



COMPENDIUM ON FATHERHOOD PROGRAMMES



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**TOGETHER AGAINST
GENDER STEREOTYPES AND
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**
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February 2021



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ACRONYMS

ACEV	Mother Child Education Foundation
CPI	Center for Public Initiatives
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EECA	Eastern Europe and Central Asia
EECARO	Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office
EU	European Union
FSP	Father Support Programme
GBV	Gender-Based-Violence
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MNCH	Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WHO	World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION

Papa Schools and father peer support groups have emerged around the world along with a recognition that not only do fathers play a critical role in the health and wellbeing of their partners and children from pregnancy on, but that engaged fatherhood has tremendous benefits for men. Research now shows that when fathers are positively engaged in the lives of their children, their children are more likely to have better mental and physical health, perform better academically, have higher cognitive and social skills, display higher self-esteem and tolerance to stress, and experience fewer behavioral problems.¹ Fathers who take time for active parenting live longer, are less likely to abuse drugs, are more productive at work, have generally fewer mental and physical difficulties, and report being happier than fathers without close connections with their children².

The following compendium is intended to serve as a reference for UNFPA country offices and implementing partners in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) as they develop and expand fatherhood programming that challenges restrictive gender norms and encourages men to take on greater caregiving and household management roles.

Short program briefs describe a range of Papa School programming implemented around the world. The “Good Practice Program Briefs” section describes Papa School programmes that have been rigorously evaluated and show evidence of achieving positive results on one or more outcomes including parenting skills, father engagement in caregiving, father-child interaction, and violence reduction (i.e. intimate partner violence against the mother or violent discipline against the child). Additional programme briefs have been included to showcase Papa School programmes with limited publicly available supporting evidence to determine the extent of their success and sustainability. Additional programme briefs serve as a reference and snapshot of the diversity of fatherhood training efforts that exist, particularly in Western and Eastern Europe and Central Asian countries.

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- 1 Allen, S. and Daly, K. (2007). *The Effects of Father Involvement: An Updated Research Summary of the Evidence*. Guelph, Canada: Centre for Families, Work & Well-Being, University of Guelph. and Barker, G. (Ed.). (2003). *Men’s Participation as Fathers in the Latin American and Caribbean Region: A Critical Literature Review with Policy Considerations*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. and Nock, S. and Einolf, C.j. (2008). *The One Hundred Billion Dollar Man: The Annual Costs of father absence*. National Fatherhood Initiative.
 - 2 DeGarmo, D.S., et al. “Patterns and Predictors of Growth in Divorced Fathers’ Health Status and Substance Use”. *American Journal of Men’s Health*. 2010; 4(1): pp. 60-70. and Schindler, H.S. “The Importance of Parenting Contributions in Promoting Fathers’ Psychological Health”. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 2010; 72(2): pp. 318-332. and Eisenberg, M.L., et al. “Fatherhood and the Risk of Cardiovascular Mortality in the NIH-AARP Diet and Health Study”. *Human Reproduction*. 2011; 26(12): pp. 3479-85.

BACKGROUND

This compendium has been designed in the framework of the “EU 4 Gender Equality: Together against gender stereotypes and gender-based violence” programme, funded by the European Union, implemented jointly by UN Women and UNFPA in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. The program works towards:

1. Shifting societal perceptions around gender stereotypes and patriarchal norms which limit women’s rights
2. Increasing men’s involvement in the care taking of their children and participation in fathers’ programmes
3. Increasing the knowledge and tools of social workers (mediators) and CSOs on how to conduct evidence-based violence prevention programmes targeting perpetrators of domestic violence.



GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENTS

Papa Schools programmes included in this compendium incorporate one or more elements of good practice, either managerial or technical. This information is based on the program evaluations, interviews with researchers or practitioners responsible for program implementation or evaluation, analysis of their curriculum content and methodologies and other documentation describing key design and implementation aspects such as facilitator profile, training and support, and recruitment strategies. Managerial good practices indicate considerations for successful program management; technical good practices refer to helpful technical content and frameworks or theoretical approaches.

DESIGN GOOD PRACTICE

LENGTH OF EXPOSURE

Critical reflection, internalizing new attitudes and behaviors, practicing them in safe spaces and later adopting them, requires participant exposure to this content and opportunities to reflect and practice in a medium to long term. While there is no fixed number of sessions or “dosage”, an exposure of weekly two-hour group sessions or group sessions combined with home visits during a 3 to 5-month process is recommendable.

FACILITATORS NOT TEACHERS

While teachers are often expected to have all the answers, facilitators focus on facilitating dialogue and critical reflection among participants. Papa schools using a transformational gender approach rely on the use of facilitation - not teaching - to create open and safe spaces for fathers to reflect on their lives, share, and learn from each other.

RECRUIT EXPECTANT AND NEW FATHERS

A window of opportunity exists during pregnancy and new fatherhood in which guidance, knowledge, and skills on how to navigate the life changes brought about by a newborn may be more welcome. This makes it both an effective period to recruit fathers for Papa School as well as a period during which attitudinal and behavioral changes are more likely to be made.

CHOOSE A CONVENIENT TRAINING VENUE

Choose a venue that is convenient and accessible to fathers with a range of backgrounds, considering barriers to access such as the cost of transportation and unfamiliarity with the venue location. Economic and convenience factors can affect fathers’ ability to attend. In many countries, Papa Schools have been located within health facilities where fathers might already be attending prenatal visits and parenting classes.

