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Early Childhood Development: Practice and Reflections

Supporting Fathers

Contributions from the International Fatherhood Summit 2003

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About the series

The series, *Early Childhood Development: Practice and Reflections* addresses issues of importance to practitioners, policy makers and academics concerned with meeting the educational and developmental needs of disadvantaged children in developing and industrial societies. Contributions to this series are welcomed. They can be drawn from theory or practice, and can be a maximum of 30.000 words. Information about contributing to the series can be obtained from Diane Lemieux, Series Editor, Department of Programme Documentation and Communication at the address given on the back cover. Copyright is held by the Bernard van Leer Foundation. Unless otherwise stated, however, papers may be quoted and photocopied for non-commercial purposes without prior permission. Citations should be given in full, giving the Foundation as source.

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Foreword

For over 50 years young children have been the focus of the Bernard van Leer Foundation. Many of our partners provide assistance to parents as one strategy in the drive to ensure that young children develop to their full capacity. The reality of parent support work, however, is that mothers tend to be the main users of these programmes, creating a gender imbalance that the Foundation has recognised in its portfolio. What is the effect of this programmatic 'blindness' to fathers on the lives and potential development of children? In its search for ways to build an awareness of fatherhood issues into existing parent support work, the Foundation supported the International Fatherhood Summit held in Oxford, England in March 2003. This issue of *Practice and Reflections* presents the views and findings of the various authors, as well as the lively debates which took place during this unique meeting.

This volume argues that fathers around the world have a big impact on the development of their children. In the research, a father's influence on teenage children has been clearly identified, and in very young children the research shows that fathers and mothers differ little in their ability to care for their children. Furthermore, the authors argue that in most parts of the world it has become clear that in order to maximise the effects of family support services, fathers need to be addressed as an integral part of the family, and not as separate, special entities. Finally, the various chapters explore the many factors which influence a) what men do as fathers, and b) the decisions families make on how to raise their offspring. In most countries today, fathers get mixed signals regarding their rights and responsibilities towards their children. Only when societies consciously accept that good fathers are vital to the development of their children, will it be possible to exploit their full childrearing potential.

Although the Summit strived to be truly international, fully half of the participants represented English-speaking industrialised countries, reflecting the fact that the most active fatherhood research and lobby activities take place in these countries. While this bias is unfortunate, the Bernard van Leer Foundation and the Summit participants hope that this publication will contribute to the public discourse, the design of programmes, and research activities in many other countries.

This volume is not a definitive review of current knowledge or a manual on how to deal effectively with fathers. Rather, as a contribution to the 10th anniversary of the Year of the Family in 2004, it provides a basis for further discussion and exploration on how to ensure the best possible environment for the development of children around the world.

Diane Lemieux
Series editor

Thailand: Hmong father and son. Photo: © Jim Holmes

Executive Summary

The International Fatherhood Summit was hosted by Fathers Direct and funded by the Bernard van Leer Foundation in Oxford, England in March 2003. The 41 participants represented a wide range of specialisations and countries, all with an interest in current research, practice or policy making around fatherhood issues. The goal was to suggest ways forward in aiding fathers in their ability to support the development of their children, and to facilitate strategic alliances between leading actors in the field of fatherhood worldwide. The papers presented in this volume are the result of an interactive process of sharing and discussion before, during and after the meeting.

Chapter 1 describes the proceedings of the Fatherhood Summit. Out of a concern for childhood outcomes and from the perspective of gender equality, the author provides examples of the growing international interest in the issues surrounding the roles of men and fathers in family life.

Chapter 2 looks at the economic, social, cultural and political factors and trends that affect what fathers actually do, as well as the perceptions of what fathers should do. The authors point to a few implications of current trends that impact fathers to varying degrees around the world. For instance, they discuss the fact that fewer fathers live with their children, as well as the fact that expectations of men's roles within the family are changing. In terms of recommendations, they make a plea for substituting what has until now been speculative assumptions with hard data on fathers in many more countries and cultures around the world. Finally, men need to be engaged in the critical debates about change which have 'too often been about changing men rather than about what men want to change, or why'.

Chapter 3 looks at fatherhood issues in academic research circles. The authors argue that fathers indeed affect their children's development in diverse and significant ways. They review patterns of paternal involvement, interaction styles of fathers and the constraints on effective fathering. While the large volume of research on parent-infant attachments indicate that mothers have more influence on child development, an emerging trend in the literature seems to suggest that fathers may have a greater influence on their children in adolescence than mothers. The chapter concludes with the notion that fatherhood needs to be understood within a network of familial and social relationships, and that more research is required in many more countries and cultures of the world.

Chapter 4 reviews practical work with fathers and around fatherhood, and discusses of the lessons learned from these experiences. The majority of the examples come from the industrialised countries though the implications are of value around the world. The authors state that, to be most effective, programmes targeting fathers are best integrated into existing national structures and services. For this, the development of father-friendly family agencies through staff training is necessary, as is more evaluation of actual programmes to determine 'good practice' in various cultural contexts.

Finally, Chapter 5 takes a comprehensive look at how fatherhood is affected by public policy. The authors, aware of the western bias of their material, attempt here to offer glimpses into the ways in which fatherhood is constructed by law and policy in a few countries, hoping to stimulate thinking on these issues around the world. The chapter covers taxation and employment regimes, education policies, health policies, separation and divorce laws, and issues of vulnerable children and their fathers. For example, under the section on employment they note that most societies organise work as if employees have no private life, and as if no fathers work there (Linda Haas, 2002). Until societies fully grasp the importance fathers play in the lives of their children, legal and policy regimes will continue to have a mixed (positive and negative) impact on families and the ability of fathers to effectively raise their children.

Each chapter has a useful reference section as well as recommendations for anyone interested in exploring how to strengthen the capacity of parents – both mothers *and* fathers – to provide the best upbringing for their children.

Chapter one

The International Fatherhood Summit

By Tom Beardshaw

In March 2003, the International Fatherhood Summit (IFS) took place at Christ Church, Oxford, in the United Kingdom. The event was the result of over two years of work to develop international networks by pioneering agencies involved in strengthening the relationships between children and their fathers in a wide variety of contexts. Here, the word 'father' was used inclusively, to refer to men who are important to a child, or who have an impact on their welfare. This includes both 'biological fathers' and 'social fathers' (those consistently engaged in core responsibilities for their children, whether biologically related to them or not).

The IFS was organised and hosted by Fathers Direct in the UK and was funded by the Bernard van Leer Foundation. This summit brought together a group of experts from a wide range of geographic and disciplinary backgrounds, including sociology, reproductive health, masculinities studies, anthropology,

Fathers Direct is a charity established in 1998 and based in the UK. It aims to create a society that gives all children a strong and positive relationship with their father and other male carers, and prepares boys and girls for a shared role in caring for children. The organisation focuses on the well-being of children and the responsibilities of parents, and emphasises the importance of supportive relationships within families. Its strategies include the following:

- challenging outdated and limiting attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of men and women in relation to children, by explaining the value to children, mothers and fathers of positive relationships between children and their fathers and other male caregivers;
- challenging policies, institutions and practices that limit the way men and women fulfil their responsibilities and roles in caring for children;
- providing expertise and information to child and family organisations on how to help fathers and other male caregivers to be positively involved in the lives of children and to enhance men's positive contribution to family life;
- creating and developing an international network, to learn from good practice worldwide.

Fathers Direct is supported by funding from the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, the UK Government's Family Policy Unit, Department of Trade and Industry, Department for Education and Skills, Department of Health, the Scottish Executive Health Department, the Lloyds TSB Foundation, the Tudor Trust, Carnegie UK Trust, Dorus Trust and the Stella Symons Charitable Trust.

For more information, contact Fathers Direct at www.fatherworld.org or www.fathersdirect.com.

UK: Fatherhood Summit participants. Photo: © Paul Hackett

peri-natal care, journalism, infant development, child development, domestic violence, community development, social work, psychology, psychiatry, gender studies, child poverty, employment, education, business, family support, child care and law.

The aim was to share experiences and knowledge, and to debate core principles, vision and values in order to develop strategic alliances worldwide between leading actors in the field of fatherhood. This work will provide the basis for an infrastructure and agenda for ongoing networking.

The outputs of the summit included:

- the publication of this report in the form of a position paper resulting from the debates at the IFC, as agreed by the Summit participants;
- a documented and recorded presentation of experiences, principles, vision and issues to a panel of policy makers in international development;
- a proposal to establish an International Fatherhood Network for the continued exchange of experiences;
- advocacy and distribution of the results of the Summit, especially in relation to the upcoming 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Family (2004).

The IFS process was designed to generate a maximum level of participation by the attendees. Before the summit, four groups of two experts were selected to draft a chapter each of the position paper. These are the authors of the remaining chapters in this volume. During the IFS, each paper was allocated a half-day session for debate and discussion. The authors organised the sessions to focus on the key issues in their paper and to yield contextual information on regional, national and local differences. After the summit, the chapters were further refined in light of the discussions that had taken place at the IFS. Thus, this publication is a collective statement on the current state of policy, practice and research around fatherhood.

Summit participants

Name	Organisation	Country
Javier Alatorre	Consultant for CEPAL México	Mexico
Gary Barker	Promundo	Brazil
David Bartlett	Fathers Direct	United Kingdom
Tom Beardshaw	Fathers Direct	United Kingdom
Harald Breiding-Buss	Father & Child Trust	New Zealand
Janet Brown	Caribbean Child Development Center	Jamaica
Adrienne Burgess	Fathers Direct	Australia
Randal Day	Brigham Young University	USA
Duncan Fisher	Fathers Direct	United Kingdom
Linda Haas	UPUI	USA/Sweden
Philip Hwang	Göteborg University	Sweden
Soumaya Ibrahim	Independent Gender Specialist	Egypt
Jeff Johnson	NPCL	USA
Marsha Kaitz	Hebrew University	Israel
Ercin Kimmet	MOCEF	Turkey
Maxim Kostenko	Altay Regional Crisis Center for Men	Russia
Michael Lamb	NICHHD	USA
Peter Lee	CAF	United Kingdom
Diane Lemieux	Bernard Van Leer Foundation	Netherlands
Jim Levine	Families and Work Institute	USA
Charlie Lewis	Lancaster University	United Kingdom
Jorge Lyra	PAPAI - Programa de Apoio ao Pai	Brazil
Robert Morrell	University of Natal	South Africa
Mike Na	Korean Fathers Club	Korea
Dumesani Nqina	Embizweni Voluntary Association	South Africa
Bame Nsamenang	University of Yaounde	Cameroon
Margaret O'Brien	Centre for Research on the Child and Family	United Kingdom
José Olavarría	FLACSO	Chile
Roger Olley	Children North East	United Kingdom
John O'Sullivan	Fathers Direct	United Kingdom
Jan Peeters	Ghent University	Belgium
Kyle Pruett	Yale University Child Study Center	USA
Warwick Pudney	Father and Child Association	New Zealand
Graeme Russell	Macquarie University	Australia
Laura Salinas	Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Azcapotzalco	México
Estela Santa Cruz Flores	`Papa Bueno'	Peru
Rajalakshmi Sriram	Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda	India
Tara Thurlow	Bernard Van Leer Foundation	Netherlands
Nigel Vann	NPCL	USA
Bobby Verdugo	Bienvenidos Family Services	USA
Tony White	Uniting Care Burnside	Australia

International Experts Panel

- Peter Laugharn, Executive Director of the Bernard van Leer Foundation;
- Patrice Engle, Senior Advisor for Early Childhood Development in UNICEF, New York, representing the office of the Executive Director of UNICEF, Carol Bellamy;
- Kathy Bartlett, Senior Programme Officer, Education, with the Aga Khan Foundation in Geneva. Kathy is also Co-Director of the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development (CGECCD);
- Jeffrey DeFourestier, Policy Analyst in the Human Resources Directorate of the Department of National Defence for the Government of Canada, on the recommendation of the United Nations Family Unit.

The emergence of fatherhood as an Area of international concern

Some early work with fathers began in the United States and a few other developed countries during the 1980s, but the issue had received very little international attention before the 1994 UN International Year of the Family. In the past decade, there have been a number of meetings and reports that have examined the role of men within the family, with notable contributions from UNICEF (Engle, 1995) and The Population Council (Bruce, Lloyd and Leonard, 1995).

The introduction to UNICEF's 1995 report (Engle, 1995) elucidates the state of the International debate on gender equality and the role of men and fathers in family life:

At the conclusion of the international Year of the Family, the previously neglected role of the father, and more broadly of men in families, was emerging on development agendas to facilitate achieving gender equality. This interest in the role of men has been expressed at the highest levels in UNICEF. Dr Richard Jolly, in his address to the World NGO Forum on December 1, 1993, called for an awareness of the fundamental role of the family in the growth and well-being of all its members. He made two recommendations related to men in families: 'more equitable partnerships between women and men must be promoted… especially within families' and 'a more active role for fathers in child-rearing must be promoted. (Engle, 1995)

Even at this stage, the paucity of research material on the roles that men play as fathers and their effect on women and children was acknowledged, as 'research on family well-being tends to focus on the links between mothers and children' (Engle 1995), while, at the same time, the importance of the issue was emphasised:

Fathers must be included in the picture if the mid-decade and year 2000 goals are to be most effectively met in sustainable ways. For almost every goal, the father's role makes a difference, as does the mother's. Men in families may influence child survival, growth and development through the decisions they make about resource allocation, through supporting women in decision making, through economic contributions to the family which make the seeking of care more possible and through their caring for children. (Engle 1995)

The publication of the UNICEF and Population Council reports reflected a growing shift in thinking about the roles that men undertake within family life:

I*t marks a major paradigm shift in the global thinking about father's roles in families. A consensus is emerging that fathers must be viewed as more than financial backers of the core family unit – defined as mother and children. Fathers are themselves an integral part of the core family unit. Given the will and wise policy support, fathers can play a vital, expanded role in children's lives.* (Bruce *et al.*, 1995)

In the period since the International Year of the Family, three areas of activity in relation to fatherhood have emerged. First, a growing body of research on fathers and children has developed, most notably within the disciplines of psychology and sociology. Second, there is a developing body of fieldwork by NGOs who have created methods for engaging fathers within the context of programmes aimed at enhancing gender equality and childhood outcomes. Third, a number of national governments, mostly in the rich minority world, have developed policy approaches that aim to encourage the participation of fathers in parenting and domestic life.

There are a number of social, economic, cultural and political factors that can be pointed to in order to explain this increasing focus on the role of fathers in families. During recent years, the issue of the role of men in families and as fathers has risen in international prominence in discussions of gender equity, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and child welfare. The Summit members agreed that this trend will continue because of social and economic changes around the world. The increasing percentage of women working outside the home, changes in the structure of employment in various settings, and the fact that a larger number of fathers live away from their children all mean that fatherhood as an issue will only increase in importance.

As the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Family approaches, there is renewed interest in these issues from international agencies. For instance, in 2003 the World Bank commissioned a report on Men's Participation as Fathers in the Latin American and Caribbean Region (Barker, 2003).

The United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), has organised an Expert Group Meeting in Autumn 2003 on 'the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality'. The Expert Group Meeting formed part of the Division's preparation for the forty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which will address this topic as one of its thematic issues. This process focussed on many of the issues that were considered by the IFS, such as the role of men and fathers in enhancing women's reproductive health and rights, paying attention to gender stereotypes and expectations about men's roles and responsibilities in work and family life, preventing violence against women and the role of men in HIV/AIDS transmission.

A conference held in September 2003 titled 'Reaching Men to Improve Reproductive and Sexual Health for All' was sponsored by the Men and Reproductive Health Task Force of the Interagency Gender Working Group of USAID. The conference was a multi-agency collaboration led by Engender Health, the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH) and the Population Reference Bureau (PRB) and guided by an advisory group of senior developing-nation experts. A primary objective of the conference was to provide models of programmes that have successfully engaged men in reproductive and sexual health (RSH) in ways that have improved the health of their partners and children as well as their own. It will provide state-of-the-art tools and approaches for implementing gender-equitable strategies to involve men in RSH as mandated by the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

Conclusions

The examples above illustrate the growing interest, from the perspective of concern with childhood outcomes and gender equality, in issues surrounding the roles of men and fathers in family life. This report is submitted for the consideration of policy and law makers, researchers and analysts, programme strategists, planners, managers and workers in order to support the development of knowledge about the roles of men and fathers in family life. While much of the work on fatherhood has thus far been poorly financed and has received little attention globally, the IFS participants hope that this emerging field, and the documentation of this field as set out in this report, will make a meaningful contribution to the goals and strategies of national and international organisations, particularly in the areas of promoting gender equality and positive childhood outcomes. Appendix 1 outlines the body of international agreements that lay the foundation for interventions in fatherhood work.

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UK: Plenary discussions at the Fatherhood Summit. Photo: © Tara Thurlow, Bernard van Leer Foundation

Chapter two

Global Diversity and Trends in Patterns of Fatherhood

By Janet Brown and Gary Barker

Introduction

There are tremendous variations in the cultural traditions -- at the country level as well as more locally -- that define men's roles in families. There are also variations in current trends that reflect men's actual behaviour within and outside these ascribed roles. But in spite of these differences, two 'universals' have been observed in all geographic regions and cultures: (a) most men desire to be good fathers and to care for their children, and (b) fathers are expected to provide for their children and to protect them.

The extent to which men see themselves -- or others see them -- as nurturers, mentors, companions, disciplinarians, advocates, or even as important in the lives of their children -- depends largely on economic, social, political, cultural and religious factors within any given context. Further, a man's capacity to fulfil the expectations to be a provider and protector are strongly affected by these factors. Since none of these factors is static, fatherhood roles and fathers' conduct are not static, either, and the pace and direction of change depends on the nature and pace of the changes taking place in a particular context.

The diversity of patterns is complicated further by the fact that in any given may be very dissimilar to the responses of other men in a similar situation. A man's own subjective experience with his father, his family of origin, his past and current partner(s), his current employment status, his marital/relationship status, among other things, will colour his interpretation of and interaction with these conditions, as will the nature of his relationship with his children.

An attempt to list the diversity of children's experiences with their fathers and of fathers with their children would require more space than available here as the poem above indicates. Such a long list would at least include loving and nurturing experiences as well as abuse and neglect. Some fathers are mentally ill, commit crimes, beat their partners and still love their children. Some run away, and the contributions of others remain hidden because they feel such tasks are not 'manly'. Still others take great pride in their fathering tasks and encourage other men to be caring fathers.

