

## Background

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) individuals living in Lebanon are subject to harmful medical discrimination including sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE), even though **homosexuality is not a disease**
- SOCE is linked to adverse outcomes including depression, self-harm, substance abuse and even suicidal attempts
- SOCE continues to be practiced in Lebanon and is especially **harmful to youth**
- **79% of Lebanese** report that homosexuals should be taken in for **psychological or physical treatment**

**The Lebanese Medical Association for Sexual Health** “aims to achieve equity in health with focus on sexual health and the health of marginalized groups such as LGBT individuals.”

## Rationale

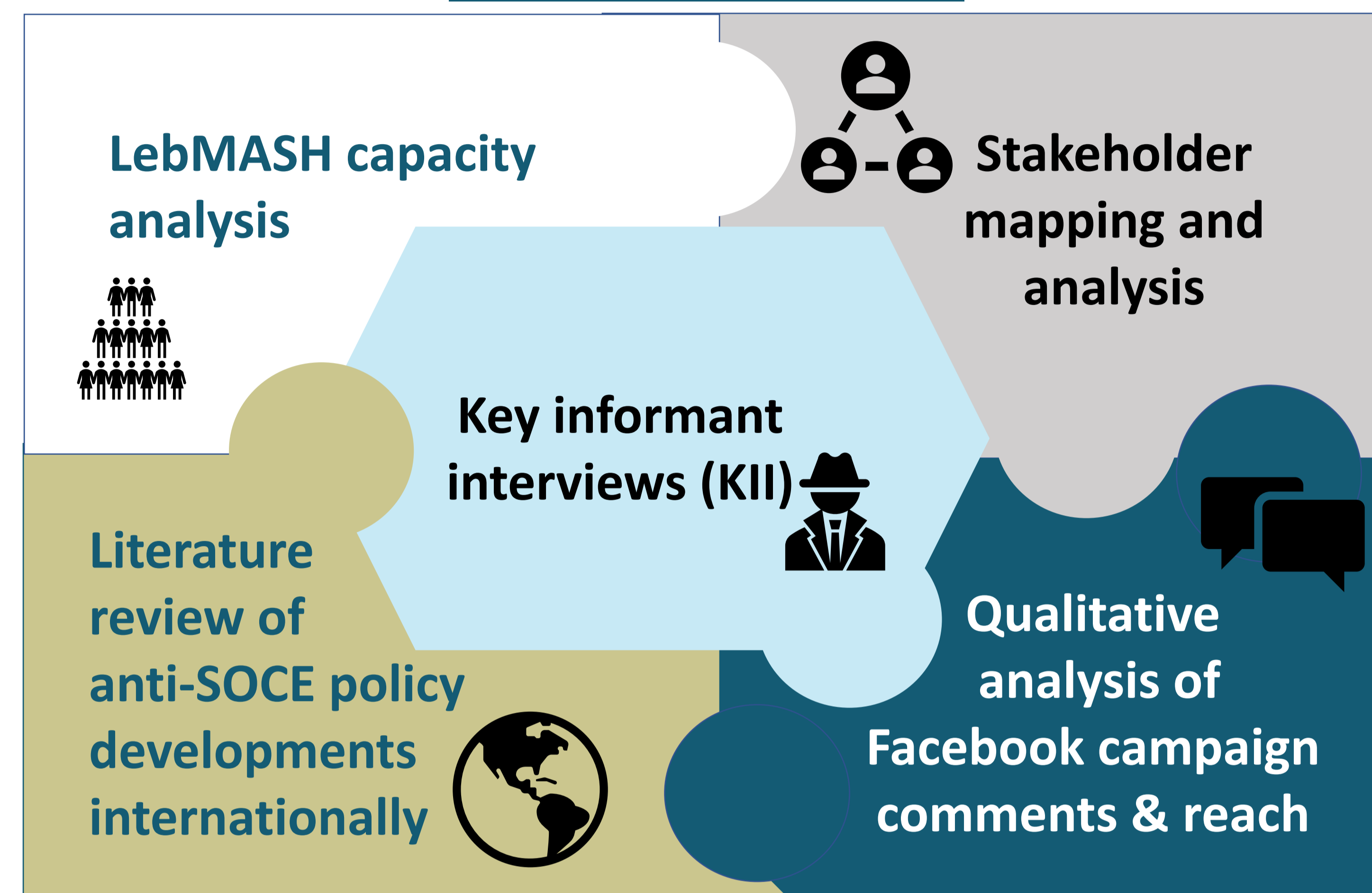
Despite public statements by the Lebanese Psychological Association and LebMASH, homosexuality continues to be pathologized.