CHOOSE A CONVENIENT TRAINING TIME

Papa Schools should consider the time of day of meetings to encourage regular participation. This might mean holding sessions during lunch or evening hours to accommodate fathers' work schedules. Don't make assumptions about when fathers might be available, but be willing to adapt timing to meet the needs of each class. In one Papa School, two versions of the curriculum were offered - one at night and one in the morning - to provide fathers with a range of options.

RECRUIT USING FAMILIAR COMMUNICATION METHODS AND VENUES

Depending on the backgrounds and identities of the fathers you are targeting, effective recruitment channels may differ greatly. Using multiple means of communication will increase the chances that they will reach the intended audience. Methods might include posters at health facilities or maternity centers, social media postings, radio announcements, or word of mouth through religious and cultural institutions. Recruiting through health centers and maternity centers is also a good way to identify expectant and new fathers.

GROUP BASED SESSIONS³

Group learning formats can have several benefits for participants since they not only allow interpersonal/ observational learning but also generate social support and help develop self-efficacy perceptions in parents' role to parent effectively, which contribute to the adoption of healthier behavior. Group learning can help to reduce anxiety around parenting as participants realize that others face similar challenges, work together through common problems and find shared solutions to parenting issues.

3 Digolo, L., et al. (2019). Evidence Review: Parenting and Caregiver Support Programmes to Prevent and Respond to Violence in the Home.

APPROACH AND CONTENT GOOD PRACTICE

USE A GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH

Using a gender transformative approach throughout the curriculum is critical to changing unhealthy and negative gender norms and stereotypes that hinder men from practicing engaged parenting and treating their partners in respectful and equitable ways. Gender transformative work seeks to change unequal power relations between men, women, and non-binary people. In Papa School curriculum, this could mean promoting gender equality within couple relationships, equitable division of caregiving and household chores between women and men, positive discipline versus punishment of children, the prevention of violence against women and children, and the modeling of gender equality to children in their relationships with their parents.

TAILOR MESSAGING TO APPEAL TO MEN'S ASPIRATIONS AS FATHERS

Gender-transformative programming that appeals to men as instrumental to maternal and child health without acknowledging men's experiences and needs may find it difficult to recruit and retain men in fathers' groups. There are a range of benefits to men from increased caregiving, including improvements in mental, physical, and sexual health⁴. Recruitment messaging should make these benefits clear and appeal to men's aspirations as fathers.

ADAPT CONTENT TO THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Although core concepts and activities will remain the same, Papa School curriculum should be reviewed and revised by a team of local stakeholders - these could include local fathers from different backgrounds - in order to address the needs and situations of fathers in the community. This could mean addressing particular issues, such as postpartum depression in men, or meeting the particular needs of migrant fathers or military fathers. Make sure to schedule enough time for formative research and contextual adaptation.

MODELLING BEHAVIOR AND INTERACTIVE EXERCISES

Program design is grounded in social learning theory. The sessions include participants' sharing their experiences and concerns, hands-on activities and interactive exercises (open-ended story, role-playing, drawings) and a take-home activity to encourage reflection and practice at home

INTRODUCE CONCEPTS OF GENDER AND POWER GRADUALLY

Conversations about gender and power dynamics can be emotionally difficult for participants, and contentious. They require the building of relationships of trust within the group and skilled facilitation to create safe conversational spaces. Starting with topics fathers can relate to in their own lives in non-judgmental ways - such as talking about relationships and about men and women's lives - can be more effective.

4 van der Gaag, N., Heilman, B., Gupta, T., Nembhard, C., & Barker, G. (2019). State of the World's Fathers: Unlocking the Power of Men's Care. Washington, DC: Promundo-US.

BUILD HEALTHY AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP SKILLS⁵

Programs that strengthen positive communication between parents and their children, and between intimate partners have been found to be effective at preventing violence in the family by building common protective factors to reduce IPV and VAC jointly in the home.

BUILD PARENT AND CAREGIVERS' SKILLS TO MANAGE A CHILD'S BEHAVIOR THROUGH POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT AND NON-VIOLENT DISCIPLINE TECHNIQUES.⁶

Programs that include positive discipline content usually also include pedagogical content for parents to better understand how children behave depending on their developmental stage, to help parents set realistic expectations and deter them from responding to misbehavior with violent discipline methods.

INCLUDE HOMEWORK

Engaging fathers through the use of homework activities to be conducted in between Papa School sessions can result in practical and thought-provoking discussions and increase retention rates. Homework assignments, such as practicing breathing techniques or asking their partner about their experience with their own father, can help make linkages between program messages and fathers' lives and promote positive behavior change.

INCLUDE "FAMILY DAYS"

Family days are an opportunity for fathers and their partners to participate in activities as couples or families. They create space for togetherness and for fathers to practice positive behaviors discussed during Papa School sessions. Activities can be included to build family communication and planning skills, such as making a family budget or talking about the future.

5 Digolo, L., et al. (2019). *Evidence Review: Parenting and Caregiver Support Programmes to Prevent and Respond to Violence in the Home* p.12

6 Digolo, L., et al. (2019). *Evidence Review: Parenting and Caregiver Support Programmes to Prevent and Respond to Violence in the Home* p.12

HOW TO USE THIS COMPENDIUM

Good practice programme briefs describe successful Papa School programmes implemented around the world. These have been chosen based on available evidence that they have achieved positive results on one or more outcomes related to parenting skills, father engagement in caregiving, parent-child interaction and relationship quality, and violence reduction. Rigorous evaluations exist for all programs selected as “good practice” and these have been included as links in all briefs. Each good practice program brief includes the following elements:

Location: Indicates the location in which the program was implemented.