Generalisations about fathers will always do some injustice to the breadth and depth of experiences and meanings of

Thailand: Returning from work in the fields. Photo: © Jim Holmes/Bernard van Leer Foundation

Some Children's Fathers

Some children have fathers who live far away and send money or clothing
Some children have fathers who live nearby and visit regularly
Other children have fathers who raise them alone
Others have fathers who share home and caring duties with their mother
Others have fathers who look after them all the time,
So their mothers can work

Some children have fathers they stay with at weekends and in the holidays
Others have fathers who are in jail
Some children have fathers who live at home, but are rarely there
Others have foster fathers or step fathers

Some children have fathers who are too poor to provide for them
Some have an uncle or grandfather who fathers them
Some children have a father who is a child himself
And some children have no father figure

There are fathers who read bedtime stories to their children
And there are fathers who cannot read
There are fathers who love and care for their children
And there are fathers who neglect and abuse their children

Some fathers attend the birth and every milestone in their children's lives
Others have never even met their teacher
Some fathers are ill, some commit crimes and some beat their children's mothers
Others work long hours in hard jobs to provide for their children

Some are confident in their parenting role and take great pride in it
And others are frightened of these responsibilities
Some fathers run away from their children
Others, desperate to see them, are prevented from doing so

Fatherhood is different in so many ways for so many children
But one thing is universal
What fathers do ... MATTERS TO CHILDREN

fatherhood around the globe, but with this in mind, this chapter will attempt to point to some of the more significant trends in men's fathering roles and behaviours, and the forces seen as affecting these trends. This chapter draws on questionnaire responses, accounts of interventions directed to or by men and fathers, as well as the growing body of research on men, masculinity and gender worldwide.

Impacting factors, emerging trends

The following bulleted outline will list economic, social, cultural and political factors that have had an impact on men, women and families over the past several decades, as well as noting some emerging trends that relate to these forces. Many of these factors, such as the educational and income levels of men and their partners within a given cultural/political context, for example, obviously interlink. Research on masculinity and fatherhood has shed considerable light on these factors, but that light has also been refracted at different points in time through different lenses. The lens of gender, for instance, within the broader women's movement, produces perceptions of men's family roles that differ considerably from the analysis of theorists in the fields of psychoanalysis, micro-structure or social learning/social roles. Some of the different trends discussed below reflect these differing perceptions; some may appear contradictory or in conflict. This should not be surprising, given the untidy nature of both individual and collective change.

Finally, all bulleted points must be read as 'discussion points' in relation to a given context, taking differing sub-group characteristics into account. For example, the impact of the first trend noted below, that of more women entering the work force, will be viewed very differently by persons of high academic achievement and economic means, by women whose limited education and means have resulted in accepting working conditions that are unsafe or poorly paid, or by men who see women taking up already limited employment options. Differences in perceptions and experiences based on social class, ethnicity, religion and education will colour how both men and women interpret the factors and trends outlined. They are offered precisely because of the need to provoke further discussion and debate about these factors in a wide range of national and sub-national contexts. Such debates can aid the development of policies and research agendas, as well as programme development and implementation, in addressing ways forward in support of positive fatherhood in many varied contexts.

Economic factors and trends

More women have entered the formal and informal workforce outside the home.

Poem by: Janet Brown, Adrienne Burgess and Tom Beardshaw

- This started earlier in industrialised countries and is more recently true in many developing countries.

- This has increased pressure on men to share domestic chores, including childcare and, in some contexts, has fuelled resentment on the part of men and women in the face of changing roles in the household.

- Female-headed households are on the increase in both developed and developing countries.

- As a result of these trends, working mothers (and fathers) need safe, supervised childcare facilities and arrangements. These have burgeoned all over the world with varying levels of quality.

- As a result of higher education, training and employment, women are growing financially more independent of men, sometimes more personally self-fulfilled, while at the same time, often double-burdened with work outside and inside the home. This is changing relational dynamics, with outcomes ranging from increased gender equity in the partnership to domestic violence to redress power shifts.

- Women in the formal workplace still tend to earn less than their male counterparts, and this can have an impact on relationship dynamics and childcare choices, as well as financial conditions for single-mother families.

The nature of economies has changed and continues to change

- Economies are shifting from agricultural and industrial work in many countries to service/technology industries and less stable, more mobile employment. Globalisation of trade zones and tariff regimes, changing immigration policies, concentrations of wealth and power among multinational corporations, exploitation of cheap labour pools around the world, etc, have resulted in different benefits or disadvantages to countries, sometimes blurring boundaries and issues of national autonomy and affecting employment patterns, migration, whole national economies.

- Demand for labour-intensive and agriculture-based work, historically a source of stable employment and social identity for men, has decreased in many countries, both developing and developed, while the growing employment sectors of service and technology industries require higher levels of education and skill and can use females as well as males for most jobs.

- Men's participation in the labour force has either remained stable or declined in most countries, while women's participation has increased. In countries

that have established social safety nets, still relatively scarce in developing countries, priority is usually given to women, particularly mothers.

- The migration of men in search of work is one factor contributing to the rise in female-headed households (e.g., in Latin America, Caribbean, Africa, Asia). Labour-related migration can be both internal (from rural to urban areas) and external (across regional and national borders). As a result, remittances from abroad are a major source of income for many developing-country economies, with both positive and negative implications for families.

- In many developing regions, and in some sections of developed countries, both men and women face general economic instability (such as high unemployment or layoffs), declining wages coupled with high inflation and long work hours, each with different implications for men and women. For men, job loss generally results in loss of identity and self-esteem. This is increasingly true for women, as well, especially those with higher levels of education.

- The term 'marginalised men' has become common parlance to connote (usually) young, less educated men, those working in informal sectors, the unemployed – in general, those who are more affected by changes in the economy and who are peripheral to the 'mainstream'. In some countries, these men are in the majority, along with equally poor, under-employed and oppressed women. In other contexts, the term is used to imply men's marginality in terms of the family; such marginality can cut across the lines of social class to describe men who are generally not engaged in the daily life of their children and partners but who may not perceive themselves as marginal to other social and political structures. The term must be contextualised.

Women's income tends to be used differently from men's income

- Gender studies of income use within households have found that, worldwide, men contribute a lower percentage of their income to family maintenance than do women (when women earn). In some regions, one result of this finding has been a focus on income-generating projects for women to support the health, nutrition and education of children.

- Men's contributions to the household sometimes differ in relation to whether they are residential or non-residential fathers, whether they have other families (of origin or procreation) to support, the nature of their relationship with the children's/ren's mother, and the gender of the children.

- In some regions (e.g., the Caribbean and some parts of Sub-Saharan Africa), a woman's income is seen as her own, while it is expected that a man's income should support his children's mother as well as his children. Other studies find that women and men use their income in similar ways when they are heads of households, i.e., gender becomes less important than the position of the person who is mainly responsible for financially supporting the household.

Social factors and trends

Disparities in social class have widened; the numbers of poor have grown in many countries

- Rising numbers of people who are under- and un-employment, both male and female, naturally affect the levels of poverty and conditions of growing numbers of children.

- Female-headed households tend to be poorer than two-parent ones, with the gap generally wider in developing countries. In countries with extensive social buffers, such as the Scandinavian countries, these socio-economic disparities are less, and less related to gender.

- High rates of criminal or illicit activities in some developing countries and specific groups among industrialised countries impact on family safety and income, with men (mostly younger men) participating in these activities at higher rates than women. Crime is a considered option for many youth whose education and employment options are limited.

- In many countries, 'zero tolerance' policies or more punitive criminal justice systems mean that a larger absolute number and proportion of men are incarcerated than ever before, with painful consequences to children and families. In most developing countries, rehabilitative services are either limited or non-existent.

Multiple factors have resulted in a decrease in long-term marital/partner unions in many parts of the world

- In Western industrialised nations and in some developing countries, marriage rates are declining and divorce rates are rising. While rates vary widely by region and country, data from parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, show that the divorce rates of ever-married women aged 40-49 ranged from 25% to nearly 50%, having nearly doubled between the mid-1980s and late 1990s.

- Between 10% and 30% of developing-country households are officially defined as female-headed; in countries with high rates of men's migration for work and/or low marriage rates, such as the Caribbean, the proportion of

Studies with young men in various low-income settings have suggested that violent behaviour is often associated in part with the version of manhood or masculinity that the young men are socialized into. Studies comparing young men involved in delinquent behaviour with those who do not exhibit delinquent behaviour have found the following to be protective factors in reducing delinquency:

- *having a skill, a realm of competency or a meaningful connection to a mainstream social institution;*
- *belonging to an alternative male peer group that reinforces a non-violent version of masculinity;*
- *having an important relationship or multiple relationships with someone who models alternative ways of being male, who provides connections to relevant resources and who is supportive;*
- *finding a sense of competence and a purpose of life in fatherhood and a meaningful relationship with a partner;*
- *having anger-control and coping strategies.*

Gary Barker, Brazil, Summit participant

female-headed households can range up to 50%.

- In several countries with traditionally early marriages, the age of marriage for women is rising. Added to the low marriage rates in other countries and the increasing rates of divorce and separation, this has resulted in more children being born outside marital or co-residential unions.

- The effects of single parenthood, divorce and separation in terms of children's school performance and behaviour are being documented, with varying outcomes in some settings. Studies are confirming that divorce or separation can be either positive, negative or neutral for children, depending on a variety of family and situational factors, which determine whether the children's interests are considered paramount, whether parents negotiate custodial arrangements amicably, what roles new partners play, etc. There is little consensus, except perhaps that more than one caring adult in a child's life is better than only one.

- As family head, women often serve as gatekeepers to men's relationships with their children. They can facilitate or they can deny access as a result of a conflictual relationship, separation, lack of financial support, or perceived harm to the child.

Household structures are changing in relation to multiple economic and social factors

- Extended kinship systems of child care and support have been either thinned or eliminated by such factors as rural-to-urban and external migration, more women in the workforce, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, etc. In some settings, this has resulted in fewer positive (biological or social) male role models available to children within their own environments. Movie superheroes, distant idealised figures, or local power figures (e.g., drug 'dons') are sometimes substituted.

- Single-parent households (of mother, father, grandparent alone) are on the increase, with economic, psychological and social consequences that, as noted before, have been insufficiently studied.

- There is little documentation of the impact on children of 'social fathers' (stepfathers, uncles, male neighbours) who take on fathering roles within traditional and emerging family forms. Various studies have suggested that often men are present in the lives of children, even if a residential biological or stepfather is not. Some of these men have actual, potentially positive roles to play in the socialisation and care of these children. Similarly, there is little documented on the outcomes for children raised within a two-parent gay or lesbian family compared to those with male and female biological or surrogate parents

- In both developed and developing societies, the contribution and impact of non-resident fathers is often discounted or rendered invisible. A few recent studies have pointed to the psychological, emotional and financial significance of non-resident fathers in the lives of their children.

Women's and children's rights movements have led to higher levels of female education and employment

- Higher education of girls and women is addressing gender imbalances in education and some employment sectors, but rarely in economic parity. In some regions (the Caribbean, some urban areas of Latin America, North America, Australia, the UK), women outnumber men in secondary and third-level educational institutions, outperforming them in some subjects.

Allen and Hawkins (1999) define maternal gate keeping in the US as having three dimensions: a reluctance to relinquish responsibility by setting rigid standards, a desire to retain what has been a primary source of identity and self-esteem, and an expression of beliefs and expectations that denigrate men's enjoyment of and capability to do child care.

Linda Haas, Sweden, Summit Participant

'Affirmative action' in some contexts is being proposed for males as a result, with little analysis being offered as to the causal factors of this imbalance.

- Higher female education and employment has presented challenges to traditional masculinities and the domestic division of labour. In some more traditional societies, this is seen as a 'foreign' influence to be resisted. Feminism is often seen as oppositional in these contexts rather than complementary to men's needs; male defensiveness is often the by-product.

- Some middle-class women (world wide) are choosing to have children 'on their own' with little or no expectation of the father participating in the child's life, including financial participation. The reasons given often relate to maintaining freedom or rejecting narrowly defined or rigid male partnership roles.

- Higher education of mothers results in better quality parenting (and, in developing countries, in higher educational attainment for girls and better child health for both boys and girls). A few studies suggest the same for fathers, at least in terms of financial contributions, but there has been less work done in this area.

- Higher levels of education for women and men, and availability of contraceptives, have resulted in a reduced family size in nearly all regions of the world, with implications for the availability of time and resources for children.

Domestic and gender-related violence is emerging as a worldwide issue

- The women's movement raised global consciousness of levels of spousal and child abuse within families, but much still remains hidden. Studies of gender violence have examined its roots in history (e.g., slavery in some parts of the world), in religious and cultural traditions, in the shifting balance in relationships and power (among men, between men and women) and in the psychological and physiological makeup of men and women. Whatever the factors, there is far more male physical violence against females, although the emotional abuse of men by women has received recent attention.

- Research from a number of developing countries suggests that between one in five and one in three adult women have been victims of physical violence by a male partner. Other studies have confirmed men's widespread acceptance of this level of gender-related violence, even if they do not use it. Several UN agencies are beginning to focus on the importance of engaging boys and men in reducing violence against women.

- While programmes in many countries seek to assist men in examining and

Early Head Start programmes are now on the forefront of efforts to reach out and involve fathers. Recently released findings from the national evaluation of the programme indicate that Early Head Start had an impact on father's involvement with children in several important areas. For example, fathers who participated in the Early Head Start Program spanked less, were less punitive in disciplinary practices and were less intrusive in interacting with their children than fathers in the control group.

Jeffery Johnson, US, Summit participant

reducing abusive behaviour, in most developing countries and probably most industrialised countries, more attention has been given to providing protective mechanisms for women who have been victims of gender-based violence. There have been few prevention programmes designed to help men reduce violence against women (and children). The White Ribbon Campaign, which now exists in more than 20 countries, is a notable exception.

New images of fatherhood emerging in the developed-world media and globally

- Men are often portrayed as 'deficient women' in relation to their families and their children (at least in Western media). Some portrayals of nurturing and responsible fathers promote the 'new father', as compared with a 'traditional father' who was most often a wage-earner and a disciplinarian and more distant from his children than the mother. Studies suggest that reality lags behind images: 'traditional' behaviours often co-exist with 'new father' behaviours.
- Co-parenting initiatives are providing fathers more encouragement to be nurturers, although these reach a small minority of men in most settings and are non-existent in many others.

Cultural factors and trends

In most nation states, patriarchal structures prevail in governance, in the corporate and financial sectors, in religious institutions and in culturally ascribed family roles, despite varying levels of collective challenge and sub-group differences.

- Men's family roles have resisted change in most settings. Fatherhood remains narrowly defined as providing, protecting, sometimes disciplining. Nurturing is simply not defined as 'manly'. Many men who take on domestic chores or caregiving still feel they are doing 'women's work' or 'helping out the wife' of necessity and gain little positive self-identity or purpose in exercising these skills.
- The International women's movement and its outputs (Decade of Women,

Beijing, the UN CEDAW, Cairo conference on population and development, etc.) have called attention to issues of gender equity in family roles and responsibilities and greater male participation. As a result, there has been increased research, along with programme and policy initiatives, to engage men in sexual and reproductive health issues and in family life in general. This has been in North America, Europe and Australia over the last two decades and in Latin America and the Caribbean more recently, although it has been less prominent in Sub-Saharan Africa and in much of Asia and the Middle East.

- These patterns often overlook l*ayers of cultural reality* and sub-group differences that may contradict the dominant, or 'official', culture of the State. Western European patterns of colonisation of whole continents and regions for hundreds of years gave scant regard to indigenous practices of governance and social organisation. The retention of cultural traditions in many post-colonial countries has been insufficiently studied and, when brought to the surface, often contradict official versions of social history.

Religious institutions influence attitudes and behaviours in relation to men's family roles

- Scriptural references are used by all major religions to uphold male authority and responsibilities, and the mothering role of women.

- Some religious groups, particularly in North America, actively promote 'new fatherhood' images of nurturing men who share work within the home. Many faith-based organisations are actively seeking ways to engage men more significantly with their children and families within and outside worship settings. Some of these espouse traditional gender roles for men and women, while others promote gender equity. Within the Caribbean, some church organisations have mounted 'campaigns' and men-only workshops

I agree…that we must look at parenting as something that is deeply gendered. . . . Gender arrangements also are about power, the persistence of male dominance over women, in political life, in the marketplace, and in the home. Guilt feelings are expressed by both women and men when they stray from predominant norms for proper motherhood and fatherhood, feeling that they are compared to some external standard (Doucet, 2000). Couples cling to the 'double standard of parenting' even in the face of conditions that would seem to logically call for more shared parenting (e.g., when mothers work overtime, fathers are unemployed, or family size is large).

Linda Haas, Sweden, Summit participant

to support men as responsible family men. In some parts of the Arab World, mosque leaders address men's family responsibilities and organise men's parenting groups.

- Sexuality is addressed differently by different religions and sub-groups within denominations. How each handles issues of reproductive health, contraception and abortion, homosexuality, sex and pregnancy outside marriage, multiple partners and gender equity affects the attitudes and behaviours of men (and women) in relation to the religion as well as to

Kenya: Samburu grandfather fetching water. Photo: © Tanja van de Linde/Bernard van Leer Foundation

Many social historians of the Caribbean have attributed present-day family structures, and the limited engagement of fathers with their children, to the presumption that they are relics of the horrible exigencies of slavery. Warner Lewis (2003), among others, has helped to debunk this 'official' history with her meticulous research in several Caribbean and South American countries on the faithfully retained social patterns of Central African slaves in the 'New World', including many interpersonal and wedding rituals.

the family. In some countries, few men appear in institutions of worship; in others only men appear. These differences, whatever their source, profoundly reflect the impact of these institutions on men and, by extension, their families.

Male mentoring by social fathers is an under-studied factor

- The role of uncles, grandfathers, stepfathers and the extended kin network of the majority world has not been examined nearly as much as the nuclear family of the minority world, thus rendering the influence of these men in the lives of children largely invisible.

- It is often assumed that sports coaches, youth club leaders, entertainment icons and other community leaders exert an influence on how boys and men piece together male and fatherhood-related images of themselves, particularly when biological fathers are absent. In some cultures, the social father role is traditionally recognised and honoured; in others, these influences are discounted. There is little research into the actual impact of these figures on the formation of self-identity. In the absence of research, anecdotal inferences usually dictate perceptions and public assertions.

Early socialisation patterns of gender identity shape later male-female relationships, attitudes towards sexuality, marriage, children

- Early messages (both direct and indirect) are passed on to boys and girls about maleness and femaleness, expected responsibilities, future prospects, educational attainment, the meaning of family, sexuality, etc. These messages usually follow culturally determined gender stereotypes and shape future adult attitudes towards intimacy, trust, having and rearing children, home management, etc. Girls almost everywhere hear that their opportunities should, and can, be wider than before, while boys are getting mixed messages that feed insecurities and distrust. In a few settings, parenting programmes address these mixed and powerful messages.

- There are wide variations in the degree to which 'traditional' gender socialisation

patterns predominate or are diluted or contradicted by popular culture (music and film, street culture, 'new father' images, etc.). Media images wield a strong influence worldwide, with parents in many settings expressing feelings of being 'out of control' in the face of popular culture.

- Rites of passage, while formalised in some cultures to form and clarify gender identity and gender-related roles, are being reinvented in some industrialised settings to assist young persons in developing confidence, positive relationships and self-help skills. It is not known how much these reinvented rituals reinforce gender stereotypes or promote gender equity.

