

## 7 - FAMILY AND GENDER EQUALITY

The concept of family is changing. The traditional family is being substituted by new forms of life and partnerships: there are families of single father and a son, others with a single mother and a daughter as well as families with more than one mother or father. Whatever form the family has, it is important that family members feel responsible for each other either due to legal requirements or personal commitment.

The institution of family – with married couples, parents, children, grandparents or grandchildren – influences laws as well as regulations. It is relevant for the payment of taxes for instance and can guarantee certain advantages concerning specific state services. It also rules the relation among parents and children as well as between husband and wife.

In Switzerland everyone has equal rights. Equality between men and women has been anchored in the Swiss Federal Constitution since 1981. Everyone should have the same chance to accomplish what they want in all areas of life. There should be no difference between Swiss and Immigrants or between men and women.

Swiss Marriage Law states that there are no gender specific tasks. For example both marriage partners can decide together how to share the costs of maintaining a family.

Domestic violence and abuse are forbidden in Switzerland. Switzerland has the Victim Assistance Act (in German **Opferhilfegesetz**) which ensures free information, counseling and support to victims of violence. You can find more information at [www.opferhilfe-schweiz.ch](http://www.opferhilfe-schweiz.ch).

In case of legal, social and cultural issues inside a marriage or partnership you can consult the **Information Center for Bi-national Couples and Families** at [www.binational-bs.ch](http://www.binational-bs.ch).