent, asexual, or incapable. Rather than relaxing gender norms, disability often coexists with them, so that young people are still expected to perform the appropriate femininity or masculinity—appearance, behavior, emotional control—even when their bodies or environments make this difficult or impossible. For example, a disabled woman who cannot physically fulfil domestic tasks may be judged more harshly than a man with the same impairment, because housework is treated as her "natural" duty; a disabled man who cannot embody physical strength or breadwinner status may be seen as doubly failing both masculine and able-bodied ideals. These overlapping stereotypes create a narrow, punitive space in which disabled youth must constantly negotiate legitimacy as both gendered and disabled subjects.

3.7 WHAT ACTIONS, ACTORS, AND MOMENTS DISRUPT STEREOTYPES?

Civil society and activist organising emerge in the research as the main engines pushing against entrenched gender stereotypes, but their reach and impact are uneven. Student unions, feminist groups, and queer collectives have created spaces—especially in universities and major cities—where young people can debate norms, access legal information, and experiment with different ways of living gender. Activists describe a productive circulation between academic research and practice, where studies on gender, labour, or violence are translated into public debates,

workshops, and campus campaigns that make abstract concepts tangible for peers. At the same time, they are acutely aware of the limits of an activism *"centred on the elites,"* concentrated in capitals and university spaces and largely failing to reach rural areas and interior regions where stereotypes are often most restrictive. This recognition is likely the reason why several experts interviewed in this study are calling for broader coalition building—linking student movements, feminist associations, labour unions, and regional groups—to develop collective strategies, support women's leadership within their own structures, and extend gender-justice work beyond familiar urban strongholds into communities with the least access to rights-based discourse and organising tools. These experiences inform the recommendations in Chapter 4, which emphasise coalition-building, youth-led organising and protection of civic space.

3.8 SYNTHESIS & DISCUSSION: THE PARADOXES OF CONTEMPORARY GENDER STEREOTYPES IN TUNISIA

The qualitative evidence presented in this chapter reveals a fundamentally **paradoxical landscape**. Young Tunisians articulate sophisticated critiques of gender stereotypes while remaining embedded within systems that feel almost impossible to transcend. This tension is not a logical failure; it reflects structural conditions in which individual consciousness and institutional constraints move at different speeds.

The paradox of legal modernity and social tradition

Across focus groups, and with support from key informants, participants repeatedly contrast Tunisia's progressive legal framework on gender equality with the persistence of deeply patriarchal expectations in family and community life. They are aware that the 1956 Code of Personal Status banned polygamy and granted women divorce rights, that the 2014 Constitution enshrined gender equality, and that the 2017 law criminalised domestic violence—reforms they describe as unprecedented in the region. Yet they emphasise that these advances coexist with enduring gender stereotypes and restrictive practices, and in some contexts they perceive conservative reactions intensifying.

Taken together, these accounts point to a paradox: **legal modernity has reshaped rights on paper without fully dismantling the social, economic and institutional arrangements that sustain gender hierarchy**. Youth and key informants describe laws that function as aspirational reference points—invoked in debates, used rhetorically by activists and sometimes mobilised in complaints—while remaining only partially implemented. As one activist notes, "laws are often just ink on paper," allowing families, schools, religious institutions and local authorities to continue governing daily life according to customary gender norms.

Participants and experts converge on several conditions they see as essential for legal reforms to become genuinely transformative: effective enforcement and adequate budgets; training and attitude change among police, judges and administrators; cultural and educational work that delegitimises harmful stereotypes; and economic changes that increase women's material independence. Without these elements, formal equality coexists with substantive inequality and

a form of legal modernity that raises expectations and destabilises some norms, but does not resolve the contradictions youth confront.

Economic precarity as a basis of stereotype persistence

A central pattern in the material is that **economic precarity tends to intensify gender stereotypes**. A student activist links economic crisis to reinforced expectations around inheritance and provision, explaining that men who anticipated inheriting land now feel directly threatened by proposals for equal division with sisters. This analysis resonates with survey evidence indicating that younger Tunisian men often express more restrictive gender attitudes than older cohorts, an inversion of patterns observed in many other contexts.

While longitudinal data are limited, the qualitative findings suggest a plausible mechanism: as economic conditions deteriorate and stable employment becomes harder to access, traditional gender roles gain emotional and symbolic importance for some young men. They function as sources of identity, dignity and status when material markers of success are out of reach. The "marriage crisis" illustrates this dynamic: many young men cannot afford to marry according to prevailing expectations, yet marriage remains a central marker of adult masculine status. Rather than abandoning traditional expectations, some respond with defensive conservatism—reframing women's educational and economic achievements as unfair competition or as undermining men's role, and portraying demands for equality as an added burden in an already precarious context.

In the words of several youth and activists, addressing this pattern requires more than normative appeals to equality. **Without changes in the material conditions that make the breadwinner ideal unattainable—unemployment, informality, regional inequality—calls for gender justice risk being experienced as abstract or even threatening**. Economic and cultural transformations must proceed together if stereotypes are to loosen rather than harden under crisis conditions.

The complexity of stereotype critique without erasure

Participants also highlight the limits of conventional anti-stereotype work that simply seeks to "eliminate" stereotypes. They note that such approaches can inadvertently erase or stigmatise people who genuinely identify with traits labelled as "stereotypical." The stereotype lies in the reductive generalisation that converts one characteristic into a total identity, and in the hierarchy that devalues those who embody it.

For feminist activism and programming, the implication is that the goal cannot be the abstract erasure of stereotypes. Instead, participants point to three parallel tasks: **challenging stereotypical constraints when they limit life choices** (for example, expectations that women must prioritise caregiving); affirming that people who embody traits coded as "feminine" or "masculine" can still be leaders, professionals or activists; and creating space for those who enjoy traditional roles (such as cooking, childcare or homemaking) without treating these as obligations or prerequisites for respectability. This suggests a more nuanced framework in which

gender justice is defined as expanding people's room to choose, not prescribing a single "correct" way to be a woman, a man or a queer person.

Institutional reproduction of stereotypes: the problem of implementation

Across focus groups, supported by key informant analysis, participants stress that institutions formally committed to equality often **reproduce gender stereotypes through everyday practices**. Universities are frequently cited as emblematic: young people describe them as spaces where some encounter critical perspectives on gender and sexuality, while others are exposed to openly conservative or anti-rights discourse.