- Some cultural practices discourage early sexuality (and the risk of pregnancy) by teaching children to distrust the opposite sex, feeding self-fulfilling prophecies. In many developing-country settings, lingering gender inequalities combined with poverty and other social factors result in male-female relationships characterised by mistrust, tension and conflict.

- Homophobic myths prescribe and proscribe many options for boys, often resulting in narrowed options, encouraged early heterosexuality, personal insecurities about sexual identity, stereotypic thinking, etc. Countries and subcultures widely differ across the globe in their legal and social treatment of homosexual partnerships and families, or emergent homosexuality in sons.

- Cross-cultural research has consistently confirmed that boys and men often perceive and are subject to narrow definitions of what it means to be a man and rigid guidelines of what a 'real man' can and should do. In the mass media, pop culture (including self-help books) and academic research, the stringency of this narrow definition of manhood is a consistent theme across the cultures studied, mostly from the minority world.

Historical and cultural attitudes and practices influence fathers' behaviours

- A review of ethnographic reports from 156 cultures concluded that only 20% of cultures promoted men's close relationships with infants, and only 5% with young children. Around the world, men are not generally seen as caregivers.

- The personnel involved in parenting programmes and policy tend to assume that fathers are disinterested and/or incompetent in caring for children, or assume they are hard to reach, and therefore limit their efforts to engage men.

- In many societies, children have been regarded as their parents' 'old age

pension'; elders were respected and cared for. As these traditions break down, many men who have been marginal to their families join the ranks of the destitute. In Western cultures, at least, individualism, divorce and mobility have left many modern-day fathers (and some mothers) financially and/or emotionally marginalised from their children.

Research has aided the analysis of social and cultural patterns

- What men actually DO, THINK AND FEEL about their roles in relation to children and family ('fatherwork') rather than the more normative, idealised projections of fatherhood has received increased attention. The bulk of this research, however, has been done with North American and European men and their families, leaving the majority world with only an intuitive understanding of present patterns and changes.

Political factors and trends

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

- All countries of the world (except the US) signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which specifies parental rights and responsibilities as well as the child's right of access to both parents.

- Despite CRC ratifications, countries differ widely in terms of legislative and policy reforms to ensure that both parents are supported in the care, protection and development of their children. Some countries have maternity and paternity leave, childcare provisions, economic benefits for parents, unemployment and pension benefits, insured healthcare, free education through the secondary level, etc. Most have few if any of these provisions. The involvement of fathers in their family must be considered in these very disparate contexts.

Is it possible to change the attitudes of boys and young men regarding gender roles and fatherhood? In Latin America, a consortium of four NGOs, including Promundo (Brazil) and Instituto PAPAI (Brazil), who presented their work at the Summit, has developed a theoretically and empirically grounded model for promoting changes in attitudes and community norms regarding boys and young men. The intervention, called Program H, consists of field-tested group educational activities, a no-words cartoon video about a boy and the way he is raised, combined with community messages (billboards, radio, theatre, raps, etc.) to promote reflections about what it means to be a man and a father. In field-testing with nearly 300 young men in six countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region, the intervention demonstrated changes in attitudes in young men who participated; A longer term project to evaluate impact is currently underway.

Gary Barker and Jorge Lyra, Summit participants

- Child maintenance legislation exists in most countries and is enforced primarily against fathers. There are growing movements in the US, Latin America, Western Europe and, to a limited extent, elsewhere of fathers who are organising against the perceived bias of court systems in favour of mothers and for the right of access of fathers to their children, sometimes denied for lack of sufficient financial provision or as a result of marital breakdown. More fathers are fighting for custody rights in court.

- In some cultures men still exercise absolute authority over children, although this is also slowly changing. In most countries the law confers the child's name and nationality through the father.

- For several reasons, many children in the world are not legally registered, or registered without a father's name. These children stand to lose child support, inheritance, pension benefits, etc. In some cultures a woman's 'power' to name the father can attribute fatherhood falsely or deny it. DNA testing is being increasingly used by the courts to prove or disprove paternity.

Governments differ in their commitment to gender equity in legislation and policy

- Most Western countries have adopted legislation that moves toward promotion of equal rights for women, though enforcement mechanisms vary in effectiveness. Signatories of the Cairo Declaration of the World Conference on Population and Development in 1994 pledged to reduce gender inequality by involving men to a greater extent in family life in positive ways, but this remains generally a low priority.

- Few countries have provisions for leave or financial considerations for fathers on the birth of their children. Even in countries promoting paternity leave, shared parental leave, shared custody, etc, children stay with mothers in the majority of cases. Where legislation requires that mother and father take parental leave during the child's first year, as in most Scandinavian countries, most men make use of it. In countries where paternal leave is optional, as in Israel, far fewer men take up the option. In Egypt, women receive leave to care for their children

In the UK, men with second families are sometimes provided some maintenance relief by the courts. The courts in Egypt give boys up to the age of 12 the right to choose which parent they want to live with when there is a divorce; girls can choose up to the age of nine.

Summit participants

In Israel, the mother confers nationality. In Jamaica, it can be either or both parents. Turkey has a non-legal option: boys are usually registered while girls often remain without identity cards.

Summit participants

and their parents; men only get leave for parent care.

Public and reproductive health policies and programmes have only recently begun to target men

- The HIV/AIDS epidemic has drawn attention to the role of men in spreading the disease, preventing it and caring for its victims. Education campaigns in some settings are specifically addressing boys' and men's sexuality and calling on men to consider the consequences of their sexual behaviour for their children as well as their partners.

- Socialised to be 'risk takers', men cost the state much more than women when one considers the aftermath of violence, crime and motor vehicle accidents. Around the world (with the exceptions of China and India), men die at higher rates than women. Young men have the highest death rates, with traffic accidents and violence being the chief causes.

- Data from the field of family planning suggest that men are more likely to cooperate with contraceptive use when they feel connected and invested in the children they already have. Some interventions seek ways to support men at their child's birth to attach and invest early.

- Most health services are not father-friendly, nor do they actively encourage men in health-seeking behaviours. In a few countries (the UK, Australia, US and Brazil, among others), nascent efforts have begun to make health services more attractive and friendly to men.

Increasingly, prospective parents have chosen to attend antenatal programs as couples. In many areas the inclusion of men has not altered the nature of the programs, with content and style directed at women and focusing on the birth. I believe it is critical for the development of involved and responsible fatherhood that men view their role as important from the beginning. . . . It is clear when the needs of men are recognised and included in the program, the reported satisfaction with the service increases for both men and women.

Tony White, Australia, Summit participant

Table 1: Percent of childhood years spent without a father (but with mother)

Brazil	9%	Ghana	29%
Colombia	13%	Botswana	36%
Dominican Republic	14%	Kenya	27%
Ecuador	7%	Mali	8%
Peru	9%	Senegal	16%
Trinidad and Tobago	17%	Zimbabwe	30%

Source: Bruce *et al.* (1995)

Implications

These trends have implications for everyone: men, women and children. Some of these implications are listed below.

Fewer fathers are living with their children

Perhaps one of most obvious and most important implications of some the trends mentioned above is that fewer men are living with their children. Merely counting female-headed households has been noted as an insufficient approach to understanding men's and women's roles in the household. But one indisputable result of the higher proportion of female-headed households is that a growing proportion of children spend more years living away from their fathers than in the past. Table 1 provides data for selected countries in Latin America, the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa on the percentage of childhood years (ages 0-18) spent without fathers.

Father absence has been assumed to be the corollary of female-headed households

As percentages of mother-headed households rose in North America, the father's absence became a major subject of research on fatherhood. To a lesser extent, this was also true in Western Europe. Studies in the US emerging in the 1970s and 1980s examined the effects of father absence more than the effects of father's presence, and many of those studies focused on the effects on sons, in the belief that boys suffered differently from girls in some specific ways when the father was not present. It was suggested that a boy's lack of a positive male role model in the home was more likely to turn him towards exaggerated versions of manhood and to his peers for

male identity, with often negative consequences. Having a father available, it was suggested (at least at the level of theory), might serve to curb some of the more aggressive tendencies of boys. The empirical research to support this theory is still limited and inconclusive. Qualitative accounts of boys without fathers present in the home suggest that mothers and other family members can, in some cases, counter the boys' aggressive tendencies. However, empirical research in the US has found differences between boys and girls in the effects of father absence. This research finds that boys seem to experience more academic and social problems when fathers are absent from the home. Father absence for girls (again, in US studies) has an impact in such areas as earlier average age at first sexual experience, but apparently it does not, on average, affect school completion.

Many of the studies on father absence have been justifiably criticised for various reasons. One is that they cast female-headed households in a negative light, as 'incomplete' families. Second, they often confound father absence with factors of race and social class. In fact, many of the stresses associated with father absence are likely to be related to financial difficulties that single-parent families face, stress that may also be compounded by issues of separation or divorce. Other questions have been raised about the definition of an 'absent father'. Posing absence as dichotomous with presence ignores the psychological presence and positive contributions of non-resident fathers, as well as the psychologically 'absent' father who lives within the family with little real contact with his children. Also ignored in this approach are interactions with older male siblings, uncles, grandfathers and other male figures close to the family.

Female-headed households are not always absent of men

In some parts of the world, fathers are marginal to domestic family roles, and the family is matrifocal in its day-to-day organisation (as in parts of Africa and the Caribbean), but men are neither physically nor psychologically absent from the lives of their children. They may live nearby and see the children regularly; they may contribute financially and in other ways to the children's welfare; if geographically distant, they may write or phone regularly to show caring and interest. Extended families often contain caring uncles, male cousins, grandfathers and other male figures who serve as male models for the family's children. In the Caribbean, it is not unusual for a woman to have had children by more than one man, be supported by one or more of them and have a current boyfriend who serves as a stepfather. In extended family contexts, children also are often informally 'fostered' by other families who may or may not be related by blood but who help relieve the pressures of a low income.

Children experience father absence and presence in both positive and negative ways. As noted above, there are some studies that indicate that having the father present in the home has a positive impact on school attendance and performance, as well as behaviour, particularly for boys. Other studies indicate that a father's lack of involvement with his children, whether the father is resident or not, also has a strong subjective meaning for those children.

Some studies in Latin America have also indicated negative effects related to the father's involvement with his children – or lack thereof. A representative sample of adolescents in public schools in Mexico City found that of the 86% of boys who lived with their fathers, 24% reported a problematic relationship. Of these, 25% said that communication with the father was poor or limited, and 21% of girls and 35% of boys said they were hit by their father regularly. Even more significantly, nearly 70% of those who reported a poor relationship said they did not have trust in their fathers (Sanchez-Sosa and Hernandez-Guzman, 1992). In qualitative research conducted in Brazil, low-income young men (the majority of whom lived in mother-headed households) and had little admiration for their fathers (Barker, 2001). However, in a number of reported studies, many young people often report feeling badly about their fathers not being present in their lives, either emotionally or physically.

In much of the world, what it means to be a man and what it means to be a father are being questioned

In Western Europe, North America, some parts of Latin America and the Caribbean and from more disparate reports elsewhere, qualitative descriptions of men expressing and experiencing confusion over their roles and identities as men and fathers are accumulating. As women have taken on new roles outside the home, in ways that generally *expand* their skills and sense of self, most men have been much slower to take on new roles within the household, and many speak and behave defensively about women moving into or taking over traditional male spheres. When men take on household roles, these roles are not generally socially valued for or by men (or it appears by many women), perhaps with the exception of involved fathering in some parts of Western Europe.

Men's identity has historically been linked to their work. When this work becomes unstable, unfulfilling, uncertain or non-existent, they have had no obvious, socially satisfying alternative roles. Many men believe that moving into roles formerly the hegemony of women would redefine them as 'inadequate women', as many media images now portray men. There are reports (mostly qualitative) that suggest a link between such role confusion and men's alcohol use, their violence against women, risk-taking behaviors, suicide and homophobia.

Studies in several regions on disparate masculinities and male sexuality have drawn academic attention to issues about the formation of male identity, but men have generally been slow to own this evolving discourse, defining manhood and fatherhood, and to set their own agendas. Those who have tried to set their own agendas sometimes represented very different, and even conflicting, perspectives, such as the mythopoetic movements (in the US primarily), which attempt to somehow 'return' to male images and behaviours of the past; organisations of men, such as the international White Ribbon Campaign, which stands against male violence against women; and the religious campaigns, sometimes led by men, to 'call men back' to responsibilities for their families and communities.

Some men have welcomed calls for change in their roles and attitudes toward domestic and nurturing tasks

Both quantitative and qualitative reports indicate that some men are devoting more time to domestic tasks and childcare, either by choice or as a response to new demands on women's time. There are also more men who, as a result of divorce or separation, are fighting for custody or more equitable time-sharing with their children; there are a few support groups, at least in some Western countries, for men who choose to do this. To a lesser extent, some men in various parts of the world are also beginning to question traditional trends that pull them away from their families; they are reflecting on their roles as fathers and the meaning their children hold for them. These men remain minorities in most if not all societies, but these emerging social trends are nonetheless significant. And daily, more and more men are being faced with pressures that call for these reflections, even if they are not yet ready to embrace the challenges.

Fathers still contribute far less time to the direct care of children than do women world wide

However, the proportion of the time fathers spend in the direct care of their children is increasing in many regions for a variety of reasons. Although there are tremendous variations across regions and among men in any given region, studies from diverse settings find that *on average,* fathers contribute about one-third to one-fourth as much time to direct child care than do women (Population Council, 2001). In US studies, fathers' *availability* to their children has increased from about one-half of that of mothers in the 1980s to nearly two-thirds that of mothers in the 1990s (NCOFF, 2002). Even if not as involved in direct childcare, many men make decisions about the use of household income for the children's well-being, education and healthcare. In a study in Guatemala, for example, women reported that men were

responsible for making decisions about healthcare in 55% of families when women did not earn an income, but it is interesting to note that this was true in only 11% of families where women earned more than 50% of the family income (Bruce, 1995, p. 52).

Men's involvement in domestic and childcare responsibilities appears to increase in relation to changes and temporary challenges within the household. Research in the US with two-parent households found that a father's participation in care-giving is more likely to increase in relation to the number of hours the mother works outside the home and to the number of children in the family (NCOFF, 2002). Authors in Latin America and the Caribbean also report that men are - even if reluctantly - responding to new domestic demands. While these changes should not necessarily be construed as deliberate or the spontaneous desire of men for an equitable share of domestic burdens, they do offer insights into factors and trends that encourage new behaviour. Not only *being* employed, but also the nature and quality of a man's employment affect the type and level of interaction a man has with his children. For example, fathers who work in mundane tasks, or in work sites where they have little or no autonomy, or who work long hours, are more irritable and more likely to be authoritarian and conflictive in their relationships with their children (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Various other researchers in the US and Australia are finding that being employed fewer hours or having a less demanding job allows some men (probably more middle-class men) to be more available for their children (Russell and Radojevic, 1992).

There has been very little research on the implications of family illness on the participation of fathers in childcare or domestic support, but the HIV/AIDS epidemic is forcing such issues on communities and families. To date, most of the caring burden falls disproportionately on women, but we know very little about men's roles in communities where virtually all families are affected, or in families or relationships in which they must be the primary caregiver because of illness. Such communities are on the increase in Africa, the Caribbean and India, and to lesser degrees, in other regions as well. Also, qualitative reports suggest that fathers of children with disabilities 'defect' from the family more often than mothers; again, we know little about what support there is to help men to remain in caring roles in such situations.

Many factors have contributed to changing expectations about men's roles in childbirth, particularly their presence at the delivery

The World Health Organisation issued an international statement in 2000 on the importance of women being allowed to have a person of their choice present

during birth, increasing attention to this issue in some maternal and child health initiatives in developing countries. The presence of the father at birth has become widespread throughout North America and Western Europe. One author states that 27% of fathers in the US participated in childbirth in the 1970s, while by the 1990s, this had risen to 85% (Parke, 1996). Among middle-class men in the Latin American/Caribbean region, this is also starting to become common, although much less so among low-income men The Fragile Families initiative in the US and the Men in Families programme in Australia believe, as one of their premises, that if a father is actively engaged with birth preparations and is present at the birth of his child, the chances of his remaining more active in the life of that child are increased.

Biological fathers are not the only fathering figures in and for families

In examining men's roles in the lives of children, researchers have paid some attention to the impact of negative role models, such as alcoholic men, drug pushers and violent and abusive men, but they have given scant attention to the impact of men in positive roles other than that of father figure -- men who are teachers, coaches, religious leaders, who model friendships with other men and with women, who provide leadership in community organisations, etc, and who therefore provide 'fathering' images for the formulation of children's male identity and aspirations.

Some final reflections on change among men as fathers

It is important to promote much more discussion on what, in fact, promotes positive change. Even defining what directions are meant by 'positive change' will differ from setting to setting. The concept of the 'new father' shows up repeatedly in the literature, particularly in the West. This new 'ideal' of fatherhood emerged in the US in the 1960s, and in parts of Europe, spurred in large part by

The contemporary African father is neither entirely traditional nor entirely modern; his is a hybrid cultural character that is the product of the co-existence of indigenous and imported psychologies and imperatives in the same individuals and communities. It is a rich overlay of Arabic-Islamic cultural influences and Western-Christian intrusions that have been or are being superimposed on deep- rooted indigenous African cultural images, all, most or some of which are relevant to contemporary African fathers. Over all, changes in the status of women and children, the changing family structure and gender roles and increasing waves of democratisation and pressure for good governance are re-structuring everyone's status position and responsibilities.

Bame Nsamenang, Cameroon, Summit participant

women's increasing level of education and participation in the laborlabour force and, of course, the women's movement. A secondary factor fuelling this concept may have resulted from some men questioning their fathering role, which was relatively limited as being primarily a provider. There has been change in the direction of this 'ideal' image, at both the societal level as well as the individual level. But there have been backlash reactions as well, in resisting changes perceived to be in conflict with men's own interests.

Most projections of this 'new father' assume a certain level of educational attainment and financial security, which allow latitude for some negotiated role adjustments and experimentation towards more equitable sharing of childcare and domestic responsibilities. The concept of the 'new father' has little meaning to a low-income father with an insecure employment future and an unemployed wife or partner who sees financial support as the *sine qua non* of his relationship with his children. It is clear that women want changes, changes that suggest more equitable and negotiated load sharing. It is also clear that such changes would be positive for women, and *could* be positive for men, though, as yet, many men do not embrace this vision. It also seems clear that many children want change, although there is less documentation in this area. The significance of fathers in the lives of children and the significance provided by children in the lives of their fathers should not be discounted as forces for change.

Changes in behaviour, from whatever cause, are almost always gradual and can reflect quite contradictory images, mixing old paradigms with new. To care for one's family, to work and sacrifice to support them, and to protect them from danger and threat are common to all versions of masculinity and have been positive values for many societies and families. Other aspects of masculinity and fatherhood -- such as being the authoritarian head of the family, a harsh disciplinarian, the provider of money but not loving attention, marginal to many aspects of family life -- need to be challenged in the face of current realities and trends. It is important to discuss what aspects of traditional fatherhood should be preserved and deepened, rather than seeing all traditional versions of masculinity as negative. It is also important to point out that in many parts of the world, fathers have traditionally been involved in many positive ways.

