

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

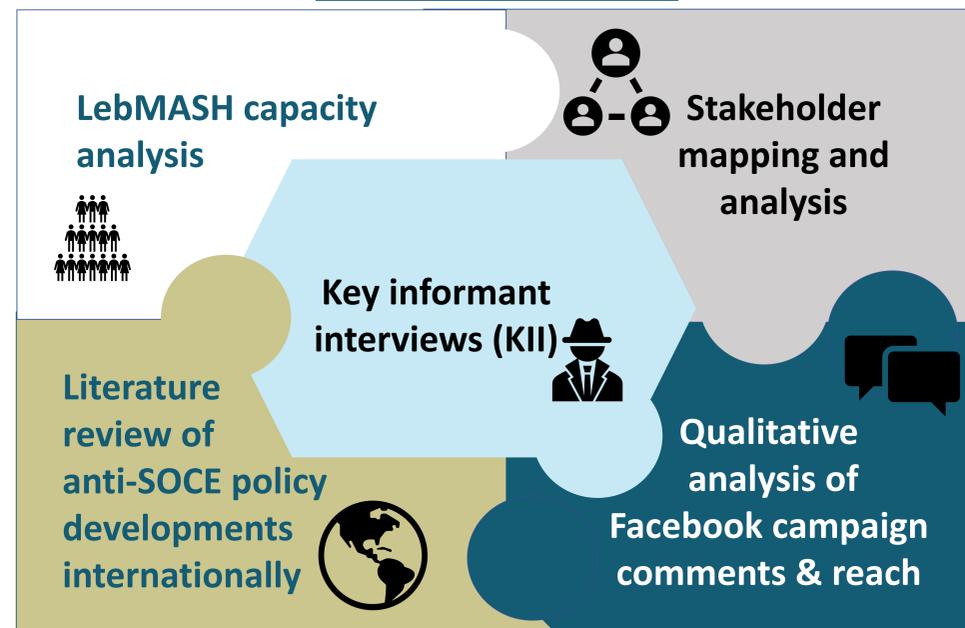
Despite public statements by the Lebanese Psychological Association and LebMASH, homosexuality continues to be pathologized.

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