Similar patterns appear elsewhere. Youth and experts describe law-enforcement bodies tasked with protecting women from violence that instead blame victims or minimise complaints, and schools that teach equality in curricula while maintaining strict gender segregation and punishing cross-gender interaction. These accounts suggest that institutional reform must go beyond formal changes—new laws, strategies or curricula—to include sustained work on the attitudes, incentives and routines of those who implement them: teachers, administrators, police officers, judges and managers. Without this, institutions risk functioning as spaces where stereotypes are quietly reproduced despite progressive mandates.

The role of violence in maintaining stereotypes

A critical finding is that gender stereotypes are maintained not only through socialisation and representation but also through **actual and threatened violence**. Participants describe violence working in two ways: as direct enforcement, punishing those who violate or appear to violate norms through physical assault, harassment, ostracism or online attacks; and as normalisation, where male violence is portrayed as natural or inevitable and the fear of such violence teaches girls, women and queer youth to self-police.

Youth give examples from multiple settings. In schools, teachers sometimes punish cross-gender interaction or cover for male harassers, signalling that girls who complain are the problem. In the street, young women and queer youth report harassment linked to clothing, hair, voice and movement. Within families and intimate relationships, participants recount spousal violence and brothers' control over sisters being excused as men's "temper" or a response to women's supposed provocation. Several mention that police and other authorities fail to enforce protection orders or discourage survivors from pursuing complaints; even femicides are at times publicly justified, with people "coming up with excuses" for men who kill their partners. These accounts underscore that dismantling gender stereotypes requires not only cultural work on norms and images, but also **credible accountability for violence and robust enforcement of protection mechanisms**.

Sectoral and spatial specificity of stereotypes

The findings also show that gender stereotypes are **not uniform across Tunisia**; they vary by geography, socio-economic position and institutional environment. Young people from urban universities report greater exposure to progressive narratives and counter-discourses than rural

youth with limited access to education and information, while stressing that exposure does not automatically translate into attitude change. In some urban settings, participants see many women in universities, civil society spaces and certain professions; in nearby rural areas, women are more confined to unpaid or low-paid agricultural work and domestic roles.

A student union leader links these differences directly to infrastructure and institutional presence: cities with municipalities, institutes and universities make women's presence in public life more visible and normalised, whereas rural areas lacking such facilities offer fewer legitimate spaces for women to be outside the home. Young men and women similarly note that access to education, public transport, safe public spaces and diversified employment shapes how far stereotypes can be stretched or challenged in practice. These observations suggest that investments in **infrastructure and services are not gender-neutral**; they expand or restrict the concrete possibility space within which young people can renegotiate norms.

The partial and contested nature of cultural change

Finally, the evidence points to cultural change around gender as **partial, uneven and constantly contested** rather than linear. Participants identify multiple moments and spaces where stereotypes are disrupted: the visibility of campaigns such as #EnaZeda, the strong presence of women in universities, the emergence of feminist and queer organising, and the gradual normalisation of some gender-nonconforming expression in certain urban areas or online. At the same time, they underline that these openings are accompanied by strong counter-currents. Queer activists in Sfax, for example, describe the post-revolution period and social media as making it easier for some young people to see gender stereotypes as "things to let go of", while others use the same tools to restore or reinforce conservative gender and sexuality norms. Several participants characterise the present moment as a **"constant flux" or "battle" between opposing projects**—one pushing toward greater equality and recognition, the other toward re-entrenchment of differentiated roles and moral regulation.

Taken together, the narratives in this chapter show that young people in Tunisia experience gender stereotypes as **dense, everyday infrastructures** rather than abstract beliefs. Moving between homes, universities, workplaces, streets and online spaces, they repeatedly adjust their bodies, speech, relationships and aspirations to norms that define "proper" masculinity and femininity and punish perceived deviance. This produces layered lives in which critique, accommodation and strategic silence coexist, and where contesting stereotypes requires careful navigation of economic precarity, family control and shrinking civic space. These lived experiences answer the cardinal question of the study by revealing trajectories that are neither simply traditional nor simply modern: some youth push toward more fluid and egalitarian norms, others are drawn or pushed into more entrenched roles, and many oscillate between the two depending on context. It is on this uneven ground—marked by both openings and backlash, both resistance and resignation—that current and future possibilities for **gender justice** are being shaped, and that Chapter 4 takes up in its discussion of implications for policy, programming and youth-led organising.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

This study set out to examine how young people in Tunisia understand, live and contest gender stereotypes, and how their trajectories — between more fluid and more re-entrenched gender norms — reshape current and future possibilities for gender justice. The findings show that young people are neither straightforward carriers of "tradition" nor automatic agents of progressive change. Rather, they navigate a contradictory social landscape in which formal commitments to equality coexist with persistent patriarchal norms, economic precarity, institutional inconsistency and uneven opportunities for resistance. In this context, gender stereotypes are not simply opinions or outdated residues; they function as social and institutional infrastructures that organise authority, care, labour, mobility, sexuality, respectability and belonging.

The report finds that these stereotypes remain deeply embedded in everyday youth lives. Across focus groups, young participants repeatedly described a provider–caregiver model in which men are expected to lead, provide and embody authority, while women are expected to care, accommodate and preserve family respectability. These expectations structure education, work, marriage, movement in public space, emotional expression and access to legitimacy. They are maintained not only through discourse, but through family socialisation, school routines, labour-market hierarchies, media narratives, legal gaps, peer pressure, gossip, harassment and violence.

At the same time, youth responses to these norms are rarely linear. Many participants do not simply accept or reject stereotypes; they inhabit ambivalent, shifting and highly contextual positions. They may criticise gender inequality while still valuing certain traditional roles as sources of recognition, security or dignity. They may support women's work while continuing to naturalise unequal care burdens, or seek more just gender relations while rejecting the language of equality. Contemporary youth trajectories in Tunisia are therefore better understood not through a traditional-versus-modern binary, but through ongoing negotiation across contradictory normative, economic and political pressures.