Many men are clearly sensitive to the messages in society at large about new expectations of men as fathers, but moving from attitude and discourse to new attitudes and action is not always a straightforward process. In this journey, there are few supporting frameworks to guide men towards taking up their own agendas to satisfying fatherhood and satisfying family relationships. These need to be constructed by men, as well as by men and women together, if positive changes that benefit men as well as women and children are to progress consciously

and systematically, rather than by serendipitous circumstance. Indeed, women and extended family settings are clearly involved in promoting changes in family roles and in men's roles, but in some studies, women are ambivalent about the degree and kind of change they want from men. All these factors suggest the complexities involved in understanding men's changing behaviour and must be taken into account and in promoting positive change in terms of men's roles as fathers.

Recommendations

Deficit models of analysis and programming, with men's insufficiencies or problems as starting points, have often missed seeing and documenting what men actually ***do*** and ***feel*** as fathers, and have ignored the positive potential in every father to be a good parent. In many cases, programme staff, policy makers, family members and others make assumptions about men and their roles as fathers that ignore the complexities and diversity of men's behaviours and experiences. Fathering is a diverse experience for men, and is constructed and shaped by cultural, social and political realities, as well as by men's and women's relationships.

The Summit discussions of the factors and trends bearing on fatherhood patterns around the world agreed that research and programmes that target men as fathers need to consider men as they are, replacing deficit perspectives with more open and accurate explorations of what men do, think and desire in relation to their children, and how their positive involvement and relationships can be supported personally, organisationally and systemically. The following few recommendations are offered:

1. A 'demography' of fatherhood globally would assist in helping substitute hard data for speculative assumptions, particularly for those parts of the world that remain understudied. Such information as longevity and fertility of fathers, union status and co-residential patterns, ethnic and intra-national differences, employment and poverty statistics, etc, would aid our understanding of factors that bear on the diversity of patterns observed among and within nations around the world.

2. National case studies are urged with the same objective: to provide more detailed analysis of the diversity of fatherhood patterns within a given country, in relation to language and ethnicity, religious affiliations and practices, socio-economic differences, workplace and social-sector policies, sub-cultural differences, etc. Good information can then promote more group-sensitive and effective policy and programme responses.

3. More research is needed in diverse contexts on the impact of fathers in the lives of their children and the effects

of divorce, separation, new partners, stepparents, social fathers and father absence on the health, welfare and educational performance of children. The vast majority of fatherhood studies have concentrated on white, middle-class North American or European families. With a few exceptions, the majority world has remained largely invisible on researchers' agendas (and the budgets of funders of research). Assumed commonalities and differences need to be challenged and tested; policy and programmatic applications derived solely on evidence from very different contexts can be wasteful and ineffective.

4. Men need to be engaged in critical debates about CHANGE -- debates about the changes happening in the world around them and within their own environment, and debates about the changes they are effecting in response, whether consciously, unconsciously or under duress. The debates have too often been about *changing* men, rather than about *what men want to change, or why they would want to change.* Summit participants agreed that this position does not ignore the fact that there are men who are harmful to women, children and to themselves, men whom we would wish to change for everyone's benefit. However, there are laws and services that must be held to their mandates to deal with those persons who harm others. Such laws and services can only benefit from greater clarity about what men believe they and other men need in order to fulfillfulfil their own desires to be better men, better fathers. A research agenda that examines motivations for change in a variety of contexts would be extremely useful to those with responsibilities for policies and programmes that have the potential to provide these supports.

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Chapter three

Fathers: The Research Perspective

By Charlie Lewis and Michael E. Lamb

Introduction

Thirty years ago, it was possible to summarise the research on fathers in a single paper. Men were described as 'forgotten contributors to child development' (Lamb, 1975), although perhaps it is fair to suggest that this was because the research data were diffuse rather than non-existent. Today the task would be impossible. Within our own discipline, psychology, over 700 articles on fathers are cited each year in the *Psychological Abstracts* database (in the 1970s, it was already at 400). In addition, books and lengthy review chapters proliferate, and it is to these that the reader must turn to get a complete impression of current patterns (for some of those published over the past 12 months, consider Day and Lamb, in press; Hobson, 2002; Lamb, in press; Tamis-LeMonda and Cabrera, 2002). However, as Tamis-LeMonda and Cabrera (2002, page xii) put it, 'as is often characteristic of the social sciences, the study of father involvement continues to be an insular enterprise, with exciting progress generally occurring within rather than across fields.' Here, we will attempt to explore the diversity of the literature while being sensitive to the caveat that we are both developmental psychologists. We try to be interdisciplinary in our reading and our research, but also realise that such a task is a massive one and that we rely here almost entirely upon findings within our own discipline.

This paper attempts to identify clear patterns in the existing data so that the Summit can reach a consensus about the role of most men in most children's lives. Our claims address an apparent paradox in the emerging literature: in most cultures, men continue to be less involved with their children than mothers, both in terms of childcare and interaction. However, in the most studied family form, the nuclear two-parent household, fathers contribute to their children's development in important ways. In order to present (and at the summit, perhaps resolve) the paradox, we will examine the data on parenting and its influence on children. We focus our attention here upon the two-parent household simply because it is the most studied form and the database allows us to draw substantive conclusions. Elsewhere, we have each analysed fathers in non-residential families (Lamb, 2002; Lewis *et al.*, 2002). This paper is divided into five sections.

Ireland: A father feeds his infant in rural Ireland. Photo: © Derek Speirs

We begin by examining the literature on paternal engagement with children, revealing that while paternal involvement with children in two-parent households is increasing in North American and European contexts, there are still many constraints on what men do with their children.

The second section describes what we know about the ways in which fathers and children interact with one another, attempting to answer old questions about the propensity of men to form close relationships with their children, and whether 'fathering' is equivalent to 'mothering'. The evidence suggests that mothers and fathers are largely similar in their interaction styles, although the average mother still seems to be more sensitive than the average father.

In the third section, we examine three factors that may explain why mothers appear to be more sensitive and skilful in order to consider how the constraints on fathering are played out in everyday interactions. We recommend examining fathering within a network of relationships within and beyond the family.

In the final two sections, we examine the commonalities and differences between men and women as parents.

In the fourth section, we explore a traditional and voluminous area of research, parent-infant attachments. In keeping with the literature on parental engagement with children, this literature suggests that mothers have a greater influence on their children's development than fathers do.

However, the final section highlights an emerging trend in the research on fathers – multi-informant and longitudinal data analyses of family relationships – which allows us to pinpoint paternal influences that have thus far been hard to identify and quantify. In adolescence and adulthood, there is evidence to suggest that fathers might have a greater influence on their children than mothers do.

Paternal involvement in child care

Over the past 30 years, a great deal of research has attempted to identify, define and measure paternal involvement. This is no easy task (Pleck, 1997) and has to take into account mothers' and fathers' commitments to other activities (notably, employment), the changing nature of parenting over as the child develops and how we define 'involvement'. For example, the sociologist David Morgan (1998) suggested that a man's attendance at a Trades Union meeting can be legitimately described as a 'paternal activity', for in many respects, such an activity is aimed at improving the workplace for oneself, one's colleagues and, by implication, one's children, while simultaneously ensuring that the family income is sufficient. Debate about the scope of fatherhood has increased over the past 10 years

(Hawkins and Dollahite, 1997; Palkowitz, 2002). Within the conceptual framework (Lamb *et al.*, 1985) that has dominated research for the last 20 years, three components of father involvement have been distinguished: (1) engagement: the interaction between the father and the child, usually through caregiving or interaction (e.g., play or instruction), (2) accessibility or availability to the child, and (3) responsibility for the care of the child.

The literature suggests the following: *Across a diversity of (mainly industrial) societies, men have lower levels of engagement than women and there is evidence of clear constraints upon their involvement.* For example, biological fathers spend more time in interaction or available than resident non-biological father figures (Hofferth *et al.*, 2002), and mothers are more involved than fathers. In the largest contemporary survey of two-parent households in the US, fathers were available for three and a half hours to their children under the age of 12 and interacted with them for 1.8 hours, of which 39% was spent in play or 'companionship' while only 28% (0.51 hours) involved caregiving. Similar patterns are evident in comparable European contexts (Pleck and Masciadrelli, in press).

Patterns of paternal involvement seem to be changing in Western Europe and North America. Time budget studies in the 1980s and the 1990s (conducted mainly in the USA) suggest that men's accessibility to children increased by 66%, while their engagement increased by 43% (Pleck, 1997). Nevertheless, when asked to identify the features of parental roles that they most closely identified with, fathers still listed financial provision as the most central aspect of their role (Warin *et al.*, 1999).

The recent increases in male domestic involvement largely reflect changes in their own and, particularly, their partners' engagement in paid employment. Although there are many individual and cultural variations, the evidence clearly supports of this claim (Presser, 1989). For example, Wheelock's (1991) study of unemployed husbands found that they were highly participant at home but did not express a belief in sexual equality or involved fathering. Similarly, Ferri and Smith's (1996) analysis of the UK National Child Development Study found that the group of fathers who took responsibility for childcare included significantly more blue-collar workers than white-collar professionals.

Fathering is embedded in a network of social relationships and must be understood within such a context. Ethnographic research 50 years ago indicated that the closer the social ties within a community, the more likely there is to be a sharper division of labour between men and women (Bott, 1957; Young and Willmott, 1957). Such influences also hold in settings where men do not live with their children; in African-American communities, for example, fathering is

supported within the child's wider familial network (Jarrett, Roy and Burton, 2002).

Men's extra-familial social networks seem to have little, or even a negative, influence upon involvement with their children. Men report that social networks do not provide them with practical or moral support (Hossain and Roopnarine, 1993). Indeed, research in Sweden (Hwang *et al.*, 1984) and Australia (Russell, 1983) suggests that men experience hostility from their family and colleagues when they express a desire for greater involvement.

In Europe and America a key to understanding paternal engagement is the mother-father relationship. Two studies (Belsky, Gilstrap, and Rovine, 1984; Lamb and Elster, 1985) suggest that fathers' interactions with their infants are influenced by the current quality of spousal interaction much more than mothers' behaviour is. Similarly, the most common longitudinal predictor of parenting is the quality of the relationship between the parents (e.g., Feldman, *et al.*, 1983). When spousal relationships in early parenthood are poor, mothers tend to become more involved with their infants, while fathers become more negative and intrusive when interacting with their infants (Belsky *et al.*, 1991). Recent theoretical analyses have suggested that mothers acts as 'gatekeepers' (Allen and Hawkins, 1999). Although there is some support for this, Pleck and Masciadrelli (in press) suggest that we should be cautious as most studies show a positive correlation between levels of maternal and paternal involvement, not a negative one, as might be expected if mothers were actively keeping fathers at bay.

Father-child and mother-child relationships

If we examine parental behaviour across the period of active parenting – from interactions in the delivery room to relationships with teenagers – the behaviour of partners (i.e., mothers and fathers) is very similar (see Lamb and Lewis, in press, for further discussion). At the same time, mothers tend to be more sensitive to their children and there are clear cultural variations in both maternal and paternal styles. We start by charting these variations, below.

How do fathers and mothers interact with their newborn babies?

Mothers' and fathers' experiences of pregnancy necessarily differ (Lewis, 1986) and the evidence suggests that this differentiation continues after childbirth. In the early months of parenthood, mothers experience more life changes and report more satisfaction (Dulude *et al.*, 2000), but also more negative changes (Oakley, 1979) than fathers.
However, even with their newborn infants, fathers' styles closely resemble those of mothers (Rödholm and Larsson, 1982). Joint parenting often involves adopting the same routine and style of the other;

early research showed few differences between the caregiving styles of American fathers and mothers (Parke and Sawin, 1977). Usually, but not always, men copy what their partners do (Backett, 1982). The paediatricians Greenberg and Morris (1974) coined the term 'engrossment' to describe the intense feelings of attachment to their newborns that men reported. Physiological evidence in support of this is now available. New fathers show changes in hormonal levels (decreased levels of testosterone and estradiol and increased levels of prolactin and cortisol) around the birth of their infants that resemble those in their partners (Storey *et al.*, 2000).

However, cross-cultural evidence suggests that mothers soon gain an advantage, which is apparent in the delivery room and is certainly enhanced by virtue of their greater levels of contact. For example, Kaitz *et al.* (2000) found that Israeli mothers soothed their newborns more effectively than new fathers did, regardless of parity. Experimental work shows that Israeli and American fathers recognise their infants by touching their hands after only 60 minutes of exposure, even when blindfolded (Bader and Phillips, 1999; Kaitz *et al.*, 1994). However, Kaitz *et al.*(1994) found that fathers could not recognise their newborn infants by touching their faces, while mothers could do so, perhaps because the mothers had spent twice as much time with their infants prior to testing than the fathers had (on average, 12.6 hours and 6.8 hours, respectively).

Are there distinctive paternal and maternal interaction styles?

As noted in the first section of this paper, fathers in many cultures consistently become involved in play more than in caretaking (Rendina and Dickerscheid, 1976). It seems important, therefore, to ask whether maternal and paternal styles differ, and, if so, what the possible effects of such differences might be.

Many researchers have reported no differences between levels of maternal and paternal sensitivity to the developing baby. Fathers and mothers both adjust their speech in interaction with infants, using slower diction with shorter phrases, more imitation and more redundancy (Kokkinaki and Kugiumutsakis, 2000). Both seem sensitive to developmental changes in the infant's abilities and preferences in order to adjust their play (Crawley and Sherrod, 1984) and affective engagement (Notaro and Volling, 1999).

However, mothers seem to be more closely attuned to the infants' capacities and less challenging as a result. Following early American work suggesting that men adopt more abrupt and physically stimulating styles with their young infants (Lamb, 1976b; Yogman, 1981), Frascarolo-Moutinot (1994) and Labrell (1994) reported that French and Swiss fathers

were also more intrusive than mothers were. Israeli fathers expected less cognitive maturity and social autonomy in their 6-month-olds than mothers did (Mansbach and Greenbaum, 1999).

Mothers have long been found to hold their babies in the course of caretaking, while fathers tend to do so in response to infants' requests to be held or during play (Belsky, 1979; Lamb, 1976b, 1977c). In return, infants sometimes respond more positively to being held by their fathers than by their mothers (Lamb, 1976b, 1977c).

Such patterns continue to be found. American fathers tend to engage in more physically stimulating and unpredictable play throughout the infancy period (e.g., Clarke-Stewart, 1978; Dickson *et al.*, 1997; Lamb, 1977c), even though rough and tumble play becomes less prominent as children grow older (Crawley and Sherrod, 1984). Paternal play styles also elicit more positive reactions from infants: young children tend to select their fathers for play when they have the choice of partner (Clarke-Stewart, 1978; Lamb, 1976b, 1977c). Researchers agree that most of the differences between mothers and fathers are not large, however.

Biological or cultural differences between parents?

A key question is whether the findings described above reveal biologically-driven tendencies for men to specialise in play or whether they are culturally determined. *Most research from a wide variety of cultures supports the notion that fathers have a distinctive interaction style.*

Even when fathers declare a belief that parents should share the child-care responsibilities (Hyde and Texidor, 1988) they still show a 'preference' for physical play over caretaking. In addition to the differences between maternal and paternal styles reported in France and Switzerland, these differences have also been found in Italy (Best *et al.*, 1994) and in India, in both single- and dual-earner families (Roopnarine *et al.*, 1992). Within North America, they are also apparent in African-American (Hossain *et al.*, 1997; Hossain and Roopnarine, 1994) and Hispanic-American families (Hossain *et al.*, 1997).

However, parental differentiation is not so clear in many other cultures. German (Best *et al.*, 1994), Swedish (Lamb *et al.*, 1982) and Aka (hunter-gatherer) (Hewlett, 1987) fathers appear not to specialise as playmates. Similarly, men on Israeli kibbutzim do not play with their 8- and 16-month-olds more than mothers do, despite their 'traditional' division of caretaking responsibilities (Sagi *et al.*, 1985). Indeed, Taiwanese fathers report that they seldom play with their children (Sun and Roopnarine, 1996).

In addition, the evidence suggests that differences within cultures might be greater than was once thought. In Greece, men in rural communities appear to be

significantly less involved in play and childcare than those in urban communities (Maridaki-Kassotaki, 2000). Zaouche-Gaudron, Ricaud and Beaumatin (1998) found that French fathers who believed in greater parental role differentiation tended to have a more positive impact on their children's development than those whose roles were less distinctive. As we suggest later, it is possible that fathers have more impact on their children when their interactions are different from those of their partners. So, the link between fathers and infant play seems to be culturally prescribed, but it nevertheless represents a characteristic pattern in many cultures.

Differences between parents' roles and styles continue beyond the period when children require immediate care to ensure their survival. Paternal engagement declines as children grow (Pleck and Masciadrelli, in press), but father-child interactions continue to involve play, recreation, and goal-oriented actions and tasks (see, for example, Collins and Russell, 1991; Montemayor and Brownlee, 1987). *However, mothers and fathers become equally involved in many aspects of their children's lives.* This applies in middle childhood to affective caregiving (Russell and Russell, 1987), school activities (Youniss and Smollar, 1985) and also to the increasing amounts of

Thailand: Father and child visiting neighbours. Photo: © Jim Holmes/Bernard van Leer Foundation

homework in secondary school (Solomon *et al.*, 2002). When observed together, mothers and fathers initiate activities with equal frequency (Noller, 1980) and react quite similarly to their children's play and cognitive styles (Bronstein, 1984).

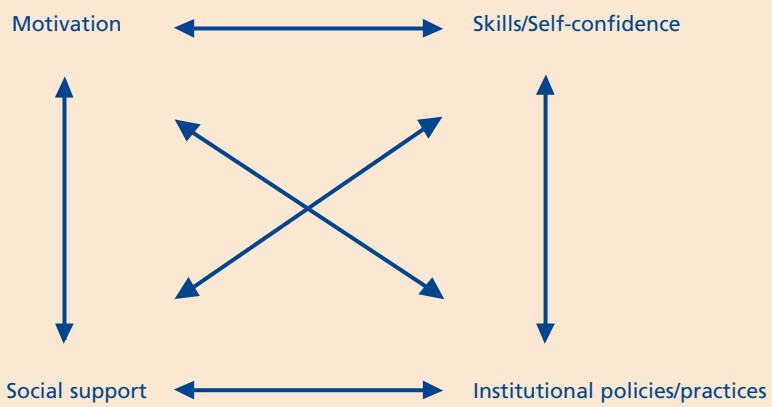
Whatever factors influence fathers' tendencies to be more or less involved in interactions with their children, there appears to be substantial stability within fathers' behaviour, at least during the period from birth through the first 30 months (e.g., Hwang and Lamb, 1997). There is some evidence for continuities in father-child closeness over time within middle childhood, perhaps reflecting a continuing role division in this period (e.g., Herman and McHale, 1993). However, Lamb *et al.* (in press) reported that the amount of time that Swedish fathers spent interacting with their children diminished over the course of childhood, even though the amount of time that they were accessible (both individuals awake and in the home) increased as the children moved from infancy into childhood and adolescence. Stability over this period was quite low in this study, perhaps because the older children were not confined to home as much as younger children were.