BACKGROUND

Provides a short history of the program, including when it was launched, the organizations involved, and the aim of the program.

INTERVENTION

Provides details on facilitator recruitment, training, and the backgrounds or experiences prioritized. Details father recruitment activities and profiles targeted, and notes the location in which the training was held as well as the timing and duration of sessions. Where available, information is provided on the themes addressed by the training.

MANUALS

Where available, links are provided to publicly published training materials.

EVIDENCE

Provides a summary of key findings from recent program evaluations and assessments.

EVALUATIONS

Where available, links are provided to publicly published program evaluations. Included are both qualitative and quantitative evaluations and assessments.

CHALLENGES

Provides details on key challenges identified in program evaluations and assessments.

LESSONS LEARNED

Provides details on lessons learned during program implementation, as reported in program evaluations and assessments.

For reference, shorter program briefs have been included for Papa School programs with limited publicly available supporting evidence to determine to what extent they were successful and sustainable. These are snapshots of programs implemented around the world, with a focus on Western and Eastern Europe and Central Asian countries. Each additional program brief includes information on location, background, intervention, and the following element:

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Details how and by whom program activities were monitored, and where available, provides information on evaluations conducted on the program.



GOOD PRACTICE PROGRAM BRIEFS

FATHER SUPPORT PROGRAM (AÇEV)

Location: Turkey

BACKGROUND

Anne Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı (AÇEV), or the Mother Child Education Foundation, established the Father Support Programme (FSP) in the late 1990s when they realized that fathers could benefit from the same kind of parenting knowledge and support being made available to women through the foundation's Mother Support Programme. Papa training sessions were piloted in Istanbul and Kocaeli and then extended to reach fathers across all socio-economic groups. AÇEV continues to implement FSP and since 1996 has reached more than 60,000 fathers across 55 cities in Turkey. FSP alumni and trainers are now building their own father networks and initiatives and advocating for gender equality in their communities. Among other donors to the program, the UN Trust Fund funded and evaluated an FSP program in 2019.

INTERVENTION

Papa training sessions typically take place once a week over 13 weeks. ACEV trains school teachers to deliver the father school program. The intense ten-day facilitator training emphasizes interactive teaching methods and the building of group cohesion. The program targets men with children between two and ten years of age, and primarily recruits within schools. A majority of fathers attending the course are in their thirties although age ranges vary from 20 to 50. Most are employed with partners providing full-time childcare at home. Men have to be literate to participate.

Papa training sessions typically cover the following themes:

- Opening meeting: establishing a contract
- Impact of the father's role on the child
- Parenting styles
- Accepting the child; active listening
- Using "I" language
- Methods of positive discipline (Session1)
- Methods of positive discipline (Session II)
- Overview of child development
- Cognitive development and reading
- Social development of children
- Emotional development of children
- The importance of play
- Applying attitudes and skills

MANUALS

Training materials are not publicly available.

EVIDENCE

In 2019 a UN Trust Fund mixed-methods evaluation found that following an FSP training, 43% of fathers in the program took on more responsibility in child development and household duties and applied non-violent communication methods. In addition, there was a 40% decrease in men's acceptance of the stereotype of men as heads of household. A 2009 Population Council case study using in-depth interviews found that after the training, participants felt a sense of pride in their role as fathers and reported changes in their communication with their children - they listened more, controlled their anger more effectively, used positive discipline methods instead of beating, and spent more time with their children, especially in play. Anecdotal evidence indicated possible improvements in children's educational performance.

EVALUATIONS

- Population Council (2009) And how will you remember me, my child? Redefining fatherhood in Turkey.
- Koçak, A. (2004) Evaluation Report of the Fatherhood Support Program.
- UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women (2019) Final External Evaluation Report Project "Fathers Are Here for Gender Equality".

CHALLENGES⁷

AÇEV faced cultural challenges to addressing issues of gender and gender equality in their programming, as many participants held conservative gender beliefs. Staff addressed the topic as sensitively as possible, emphasizing, for example, that both daughters and sons have the same need to be supported in their development. They brought up the practice of spending time with friends at coffee houses to indicate that even spending a short amount of time with their children after dinner could make a big difference, even though it was something their own fathers may never have done with them. Staff also addressed husband-wife relations by framing it as creating a home environment in which everyone should be able to express their thoughts and emotions - emphasizing an open and democratic environment.

LESSONS LEARNED⁸

Early on, a democratic and teamwork-oriented culture was established within the Father Support Program. Staff felt that if they were going to promote principles of mutual respect and openness among fathers, they should be modeling these behaviors themselves. These core principles are said to have continued in subsequent implementations of the program, even as content has evolved. Promoting a democratic culture within the program team responsible for implementation has been a prerequisite to creating democratic cultures in households.

7 Barker, Gary, Deniz Dogruoz, and Debbie Rogow. 2009. "And how will you remember me, my child? Redefining fatherhood in Turkey," *Quality/Calidad/Qualité* no. 19. New York: Population Council.

8 Ibid.

PROGRAM P (PROMUNDO)

Location: Global

BACKGROUND

Created by Promundo and inspired by the Brazilian sociologist Paulo Freire, the Program P approach guides fathers through a process of “conscientization,” encouraging them to reflect critically on the cultural conditions supporting and framing experiences of gender inequality in a way that helps promote their personal growth. The approach aims to create the conditions for fathers to challenge and change the restrictive gender role prescriptions that make it difficult for them to take on engaged fatherhood roles. While Program P was originally designed and implemented in several countries in Latin America and in Rwanda, it is currently being adapted for the European context through **Program PARENT**, targeting Portugal, Italy, Lithuania, and Austria.