The report also shows that possibilities for disruption are real but uneven and fragile. University life, student organising, feminist and queer activism, migration, digital media and exposure to alternative social worlds can all open space for questioning inherited norms. Yet these spaces are themselves unstable and contested. They may enable experimentation and solidarity, but they can also reproduce internal exclusions, new forms of policing and backlash. Progress appears neither automatic nor cumulative; it is partial, situated and vulnerable to reversal.

A central conclusion of the study is that economic precarity plays a crucial role in this process. Deteriorating material conditions do not simply weaken traditional gender norms; in many cases, they intensify defensive attachments to them. For some young men, the breadwinner role remains a key marker of worth and adulthood even as stable employment becomes harder to attain. For many young women, paid work has not displaced domestic expectations but added to them, producing an intensified double burden. Gender stereotypes therefore persist not only

because they are culturally familiar, but also because they remain materially and institutionally embedded.

The study further confirms that gender stereotypes are experienced intersectionally. Region, class, race, disability, sexuality and degree of access to activist or educational spaces all shape how stereotypes are lived, enforced and contested. Rural youth, working-class youth, Black Tunisians, queer and trans youth, and youth with disabilities often face layered and specific forms of control that cannot be adequately explained through gender alone. Any attempt to address stereotypes in Tunisia must therefore move beyond homogenised notions of “youth” or “women” and engage the differentiated realities through which power is organised.

Overall, the report concludes that the future of gender justice in Tunisia will depend less on formal commitments to equality alone than on whether the social, economic and institutional conditions that sustain stereotypes are meaningfully transformed. Youth are already generating critiques, strategies of survival and moments of resistance, but without stronger infrastructures of protection, redistribution, accountability and collective organising, these openings will remain fragile. The central lesson of this study is that gender stereotypes among youth are not peripheral cultural attitudes to be corrected at the level of awareness alone; they are constitutive of broader relations of power and must be addressed as such.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The evidence gathered from Tunisian youth across diverse contexts points to a clear opportunity for KVINFO and its partners to play catalytic roles in supporting locally driven efforts to challenge entrenched gender stereotypes and the infrastructures that sustain them. Drawing on KVINFO’s identity as a feminist knowledge hub, convener and long-term ally to women’s rights movements, five strategic directions emerge as both necessary and feasible for disrupting and transforming gender stereotypes in practice.

The recommendations below do not address gender stereotypes only at the level of discourse or awareness. They respond to the study’s core finding that stereotypes are sustained through institutions, economic precarity, violence, unequal care relations and constrained civic space, and therefore require interventions at multiple levels.

Act as a convener and bridge-builder

Via collaboration with local partner organisations KVINFO uses its position to bring together actors who rarely sit at the same table — feminist organisations, queer collectives, student unions (such as UGET), labour movements, anti-racist groups and youth-led initiatives from different regions — but could take more advantage of this convening role around concrete strategies to name, contest and transform gender stereotypes in everyday life and institutions.

This convening role should prioritise :

- Safe, inclusive spaces for dialogue across movements where youth can jointly map how stereotypes operate in families, schools, workplaces and digital spaces, and co-design counter-narratives and collective actions.
- Exchange on how gender stereotypes are enforced differently in urban and rural settings, and what disruption tactics have worked in each, ensuring marginalised voices from interior regions are centred rather than tokenised.
- Coalition-building around shared demands that directly challenge stereotype-based exclusions (for example, comprehensive sexuality education that uncouples "respectability" from silence; economic justice that contests breadwinner-only models; ending violence used to police gender non-conformity).

Provide flexible, trust-based support to youth-led initiatives

KVINFO champions a flexible, multi-year funding model that should also treat youth-led groups as trusted partners in challenging and transforming gender stereotypes, while relinquishing tight control mechanisms. Effective responses to stereotypes seem to emerge through sustained organising, peer support, cultural work and community-based experimentation rather than through narrowly predefined outputs.

This implies:

- Continuing multi-year core support for women's rights organisations, while including queer collectives and youth-led groups that work directly on challenging stereotype-based expectations around care, masculinity, sexuality, work and public participation, while reducing administrative burden and accepting learning-oriented reporting.
- Continuing and more consistently provide funding for "unglamorous" but essential work — operating costs, staff, translation, transport, mental-health support, security and movement-building — because this is often what enables groups to sustain everyday anti-stereotype work with youth across different regions and social settings.
- Providing rapid-response mini-grants for urgent needs such as legal defence, emergency safety, counter-backlash campaigns or public responses to incidents of stereotype-based violence and harassment, with greater tolerance for political and reputational risk, especially where work touches queer rights, sexual autonomy and anti-racism.

Strengthen movements' capacities to analyse, name and counter gender stereotypes

KVINFO can further leverage its expertise as a knowledge hub to offer demand-driven capacity-strengthening that helps local actors better understand how gender stereotypes are formed, enforced and contested across institutions, regions and social groups. The aim should not be to replace local knowledge, but to deepen movements' ability to translate lived experience into sharper analysis, safer practice and more effective interventions.

Priority areas include:

- Intersectional feminist analysis that links gender stereotypes to class, region, race, disability and sexuality in the Tunisian context, including materialist approaches that connect stereotypes around care, authority and breadwinning to broader political-economy dynamics.
- Safe and ethical methodologies for anti-stereotype work, including digital security, trauma-informed facilitation, conflict-resolution and accountability tools, and skills for holding safer spaces with queer youth, rural youth and other groups exposed to heightened policing of gender norms.
- Anti-backlash strategies that equip movements to respond when stereotypes are repackaged through authoritarian, religious or digital narratives, including media skills, legal literacy, counter-narrative development and solidarity protocols for activists facing arrest, smear campaigns, online hate or other forms of retaliation.

Use evidence to challenge depoliticised gender mainstreaming

KVINFO should use this research and its broader knowledge base to push donors, policymakers and partner organisations beyond technocratic and depoliticised approaches to gender equality that treat stereotypes as isolated attitudes or awareness gaps. The findings of this study suggest that stereotypes are embedded in institutions, labour relations, legal implementation gaps, violence, regional marginalisation and struggles over legitimacy and belonging.