General reviews suggest differences in the relationships that mothers and fathers have with their teenage children (e.g., Holmbeck *et al.*, 1995; Russell and Saebel, 1997; Silverberg *et al.*, 1992). However, *in the teenage years, fathers tend to be more engaged with their sons than with their daughters, and to have more distant relationships with their children than mothers do.* Such patterns have been reported over several years (Youniss and Ketterlinus, 1987). Adolescents in many countries (e.g., North America [Hosley and Montemoyor, 1997], Korea [Rohner and Pettengill, 1985] and Britain [Langford *et al.*, 2001]) consistently report being closer to their mothers than to their fathers. While this is particularly the case for daughters (Larson and Richards, 1994), it is also true for sons (Youniss and Smoller, 1985). Two possible, and not incompatible, explanations have been proposed. First, men are associated in a number of cultures with disciplinary functions. For example, Korean daughters see their fathers as distant and controlling (Rohner and Pettengill, 1985). Second, the centrality of the father's role of playmate in many cultures may become inappropriate and even an embarrassment to their teenage children. Adolescents interviewed about their parents have reported such feelings (Langford *et al.*, 2002).

Exploring the differences between mothers and fathers further

In 1985, Lamb *et al.* attempted to grapple with the factors that influence paternal involvement. They proposed that four factors were important: motivation, self-confidence, social support and

FIGURE 1: THE NETWORK OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PATERNAL INVOLVEMENT



Source: Adapted from Lamb *et al.* (1985).

institutional practices. Research since then has tended to use these dimensions and, as figure 1 suggests, depicts them as interrelated. Examining the evidence using these dimensions, *we suggest three reasons why men in two-parent families appear to differ with respect to relationships with their children:*

- paternal sensitivity (issues having to do with motivation and self-confidence);
- systemic factors within the family (the strongest aspect of social support);
- the ways in which the family fits into the wider social system (the relationship between institutional practices and family interactions, notably a persistence of the father-as-provider role).

Paternal sensitivity

Given the differences between mothers and fathers and the cultural variations in paternal styles reported above, variations of paternal sensitivity may involve the interaction between biology and culture. For example, one added feature of Storey *et al.*'s (2000) study of new fathers was an association between paternal reactivity to infant signals and the magnitude of the hormonal changes experienced by these men. Similarly, individual differences in paternal engagement over the first year are fairly stable over time, especially between 3 and 9 months (Belsky, Gilstrap, and Rovine, 1984). It is thus important to determine why fathers differ in their sensitivity and engagement.

The following psychological factors are associated with men's adaptation to parenting.

- Men's recollections of their own childhood relationships are correlated with their paternal sensitivity: men who recall loving and secure relationships with their own parents tend to be more sensitive and involved than fathers with less positive memories (Cowan *et al.*, 1996), although studies have long shown that some highly involved men report having become involved in reaction to their own fathers' lack of engagement (e.g., Eiduson *et al.*, 1982).

- Experience in childcare appears to facilitate parental responsiveness in infancy (Donate-Bartfield and Passman, 1985) and beyond. This may explain why impoverished fathers who live with their infants appear more sensitive than those who do not (Brophy-Herb *et al.*, 1999).

- Men's perceived psychological well-being appears to be related to their paternal sensitivity (Broom, 1994; McElwain and Volling, 1999; though see also Field *et al.*, 1999).

- Most men appear to react to the needs of their families. For example, when mothers are depressed post-natally, infants have more positive interactions with their non-depressed fathers (Hossain *et al.*, 1994). Likewise, when children are hospitalised, most fathers who can take leave from work will do so and, in turn, appear to be less distressed (Darke and Goldberg, 1994).

Fathers' interactions within the family system

In keeping with the data on men's involvement in childcare, research on the family over the past 30 years has shown the interconnectedness of individual relationships. Fathers both interact directly with children and influence maternal behaviour, while mothers also influence fathers' behaviour and involvement (see Cummings, Goeke-Morey, and Redmond (2004); Cummings and O'Reilly, 1997; Lamb, 1997b). To complicate the picture further, researchers have confirmed R. Q. Bell's (1968) observation that children are active agents in their own and their parents' continuing socialisation.

The spousal relationship is a particularly good indicator of parent-child relationships throughout development. Fathers become consistently more involved in interactions with their infants (Beitel and Parke, 1998; Grych and Clark, 1999) and toddlers (Goldberg and Easterbrooks, 1984) when each parent supports the other's involvement and, indeed, when partners interact more (Belsky, Gilstrap, and Rovine, 1984). For example, Japanese mothers of securely attached infants reported greater levels of spousal support than did the mothers of insecurely attached infants (Durrett *et al.*, 1984). Conversely, marital tensions adversely influence both men's interaction skills and the infant-father attachment (Lundy, 2002).

Linking family interactions into the wider social system

In keeping with the influences on paternal childcare, the involvement of both parents in activities beyond the nuclear family affects paternal interactions with their children. We summarise here the extensive literature on parental employment to illustrate just how complex the links between fathering styles and the wider culture are.

In advanced industrial cultures, dual-earner families have become the norm and thus the psychological patterns associated with this family form are of increasing importance. Maternal employment is directly related to paternal involvement in the care of infants (Hyde *et al.*, 1993; Lamb *et al.*, 1988), preschoolers (Berry and Rao, 1997) and school-age children (Crouter *et al.*, 1999). In turn, involved fathers know more about their children's daily experiences, but parental employment patterns have a more profound influence than changes in childcare.

Men do not spend commensurate amounts of time in childcare as they reduce their work hours, although they maintain their commitments to leisure activities (Crouter *et al.*, 1987; Gottfried *et al.*, 1988; McHale and Huston, 1984). Perhaps as a result, at least in dual-earner families, increased paternal involvement in childcare was often at the expense of marital happiness (Crouter *et al.*, 1987).

There is good evidence that the presence of an infant results in additional strains in dual-earner families.

- In one study, four-month-old boys interacted more negatively with their fathers when their mothers were employed (Braungart-Rieker *et al.*, 1999).
- At the same time, fathers and mothers reported anxieties over leaving their babies and toddlers in someone else's care (Deater-Deckard *et al.*, 1994; Hock and Lutz, 1998).
- Braungart-Rieker *et al.* (1999) reported that men in dual-earner families were less sensitive to their four-month-old sons than men with unemployed wives and that the boys were more likely to become insecurely attached to their fathers than to their mothers.
- Men with wives who were not committed to the work force full-time seem to be more sensitive to their infants when they are highly involved in childcare (Grych and Clark, 1999) and stimulate their infants less (Pedersen *et al.*, 1982).
- Similarly, Field *et al.* (1987) reported that employed mothers were much more active in face-to-face interactions with their infants than employed fathers were.

Father-child relationships in dual-earner families become more positive beyond

infancy. Crouter *et al.*'s (1999) research suggests that the signs of distress in father-infant relationships are not evident beyond infancy. Indeed, men in dual-earner families are reported to have *closer* relationships with their children than men in single-earner families (see Berry and Rao, 1997). However, a report from the US Early Child Care Study (NICHD 2000) noted that the link between employment and the quality of child-father interactions was moderated by the men's attitudes and age, with younger fathers and those more committed to equal parenting having more sensitive play styles. Cultural patterns of parental employment are also important. In New Delhi, for example, a strong 'traditional' culture appears to ensure that men in dual-earner families are indistinguishable from fathers in single-earner families (Suppal and Roopnarine, 1999).

Do fathers influence their children s emotional development?

Infant-mother and -father attachments

Attachment theory has been central to research designed to identify the nature and significance of mother- and father-child relationships. It holds that parental sensitivity determines the security of attachments and thus of the child's subsequent psychological adjustment (Ainsworth *et al.*, 1978). Between the ages of 12 and 24 months, attachments are measured using a procedure known as the 'Strange Situation' in which the child-caretaker interaction is assessed after the child is stressed by being left in an unfamiliar room and/or with a stranger. The procedure allows us to make inferences about the security of the relationship to the infant.

Some studies using the Strange Situation yield contradictory results, with weak or no relationships between parent-infant interactions and Strange Situation behaviour (e.g., Notaro and Volling, 1999; Rosen and Rothbaum, 1993, Volling and Belsky, 1992). However, other studies suggest that the sensitivity of fathers in a free-play session is related to assessments of infant-father attachment (Cox *et al.*, 1992; Goosens and Van IJzendoorn, 1990).

When the collected evidence is explored in a procedure known as meta-analysis, there is a statistically significant link between paternal sensitivity and the security of infant-father attachment, which is weaker than the association between maternal sensitivity and the security of infant-mother attachment (De Wolff and Van IJzendoorn, 1997; Van IJzendoorn and DeWolff, 1997). The patterns seem to hold when men display less sensitive behaviour to their infants. For example, Caldera *et al.* (1995) found that when fathers seemed more psychologically distant in a laboratory interaction, their infants were more likely to be insecure six months later, at 18 months.

Are mother-child attachments more important?

The attachment paradigm has been useful as it allows us to explore how and how much early parent-child relationships influence the child's ability to cope with the typical hurdles of peer interactions, life in school and the establishment of new social relationships.

A substantial body of research suggests that the predictive power of infant-mother attachments is greater and more consistent than that of infant-father attachments.

- Belsky *et al.* (1984) found that attachments to both parents, but especially infant-mother attachments, were related to higher-level cognitive skills in a sample of American toddlers.

- Main *et al.* (1985) found that Strange Situation assessments of mother-child attachments indicated greater impact on children's attachment-related responses than earlier and concurrent assessments of child-father attachments.

- Similarly, Suess *et al.* (1992) reported stronger maternal influences in a study of the association between the security of parent-infant attachments and the quality of German children's later interaction with peers.

- Steele *et al.* (1999) found that the ability of British six-year-olds to read affective expressions in cartoons was predicted by the security of infant-mother attachments five years earlier, but not by infant-father attachments at 18 months or by these British parents' feelings of attachment during pregnancy.

- Verscheuren and Marcoen (1999) found that Belgian child-mother attachments had a greater effect on the positive self-perceptions of 5- and 6-year-olds than did child-father attachments, while child-father attachments were better predictors of behaviour problems.

Nevertheless, other research shows that father-child relationships are not irrelevant.

- Lamb *et al.* (1982) reported that Swedish infants with secure attachments to their fathers were more sociable with strangers, but there was no association between the security of infant-mother attachments and sociability in their sample.

- Sagi *et al.* (1986) found that infants on Israeli kibbutzim who were securely attached to either parent were more sociable with strangers than insecure-resistant infants.

In European and North American countries, the collected evidence suggests that in two-parent families, relationships with both parents influence the child's psychological development.

- Gable *et al.* (1994) reported strong links between the quality of parent-child relationships, marital quality and child outcomes in a study of 2-year-olds.

- In two studies (Benzies *et al.*, 1998; Verscheuren and Marcoen, 1999) secure attachments to one parent partially offset the effects of insecure attachment to the other.

- Children who displayed negative emotion early in infancy tended to become more positive when they had active, sensitive and happily married mothers. At the same time, some infants became more negative when their fathers were insensitive, uninvolved in their children's lives and dissatisfied with their marriages (Belsky *et al.*, 1991).

- Easterbrooks and Goldberg (1984) found that children's adaptation was related to both the amount of paternal involvement and, more important, the quality or sensitivity of their fathers' interactional style.

- Verscheuren and Marcoen (1999) found that five-year-olds who described secure attachments with their fathers were more independent and socially competent with peers, less anxious and withdrawn, and better adjusted to school stresses than children with insecure representations of attachments to their fathers.

Children with two secure attachments appear to be more socially competent and popular with peers, less anxious and

Father and son modelling clay. Photo: © Gandoy Diaz

withdrawn, better adjusted to school stress and to have higher self-esteem than children with two insecure attachment representations.

A closer look at possible paternal influences

Some evidence simply suggests that fathers have less influence on their children than mothers do when other domains of experience are considered. In keeping with such an expectation, Hunter *et al.* (1987) found stability over time in the quality of both mother- and father-infant interactions in play sessions, although only maternal style predicted the children's later cognitive skills.

However, others have reported links between paternal styles and children's later language development ((Magill-Evans and Harrison, 1999); IQ level (Wachs *et al.*, 1971; Yogman *et al.*, 1995); 'mastery motivation' in boys (Yarrow *et al.*, 1984).

Likewise, Finnish fathers who read more often to their 14- and 24-month-old infants had children who were later more interested in books (Lyytinen *et al.*, 1998).

Labrell (1990) reported that paternal scaffolding of children's activities promoted independent problem solving by 18-month-olds.

In a range of cultures, preschoolers clearly differentiate between the roles of mothers and fathers and interpret parental influences in different ways.

- Raag and Rackliff (1998) found that, when asked about their parents' preferences for a range of sex-neutral and sex-stereotyped toys, more boys than girls -- especially those who had previously chosen sex-stereotypical toys -- said that their fathers would consider cross-sex toy play to be 'bad'. Thus, fathers were believed by sons but not by daughters to have more restrictive rules of conduct than mothers.

- Reid *et al.* (1989) reported that preschoolers who posed for a photograph as a parent with a small baby acted in sex-stereotypical ways: Compared to posing as 'themselves', boys moved further away when posing as 'daddy' while girls moved closer to the baby when posing as 'mummy'.

Domestic work is widely described as the mother's prerogative while bread-winning is seen as the province of fathers throughout the school years (Hartley, 1960; Langford *et al.*, 2001) and these beliefs persist in industrial cultures into adolescence (Goldman and Goldman, 1983). Fathers may play an important part in mediating between the family and the outside world; Lieberman *et al.* (1999) reported that fathers' availability was particularly important in predicting some positive friendship qualities (helpfulness, closeness and security).

Longstanding research has suggested that children learn to regulate their emotions and to resolve conflict through interactions with their fathers (MacDonald and Parke, 1984). Parke *et al.* (in press) recently summarised substantial evidence that fathers and mothers have distinct influences on the development of peer relationships and social skills.

- Parke and his colleagues found that fathers who display high levels of both physical play and positive affect with their 3- and 4-year-old children had children who were rated by their teachers as most popular with peers.

- Men who were both highly physical and low in 'directiveness' had the most popular sons, whereas fathers who were highly directive had less popular children (Parke *et al.*, 1993).

- Hoffman and Youngblade (1999) reported that the fathers' involvement in routine childcare predicted better school attainment in children and fewer sexual stereotypes in their daughters.

How research teases apart maternal and paternal influences

Recent analyses have tried to tease apart maternal and paternal influences on child development (Pleck, 1997). Research over the past 20 years has identified clear paternal influences on children's development, even when maternal influences are taken into account and the data do not rely on one respondent (Amato and Rivera, 1999).

- In two-parent families, the quality of father-child relationships is positively related to indices of the children's well-being (see Amato [1998] for a full review).

- Astone and McLanahan (1991) found that fathers' monitoring of school progress was positively correlated with adolescents' high school grades, attendance and attitudes toward school.

- In the USA, Anglo and Latino adolescents' feelings of closeness to their fathers were associated with lower levels of substance abuse (Coombs and Landsverk, 1988).

- After controlling for variations in mother-child relationships, Forehand *et al.* (1986) found that the quality of father-child relationships (reported by both the children and the parents) independently predicted children's academic grades (reported by the teachers).

Longitudinal research shows that fathers can affect the psychosocial adjustment of adolescents and young adults.

- Earlier paternal involvement predicts adult children's feelings of satisfaction in spousal relationships and self-reported parenting skills (Burns and Dunlop, 1998; Franz *et al.*, 1991).

- Mothers' and fathers' hostility towards their 16-year-olds and the extent to which they undermined their teenagers' autonomy independently of one another predicted the degree of hostility and low ego-resiliency reported by close friends of the children at age 25 (Allen *et al.*, 2002).

- Lewis *et al.* (1982) found that the reported involvement of British fathers in two-parent households when the child was age 7 and 11 predicted the child's performance in national examinations at age 16 as well as whether or not the child had a criminal record by age 21.

- In their analysis of data from the UK National Child Development Study, Flouri and Buchanan (2002a, 2002b) found positive correlations between patterns of paternal involvement in childhood and later indices of psychosocial adjustment (until the children were 33 years of age), even when possible mediators (family structure, gender, maternal involvement, parental mental health and parental socio-economic status) were taken into account. Maternally reported father-involvement at age 7 predicted self-reported closeness to father at age 16 and lower levels of police contact, as reported by the mothers and teachers (Flouri and Buchanan, 2002a). This in turn predicted marital satisfaction and diminished psychological distress at age 33 (Flouri and Buchanan, 2002b), whereas self-reported closeness to mother at age 16 predicted only marital satisfaction 17 years later.

Results like these suggest that, in the long term, patterns of father-child closeness might be crucial predictors of adult psychosocial adjustment. The origins of such patterns are still to be explored in depth and require longitudinal studies that are sensitive to the range of possible paternal influences and represent the greater and more diverse patterns of involvement by contemporary fathers than of those fathers studied in the earlier longitudinal studies.

Some emerging research suggests that researchers need to explore parent-child relationships in their full complexity and diversity [i.e., beyond simple attachments]. Grossmann *et al.* (2002) found that the security of infant-mother attachments was a better predictor of children's feelings of security at age 6 and 10 than was the security of infant-father attachments. By age 10, however, the fathers' sensitivity in free play at age 2 also predicted security. By 16 years, only the measure of father-toddler play (and not early parent-infant attachments) significantly predicted child adjustment.

Conclusions

In this paper, we have argued that fathers in two-parent households indeed affect their children's development in diverse and significant ways. Building on popular

measures and hypotheses, researchers have conducted many studies over the last 30 years suggesting that mothers tend to demonstrate more skill in interacting with their children and that maternal closeness appears to have a more obvious effect on their children. Men are less available, interact less and care for their children less, and the apparent maternal advantage seems to reflect these different parental roles. By contrast, the evidence summarised in the final section of this paper suggests that measures favouring fathers, like the sensitivity of their play, and research that examines the development of relationships into adulthood reveal more impressive paternal influences. For the future we propose that research guided by patricentric themes may yet teach us a great deal about the nature of fathering and its influence on children (Hawkins and Dollahite, 1997; Warin *et al.*, 1999).

Implications

Three issues emanate from this paper and, indeed, from the conference where this paper was presented.

1. Fatherhood has to be understood within a network of familial and wider social relationships. Fathers should not be studied in isolation, nor should they be neglected in research on the development and well-being of children.

2. Given that the existing evidence shows that the father is an important figure in children's lives, policy makers must do more than pay lip service to his role. On the strength of the evidence presented in this chapter, we challenge politicians, professionals in health, social services and education, and representatives of non-government organisations to examine the provision made for supporting fathers in families.

3. The evidence we have outlined here provides insights into the role of men in families. However, there are large gaps in the research literature, and these need to be plugged if an understanding of fatherhood is to be expanded.

- First, we need more demographic data on men within different cultures, particularly those outside Europe, Australasia and North America.