INTERVENTION

Program P is an evidence-based intervention that targets fathers and mothers (expectant or current parents of young children). Program P is based on a structured group-based curriculum that seeks to create safe spaces to support parents and caregivers to provide nurturing care for their children, and to promote early learning through non-violent, responsive and emotionally supportive interactions. The curriculum is grounded in theories of positive parenting⁹, gender and masculinities. While the original Program P included sessions on sexual and reproductive health, more recent adaptations have focused on strengthening parenting skills and healthy relationships skills to prevent violence in the home. It includes modules that aim to improve parent-child relationship quality, increase parental responsiveness, knowledge of developmental milestones, and positive discipline. Sessions seek to strengthen parental capacity and provide concrete parenting skills to use in their daily lives, including positive discipline techniques. The curriculum also includes content to encourage equitable gender roles and caregiving, couple communication and co-parenting, healthy relationships, emotion recognition and regulation, conflict resolution and stress management.

The duration of Program P can range from 10 to 15 weekly group discussion sessions. Typical sessions are 2.5 hours weekly over a period of 10 to 16 weeks. Facilitators are trained over a period of 6-10 days focusing on foundational gender and power concepts, engaging in critical reflections on these issues themselves and both experiencing firsthand and practicing facilitating horizontal group dialogues rather than teaching. They are encouraged to create an open and safe space to foster dialogue and critical reflection rather than trying to have all the answers. The sessions use participatory activities, including videos followed by group discussions, role playing and take-home assignments to reinforce and practice what was covered in the group. They work in either all-male or different-sex pairs. The program recommends seeking out facilitators from feminist and progressive social justice organizations, that have experience in facilitating participatory discussions and have examined their own gender prejudices. The program values diversity in male caregiving and targets men with biological and non-biological

9 World Health Organization. (2018). Nurturing care for early childhood development: a framework for helping children survive and thrive to transform health and human potential

children, believing that fatherhood is more than biology and manifests itself through the quality and depth of the caregiving connection men have with children.

Program P curriculum typically covers the following themes:

- Sex, gender, and parenting
- Father's impact
- Family planning
- Pregnancy
- Birth
- Caregiving
- Gender in play
- Preventing violence against women
- The needs and rights of children
- Division of caregiving
- Couples communication
- Positive discipline
- Emotion regulation

MANUALS¹⁰

- Program P: A Manual for Engaging Men in Fatherhood, Caregiving, and Maternal and Child Health.
- A More Equal Future: A MenCare Manual to Engage Fathers to Prevent Child Marriage in India.
- Caring for Equality: A WorldVision-Armenia manual to work with men, women and youth in the promotion of gender equality and the prevention of prenatal sex selection.

EVIDENCE

Program P has been adapted and implemented in at least 18 countries around the world. In a 2018 randomized controlled trial of the program in Rwanda it was found that after 21 months, 33% of women in the intervention reported experiencing physical violence from their partners vs. 57% in the control group¹¹; men were reported to accompany women to 2.09 visits vs. 1.57 in the control group; and men reported spending 2.26 hours on childcare and household tasks per day vs. 1.40 hours in the control group. Qualitative results in other evaluations found that men improved relationships with their children and partners, learned to manage difficult emotions, and decreased their abuse of drugs and alcohol. Most recently, an evaluation of Program P-ECD in Lebanon conducted through questionnaires, focus groups, and in-depth interviews with participants found significant reductions - from 32% to 14% - in justification or tolerance of violence against women by both women and

10 Manuals are available in English, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian [here](#)

11 To note, control groups are those groups that act as a comparison for fathers who receive Papa School training. Control groups are fathers who have not received Papa School training.

men; significant decline (20-50%) in use of harsh physical discipline with children by both men and women; significant increases (30-50%) in men's active participation in housework and caregiving tasks; and increased communication in the couple about their own and their partner's concerns and feelings.

EVALUATIONS

- Promundo (2018) Gender-Transformative Bandebereho Couples' Intervention to Promote Male Engagement in Reproductive and Maternal Health and Violence Prevention in Rwanda.
- Promundo (2020) The Pilot of Program P-ECD in Lebanon: Evaluation Results and Lessons Learned.

CHALLENGES¹²

While lessons learned are particular to the contexts in which Program P is adapted, many implementers around the world face difficulties recruiting and retaining fathers. It is often challenging to find times during which fathers are available to attend programming, given men's varying work schedules during the day and week. Recruitment is also difficult if messaging emphasizes benefits to children and women without making clear to men how active parenting benefits them and addresses their needs, questions, and aspirations. Finally, challenges may arise from economic constraints related to participants' conflicting work schedules or the broader need to attend to their daily income-generating activities.

LESSONS LEARNED¹³

In Lebanon, program staff held sessions in the evenings, after work hours, when men were available. This created additional workload for program staff but resulted in satisfied participants. The program also found that recruitment was more challenging in urban Beirut than in rural areas, where men had more flexibility during the day. Staff ended up recruiting higher numbers in the rural south to meet their implementation targets. Implementing Program P across the Global South, Promundo staff found that men were more likely to join classes and continue to attend when programs appealed to men's aspirations to be good fathers and advertised the range of benefits that come from active caregiving, including improved physical, mental, and sexual health outcomes. In many urban, rural and low-income communities, providing transport reimbursement fees reduced one of the barriers participants often face and that can help them sustain adherence to the program. Program P staff in the Global South also found that in some communities and cultures, low expectations of fathers discouraged them from participating in the program, because they felt they already met cultural expectations of "good" fathers". This disincentivized improvement. To address the issue, staff included social and behavior change messaging campaigns to expand the definition of fatherhood to include being a nurturing caregiver (and not simply a "provider" or "protector"). Expanding the definition of "good fatherhood" helped improve enrollment and retention as it sensitized family members and gained their buy-in in the expanded definition from the start.