This involves:

- Disseminating key findings to donors, international NGOs and Tunisian institutions in ways that highlight how gender stereotypes are sustained through economic structures, state practices, family socialisation, education systems and media environments — not only through “culture” in the abstract.
- Producing concise policy briefs and advocacy materials that show how youth-led initiatives are already challenging stereotype-based exclusions in concrete domains such as public space, care work, schooling, sexuality, employment and political participation.
- Advocating for gender-justice frameworks that address stereotypes together with redistribution, public services, labour precarity, anti-Black racism and state accountability, so that anti-stereotype work is not reduced to messaging campaigns detached from material realities.

Defend civic space for feminist and queer organising

KVINFO can play an important external-ally role in protecting the civic space that youth need in order to question, resist and transform gender stereotypes. Because the study shows that stereotypes are contested not only in private beliefs but also through collective organising, speech, visibility and public presence, shrinking civic space directly undermines the conditions for change.

Concretely, this means:

- Using its voice in regional and international fora to highlight how restrictions on civic freedoms, moral panic and authoritarian discourse can reinforce stereotype-based control over women, queer youth and other groups whose bodies, movements and speech are already heavily policed.
- Supporting Tunisian movements' demands for associational freedom, protection from harassment and meaningful participation in policy processes, especially where these struggles concern the right to challenge norms around sexuality, care, masculinity, respectability and family roles.
- Backing advocacy that links gender stereotypes to broader struggles for democratic freedoms, so that anti-stereotype work is recognised as inseparable from the political conditions that allow young people to organise, dissent and imagine alternatives.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: FGD GUIDE

صباح النور،

انا....

شكرا على وقتك وعلى الاستجابة لطلب اللقاء، مش بش ناخذو برشا من وقتك على أقصى تقدير ساعتين.

احنا ليوم قاعدين نقوموا بدراسة بتمويل من منظمة KVINFO تتعلق بالقوالب النمطية القائمة على النوع الاجتماعي في تونس وتحديدا في منظور الشباب والشابات الي أعمارهم بين 18 و35 سنة. تهدف الدراسة لفهم نظرة الشباب في تونس للقوالب النمطية المتعلقة بالنوع الاجتماعي والبحث في هل انهم يشوفوها حاجة إيجابية ولا سلبية؟ وهل يتعاملو معها بنظرة نقدية ويحاولو يكسروها، ولا بالعكس يأكّدوها ويكرّسوها؟

بش نقوموا بالدراسة هاذي بدينا في تجميع كل الدراسات والبحوث والتقارير الي صارت في تونس حول الموضوع والي صارت زادا في سياقات تشبه لتونس مجتمعيا.

وفي مرحلة ثانية، بدينا في العمل الميداني الى يقوموا بيه مجموعة من الباحثين والباحثات والي ينقسم لجزئين جزء أوّل يقوم على مجموعات تركيز تحاول تجمع كل فئات الشباب.ات التوانسة يمختلف خلفياتهم الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والثقافية والجندرية والجهوية زادا. والجزء الثاني يتعلق بلقاءات ثنائية مع الأكاديمين والا الخبراء والباحثين والا المهتمين بالمجال.

وفي الإطار حبينا نقومو بمجموعة النقاش هذي معكم/ن بش نطرحوا عليكم/ن بعض الأسئلة المتعلقة بالدراسة والي طبعا بش يتم استعمال مخرجاتها بعد تحليلها. نحب نسئل مالبداية هل انك موافق.ة على المشاركة معانا في اللقاء بش تعطينا الي تراه مناسب من المعلومات والتحاليل الي تفيدنا؟

بش نحافظو على المعلومات و نحاولو مننساوش منها حاجات، نحبو نسجلو اللقاء الي مش بش يتم استعماله بصيغته المسجلة أو الصوتية وإنما بش نستعملوه للتحليل لاحقا، هل موافقين على التسجيل؟

مع العلم إن كل المخرجات والأشياء إلي بش تقولوها بش تكون مخفية الإسم ...

خوذو راحتكم في الاجابة او عدم الاجابة على الاسئلة الي تحبو عليها، وتنجمو تقدموا اي اضافات تراوها مناسبة.

النشاط: رسم خرائط القوالب النمطية للنوع الإجتماعي

الهدف:
استكشاف تصورات المشاركين /ات للأدوار الجندرية والصور النمطية في مجتمعهم/ن وكيف تؤثر هذه الأدوار على سلوكياتهم/ن وخياراتهم/ن وتفاعلاتهم/ن.

المواد المطلوبة:

- ورق كبير
- أقلام تحديد / أقلام بألوان مختلفة
- الملاحظات اللاصقة (post-it)
- مجموعة من الأسئلة المعدة مسبقا لتوجيه المناقشة

الخطوات:

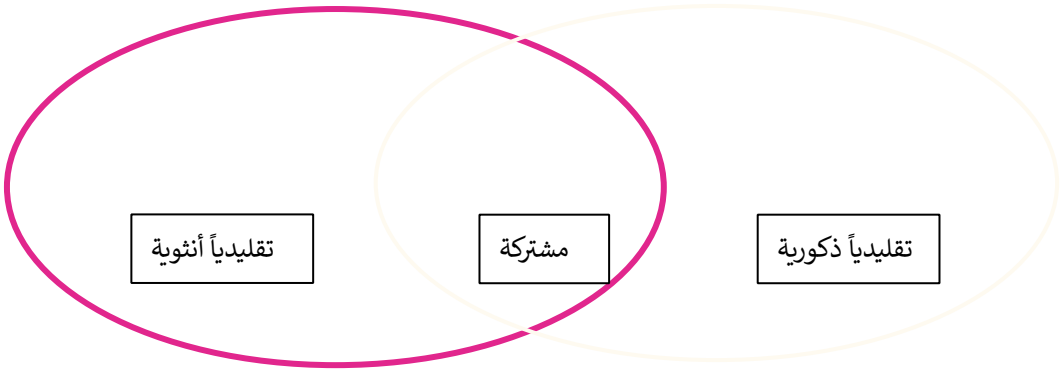
المقدمة (10 دقائق):

- اشرح للمشاركين سياق البحث وغرض النشاط بشكل مختصر- واحصل على موافقتهم لتسجيل الجلسة. دعهم يعرفون أن الهدف هو تصور ورسم الصور النمطية الشائعة المتعلقة بالجنسين في مجتمعهم (الإيجابية والسلبية)، واستكشاف كيف تشكل هذه الصور النمطية حياة الناس.