- Second, cross-cultural comparisons will enable deeper insights into the roles of men in very different family settings and will help policy makers to take into account issues involving men in specific settings. For example, we know little of the widespread practice in many cultures of fathers working away from their families for large parts of the year.

- Third, an extension of research on fathers in developing economies will help ensure that rapid economic growth does not happen at the expense of family cohesion and children's development.

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Chapter four

Review of the State of Practical Work

By David Bartlett and Nigel Vann

Introduction

In response to the impact of the changing world described in chapter 2, many governments and community agencies have provided an array of supportive services for families. The intent generally includes one or more of the following objectives:

- raising current standards of living;
- strengthening family resources;
- helping families prepare their children for positive futures;
- improving outcomes for children, families and society.

Until recently, the focus of most of these services has been on mothers and children, with little attention paid to the role of fathers. Over the last 20 years, we have seen the slow growth of a small service sector that is providing support for men and fathers. This chapter takes a look at why, how and with what success, agencies around the world are working to support fathers (both biological and 'social').[1] We identify common themes and differences across countries, cultures and social groups; take a look at lessons learned; and make some recommendations for future directions. This chapter contains more references to the developed world, but it also seeks to capture instances of emerging work in the majority world and to contemplate how such programmes can be applied in diverse settings with fewer resources.

In Western countries, funding patterns have tended to support 'add-on' programmes that specifically engage fathers alongside the 'normal' operation of institutions in which the programme functions. While the development of such 'fatherhood' programmes has generated a knowledge and experience base within the field, such an approach is likely to be of limited appeal within countries where existing resources are already stretched. Indeed, the debate on

[1] *We focus mainly on services offered by statutory and voluntary family-support, child-protection and child health and education agencies. But we will also touch on the impact of other agencies for whom supporting family relationships is not their main role, e.g., criminal justice agencies, employment and training agencies, youth and community agencies, agencies dealing with housing, benefits and other financial issues (including child support).*

Spain: a first-time father. Photo: © courtesy of Preescolar na Casa

working with fathers in the developed world is now moving into an exploration of how fathers can become routinely included within health, education and social services as a natural dimension of those services. It is within the specialised context of fatherhood that a depth of understanding has developed about how services work with children's relationships with their fathers. This paper attempts to consolidate the current experience base with the inclusion of fathers in existing programmes, to improve the health, education and welfare of children.

Working with fathers

Throughout most of the developed and developing world, there are increasing concerns about (and awareness of) the rights, roles and responsibilities of fathers within the family, in the context of substantial and ongoing changes in family structures and gender roles, and a heightened awareness of the roles that fathers play in successful child development. These societal issues are explored in detail in chapter 2.

In terms of working with fathers, it is ultimately the staff 's ability to engage with men and offer them something meaningful that determines whether or not fathers will come to the programme. At some point in time, all fathers find themselves grappling with issues and questions for which they cannot readily find solutions or answers. They may seek out other men and ask questions or they will either learn from the media or by observing other men in their family or community. Most likely, they will struggle on with no real assistance. They are not likely go to family agencies and ask for help.

These moments, when fathers are dealing with specific problems, represent opportunities for engagement on the part of service providers. Such specific problems often arise during key transition stages:

- pregnancy;
- childbirth (this can be particularly challenging for adolescent fathers who have to make the dual transitions to parenthood and adulthood);
- relationship or role change (e.g., getting married, separating or divorcing, becoming a step-dad, etc.);
- bereavement, illness and loss;
- employment changes (unemployment or underemployment, lack of adequate education or job skills);
- interaction with the criminal justice system (e.g., arrest, court appearances, imprisonment, release from prison);
- life-cycle changes (e.g., school transition points for child and parent, stages in child development, changing parent-child relationships).

Fathers are neither well served by mainstream family-support services, nor by specialist fatherhood programmes, which are still patchy in distribution and quality. Nevertheless, there is an emerging body of practical work that engages men and fathers. There is also a growing awareness on the part of some family-service providers of the need to develop such interventions. Finally, there is a very small, but growing, number of initiatives that use men's roles in caring for their children as a foundation for programmes to tackle exclusion, poverty, crime and educational underachievement. A solid research foundation (described in detail in chapter 3) underlines the benefits for children of having both their parents play positive and involved roles in their lives, irrespective of their parents' marital or living situation.

Practitioners engaged in this work share the following aims and goals:

- recognition of the important role that fathers play in the lives of their children, families and communities;
- the desire to change and expand family-support services to include fathers;
- the overriding goal of improving outcomes for children.

Interventions concerning fathers can be categorised under the following broad headings.

- *Pregnancy prevention.* This includes primary prevention activities with boys and young men and a secondary prevention focus with men who may have become fathers before they were ready to be fully committed to the role or who may need to delay a second pregnancy until they are in a stronger economic position.
- *Preparation for parenthood.* Ante-natal (or pre-natal) work with men can help them anticipate the demands of fatherhood and prepare them to be involved, nurturing fathers and supportive partners to the mothers of their children. This work can take place during pregnancy or it can begin with young boys in schools.
- *Specific support for men in their fathering roles.* This support can include individual counselling, case-management support, crisis intervention, peer support groups, other groups, parenting workshops, individual sessions on parenting skills, social/play/sports activities with children, mentoring, volunteer programmes; health services, managing the role of non-resident father or stepfather, etc.
- *Counselling/support.* Fathers, mothers, and other family members may benefit from individual, couple or group counselling and other support on a range of issues, such as couple relationships, co-parenting or team parenting relationships, family

relationships, the domestic division of labour, substance abuse, anger management, or mental and physical health issues.

- *Advice and advocacy.* Fathers have diverse needs beyond support in their role as parents. Some of the areas in which they may require assistance are housing, work, financial and legal issues, including child support.

- *Educational and employment issues.* A key factor that can attract men to a programme for fathers is substantive help in preparing for and finding solid employment opportunities. Services may include basic adult skills, preparation for educational diplomas or college, vocational skills training, job readiness training, job placement assistance, support with work/life balance issues, post-employment support, support with self-employment strategies, etc.

Practical work with fathers around the world

This section provides some examples of ongoing practical work with fathers on a range of issues. By no means a comprehensive analysis, the information presented leans heavily on more established work in some of the developed countries along with reports from Summit participants on work in other countries and regions. The intent is to identify some of the key themes and lessons learned from this work in order to draft some recommendations for future directions.

There has perhaps been more father-specific work in the **United States** than in any other country. The work there has encompassed a variety of approaches, including the following:

- male involvement programs focused on pregnancy prevention with young men;

- fatherhood preparation for new dads;

- fathers' resource centres for dads faced with a variety and multiplicity of issues;

- fathers' rights groups focused on family courts and legal issues;

- programmes to support low-income fathers and their families;

- employment programmes incorporating fatherhood services to encourage involved fathering;

- work with fathers in prison and with ex-offenders;

- work with fathers and their families through Head Start (preschool) programmes.

Although a variety of community-level programs appeared during the 1980s and early 1990s, generally with a focus on

getting non-residential fathers more involved in the lives of their children, these efforts were often short-lived and isolated from one another. The work got a boost in the late 1990s with the welfare-reform efforts of the Clinton administration and a recognition that poor children and families could do better if fathers were around to play positive roles. Much of this work was funded by government agencies and charitable organisations with one key goal being to demonstrate approaches that deliver increased child-support payments and employment rates. More recently, programmes have started to focus on helping fathers manage relationship issues with their child's mother and other key 'team parenting' members such as grandparents and stepparents, even employers. And, the national Head Start programme is taking steps to more fully incorporate services for fathers as part of their service approach.

There is a growing infrastructure that provides support for fatherhood practitioners and agencies seeking to develop fatherhood services. A number of national and local organisations provide training in the field, and numerous local, state and national conferences are held for practitioners. There have also been a series of well-funded demonstration projects designed to investigate the effectiveness of different approaches. Unfortunately, there are still no definitive results, and since there is still no consistent funding base to support fatherhood, projects often struggle to continue as funding ends.

However, it is clear from the development of fatherhood work in the USA over the last 25 years that services can be provided; men will participate; and many of them will become more positively involved in the lives of their children and their communities. Some examples of successful projects are:

- the Conscious Fathering Project in Seattle, a hospital-based project, which works with fathers during their partner's pregnancy and for the first few months after childbirth;
- Boot Camp for New Dads, which began in Irvine, California, and has spawned similar programmes around the country, all working with expectant dads to prepare them for fatherhood;
- Partners for Fragile Families, a 10-site national demonstration that involves partnerships between community-based fatherhood programs, local child-support offices and employment providers;
- Fathers at Work, a six-site project to help proven employment providers augment their services with a parenting and relationship focus for fathers, many of whom are ex-offenders;
- the Fathers Resource Center in Minneapolis, one of the first agencies

to provide a range of fatherhood services;

- the 21-site Early Head Start Fatherhood Project administered by the Federal Head Start Bureau to incorporate more male involvement in the early childcare programme;

- two highly successful programmes in Baltimore -- the Center for Fathers, Families and Workforce Development and Young Fathers/Responsible Fathers - that provide a range of parenting, employment and peer-support services;

- Healthy Families/Healthy Fathers in San Angelo, Texas, a pioneer programme that is now helping other agencies in the national Healthy Families network to develop home- and centre-based services for fathers;

- Bienvenidos Family Services, represented at the Summit by Bobby Verdugo, who works to help young fathers establish positive, nurturing relationships with their children;

- Jewish Family Services, which has led the integration of male services in numerous childcare centres in the San Francisco Bay Area;

- the Mexican American Service Agency, which provides preventive and

Tanzania: While mother is at school, father cares for child. Photo: © Jim Holmes/Bernard van Leer Foundation

supportive services for young men and young fathers in San Jose, California;

- and the Indian Fathers project, a three-site project in Arizona administered by the Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health.

In the **United Kingdom,** the picture is a similar to that in the USA, although the work is less widespread and there is less focus on issues of child support and employment. A key impetus to the development of work in the UK came in the mid-1990s with a project funded by the Bernard van Leer Foundation: Fathers Plus, which is embedded in a children's organisation, Children North East. The project was the brainchild of the agency director, Ms Joy Higginson, and it serves as an example of the role of women and child-serving organisations in championing the issues and moving beyond traditional approaches to family service to create an awareness of the benefits for children of father-related work, to establish credibility with a predominantly female staff; and to make it clear that the agenda is about children and not men's or fathers' rights. Fathers Plus has not only changed the way in which its host organisation interacts with fathers and families, but it has also had an impact on other family and child agencies in the North East of England by establishing fatherhood-related staff positions in local Sure Start agencies and encouraging agency policies and practices that acknowledge the positive role of fathers in the lives of children. Roger Olley, Fathers Plus lead worker and a representative at the Summit, has created a four-part course, implemented over a 6- to 8-week period to help agencies develop effective father-friendly policies and practices. He states, 'We recognised that agencies were trying to follow through on an intent to work with dads, but were failing because they were just not at the point in terms of hearts, minds, policy or environment where they could do it.'

The UK work took another step forward in the late 1990s with Home Office funding of a variety of fatherhood initiatives, including the creation of Fathers Direct as a national training and information project. There has been a recent focus on work in institutions for young offenders, although with little post-release support. There is also a focus on working with young men to strengthen family relationships and reduce teenage pregnancies and the social exclusion of teenage mothers, teenage fathers and their children. However, implementation is still limited to a few key projects in the voluntary sector and 20 pilot 'Sure Start Plus' projects, several of which are still in the early stages of development. The biggest change in the UK has been the development of a growing number of Sure Start projects for families with children under the age of 4, which are reaching significant numbers of fathers, and forthcoming community-based Children's Centres throughout the

country – whose specific aims will include engaging with and supporting fathers with preschool children.

There has been some fairly extensive work in **Australia,** although prior to 1997 this relied mostly on the initiative of individual workers and received very little support from government and nongovernment organisations. The early work adopted a deficit approach to work with fathers and was primarily aimed at solving family problems. With the development of the Men and Family Relationship programme, initiated by the Australian Government in 1997, came an opportunity to develop service options that ranged from prevention and early intervention to crisis intervention. Since then, there have been 54 new services developed throughout Australia, targeting men in all stages of family life with a non-deficit approach. Data collected by the government shows that through June 2002 the projects had assisted 15,000 men. According to Tony White, a Summit participant and manager of Men in Families, a project of Uniting Care Burnside, 'It is apparent that the skills and experience of practitioners in the region have grown and that this has enhanced the practical work with fathers and begun to influence the development of father-friendly practices and policies in traditional services targeting families.' Mr. White also points out that 'what is needed is a long-term commitment to services that support all aspects of fatherhood and resources that target systemic change in traditional services for families, [along with] a commitment to prevention and early intervention supported by adequate resources for research and evaluation.'

The Men in Families project works with first-time fathers to highlight changes both parents will go through and to prepare fathers for their new roles. The project was started to meet a perceived need of prospective fathers who were choosing to attend ante-natal programs with their partners but were finding that their needs were not fully met by traditional programs directed at women and focused on the birth. An evaluation of the Men in Families programme showed that when men were recognised, valued and included in the programme, there were increases in the level of satisfaction with the programme reported by both men and women. The evaluation also showed significant differences for fathers who had experienced an approach that includes and affirms the importance of fathers when compared to a control group. Fathers who had been involved in the programme rated themselves as being more competent and confident as parents and were more satisfied with family life, their relationship with their child and with what they did as a parent.

Another Summit participant and one of the pioneers of the work in Australia, Graeme Russell, associate professor at Macquarie University, is involved in both research and practical work with

fathers. His research includes the evaluation of the Men in Families project and his practical work is focused on work-based programs for men, including issues such as work-life balance, psychological and physical well-being, intimate relationships, fathering and the development of father-friendly workplace policies. As he put it at the Summit, his approach is to stress 'celebration, affirmation, reflection, sharing and learning'.

There is also some interesting work going on with Aboriginal fathers, who face challenges that include poverty, geographic isolation, lack of employment opportunities and a history of non-supportive government policies. Work in aboriginal communities has been grounded in cultural contexts and seeks to help men move beyond perceived and actual discrimination to engage in community and family life in more positive and supportive ways.

The **New Zealand** Father and Child Association is an example of a national organisation that promotes the need to support and provide education for fathers, coordinates direct training for fathers and service providers, puts the issues in front of policy makers and coordinates networking and advocacy. Two members of this association participated in the Summit: Warwick Pudney, founder of Man Alive, and Harald Breiding-Buss, Coordinator of the Father and Child Trust. According to Pudney, Man Alive is 'the only social service solely for the needs of boys and men in the southern hemisphere'. He works with fathers around issues of domestic violence, runs fathering courses, assists fathers in dealing with separation issues, provides workshops that emphasise the important roles men play in raising boys, works with schools to demonstrate how to work effectively with boys and is conducting a survey focused on the ante-natal and peri-natal needs and experiences of fathers. Following the Fatherhood Summit, he created the following 'Summit-inspired teaching visual' to use in his work:

The Father and Child Trust is a community- based organisation that delivers various support services to fathers. This includes the Teenage Dads Project, a research and support programme for fathers aged 21 and under; another project focused on the mental health of new fathers; and services for fathers who are primary caregivers. Breiding-Buss is also an editor of *Father and Child*, a quarterly publication. He works to include fathers in all social and health services and is one of only two males working as a parent educator for the Parents as First Teachers Project, a home-based monthly child-development education programme for parents of children under three, which involves work with 'traditional' and 'role-reversed' families as well as single fathers from various cultural backgrounds. In a recent research project

with teenage fathers, he and his co-authors provided some interesting conclusions (Breiding-Buss *et al.*, 2003).

1. There is often 'a lost opportunity' to engage teenage fathers in supportive service projects because practitioners focus on what needs to be done to motivate the teen dads rather than 'what gets in the way' of their participation.

2. If service providers accept stereotypes of young men as irresponsible and not very interested in their offspring, this will have an impact on the father's self-esteem and his view of his role.

3. The prevailing service model is still 'a deficit model,' concentrating on weaknesses rather than strengths.

4. Support for teen dads and mums has missed out on support for them as a *couple*. The system as it is often encourages break-ups. A support programme for young fathers cannot work in isolation from support programmes for young mothers.

5. Teen dads seem to respond to the emotional components of fatherhood (love, care, time), where older dads might respond more to 'the provider's component' (money, standard of living, parenting skills).

6. The all-too-common practice of young fathers leaving school (or other education) to find work is a trap. First, the amount of hours required to gain any reasonable income on the low wages paid will leave the father with little energy to put into child or relationship. Second, the long-term financial prospects for child and family look much more positive for fathers with tertiary qualifications.

In **Russia,** support for fathers is thin, but there are pockets of emerging good practice, as exemplified by the work of Maxim Kostenko, a Summit participant and executive director of the Altay

The Work of Fatherwork

The Four Rs

Rearing: Initial education of children and society;
Responsibility: By fathers and by other men who play fatherhood roles;
Retraining: Education of both statutory powers and fathers;
Relationship: Seeing fathers as relationships (not work, money, power objects).

Warwick Pudney

Regional Crisis Center for Men. Since Mr. Kostenko founded the centre in 1998 at the age of 21, they have assisted 12,000 men and now have a staff of nine full-time professionals, including psychologists, psychotherapists, social teachers, social workers and a lawyer. The main goal of the centre is to 'cultivate, maintain and rehabilitate the physical, psychological and social health of men in the region'. They provide support for men experiencing personal crises to increase personal competence, self-awareness and self-control, and close attention is paid to problems of domestic violence and the post-trauma reactions of war veterans. There are various strands of service designed specifically for fathers, including support for single fathers and their children, as well as leisure activities for the whole family, services to prepare young people for family life and programmes aimed at preventing and overcoming stress.

Another Summit participant, Erçin Kimmet, has been coordinator of the Father Support programme in **Turkey** since its inception in 1997. The programme helps fathers with children between the ages of 3 and 9 play a more active role in the development of their children, with a focus on parenting information and skills. As an example of how public awareness can be raised and how fatherhood work can be integrated with other family services, the project is coordinated by the Mother Child Education Foundation in collaboration with Egitim-Sen, the largest labour union for teachers in Turkey. The programme has 85 trained volunteer educators who have worked with 2400 fathers from low socio-economic priority areas in two provinces. To raise public consciousness and interest, the foundation also organises symposiums and awareness promotion meetings, disseminates information on *The Role and Importance of the Father in Child Development* and works with the media to encourage coverage of the issues.

Around the world, some fatherhood work is initiated by government or charitable agencies, some by existing family-service agencies, some by new organisations, such as the Altay Crisis Center in Russia, and some from grassroots origins. An example of such a grassroots effort is the Korean Fathers Club of Seoul, **Korea,** that was represented at the summit by the club's president of eight years, Mike Na. The Fathers Club was founded in 1993 and now has various local branches. The board meets on a weekly basis to plan activities. The focus is on fathers' roles, social issues and regular events such as trips for fathers and children. The club engages in fundraising to support its activities. Mr Na also works directly with couples who are experiencing family problems, helps young students via the Internet and gives lectures on the roles of fathers for parents of children in school. He is also president of Family Net Korea, which conducts family

research, and he provides material for media articles and has published a number of books on fatherhood.