12 Promundo-US and Plan International Canada. (2020). Recruitment and Retention of Male Participants in Gender-Transformative Programs. Washington, DC: Promundo.

13 Ibid and Promundo-US and ABAAD. (2019). The Pilot of Program P-ECD in Lebanon: Evaluation Results and Lessons Learned. Washington, DC: Promundo.

REAL FATHERS (SAVE THE CHILDREN)

Location: Uganda

BACKGROUND

The Responsible, Engaged, and Loving (REAL) Fathers Initiative was designed and piloted by Save the Children to help reduce intimate partner violence and harsh punishment¹⁴ of children among young fathers in post-conflict northern Uganda. The program was tested in 2013, covering eight parishes of Atiak sub-County, Amuru District in Uganda, and has since been scaled up across Northern Uganda and the Karamoja region of Uganda, and adapted for use in Malawi. It continues to be used in Save The Children programs across Africa.

INTERVENTION

The first implementation of REAL Fathers recruited young fathers between the ages of 16 and 25 years who were parenting children between the ages of one and three years old. Young fathers selected trusted elders in the community to be mentors. Each mentor was assigned to support four fathers. Over six months, each mentor conducted six home visits with couples and facilitated six group meeting with fathers. 44 mentors (facilitators) were selected and received a 5-day training covering key concepts about gender, parenting, and relationships; and practical skills to use during couple home visits and group meetings. Father support sessions were accompanied by a poster series using emotion-based photographs of fathers in the community and messaging to prompt reflection on inequitable gender norms and domestic violence. Six large-scale community posters were sequenced over time in central meeting locations to reinforce themes addressed in the sessions. Community celebrations were held at the end of each cycle to share progress and learning with other community members and commit to adopting equitable and non-violent relationships.

The scale-up phase (2016-2018) adapted the curriculum to enable expanded coverage to new communities in the country and integrating the program into existing community programs, with the addition of a family planning group and individual session. REAL Fathers was integrated into Save the Children's Early Childhood Care and Development in Karamoja and the Youth Initiative for Employment and Sustainable Livelihood and Development programs in Northern Uganda.

REAL Fathers sessions covered the following themes:

- Fatherhood
- Tips and tricks to being a REAL father
- Family dreams
- Loving my family
- Communication
- Parenting

14 Harsh discipline was measured on a scale that incorporated seven physically and verbally abusive behaviors, including shaking their child or screaming at their child.

MANUALS

- REAL Fathers Implementation Guidelines
- REAL Fathers Mentor Training Curriculum
- REAL Fathers Mentor Discussion Guide
- REAL Fathers Mentor Resource Sheets
- REAL Fathers Women's Group Sessions

EVIDENCE

A 2016 evaluation of the program based on survey data comparing fathers who took part in the program and fathers who did not, found that group and individual mentoring sessions had a positive effect on parent-child interactions, use of positive parenting practices, and attitudes and practices related to the use of physical punishment. Men in the program were twice as likely to spend time with their child in activities such as playing, singing, counting, and naming things. They were also more likely to disagree with the use of physical punishment in statements such as "Parents should teach a child who misbehaves by spanking or hitting him/her." Men who participated in the program were almost twice as likely to use positive parenting methods. In 2020, USAID conducted a randomized controlled trial of the scaled-up program in the Karamoja region of Uganda and Northern Uganda, which included a quantitative survey at baseline, end line and one-year post intervention. One-year post intervention, fathers in the program were almost 3 times more likely in Northern Uganda and 3.5 times more likely in Karamoja to be non-violent fathers. They were more than 1.5 times more likely in Northern Uganda and almost 3 times more likely in Karamoja to engage in positive parenting behaviors. And they had over twice in Northern Uganda and over 3.5 times in Karamoja as many child-parent interactions than control fathers. The program also resulted in a decrease in intimate partner violence. After one year, fathers in the program were almost 3 times as likely to not engage in IPV in Northern Uganda and just over 3 times in Karamoja as control fathers.

EVALUATIONS

- USAID (2020) Findings From Scale-Up Evaluation of the REAL Fathers Program in Uganda
- Kim Ashburn et al (2016) Evaluation of the REAL Fathers Initiative on Physical Child Punishment and Intimate Partner Violence in Northern Uganda

CHALLENGES¹⁵

Evaluations of the program revealed the challenge of addressing deeply rooted beliefs and norms about gender roles, responsibilities, and behaviors in the family context through short term interventions. At the end of the initial pilot program, the 2016 evaluation found that men who participated did not significantly shift their beliefs about traditional gender roles. It was felt that additional engagement with men's partners and other influential individuals in their families and communities might have contributed to more significant attitudinal and behavior change.

LESSONS LEARNED¹⁶

The inclusion of content addressing both forms of violence against children as well as violence against intimate partners was seen as a promising practice that if included in Papa School themes could lead to significant reductions in both intimate partner violence and the use of physical punishment both in the short and long term. Targeting young fathers with interventions addressing child maltreatment and intimate partner violence in tandem was thus seen as an effective and promising approach to preventing the intergenerational transmission of violence.