رسم خرائط الصور النمطية للنوع الاجتماعي (30دقيقة):

- اطلب من المشاركين العمل في مجموعات صغيرة (مجموعتين من 4 أو 5).
- قدم لكل مجموعة ورقة كبيرة

المهمة 1: ارسم "طيف الجندر/النوع الإجتماعي" بسيط على الورق بالشكل الشبيه بمخطط فين لعرض كيف يرون الأدوار الجندرية ب"تقليدياً ذكورية" على جانب و"تقليدياً أنثوية" على الجانب الآخر



المهمة 2: أضف الصور النمطية والسلوكيات: اطلب من المشاركين كتابة الصور النمطية المختلفة المتعلقة بالجنسين التي لاحظوها في مجتمعهم أو في حياتهم الخاصة. قد تشمل هذه التوقعات المتعلقة بالملابس والمظهر، السلوك، الخيارات المهنية، أو المسؤوليات المنزلية، إلخ. مثال: "الأولاد لا يجب أن يبكوا"، "من المفترض أن تكون الفتيات مقدمات الرعاية"، "الرجال هم المعيلون"، إلخ.

أثناء إضافتهم لهذه النقاط، شجعهم على التفكير في:

- من يفرض هذه الصور النمطية (العائلة، الإعلام، المدارس، الأقران)؟
- كيف تؤثر هذه الصور النمطية على حياتهم اليومية واختياراتهم؟
- متى بدأوا التفكير في، الامتثال أو عدم الامتثال لهذه الصور النمطية الجندرية؟

النقاش الجماعي (75 دقيقة):

بمجرد اكتمال رسم الخرائط، ابدأ نقاشاً جماعياً. استخدم الأسئلة التوجيهية التالية:

- ماذا تلاحظون عن توزيع الصور النمطية؟ هل هي معظمها تتعلق بالأدوار "الذكورية" أو "الأنثوية"؟
- هل هنالك أبعاد إيجابية لهذه الصورة النمطية؟
- هل هناك أي صور نمطية تبدو أنها تغيرت مع مرور الوقت؟ هل يمكنكم التفكير في أي منها كانت أكثر شيوعاً للأجيال الأكبر سناً ولكنها أقل شيوعاً الآن؟
- هل تؤثر هذه الصور النمطية على الناس بشكل متساوٍ؟ هل يشعر الشباب والشابات بضغط هذه الصور النمطية بطرق مختلفة؟
- كيف تعتقدون أن الصور النمطية الجندرية تؤثر على اختيارات الشباب في الحياة (المهنة، العلاقات، التعليم)؟
- هل هناك أي فجوات/اختلافات في الطريقة التي تعبرون بها عن آرائكم وتتصرفون بها بشأن الجندر (الأدوار) في المنزل وخارجه؟ أو في المساحات المختلفة؟ لماذا؟
- هل يمكنكم التفكير في أي استثناءات لهذه الصور النمطية؟ على سبيل المثال، الأشخاص في مجتمعكم الذين يتحدون الأدوار الجندرية التقليدية. ماذا يحدث عندما يتحدى شخص ما هذه الصور النمطية؟
- كيف يمكننا تحدي هذه الصور النمطية؟ ما هي الإجراءات أو السلوكيات التي قد تساعد في تقليل تأثير الصور النمطية الضارة في المجتمع؟
- كيف سيبدو المجتمع المثالي الذي تكرس فيه العدالة الجندرية بالنسبة لك؟ ما هي التغييرات التي يجب أن تحدث حتى يصبح ذلك حقيقة واقعة؟

ANNEX 2: KII GUIDE

..تقديم

صباح النور،

انا....

شكرا على وقتك وعلى الاستجابة لطلب اللقاء، مش بش ناخذو برشا من وقتك على أقصى تقدير ساعتين.

احنا ليوم قاعدين نقوموا بدراسة ممولة من KVINFO الي هو معهد دنماركي للبحث حول القضايا النسوية، تتعلق بالقوالب النمطية القائمة على النوع الاجتماعي في تونس وتحديدا في منظور الشباب والشابات الي أعمارهم بين 18 و35 سنة. تهدف الدراسة لفهم نظرة الشباب في تونس للقوالب النمطية المتعلقة بالنوع الاجتماعي والبحث في هل انهم يشوفوها حاجة إيجابية ولا سلبية؟ وهل يتعاملو معها بنظرة نقدية ويحاولو يكسروها، ولا بالعكس يأكّدوها ويكرّسوها؟

بش نقوموا بالدراسة هاذي بدينا في تجميع كل الدراسات والبحوث والتقارير الي صارت في تونس حول الموضوع والي صارت زادا في سياقات تشبه لتونس مجتمعيا. وفي مرحلة ثانية، بدينا في العمل الميداني الى يقوموا بيه مجموعة من الباحثين والباحثات والي ينقسم لجزئين جزء أوّل يقوم على مجموعات تركيز تحاول تجمع كل فئات الشباب.ات التوانسة يمختلف خلفياتهم الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والثقافية والجندرية والجهوية زادا. والجزء الثاني يتعلق بلقاءات ثنائية مع الأكاديمين والا الخبراء والباحثين والا المهتمين بالمجال.

وفي الإطار هذا طلبنا منك اللقاء بش نطرحوا عليك بعض الأسئلة المتعلقة بالدراسة والي طبعا بش يتم استعمال مخرجاتها بعد تحليلها. نحب نسئل مالبداية هل انك موافق.ة على المشاركة معانا في اللقاء بش تعطينا الي تراه مناسب من المعلومات والتحاليل الي تفيدنا؟

بش نحافظو على المعلومات و نحاولو مننساوش منها حاجات، نحبو نسجلو اللقاء الي مش بش يتم استعماله بصيغته المسجلة أو الصوتية وإنما بش نستعملوه للتحليل لاحقا، هل موافقين على التسجيل؟

خوذو راحتكم في الاجابة او عدم الاجابة على الاسئلة الي تحبو عليها، وتنجمو تقدموا اي اضافات تراوها مناسبة.

أسئلة عامّة

1. شنوّا المقصود بالقوالب النمطية المؤسسة على النوع الاجتماعي في تونس؟

الهدف: فهم المعنى العام للقوالب النمطية الجندرية في السياق التونسي، والتأكد من أن المستجوبين يدركون مفهومها وتأثيرها في المجتمع.