In **Belgium,** Summit participant Jan Peeters is coordinator of the Training and Resource Center for Childcare at the University of Gent. He is engaged in a project designed to involve more men as childcare workers in daycare centres with the goal of creating role models for fathers, involving fathers more in the care of their young children and creating a new culture of childcare in which there is a clear place for men.

A few programs in the **Caribbean** have also focused specifically on the issue of fatherhood and childcare. In **Trinidad and Tobago,** Service Volunteered for All (SERVOL) provides vocational training for young people. As part of the training, all youth – young men and women – are required to spend some time in daycare centres, getting used to caring for young children. SERVOL staff report that for young men, this is often their first experience in caring for young children, or providing caregiving of any kind. A few other Caribbean countries have promoted 'father-son' days at school, when girls stay at home and fathers are encouraged to engage with their sons in school settings.[2] There have been radio messages and television talk shows on men's issues and men's roles as fathers. Also, in various parts of the Caribbean, parent-training activities have included fathers, sometimes in male-only sessions, other times in mixed-sex groups. Fathers Inc. is one of the oldest of such programs, having worked more than 12 years to challenge negative views about fathers. They carry out awareness-raising events to promote positive images of fathers and fatherhood development and have produced a training module that focuses on parenting skills for low-income men (Barker, 2003).

There are many countries where little or no services exist to address fathers and their roles in the lives of their families and the development of their children. This paucity is captured very well in the following e-mail communication received from Dr. Nighat Shah of **Pakistan:**

2 This is comparable to work in the UK with the Dads and Lads project to bring fathers and sons together around football (soccer). However, a cautionary note should be raised here in that fatherhood work should not focus solely on the relationship between fathers and sons; fathers also need help in managing relationships with their daughters. A good source of ideas for this kind of work can be found at www.dadsanddaughters.org, the website of Dads and Daughters, a project run by Joe Kelly in Minneapolis 'to inspire fathers to actively and deeply engage in the lives of their daughters and to galvanize fathers and others to transform the pervasive cultural messages that devalue girls and women.

Sent: 30 July 2003 22:48
To: Recipients of 'Value-Added' suppressed
Subject: Equality for men and women-Pakistan
From: "Nighat Shah"

Dear Colleagues/Friends,

I am an obstetrician/gynecologistgynaecologist working in Karachi, Pakistan. The social, cultural, traditional and religious milieu in Pakistan is pro-men and anti-women. This is reflected in all fields and I see it everyday in reproductive health. Women suffer silently thinking and believing that men are superior beings.

The very fact that we have one of the highest maternal mortalities of the region attests to the fact that very low value is placed on the life of women. . . . We have now realized that male participation is very important to improve [the] reproductive scenario. The root cause of all these problems is of course illiteracy. Men and women have to be educated to play their respective roles in the society and to have a balanced community. . . . Women on average bear 6-7 children and not infrequently I see women having [their] 14th-15th child. . . . This is gross violence of [the] highest order because most of these girls are married at the age of 12-13 years and [then] start bearing children. . . . Under these circumstances it is difficult to talk of women's rights, gender equality, etc. But for our own survival we have to hope for more education and lesser suppression.

Although there is little practical work taking place in **India,** Summit participant Rajalakshmi Sriram, associate professor at the University of Baroda, reports that there has been a growing awareness and recognition over the last decade about the need to involve men around reproductive and child health issues. Numerous research studies highlight the role men play in making decisions concerning the lives of women and children, and the need to make men sensitive to what is right and good for the welfare of their families. Some innovative interventions have attempted to involve men as partners in their programmes and advocate that it is a better strategy for initiating change and transformation than programmes that have an orientation exclusively for women.

In **South Africa,** as pointed out by Summit participant Robert Morrell of the University of Natal, 'there is no systematic encouragement of fatherhood or efforts to promote the involvement of

fathers in families. The law generally seeks to enforce the responsibilities of fatherhood but there is no concomitant effort to encourage the participation of fathers in family life. . . . In a country like South Africa, where AIDS is ravaging the population, there is a major challenge for men to become carers, to become fathers not just to their biological children, but to orphans and extended family members who have lost biological parents. For this process to be fostered, much encouragement will have to be given to promoting the idea of fatherhood.'

There have been some efforts to engage men around the issues of AIDS, gender equity and domestic violence. One project is of particular note. The Men as Partners (MAP) programme, which was initiated in 1988 as a collaboration between EngenderHealth and the Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa, is primarily a sexual and reproductive health programme designed to arrest the escalating rate of HIV/AIDS in the region, but it also recognises 'the deep-rooted nature of gender roles and their causal effects on the HIV pandemic'. The programme uses the history of anti-apartheid activism and a human-rights framework to increase men's awareness of how contemporary gender roles mirror the unequal and oppressive power of the apartheid struggle. In partnership with 10 organisations around the country, EngenderHealth works with men in workshop settings to examine contemporary gender and cultural norms, challenge those that compromise health and well-being, celebrate those that promote healthy, thriving communities, and encourage men to become active gender justice activists in their own communities (Verma, 2003).

Another noteworthy project in South Africa is a Men's Only Group that was started by the Embizweni Voluntary Association to curb violence and abuse against women and children. Summit participant Dumesani Nquinia, project coordinator at the Parent Centre in Claremont, plays a key role in this project and describes it as follows: '[the] aim is to build and unite families by taking action through education for change. . . . The main function is to organize workshops and training for men on domestic violence, gender equality, masculinity, sexuality education, parenting skills, relationships, STDs and HIV/AIDS. We also organize children's outings with fathers . . . to bridge the gap between us and our children. . . . Since 2000, the project has served 859 men with positive results for more than 50%.'

On a similarly encouraging note, the Conscientizing Male Adolescents (CMA) project In **Nigeria** has shown positive results by helping adolescent boys think critically and by expanding their knowledge about power and sexism. The project has shown that it is possible to engage young men and that it is possible to change 'historically reinforced gender attitudes' (Verma, 2003).

Work in **Latin America**[3] has also led to qualitative changes in attitudes about gender. A coalition of four NGOs in **Brazil** (Instituto PROMUNDO, ECOS and programa PAPAI) and **Mexico** (Salud y GenJro) have implemented Project H, a theory- and research-driven model of engaging young men in the promotion of health and gender equity, with an evaluation model designed to measure attitudinal and behavioural change.

Although, as Barker (2003) states, 'the amount of research and the number of programme and policy initiatives in developing regions of the world, including Latin America and the Caribbean, has been relatively scant,' there are a few promising programs that have emerged to promote father involvement or call attention to men's roles as fathers. These include mass media campaigns, programs to enhance men's skills for caring for children, and fathers' education or support groups (Barker, 2003). For example, in **Mexico,** the NGOs Salud y GenJro and CORIAC carry out essay contests and have produced educational materials (posters, calendars, etc.) to promote reflections about men's roles as fathers. In **Costa Rica** the government has encouraged national campaigns with messages about the need for fathers to participate in childcare and other domestic chores (Alatorre, 2002). A few public-health facilities in **Brazil** have started specific initiatives to encourage men to participate in childbirth, and UNICEF has also promoted men's involvement or fathers' involvement in various maternal and child health initiatives. CIDE[4] in **Chile,** Fundación Rodelillo in **Jamaica**, and PAPAI[5] in **Brazil** have started educational sessions, group discussions or support groups for fathers, including both adult and adolescent fathers. There have been various initiatives in the region to engage men in accompanying their partners for sexual and reproductive health needs and some of these have also included men in discussions related to childbirth and child and maternal health.

There are a number of other emergent projects dealing with issues of domestic violence, male-female relationships and men's marginalisation in domestic and wider economic roles. A project funded by Bernard van Leer in **Nicaragua,** Cantera, whose main target group is

3 Most of the information on work in Latin America comes from Summit participant Gary Barker's (2003) literature review.

4 An important lesson emerged from CIDE's early work in training government and NGO staff to use CIDE's curriculum, 'Paternidad Activa' (Active Fatherhood) when the majority of participants were women, which emphasizes the importance of engaging women and recognising their important roles as gatekeepers to men's participation as fathers, whether as mothers, partners of men, teachers, childcare providers or social service staff (Barker, 2003).

5 PAPAI was the first programme in South America to work with young fathers.

single mothers, has started outreach programmes to men. The aim of these interventions is to improve relations between fathers, mothers and children and to encourage more positive male involvement by reducing 'machismo' at home (Duindam, 2003). In **Peru,** a government-sponsored programme, Papa Bueno, coordinated by Summit participant Estela Santa Cruz, focuses on fathers and children in three mountain areas where people live in extreme poverty. The goal is to help fathers reassess the way in which they relate to their children and the mothers of their children, focus on ways to be positive masculine role models and encourage more involved and gender-equitable relations.

Lessons Learned

There is no unique model of the most effective way of supporting men's relationships with their children, even within a single country or community, let alone worldwide. We must acknowledge diversity in local communities and families while noting that some approaches that are more likely to engage men than others, and that there are barriers presented by policies and practices that discourage father participation. In this section, we present emerging lessons on effective approaches to fatherhood-related work by drawing on information from the projects profiled in the previous section, conversations with other service providers (mainly in the UK and US) and published evaluation reports.

Preparatory and planning stages

Many successful man-friendly projects, such as Fathers Plus in the UK, have arisen as a result of committed senior *leadership,* which has helped agencies evolve away from traditional approaches focussing on mother and child. In fact, it can be very hard to fully implement fatherhood projects within existing agency frameworks without this level of senior support to complete a process of internal cultural change that can take up to five years. However, innovative practice has also developed 'bottom-up', without an integrated agency policy or senior champion to support it. Frontline staff in some agencies have modelled and advocated new ways of operating, which have inspired those in more powerful positions to institute wider changes. Stand-alone projects that attempt to develop independently of existing agencies avoid the need for internal cultural change but can find it difficult to establish themselves and provide an adequate range of services without the support of more established agencies. Such projects are much more likely to succeed if they partner with agencies that can provide additional support services, assistance with administrative tasks, credibility with funding agencies, etc.

One strategy to prepare for the process of internal cultural change is to engage a team of staff in an audit of current activities to identify barriers to male involvement and create a framework for

action planning. For instance, Levine (1993) has described an audit of male involvement as the first step in becoming father-friendly by charting the presence of male staff, volunteers and clients, and identifying opportunities for influence and self-development for men. The US National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership (NPCL) and National Head Start Association created a Father Friendliness Assessment and Action Planning Tool that has been used by many US agencies as a first step in the planning stage and has also been made available for use in other countries. As mentioned earlier, Fathers Plus has developed a four-day 'man-friendly' consultancy package to help UK agencies get started on the process.

Successful services also do a local needs assessment (through a survey, focus groups, etc.), asking dads and their families what they want from services – and taking that as the starting point. No agency – particularly in the early days of working with men – can meet every man's needs, but recognition of diversity and willingness to consult are essential. For example, successful services for non-resident fathers recognise they often have different priorities from resident dads. 'A man who just wants to know information about separation or child support doesn't necessarily have to go to an emotional support group,' says Andrew King from Australia. As noted in the previous section, the Australian Men in Families project surveyed expectant parents and changed the focus of their service from 'birth preparation to health promotion' as a result.

Recruitment and Publicity

Perhaps the hardest part of getting a project for men started is actually convincing men in the community to come along and join in. It certainly helps if you have engaged men and their families in a community planning process, but even then, initial recruitment and start-up can often be a slow process. It is important for new projects to realise that even the most successful approaches can take a year or more to get off the ground. Too often, recruitment is treated as a part-time job and publicity plans are not well thought out, with the result that staff or management get frustrated and projects end before they have had time to complete the start-up process. A clear outreach strategy can help avoid a lot of this frustration. Successful strategies include the following:

- making sure your agency's referral/assessment forms gather data on fathers;
- going through other agencies that are in contact with men or women, whether or not these provide parenting services (e.g., employment services, child-support offices, programmes for substance abuse and anger management, health clinics, etc.), and doing more

than just dropping off brochures -- make sure that staff in such referral agencies know about your programme and can talk about it enthusiastically to fathers *and* mothers;

- advertising *within* the agency, too -- all staff are potential 'sales agents' and if everyone is not talking positively about the project to fathers and mothers 'sales opportunities' will be lost;

- 'going to where the fathers are', i.e. to physical spaces they use and feel comfortable in. Following this idea, the Australian Federal Child Support Agency supports innovative initiatives to identify, and help deal with, barriers to payment by talking to fathers in the workplace;

- using word-of-mouth. Building a quality service is the best outreach strategy of all, since it will lead to many word-of-mouth referrals;

- using 'free' publicity that work with fathers can generate in the media;

- using language likely to attract fathers, e.g., 'course' not 'group'; services to 'raise your child's self-esteem' not to 'help give your child emotional support'; 'engaging in your full range of emotions as a human being' not 'getting in touch with your feminine side' (Melvyn Davis, UK participant);

- user-friendly brochures that do not contain too much information, are easy to read and filled with eye-catching graphics; consider creating one for referring agencies, one for mothers and one for fathers;

- using the right people to outreach. It is skilled work and needs people with local credibility and contacts. Former participants make great recruiters;

- making sure all workers understand the importance of positive and empathetic outreach;

- making it easier for fathers to attend by providing bus fare and/or transport;

- getting to the father *through the mother* -- if you can convince her of the worth of your programme, she may be the best advocate to ensure his participation;

- identifying which current referral systems are working and building on them;

- perhaps most important of all, treating recruitment and publicity as a full-time job, particularly in the first year of project activity.

Initial and ongoing engagement

One of the key factors determining whether or not a father actively engages with a programme is the quality of his first interaction with a project representative. Whether or not that person is able to make a 'heart-to-heart'

connection by demonstrating empathy, understanding and belief in the father's potential can greatly influence a father's decision to get involved. But even then, successful projects work flexibly with men, recognising that what *attracts* them may well not be the same as what *keeps them coming.*

Successful projects start with a *father's own broad and individually varied concerns,* for example a desire to:

- become a better dad and spend good times with his children;
- become a better partner;
- share experiences and make friends (with dads in general, or men in a similar situation -- e.g., single dads, bereaved fathers, fathers with children with special needs);
- learn about legal rights as a dad;
- get help finding work;
- get help because of dramatic changes in family life (e.g., splitting up, arrival of first child);
  tackle a long-term problem (e.g., depression, isolation, lack of confidence, anger, violent partner, challenging child).

Key factors for *initial engagement* will vary for different fathers, but may include the following:

- a comfortable relationship with an enthusiastic, caring worker whom fathers trust and who responds to their needs;
- service within their 'comfort zone' and relevant to their own concerns. Some men welcome the opportunity to contribute to a project in a *practical* way, through do-it yourself (DIY) projects, volunteering, preparing meals, helping to develop resources, etc., and may find 'talking about feelings or problems' off-putting at first;
- no initial expectation of regular attendance;
- services defined not as 'offering help' but as using men as a resource in children's lives.

Key factors for *ongoing engagement* include:

- a strong ongoing relationship with a worker and/or other service users;
- feeling valued;
- a sense of 'team' and 'ownership';
- real changes in their family relationships and other areas of their lives;
- services that address the concerns that may have led fathers to join the project and that help them move towards their goals in practical ways.

Mix of activities and services to reflect individual needs/experiences

Successful services often use multiple approaches to reach different dads, and build partnerships with other community agencies and organisations so that a comprehensive and needs-led range of services is available locally, for example:

- *active and practical approaches with their children.* One example is sports and play activities, which can help men bond more with their children and also break down barriers so that they feel more comfortable engaging with staff and other participants;

- *adult-focused activities,* such as adult learning courses (e.g., DIY, computer skills) or recreational activities (e.g., group outings, sports events, fishing or camping trips, museum visits);

- *informal, social contact* with other dads;

- *family-focused activities,* such as picnics, outings, cultural experiences, going to the cinema, etc.;
  employment services;

- *support and advice services* for the wide range of other issues that fathers may face, such as legal needs, housing, health, substance abuse, anger management, education, etc.

The mix of services needs to look at the whole person, not just see them narrowly as parents. A key part of that, for many services, especially those with a longer term or more therapeutic remit, is dealing with the core issues of maleness and masculinity, which in many cases, perhaps particularly in the developing world, are the real stumbling blocks to men becoming effective fathers. In fact, some agencies have developed their services consciously around 'men's issues' rather than 'fatherhood/parenting issues', recognising that these issues must be dealt with first. Although few men would voice feelings or emotions as a reason for joining a programme, the most successful projects report that they provide a range of services; participants' needs change over time and established service users place a high value on sharing experiences and feelings.

A mix of male-only and mixed-gender services

Effective projects have generally found that separate man-only services need to form *part of* the picture, but reforming existing mainstream services to be inclusive of men is also an essential part of supporting relationships between fathers and their children (e.g., a fathers' postnatal group alongside a 'man-friendly' midwifery service). A common problem for many fatherhood projects is that they are so keen to establish services for men that they overlook the importance of helping fathers deal with their relationship issues, which often necessitates some contact with the partner or mother.

Reminding both staff and parents of the impact on children of negative relationships between parents, and helping them create more positive relationships, is an essential component of an effective programme.

All family services need to find ways for men to feel valued and welcomed. But *men vary in how they respond to the gender composition of services.* Some parenting projects in England found that fathers preferred mixed groups to single-sex ones (Ghate and Ramella 2002).

Separate provision may be particularly important to both women and men where:

- There are cultural norms against mixed gender (such as in many Moslem cultures);
- Parents have conflicting needs;
- Parents have very different experiences to address (e.g., for some non-resident fathers);
- Women see a female-only environment as a 'safe haven'.

But mixed services can also be useful to get a richness of experience. For example, a mixed group session can be helpful for separated and divorced fathers to hear women's concerns better, although they might hear better if their ex-spouses are not part of the group!

Gender of staff and volunteers

Some stand-alone fatherhood projects are quite deliberate about having male-only staff because they believe that 'only men can relate to men', but most acknowledge the benefits of having women involved in various staff positions. In agencies that have been traditionally staffed by females, the challenge is to 'infiltrate' men in to positions throughout the agency in order to give fathers a sense of legitimacy in a predominantly female environment, and an opportunity to discuss things they might not want to discuss with women. It is also important that men entering a predominantly female staff environment do so in a humble way and allow for a gradual process of acceptance by their female colleagues. There is nothing worse than a macho male staff person adopting the attitude that the 'ladies can sit back now because he is here to fix things'.

Most practitioners agree that it is also very important to include female staff *in direct service positions,* because men will sometimes share issues more readily with women, and a cooperative male-female team can model positive cooperation between men and women, something which some men, particularly in developing-world countries, may never have experienced. We should also note that gender alone does not guarantee that someone can work with men in a meaningful and helpful way. The important element is whether the

individual has the range of skills required to truly engage, nurture and guide men (see below for more on this). There are also projects where women have driven the shift towards male services, and at times some projects for men have been solely staffed by women. Surprisingly, this too can be effective with the right staff. However, there is the danger that in predominantly female environments a 'women know best' approach is modelled, which can be disempowering for fathers. There can be challenges for female leaders, who have seen the need to do more to engage men and spearheaded the beginnings of internal cultural changes, in either identifying male staff who can carry the work forward or in letting go of the reins and allowing male staff room to grow.