15 Ashburn, K., Kerner, B., Ojamuge, D., & Lundgren, R. (2017). Evaluation of the responsible, engaged, and loving (REAL) fathers initiative on physical child punishment and intimate partner violence in Northern Uganda. *Prevention science, 18*(7), 854-864.

16 Ibid.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM BRIEFS

DAD FOR REAL¹⁷

Location: Sweden

BACKGROUND

The Dad For Real project was launched in 2003 in five municipalities of Stockholm County, to help men prepare for active parenthood and promote an egalitarian relationship with their partner. The project was implemented by ABF Söderstörn Educational Association and funded by the Stockholm County Council; it took place over three years.

INTERVENTION

In 2003, the project recruited 28 facilitators who received a common curriculum and training. Facilitators were trained to lead discussions and act as a guide rather than a teacher. They received supplemental training two to three times a year on topics such as behavioral science, violence against children, and feminism. Approximately 200 groups of fathers were formed, with a total of about 1,000 men participating. Most participants were first-time fathers and were recruited at maternity centers, during parenting trainings for couples. The Dad For Real project was designed to complement couple-based parent training, not replace it. Classes were organized around childbirth, with one class before birth and five classes after. They took place at the health facility.

Dad For Real sessions covered the following themes:

- Childbirth
- The new life
- Parenthood
- Couples
- Work, family, and free time
- Family meetings

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The curriculum was reviewed by the Stockholm County Council and a Gender Mentor was assigned to review training materials to make sure it maintained a gender lens and observe meetings and group activities. An oversight group consisting of project managers, four facilitators, and representatives from an education association and the Stockholm County Council was formed to provide guidance. It met four to five times a year.

17 Information at: www.s-larcentra.se and Jouni Varanka and Maria Forslund, eds. (2006). Possibilities and Challenges? Men's Reconciliation of Work and Family Life - Conference Report.



FATHER SCHOOL, CPI¹⁸

Location: Kosovo

BACKGROUND

The Father School developed for Kosovo used Swedish best practices, adapted to local culture and norms. The model was institutionalized by the Center for Public Initiatives (CPI) and aims to enhance fathers' role and responsibility in children's lives as well as change stereotypes of gender behavior in family and society.

INTERVENTION

Father school facilitators are required to meet three criteria: have a child, have a positive fatherhood experience, and receive training in father school facilitation. They are also seen less as facilitators and more as teachers, and expected to know current public health legislation, sociodemographic characteristics for Kosovo, and relevant international conventions and agreements influencing approaches to Father School activities, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the WHO European Strategy for Child Health and Development. The program targets men with children under the age of one and expectant fathers who live in Kosovo or in the area. On average, groups are composed of between 5 and 15 participants. Father school sessions last approximately 1.5 hours and meet once a week. The course includes eight sessions, after which, participants receive a Father School Certificate.

Father school sessions covered the following themes:

- Father's role during pregnancy
- Myths about delivery; participating at birth
- Breastfeeding; maternal postnatal depression; sexual life
- Child development
- Law and everyday life
- Basics of gender and gender equality
- A democratic and totalitarian family
- Men's physical and mental health
- Confidence in your child's future

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The project was implemented and monitored by the regional organization Center for Public Initiatives.

18 Mats Berggren, Nikolay Eremin, Stanislav Kazansky, Vladimir Martsenyuk, Vladimir Motygin, and Andrey Turovets. (2010) Father School Step by Step. UNICEF, Moscow

MISSAKIT¹⁹

Location: Finland

BACKGROUND

Miessakit, or the Fellowship of Men's Associations, is a non-profit organization that works to support the mental, psychological, and social growth of men; promote healthy family life; and strengthen gender equality. Their primary funder is the Finnish Slot Machine Association and they operate in 15 localities across Finland. Miessakit provides peer group support for fathers in connection with municipal prenatal classes.

INTERVENTION

The project provided training for leaders of Papa Groups, including one day on training themes and two to four days on the fundamentals of group training and group dynamics. Facilitators were also trained in social case work. The project noted that facilitators must be men and emphasized that they must not threaten or moralize fathers but maintain an atmosphere of positivity. Participants were made up of expectant and new fathers, recruited at health centers. Papa Groups met at health centers. Classes took place in five sessions: two before birth and three after birth.

Meeting themes were developed during a regional consultation to identify regional special issues as well as guided by fathers themselves.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The project provided job supervision for facilitators and regional-level consultations for health centers wanting to start Papa Groups in association with their prenatal services.

19 Jouni Varanka and Maria Forslund, eds. (2006). Possibilities and Challenges? Men's Reconciliation of Work and Family Life - Conference Report.

NEW FATHERS SCHOOL OF MINSK STATE²⁰

Location: Belarus

BACKGROUND

The New Fathers School program in Minsk was created in 2009 in the context of the National Action Plan for Promoting Gender Equality 2008-2010 to strengthen the family as a societal institution through the promotion of father's roles and potential. It was based on the Swedish Dad For Real model. The program was implemented by specialists from the Minsk City Center of Social Service for Family and Children State Agency, the Minsk Territorial Centers of Social Service for Population.

INTERVENTION

Facilitators were recruited from men who were either experienced in or trained in child development and upbringing; they received training from the Minsk City Center of Social Service. The program targeted young men expecting their first child and current fathers. Classes were carried out in cooperation with maternity welfare centers and children's outpatient facilities.

The larger theme of the program was: "From today's fathers to future fathers"

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The project's results were reviewed during meetings of the Minsk City Center of Social Service and meeting of the Methodology Association of Minsk Social Service, as well as during seminars and conferences on the subject of engaged fatherhood.