2. شنيا التصوّرات السائدة على الرجال والنساء، ومنين جاو هالقوالب النمطية؟

الهدف: استكشاف التصورات الشائعة حول الأدوار الجندرية، ومعرفة مصادرها (التربية، الإعلام، الدين، القوانين، العادات والتقاليد).

3. شنيا العوامل الأكثر تأثيراً على إكتساب القوالب النمطية هذي، نقدها أو تكريسها؟

الهدف: تحديد العوامل التي تعزز أو تقلل من تأثير هذه القوالب، مثل الأسرة، المدرسة، الإعلام، المجتمع، والاقتصاد.

4. وقتاش يبداو الصغار يكتسبوها ويصنّفو الناس على حسب الجنس؟

الهدف: فهم متى يبدأ الأطفال في تكوين تصوراتهم حول الجندر، وما العوامل التي تؤثر في ذلك.

5. هل فما تغييرات صارت في تصوّرات الشباب بخصوص الجندر بين الأجيال المختلفة؟ قبل وبعد الثورة مثلا؟

الهدف: معرفة ما إذا كانت هناك تغييرات في التصورات الجندرية بين الأجيال المختلفة، وهل أنّ الأحداث السياسية (خاصة الثورة) ساهمت في صقل التغييرات هاذي.

6. هل للأزمة الاقتصادية تأثير على نظرة الشباب للقوالب النمطية هذي؟

الهدف: تحليل العلاقة بين الوضع الاقتصادي والتصورات الجندرية، وكيفية تأثر الأدوار الاجتماعية بذلك.

7. شنيا الفرق بين شباب المدن والأرياف، وبين الرجال والنساء، في التفكير حول الجندر؟

الهدف: مقارنة تأثير البيئة الجغرافية والبعد/القرب عن المركز على تصورات الشباب حول المساواة بين الجنسين.

8. شنيا العلاقة بين القوالب النمطية هاذي والعدالة الجندرية؟ كيفاش تأثّر هالقوالب النمطية على تصوّرات الشباب وسلوكهم بخصوص العدالة والمساواة بين الجنسين؟

الهدف: فهم العلاقة بين القوالب النمطية ومدى تبنّي الشباب لفكرة العدالة الجندرية في حياتهم اليومية.

9. تونس عدّات مجموعة قوانين وبرامج باش تواجه القوالب النمطية، كيف مراجعة المناهج التعليمية والقانون المتعلق بمكافحة العنف المسلّط على النساء. هل القوانين هذي غيّرت تصوّرات الجيل الجديد حول الجندر؟ اذا فما تغيير صار، ففي أي اتجاه؟

الهدف: تقييم مدى تأثير التشريعات والسياسات العامة على التصورات الجندرية لدى الجيل الجديد.

10. في نظرك، شنيا الدور اللي ينجّم يقدمه الإعلام، النشاط الحقوقي، والبحث الأكاديمي في محاربة القوالب النمطية وتعزيز ثقافة المساواة؟

الهدف: استكشاف دور الفاعلين المختلفين في تغيير الخطاب العام حول الجندر. مثلا: هل أنّ الاعلام التونسي يرسّخ القوالب/ الصور النمطية والا يكسّرها؟ هل انه كيف الشباب يكون منخرط في الجمعيات يكون أكثر وعيا بضرورة تكسير القوالب النمطية والا العكس؟ هل فما جمعيات أو نقابات ترسخ الصور النمطية هاذي وتعيد انتاجها في هياكلها وممارساتها أو انها تكسرها؟

11. شنيا المبادرات الثقافية والتربوية اللي نجحت في تغيير أو التأثير على هالأفكار النمطية؟

الهدف: معرفة المبادرات الفعالة التي نجحت في التأثير على التصورات الجندرية، لاستخلاص الدروس منها وامكانية توثيقها كممارسة فضلى.

12. حسب رأيك شنية الحلول المؤسساتية اللي تنجّم تسرّع التغيير في المجتمع؟

الهدف: استكشاف الحلول الممكنة لتسريع عملية تحقيق المساواة الجندرية من خلال السياسات العامة والإصلاحات المؤسساتية من خلال تكريس "الممارسات الفضلى".

13. هل تعتبر انه فما قوالب نمطية راسخة عند الشباب، تتعارض والاّ تتماهى مع الدين؟ اذا كان أي فشنية هي؟

الهدف: فهم التفاعل بين القوالب النمطية الجندرية والتصورات الدينية لدى الشباب، وتأثير الدين على المواقف من القوالب النمطية. هل أنّه الدين في تونس محدّد لتبني بعض الصور النطية أم أن المحدد حاجة أخرى على غرار الطبقة الاجتماعية الخ

أسئلة خاصّة بكلّ مستجوب حسب خلفيته

Academia/ Political Science	كيفاش أثّرت السياسات العمومية والخطاب السياسي السائد، خاصة بعد الثورة، على نظرة الشباب للمساواة بين الجنسين؟ وهل تعتبر أنّو فمّا إرادة سياسية حقيقية باش يتغيروا القوالب النمطية؟ كيفاش تأثر الوضعية الاقتصادية في تونس على تصوّرات الشباب للقوالب النمطية المرتبطة بالنوع الاجتماعي؟ هل الأزمة الاقتصادية خلاتهم يعيدو النظر فيها ولا بالعكس زادت في تكريسها؟ هل الفقر والبطالة عند الشباب عندهم تأثير على التقسيم التقليدي للأدوار بين الرجال والنساء؟ مثلا، هل الشباب اليوم أكثر قابلية لتقبل فكرة المرأة كمعيلة للأسرة؟ كيفاش تؤثر البيئة الاجتماعية، سواء في المدن أو الأرياف، على تصوّرات الشباب للجندر؟ هل فما اختلافات واضحة بين الشباب في المناطق الشعبية، الأرياف، والمناطق الحضرية في كيفاش يشوفو الرجولة والأنوثة؟
Feminist researcher	بحكم وظيفتك ونشاطك النسوي وقربك للشباب، هل فما فرق بين الشباب في المدن والأرياف من حيث نظرتهم للقوالب النمطية المتعلقة للجندر؟ هل أنّه المؤسسات الجامعية ترسخ العقلية هاذي والا تكسرها؟ وكيفاش المؤسسات التعليمية تنجّم تبدّل العقلية هاذي؟
Youth queer activist	كيفاش تشوف، من خلال تجربتك كناشط كويري تقاطعي، القوالب النمطية المرتبطة بالنوع الاجتماعي عند الشباب في تونس؟ هل تعتبر أنو الشباب قاعدين يرفضوها وينتقدوها، ولا