**Policies to ban SOCE at professional and legal levels can work to protect this vulnerable population from harmful practices**

## Objectives

- 1) Evaluate** the 2018 HINAD (homosexuality is not a disease) campaign to understand how Facebook users interacted with the messages
- 2) Identify** key audiences for future campaign activities
- 3) Develop** an advocacy strategy and define activities to support legislative bans on SOCE that are gaining traction internationally

## Methods



## Strategy Suggestions

### Advocacy activities

Build partnerships with health professionals and “champions” to lobby the LOP, Order of Nurses, and eventually MoPH for **official statements condemning SOCE**

Develop and generate demand for **LGBT health competency modules** for future educators, social workers and health professionals

Use community partners and NGOs to engage new audiences such as educators, youth programs, and parents of LGBT youth to **distribute messages to influential adults** working with youth

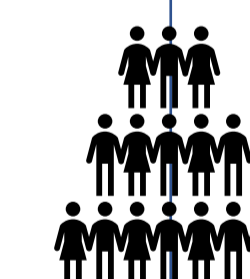
Partner with high-ranking health professionals to **publicly affirm that homosexuality is not a disease** on television, in news articles, and online discussion

## Findings



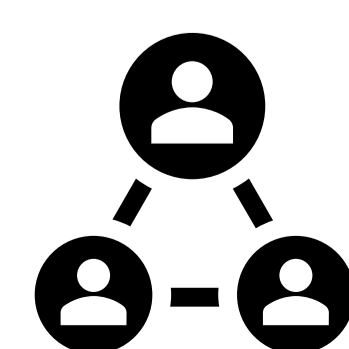
**20 US States, Brazil, Ecuador, Malta and Taiwan** have laws **banning or restricting SOCE** via:  
Complete ban on SOCE, SOCE ban limited to health sector, Non-discrimination/human rights protections

**Strengths:** interprofessional resources, partnerships and expertise  
**Weaknesses:** resources **limited by grant cycle** and **outside professional responsibilities** – they have also focused on **training health professionals and partnering with MOPH**



**HINAD campaign comments** followed trends in 2015 survey on LGBT sentiment in Lebanon; people cited homosexuality as a **threat to society and labeled it as a disease**.

1. Parallel religious legal system and **strong influence of religion in political parties** make passing national-regulation unlikely
2. **Professional regulations should be introduced** for physicians and nurses over legislative controls
3. Universities should set curricula for future health and social workers
4. National **support and awareness** regarding LGBT health issues and rights is needed



### Stakeholders that should be targeted

Health professionals Universities and Ministry of Education  
Parents of LGBT Youth General Public

## Implications

- 1) Legislative protections against SOCE** appear **unlikely** in the short term, however, with the proposed advocacy strategy LebMASH can gain the needed support to **later pursue national law**
- 2) LebMASH has traditionally focused their training efforts on health professionals **but should expand activities to engage leaders in education**
- 3) This project highlighted the **need to involve the Ministry of Education and HE as one of the main stakeholders**

## Challenges and Limitations

Due to COVID-19 it was difficult to access certain stakeholders including university departmental heads and leaders working in the MoPH and Ministry of Education