20 Mats Berggren, Nikolay Eremin, Stanislav Kazansky, Vladimir Martsenyuk, Vladimir Motygin, and Andrey Turovets. (2010) Father School Step by Step. UNICEF, Moscow

NORTHERN WAY²¹

Location: Russia

BACKGROUND

The first Father School in Russia was set up in St. Petersburg in 2008. In 2010, the individuals that began the Father School started a non-profit organization named Northern Way to deliver a Father School Basic Training program across Russia. The project was supported by the St. Petersburg Social and Economic Institute and Men21 Autonomous non-profit with the support of the St. Petersburg Labor and Social Policy Committee and SIDA.

INTERVENTION

Facilitation is carried out by unpaid volunteers, who do not receive a centralized form of training but rather meet regularly to share experiences and learning. Men are most commonly recruited through their wives or partners, who hear about the program in maternal care units. The program targeted expectant fathers. Evolved organically, but initially held in the offices of different public administration centers around St. Petersburg.

Father school sessions included the following themes:

- Bringing up a child
- Social welfare and benefits
- Child's health
- Field trips: maternity welfare center, maternity clinic

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The project was implemented and monitored by Swedish consulting companies Sprangbradan and AB Bonnie Communications. The activities of Northern Way were felt to have an impact on local policy. Since July 2012, the family policy of St. Petersburg states that every district in the city should have a Daddy School.

21 Information at: www.svrp.ru and Mats Berggren, Nikolay Eremin, Stanislav Kazansky, Vladimir Martsenyuk, Vladimir Motygin, and Andrey Turovets. (2010) Father School Step by Step. UNICEF, Moscow. and Fábian, K., & Korolczuk, E. (Eds.). (2017). *Rebellious Parents: Parental Movements in Central-Eastern Europe and Russia*. Indiana University Press. and Åberg, P. (2014). *Promoting Active Fathers: The Birth and Development of a Civic Initiative in Contemporary Northwestern Russia*.

REFORM²²

Location: Norway

BACKGROUND

The Fathers Group project was launched in Oslo with the support of the Ministry of Family and Children Affairs, and implemented under the leadership of psychologist Per Are Lokke, who wrote a popular book “Farsrevolusjonen” or “The Father’s Revolution” on modern fatherhood, masculinity, and gender relations.

INTERVENTION

The project engaged two male facilitators from a public health center to lead the Fathers Group, focusing on support and empowerment. It was important to the project that facilitators be men, which was a challenge as very few men worked at the public health center. Participants were made up of expectant and new fathers, recruited at public health centers. One Fathers Group specifically targeted fathers with partners suffering from postnatal depression. The groups met at the public health center seven times over 14 weeks. The groups of fathers were fairly homogeneous - all participants were Norwegian and in a relationship with the mothers. However, they faced a range of issues, from minor to very serious problems.

Father group sessions included the following themes:

- Role as double caretakers
- Walking on the edge
- Anger and frustration
- Balance between work and family life
- How to do right
- Exchange of experiences
- Themselves

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The group faced challenges in how to measure the effects of the Fathers Groups.

22 Jouni Varanka and Maria Forslund, eds. (2006). Possibilities and Challenges? Men’s Reconciliation of Work and Family Life - Conference Report.

SIEMPRE PAPA²³

Location: United States

BACKGROUND

Siempre Papa, or the 24/7 Dad Curriculum, was developed by the US National Fatherhood Institute to promote involved and engaged fatherhood and address strained relationships with female partners. The curriculum has been adapted for use across the United States.

INTERVENTION

The program was conducted by staff members of a community-based organization serving Latino fathers in Montgomery County, Maryland. There was no minimum education requirement for becoming a facilitator, although facilitators were encouraged to participate in a training on the program. The curriculum was adapted to target young Latino fathers who were incarcerated. Each group was made up of 6-8 fathers. Many participants were immigrants coming from countries in Central America. The program was designed to be delivered in two versions, morning and evening. The morning sessions provide basic information, while the evening sessions allow facilitators to explore certain topics and activities more deeply. Both versions contain 12 two-hour sessions. Sessions were delivered in the correctional facility in which fathers were located.

Father school sessions covered the following themes:

- Family History
- What it Means to be a Man
- Showing and Handling Feelings
- Men's Health
- Communication
- The Father's Role
- Discipline
- Children's Growth
- Getting Involved
- Working with Mom and Co-Parenting
- Dads and Work

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Siempre Papa was evaluated²⁴ between 2006-2011 through baseline and exit program surveys, finding that 47% reported improved parenting skills. Other evaluations of the larger national program found increases in fathers' communication skills and positive changes in their attitudes toward parenting and gender roles.

23 McAllister, F., Burgess, A., Kato, J. & Barker, G., (2012). Fatherhood: Parenting Programmes and Policy - a Critical Review of Best Practice. London/Washington D.C.: Fatherhood Institute/ Promundo/MenCare

24 Identity's Responsible Fatherhood Program: Preliminary Results 9/06-1/11. Identity. <http://store.fatherhood.org/c-92-program-esearchevaluation.aspx>

UNICEF PAPA SCHOOLS²⁵

Location: Ukraine

BACKGROUND

In 2004, UNICEF - in partnership with the IKEA Foundation - set up health centers for mothers and children in areas affected by Chernobyl, in an effort to address the health needs of children. The health centers hosted Papa Schools starting 2007, which now cover 10 municipal regions in Ukraine, notably areas with poor access to health and family services.

INTERVENTION

The project specified that facilitators must be men with lived experience of positive fatherhood. However, fathers did not have to have a particular educational background to be eligible as facilitators. Participants were made up of expectant fathers. Papa Schools met at health centers for mothers and children. Expectant fathers met for two-hour sessions six to seven times before birth and once or twice after birth.