	مازالو يعيدو إنتاجها بطرق جديدة؟ وكيفاش تتقاطع هالقوالب مع قضايا الهوية، الجندر، والميولات الجنسية؟ هل تعتبر انه مجتمع الميم عين ينتج كذلك في داخله قوالب نمطية و يرسخها، ام انه الوعي بقضايا الهوية اللامعيارية يخليه محمي من القوالي هاذي؟ اذا كان مجتمع الميم عين ينتج نفس القوالب، ففيما تتمثل؟
Journalist	كيفاش الإعلام التونسي يعالج قضايا الجندر والقوالب النمطية؟ وهل ثمّة تغييرات في طريقة طرح هالمواضيع؟ انت كصحافية متخصصة في المجال شنية ردود الافعال الي تلاحظها عند المتابعين.ات؟ شنية اكثر المواضيع الي تقلق الشباب التونسي حسب رايك في هذا المجال؟
Artist	هل يمكن للمسرح والفن انهم يكونو وسيلة لتغيير التصوّرات النمطية؟ وهل الجمهور التونسي بدّا يتقبل الأعمال الي تحكي على قضايا الجندر؟
Social media influencer/ transwoman	كيفاش وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تنجم تكون وسيلة لتغيير القوالب النمطية عن الجندر والجنس؟ وهل الشباب في تونس بداو يتقبلوا النقاشات هاذي أكثر من قبل؟
Youth students organizer/leader	شنوة دور الحركة الطلابية في تعزيز ثقافة المساواة بين الجنسين داخل وخارج الجامعة؟ شنية اكثر القوالب النمطية الي تراقبو فيها في الجامعة؟

ANNEX 3: AGENDA OF JUNIOR RESEARCHERS TRAINING

دراسة حول منظور الشباب للصور النمطية المؤسسة على النوع الاجتماعي

جلسات تعريفية وتدريب الباحثين

7 و8 فيفري 2025

جدول	جلسة	الهدف / الإجراء
الجلسة 1		
14.00 – 14.30	**تقديم المشاركين.ات وأهداف الدورة**	**الهدف من هذه الجلسة هوالتعرّف على المشاركين.ات وتقديم الدورات التكوينية والهدف منها.** **سيتم اعتماد تمرين "كسر جليد" للتعرف على بعضنا البعض بطريقة ممتعة.** **(مثال: ما هي المدينة التي تعتقد أنها تشبهك ولماذا).**
14.30 – 15.30	**عرض البحوث التي سيتم إجراؤها ونظرة عامة على المنهجية**	**تعريف المشاركين بالمشروع البحثي والمنهجية المقترحة وأسباب مشاركتهم في العمل الميداني الذي سيتم إجراؤه.** **الإجراء: ملخص PPT لمنهجية الدراسة**
15.30 – 16.30	**لعب الأدوار والمناقشات حول الصور النمطية**	**استكشف مع المشاركين فهمهم للمفهوم الرئيسي للدراسة: الصور النمطية الجنسانية ومواءمة المعارف الموجودة.** **الإجراء: اقترح على المشاركين الاقتران والارتجال بين الإيماءات والمواقف و / أو الأفكار / المواقف المتعلقة بالصور النمطية الجنسانية كما يفهمونها.** **ثم القيام بنقاش حول لعب الأدوار / الارتجال المختلفة وتوضيح المفاهيم طوال المناقشة.** **استخدم المناقشة لطرح أسئلة حول الزوايا / الجوانب التي لا نعرفها عن الصور النمطية الجنسانية الحالية - أو تلك الأقل شهرة أو المحرمات.**
16.30 – 17.30	**المشي القوي والمناقشات**	**التعرف على المفاهيم المتعلقة بالضعف والتهميش المنهجي والتقاطع.** **الجدول الزمني: سيتم تعيين شخصيات للمشاركين تمثل مستويات مختلفة من الامتياز والتهميش - مع التركيز على السكان الذين من المفترض تمثيلهم في الدراسة. سيتعين على المشاركين الوقوف في خط مستقيم والمضي قدما أو البقاء في أماكنهم بينما يقرأ الميسر جملة تهمهم. على سبيل المثال: يمكنني الحصول على الرعاية الطبية وقتما أردت أو تتاح لي دائما الفرصة للتعبير عن رأيي دون خوف من العقاب.** **في نهاية التمرين ، سيتمكن المشاركون من ملاحظة الفجوة التي تم إنشاؤها بين الشخصيات المختلفة والتفاعل.**

		سيركز النقاش على مفاهيم الامتياز والسلطة والتهميش المنهجي مع التقدم نحو التشاور حول مكان التقاطعية في دراستنا. أخيرا ، سيتم إنشاء رابط بين هذه المفاهيم وسبب إدراج ملفات تعريف مثل ملفاتهم لجمع البيانات مع الشباب المعنيين بالدراسة.
17. 30 – 18.00	أسئلة و أجوبة 1 اختتام الجلسة	2 جلسة أسئلة وأجوبة مع المشاركين والاتفاق على الجلسة
2 الجلسة		
14.00 – 14.30	مقدمة الدورة الثانية وملخص الدورة الأولى انرجايزر	ستعمل هذه الجلسة على إعادة تقديم هدف الدورة الثانية لتدريب الباحثين وكذلك تذكر "الطرق" الرئيسية للجلسة الأولى
14.30 – 15.30	عرض أدلة المقابلات مع FGDs و KIIs للمشاركين وجمع الملاحظات	خلال هذه الجلسة ، سيتمكن المشاركون من التعرف على محتوى أدلة المقابلات ، ل سيكون لدى كل مشارك نسخة من كل دليل ، وسيتم تقديم عرض FGDs. و KIIs تقديمي للأجزاء والأسئلة المختلفة بالإضافة إلى ما نحاول فهمه.
15.30 – 16.30	الاتفاق على مبادئ ومعايير البحث	بناء على ما تمت مناقشته في الجلسة الأولى وعلى محتوى أدلة المقابلات ، سيتم إجراء تمرين عصف ذهني مع المشاركين لإنشاء قائمة مشتركة (أو ميثاق) للمبادئ التي ستوجه العمل البحثي (نوع من ما يجب فعله وما يجب فعله) مع القيم التي ترشدهم.
16.30 – 17.30	محاكاة المقابلات ونتائج المقابلات	في هذه الجلسة ، سيتم تقسيم المشاركين إلى 3 مجموعات. في كل مجموعة من بالإضافة KII أو FGD المجموعات، سيتعين على كل مشارك محاكاة جزء من تسهيل إلى نسخ المناقشات. سيتم تقديم عرض عام مع مناقشة التحديات والممارسات الجيدة حول توزيع العمل وإدارة المجموعة أو المحاور ، وما إلى ذلك.
17.30 – 18.30	الخطوات التالية للعمل الميداني والإغلاق	أي ، FGD خلال هذه الدورة الأخيرة ، سيتم توزيع العمل وتخطيطه (من سيقوم بأي KII ، متى ومع من).