Papa school sessions covered the following themes:

- Before birth
- During delivery
- After birth
- Legal questions on the birth of a child
- Basics of gender and gender equality
- Totalitarian family as a source of domestic violence

MONITORING AND EVALUATION:

In an assessment of the program²⁶, UNICEF found significant results. In one area, male attendance at birth increased from 4% to 75% and in the Zhtomyr region, 80% of births were attended by fathers. A hospital in the Ivano-Fankivsk region reported a decrease in child morbidity of 15%, an increase in exclusive breastfeeding of 10%, and a decrease in child anaemia of 69%. Postnatal complications across the program decreased by 48% and childhood trauma rates decreased by 58%.

25 McAllister, F., Burgess, A., Kato, J. & Barker, G., (2012). *Fatherhood: Parenting Programmes and Policy - a Critical Review of Best Practice*. London/Washington D.C.: Fatherhood Institute/ Promundo/MenCare

26 https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/2010_Ukraine_-_Evaluation_report_2010-002.pdf

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY: MOBILE FATHER SCHOOL²⁷

In 2009, organizers in Responsible Fatherhood Movement in Belarus piloted an initiative to expand coverage of the movement beyond Minsk in order to meet growing demand for resources and information by expectant fathers. In Belarus, the national healthcare system allows healthcare workers to set up meetings between doctors and expectant fathers. After attending these meetings, doctors can provide fathers with a certificate that qualifies them to receive a child benefit allowance.

CHALLENGES

Many small towns and villages wanted to support fatherhood programming, but facilitators, who were drawn from staff of Territorial Centers of Social Service for Population were hard to find as most were women and the program mandated that Father Schools be facilitated by men. Also, the distance between district and regional centers could exceed 350 km, making the facilities difficult to reach for many fathers.

SOLUTIONS

The mobile Fathers Schools project formed mobile support groups made up of experienced facilitators from Minsk. The mobile Father School coordinated with localities to provide potential new facilitators with either an initial seminar for working with expectant fathers or a seminar on organizing a local Father School based on the standard program.

The mobile Father School held sessions in Gomel, Grodno, Molodechno, Dzerzhinsk, Fanipol, Stolin, Slonim, Vitebsk, Mogilev, Brest, Borisov, Borbruisk, Lida, Rechitsa, Mayina Gorka, and other localities. Each town had a Territorial Center interested in organizing and supporting work with young families and expectant parents. These centers supported operations for the mobile Father School. Once the mobile team had made initial connections and established relationships, further training and education could be supported through technology, including the use of virtual teleconferencing and meeting tools.

27 Mats Berggren, Nikolay Eremin, Stanislav Kazansky, Vladimir Martsenyuk, Vladimir Motygin, and Andrey Turovets. (2010) Father School Step by Step. UNICEF, Moscow.

CASE STUDY: RESTORATIVE FATHERHOOD²⁸

In 1999, the Restorative Community and Family Frameworks project in Minneapolis, Minnesota began a project on restorative parenting, working with fathers who have been violent to safely take steps to restore their relationships with their children. The program used fathers' groups to help fathers take responsibility for their abusive actions and the negative impact they have had on their family, and build empathy for their children. Although the project has now ended, lessons learned, and principles of the work have been incorporated into other men's parenting programs at the Domestic Abuse Project in Minneapolis.

CHALLENGES

Working as a part of a batterer intervention program, staff from the Restorative Community and Family Frameworks project found that men had a genuine interest in talking about their children and the impact of domestic violence on them. The men in their project wanted to understand what practical steps they could take to improve their parenting skills and rebuild relationships with their children, but they didn't know where to start.

SOLUTIONS

The Restorative Parenting project was launched, drawing from principles of restorative justice. It focused on two priorities:

1. Maintaining safety for all family members
2. Increasing fathers' accountability for their abusive behavior

The program was based on an understanding that when trauma occurs in a family, it breaks the relational contract between parents and children, and it is the parent's responsibility to initiate the process to restore the relationship. This does not mean the relationship will be "fixed" - the program helps men be realistic about what they can expect from their children and understand that their past actions will not be erased or forgotten. But it allows them to prepare for possible responsible interaction with their children in the future.

The restorative parenting groups address six essential components that make them unique as a form of father training:

- Principles of restorative parenting: parents are responsible to their family and must take care of themselves as well as their children. Children determine the pace of the restoration process. Individuals have choices and are responsible for their behaviors.
- Practitioner assumptions: All parents have strengths and the capacity to change unhealthy behaviors. Parents want what is best for their children. Domestic violence negatively affects how children see their parents and parents and children should not forget the actions of the past.

28 Mathews, D. J. (2004). Restorative parenting: A strategy for working with men who batter and are fathers. Available at: http://menengage.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/06/Restorative_parenting.pdf.

- Contract: a binding agreement from the parent to the child, with 30 commitments to their child, including “I will keep you safe from all harm” and “I will respect your decisions and opinions.”
- Building empathy: men must understand how their violence affects their children.
- Plan for relationship restoration: structured exercises that fathers complete, which include communication, self-awareness, listening, action, debriefing, evaluating, and integrating learning into future behaviors.
- Self-care: managing yourself when feelings of violence are escalating or when a situation may lead to violent feelings. Developing healthy alternatives so that difficult situations don’t result in violence. Better understanding the decisions that led to past violence.

This approach is seen as one key intervention point in a continuum of care for men who have been violent.



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