ANNEX 4: A QUICK GUIDE FOR FGD FACILITATION

A Quick Guide to Preparing and Facilitating a Focus Group Discussion

I. Preparing for a Focus Group Discussion

1. Define Your Objectives

- Clearly outline the purpose of the discussion.
- Identify the key research questions you want to explore.
- Ensure alignment with feminist research ethics (see below for more details).

2. Identify and Recruit Participants

- Aim for a diverse group within the limits of each group profiles.
- Use ethical recruitment strategies, ensuring informed consent.
- Consider power dynamics and avoid coercion.

3. Understand and prepare your discussion guide

- Ask open-ended and non-leading questions.
- Ensure questions are sensitive to participants' lived experiences.
- Organize questions into thematic sections to maintain flow.
- Prepare your questions well and understand the purpose of each one of them

4. Plan the Logistics

- Choose a safe, accessible, and comfortable location.
- Arrange seating in a way that encourages dialogue (e.g., a circle).
- Plan in advance your needs for materials such as: flipcharts, markers, post-it notes,etc
- Make sure your recording device has enough space and battery
- Divide the tasks properly with your co-facilitator
- Consider providing refreshments, transportation support - please coordinate this aspect in advance with Henda.

5. Prepare Materials and Ethical Safeguards

- Ensure recording devices are available if permitted by participants.
- Have a plan for emotional support in case sensitive topics arise.

II. Facilitating a Focus Group Discussion

1. Set the Tone and Build Trust

- Welcome participants warmly and introduce yourself.
- Explain the purpose of the discussion and expectations.
- Reiterate ethical principles: voluntary participation, confidentiality, and respect and obtain consent from everyone for the recording.
- Establish ground rules collaboratively (e.g., one person speaks at a time, respectful listening, no judgment).

2. Encourage Participation and Manage Power Dynamics

- Use inclusive language and acknowledge different perspectives.
- Pay attention to who is speaking and who is silent; encourage quieter voices.
- Be mindful of potential hierarchies and ensure equal participation.
- Validate participants' contributions without imposing your own views.

3. Facilitate the Discussion Effectively

- Start with an icebreaker to create a comfortable atmosphere.
- Use open-ended prompts and follow-up questions to deepen discussion.
- Keep the discussion focused but flexible to allow for organic insights.
- Use reflective listening and summarize key points periodically.
- Go with the flow in the discussion - as long as it answers the questions in your guide (do not insist in answering the questions in their order but use the guide as your framework)

4. Handle Sensitive Topics with Care

- Be prepared for emotional responses and provide a safe space for sharing.
- Acknowledge distress but avoid forcing participants to share more than they are comfortable with.
- Have a referral list for psychosocial support if needed.

5. Conclude the Discussion Thoughtfully

- Summarize key insights and invite final thoughts.
- Express gratitude and explain how the findings will be used.

- Provide an opportunity for follow-up engagement if desired.
- Ensure a smooth transition out of the discussion to avoid abrupt emotional closure.

III. After the Focus Group

1. Reflect on the Discussion

- Debrief with co-facilitators or note key reflections.
- Consider power dynamics that influenced the discussion.
- Assess whether any follow-ups are needed with participants.

2. Manage Data Responsibly

- Secure recordings and notes in accordance with ethical guidelines by uploading them in the drive prepared for this purpose and do NOT share the recordings or make other people listen to them unless it is another researcher in the same project or your supervisor - to get help on understanding what was being said that you couldn't capture properly.
- Maintain confidentiality in transcription and upload it as per provided template in the drive.
- Use participants' words responsibly and in a way that honors their experiences - do not interpret people's words.

IV. Feminist Ethics of Research: Key Principles

1. Respect for Participants' Autonomy – Ensure voluntary participation, informed consent, and the right to withdraw at any time.
2. Reflexivity and Positionality – Acknowledge the researcher's social position, biases, and power dynamics in the research process.
3. Intersectionality – Recognize and address multiple and overlapping forms of oppression (e.g., gender, race, class, disability).
4. Accountability to Participants and Communities – Engage participants as knowledge producers rather than mere subjects; co-create knowledge where possible.
5. Ethics of Care – Prioritize the well-being and dignity of participants, avoiding harm and emotional distress.
6. Confidentiality and Anonymity – Protect participants' privacy and ensure their identities are safeguarded.
7. Anti-Extractivism – Avoid taking knowledge without giving back; ensure research benefits the community and does not exploit marginalized voices.

8. Transparency and Honesty – Clearly communicate research intentions, funding sources, and possible impacts.
9. Challenging Power and Hierarchies – Deconstruct traditional power imbalances in research relationships.
10. Use of Inclusive and Non-Exploitative Methodologies – Employ research methods that honor participants' agency and lived experiences.
11. Commitment to Social Justice – Align research with transformative goals that contribute to equity and social change.
12. Responsibility in Representation – Avoid sensationalizing or misrepresenting participants' lives and struggles.
13. Ethical Use of Data – Ensure that data is not misused or repurposed in ways that contradict the interests of those involved.

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