In general, it should be acknowledged that both the creation of stand-alone male services or their integration into predominantly female staff situations requires time for staff to grow and adapt. The most effective projects have management staff who recognise and guide this process.

Beliefs and attitudes of staff and volunteers

Fathers grow in the presence of caring staff who model the kind of relationship they can have with their children and who demonstrate a belief in their strength and potential. Agencies may need to examine staff attitudes towards males, since current cultural norms, particularly

Morocco: Fathers preparing educational materials for the Koranic preschool. Photo: courtesy of Atfale

in the family-service sphere, often begin from a deficit approach and assume that men are, at best, uninterested in their children and unwilling to change or, at worst, present a potential danger to women and children. If staff demonstrate, however unconsciously, negative stereotypes toward a man, they will lose any chance of connecting with him and, even worse, they may undermine his self-esteem and set in motion a self-fulfilling prophesy that leads to actual negative behaviour.

Male workers may also collude with women in displaying contempt for men as a sex. Just being male does not mean they will side with the man, especially if they work in an environment that holds men in contempt – they may then need to see themselves as different from other men, to keep their own self-respect.

But, equally, to see only the positives in fathers can put workers or families at risk, will not provide effective support to the men and will alienate colleagues. Finding ways of allowing staff to identify and name negative behaviour without stopping there is essential to successful interventions – and requires skilful training and supervision. Again, successful work with parents is often work that models the kind of behaviour we would expect from good parents -- that includes the ability to love and nurture your child, but also to discipline your child effectively and help her/him make responsible decisions.

Address broader social and personal barriers to male involvement

Many effective agencies try to influence the wider social and economic factors that have an impact on fathers' roles. They question the division of labour between women and men, and cultural stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, both within the agency and in the wider world, and actively cooperate with other agencies to facilitate social change. Examples of this, already mentioned in detail, are Graeme Russell's work to encourage employers in Australia to adopt more flexible working practices for men, the Conscientizing Male Adolescents project that has helped adolescent boys in Nigeria think critically about power and sexism, and the work in South Africa, Peru and Brazil that is challenging men to take a fresh look at the messages they give their children and to consider more involved and gender-equitable relationships. Whilst some fathers' rights groups become too strident and make it difficult to establish positive relationships with traditionally female organisations, it is important to recognise that in many countries, domestic and family courts do tend to favour women over men, thus making it hard for some fathers to be fully involved in the lives of their children. An effective fatherhood programme will help its clients navigate these legal systems and demonstrate to judges, courts and child-support offices ways in which they are, or want to be, involved, responsible fathers. Good advice for both practitioners

and fathers is to be proactive and work with the system as it currently operates, but also to advocate for change and find ways to show, in peaceful, constructive, non-threatening ways, how the system can treat fathers unfairly and how it might become more parent-friendly for both mothers and fathers (for instance, a well-reasoned article in a local newspaper from a staff person working with fathers, particularly a female staff person, can go a long way to educating and changing opinions). A major attribute of effective programmes is that they maintain a focus on the *best interests of the child* and encourage all the adults concerned in a child's life (parents, other family members, court personnel, lawyers, child-support staff, teachers, social-service workers, etc.) to do likewise in a civilised and respectful manner.

Use group work as part of wider cluster of services for fathers

Although not all men will want to participate in group settings (at least when they first enter a programme), most effective programmes with men use group work in some form (peer support groups, parenting groups, self-help groups, Alcoholics Anonymous, etc.). US projects that use NPCL's *Fatherhood Development* curriculum to facilitate peer support groups have reported that the groups are the glue that allows them to keep the fathers connected and participating in other services (Achatz and MacAllum, 1994).

Agencies need to ask themselves why they are planning a group, and whether their target group will find them appealing. But groups, if planned carefully, *are* a powerful way of getting men to support and challenge each other.

Group work can cover a broad spectrum of collective activities:

- *social,* usually meeting with their children and involving activities and trips out;
- *behaviour-based,* where violent and/or abusive behaviour may be the focus;
- *therapeutic,* where open discussion, use of personal experiences and exploration of masculinity and personal development are characteristic;
  educational, concentrating on child development, parenting skills and issues (e.g., how to discipline effectively) and life skills (communication, decision making, dealing with stress, relationship issues, health and sexuality, etc.);
- *goal-directed,* where men engage in activities designed to produce a particular outcome or product (e.g., planning a family event, producing a booklet/video about local services or about their experiences, designing a new playground for their children, etc.);
- *advocacy/advice,* which might involve guest speakers or staff and participants sharing their own expertise.

Key features of effective use of groups:

- *not necessarily the first line of provision*, but an advanced activity that may lead on from other services (e.g., a drop-in service where men can get to know each other informally first;

- *addressing fears/concerns men may have about groups* (e.g., that there is some stigma attached to attending; they fear labelling as a bad parent). Men are often reluctant and nervous about attending groups, particularly where the focus is on talking or sharing feelings;

- *timing* that fits in with men's lifestyles;

- *reflecting local needs.* Effective groups are designed to meet the needs of men from the local community so as to appeal to their varied experiences and contribute to the project's goals;

- *flexible offerings in the context of a wider web of services.* Group work alone can never cope with the diversity of men's needs. Effective groups create a safe environment in which men can share and support each other with their varied issues and from which staff can learn more about the range of issues and needs that must be met through further assistance and other services;

- *shared ownership* about what is discussed and when, within the context of agency goals. If the men bring up a pressing issue, deal with it;

- *workers comfortable* with the type of group they are offering;

- *group facilitators or leaders highly skilled and aware of their roles.* This often requires ongoing staff training and supervision, particularly in peer support groups where the facilitator's role is to *guide and facilitate* a process of individual and group reflection, sharing and action planning. A common mistake, which can undermine or destroy the group process, is made by staff who fail to guide participants through the process in a healthy way because they lecture or dominate the time too much, share inappropriate personal experiences, have not processed their own attitudes or issues, fail to keep the group on track, do not recognise important issues that surface for some participants, etc.;

- *group composition – shared experiences or diversity?* It can be good for men to interact with others from different backgrounds -- education, maturity, experience, etc. -- but a homogeneous cultural and ethnic background (refugees whose first language is not English, for example, or very young fathers) can also be useful.

Advocate the needs of fathers

Advocacy is a key feature of many successful projects, including:

- supporting fathers in getting what they want, often from other services;

- arguing for changes in services – internally and externally;
- chipping away at the cultural negativity attached to fathers.

However, it must be balanced against other goals. For example, workers who are seen as advocates for their male service users may not be treated as impartial in the context of investigations for child protection.

Services accessed mainly or solely by women (and their children) also need to reflect man-friendly practices

Effective projects find ways to work proactively with mothers to promote, wherever possible, positive relationships between men and their children, and between fathers and mothers, irrespective of their living or marital situation. Women can have a substantial impact on children's relationships with men. For example, attitudes and behaviour of lone mothers towards non-resident fathers has a substantial impact on the strength of those fathers' relationships with their children. More generally, parental conflict is closely associated with fathers being less involved with their children. And, as with work with fathers, it is important to help mothers see the impact on children of parental conflict or negative comments, with the goal being to help both parents develop more positive communication styles.
More broadly, it is also important to mobilise the wider family to support men's relationships with children. For example, there is clear evidence that supportive relationships with grandparents lead to more confident and involved young fathers (Quinton *et al.*, 2002).

Resources/Materials materials for working with fathers

Most practitioners argue that there is a need for resource materials such as photo packs, posters, videos targeted carefully at the needs and experiences of the men an agency is trying to reach. There is currently a shortage of such resources – but this is beginning to change.

Recommendations

The traditional approaches to practice have largely failed to harness men's potential to be positively involved in children's lives. There needs to be a focus on men's broader social potential. At the most general level, it is now time to move from these individual projects towards mainstreaming the approach of seeing men as carers – actual or potential – for children and reconstructing national family, health and educational services in light of this new understanding. A few concrete activities that could lead to the strengthening of fatherhood support programmes include the following suggestions.

- **Support more evaluation and research that demonstrate programs and strategies that work.**

- **Develop staff support systems and ongoing staff training.** This should include opportunities to participate in conferences and other staff-development training for management and direct-service staff who are currently working with fathers so that their work can continue to mature. The extremely difficult and emotionally charged nature of the work also requires in-house staff-support systems that promote mutual nurturing and support among staff and between managers and staff.

- **Assist in the development of more father-friendly family agencies.** There is a need for clear strategies to help other family-serving organisations see how including a focus on fathers can help them better achieve their overall goals and provide them with the tools to grow and develop new service strategies.

- **Develop an international network of practitioners, researchers, funders and policy makers.** By providing a source of mutual support and information exchange, and by providing a springboard for advocacy and lobbying initiatives, this can be extremely beneficial to all – not least to fathers.

- **Find ways for governments and other funding agencies to support the growth of this new field** by providing funding and/or expertise to help family-serving agencies plan, grow and nurture the ongoing development of supportive services for fathers.

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Chapter five

Fatherhood and Public Policy

By Adrienne Burgess and Graeme Russell

Introduction

We begin this chapter with an apology. We are painfully aware of the Western-centricity of our thinking and our references. We lack knowledge of, and access to, non-English-speaking databases and have only the tiniest amount of data from countries in the majority world. The material we have gathered together here does not, therefore, purport to describe policies that affect fathers and fatherhood throughout the world; rather, it offers glimpses into the ways in which fatherhood is constructed by law and policy in a few countries, which can hopefully stimulate thinking in many more.

In this introductory section, we look at the fatherhood concepts and discourses that underlie either an interest, or a lack of interest, in fatherhood at the level of social policy, as well as what resources are made available to support a particular discourse. Later in this chapter, we examine five major policy areas – employment, health, education, separation & divorce, and vulnerable children – and their role in the fatherhood discourse.

Fatherhood policies

When asked to identify policies that have an impact on father-child relations, most of us think first of policies that expressly mention fathers, or non-resident fathers. Indeed, the impact of father-specific policies on men as parents may be minor when compared with the impact of other government and institutional laws and policies that are not overtly directed at fathers, or which may not consciously take them into account at all.

Throughout the world, fiscal and social policies, together with law and custom, have a profound impact on fathers' behaviours and aspirations, both directly and indirectly. For example, men are configured as fathers through state welfare policies directed at workers and parents; through civil laws around marriage, divorce, contact and residence (Hobson and Morgan, 2002); or through the degree to which fathers must be consulted when their children are taken into state care (Henricson, 2003).

Fathers and fatherhood are also shaped by extra-national laws and mandates, as described in Appendix 1 as described in

Botswana: San father with his two preschool boys from D'kar. Photo: © Mattias Hofer

the introduction to this publication. In addition, the definition of what constitutes a *father* varies in law and custom between and within nations. It can include biological or social (most commonly stepfather) relationships, or may even include maternal relatives. For instance, in Swedish law, which has looked at the issue of fathers from the perspective of child's rights (Bergman and Hobson, 2002), biological fathers have long been privileged over social fathers. In contrast, biological and social fatherhood are equally privileged in courts in the Netherlands (Knijn and Selten, 2002).

Changing concepts of fatherhood and the influence of policy

As discussed in chapter 2, the conception of fatherhood in many countries is changing. Legally, parenthood is emerging over marriage as a new model for the source of family obligations (Maclean and Eekelaar, 1997). This is probably due to a range of factors, including family fragmentation, widespread introduction and enforcement of child-maintenance laws, and the growing focus, worldwide, on children's rights and welfare.

Political constellations and pressure groups also influence law and policy. In many European countries, as well as in Australasia and North America, separated/divorced fathers are an increasingly vocal pressure group. Similarly, feminism and governmental 'femocrats' have had considerable success throughout the Western world in influencing policies directly relevant to fathers, notably where allegations of domestic violence are involved.

Traditionalism and religion also have a profound influence. In the US, the 'religious Right' has recently been successful in attracting government funding away from work with low-income, never-married fathers in order to support projects that promote the marriage agenda. Here, one category of fathers (married fathers) is supported over another (never married – i.e., more socially disadvantaged – fathers) (Beardshaw, 2003). In Israel, religious traditionalism inhibits the development of national policies to support fathers' greater participation in family life (Kaitz, 2003).[6]

The nature of law and policy affecting men as fathers may also be related to militarism. In Israel, for example, the army holds a central place in the lives of Israeli citizens, which creates both ideological and a practical barriers to active father involvement. For example,

6 In order to obtain up-to-date information for this chapter, Summit participants were recently canvassed by us for their views on .fatherhood discourses in their countries and their impact on current social policy. We have found their responses, while sometimes necessarily personal and impressionistic, to be of interest and value and therefore include them (appropriately referenced) where relevant.

Israeli men are required to serve in the army reserve for up to 65 days a year, paid by the government. This influences the degree to which fathers are able to leave work (either willingly or supported by policy) for other reasons, including child-related issues (Kaitz, 2003).

Concerns about national birth rates also affect fatherhood policies. For instance, in France, the fear of slower population growth has helped drive the development of a range of policies to encourage French couples to have more children. One that affects fathers directly is a maximum 30- to 35-hour workweek, which may provide some fathers with greater opportunities for involved fatherhood. Another is the payment of substantial state subsidies to at-home mothers, particularly to those who have more than two children. This tends to reinforce a rigid gender-related division of labour, thereby reducing opportunities for involved fatherhood.

In Japan, the public discourse about the declining birth rate is also a key potential policy driver, but for a different reason. Here, the major concern is the maintenance of pension schemes by an aging workforce. There is recognition that Japanese women, who feel that their partners do not support them as parents, may not want (m)any children. In Japan's comprehensive 1977 review of the issues associated with declining birth rates, factors that might lead to men's greater involvement in parenting were considered.

Recognising diversity

In short, fathers and fatherhood are bound up with institutions, embedded in law and shaped by policy, although not necessarily in predictable ways. In the following discussion, the fact must be kept in mind that within any nation, neither fathers nor the policies that affect them are homogenous.

Although many countries in the process of industrialisation have recognised males as sole or main breadwinners for their families, and have consequently developed policies and legislation to support them in this role, it is worth noting that never at any time in any known industrialised society, has the state treated all men equally in this respect. Inducements to becoming the sole or main breadwinning have never applied to men in the informal economy (for example, immigrant men) or to citizen-males of races or classes whose reproductive capacities have not been valued – for example, African Americans in the United States (Orloff and Monson, 2002).

The fatherhood discourse: The gender contract

Discourse here means ways of representing (talking about, writing about or visually portraying) a topic. Public discourse both influences and is influenced by government and institutional policy making as well as current, popular practise. Discourses change over time, and they

come and go. For example, in Australia there was much public discussion of fatherhood and gender equity in the early 1990s, when parental leave entitlements were under consideration.

The *gender contract,* as articulated in public discourse in many industrialised countries, is central to the fatherhood discourse (Haas and Hwang 2000). For instance, there are three key assumptions under discussion in various countries within the gender discourse, which directly affect the fatherhood debate: (1) men should have more power than women, (2) the roles of men and women are different (and in some societies this is associated with a belief that mothers should be the primary caregivers of young children) and (3) men's roles and ways of thinking should have greater value than women's (supporting gender differences in pay rates for jobs dominated by one sex or the other). Public discourse around these assumptions influences policy making and affects fatherhood.

In much of the world, gender norms still ascribe caregiving largely to women. Indeed, the idea that fathers should be caregivers of children is a relatively new one in much of Latin America and the Caribbean, as in many other parts of the world. In Britain, however, manifestations of this discourse can be traced back almost 200 years (see, for example, Cobbett, 1830). A review of ethnographic reports from 156 cultures concluded that in only 20% of cultures are men currently encouraged to have close relationships with infants, and in only 5%, with young children. In the vast majority of cultures, fathers are valued for providing discipline and passing on skills to children, but not as caregivers. However, three 'universal' contributions of men to children are noted: (1) building a caring relationship, (2) providing economic support and (3) decreasing the chance of fathering outside the partnership with the child's mother (Engle and Breaux, 1998, as cited by Barker, 2003). Having said this, it seems likely that in most, if not all, cultures and in most, if not all, eras, some fathers are and have been actively engaged in caring for babies and young children (Burgess, 1996).

As we will see in the next section, governments are becoming players in the public discourse in relation to the involvement of fathers in families. This is primarily through various policy decisions and taxation schemes that affect the gender contract between mothers and fathers regarding decisions on work and childcare roles and activities.

New directions

In many countries throughout the world, gender norms that depict fathers as 'too male' to care effectively for babies and young children are being challenged within the 'new-father' discourse. This is not only prevalent in most Western countries, but also, increasingly, in the developing world. The new-father discourse reflects positively on the capacity of fathers to do

what mothers do. It encourages fathers not only to spend more time with their children, but also to become active participants in infant care and to be emotionally available to children of all ages.

There can be little question that the feminist debate and revised expectations of women regarding gender equity are common themes in explaining increased public discourse on fatherhood. However, Russell (1999), in a review of families in which fathers are primary caregivers, indicated that recent findings suggest that fathers have become more active participants in advocating and supporting this family pattern. Much of the discussion concerning the active involvement of men in changing the definition of fatherhood comes from social movements associated with men's rights, especially in relation to custody and access. Evidence from the analysis of services designed to address the needs of men (Russell *et al.,* 1999) also indicates that there is an emerging group of highly committed and skilled male practitioners working within the service framework to change the approach to providing services for fathers. The emergence of child-rights laws and discourse has also furthered the fatherhood discourse in terms of the needs and rights of children in relation to their fathers.

The deficit perspective

The term 'deficit perspective' (Hawkins and Dollahite, 1997) refers to the pervasive negative tone in the discourse around men and fathers, which has encouraged researchers, practitioners, policy makers and family members (including men, themselves) to form negative opinions concerning fathers' motives and behaviour.

Examples of the deficit perspective include the following (Fisher, 2003):

- A father cannot cope with children without a woman to help him;
- A father is not interested in the caring role unless there is a woman who is pushing him;
- An absent father has little influence on a child's development;
- An absent father who has no relationship with his child is avoiding his responsibilities and needs to be punished;
- Men are not particularly motivated by their status as parents. Their main interest is their job;
- A teenage father is not interested in the child and avoids his responsibilities;
- Men are much more likely to harm a child than women;
- A man showing concern for a child other than his own in a public place is likely to be a paedophile.

These kinds of beliefs seem to be endemic in many countries. For example, in the US, much of the discourse around fatherhood is framed in terms of encouraging 'responsible' fatherhood, the implication being that without such interventions fathers would be 'irresponsible'.

Another common manifestation of the deficit perspective is 'not seeing' fathers. A common theme during the Summit deliberations was the lack of emphasis on fathers in social policies in various countries. Morrell (2003) commented that current government thinking and policy on gender inequalities 'tends to direct resources and policy attention towards women, as the lot of childcare falls to them.' An unacknowledged problem with this approach is that it marginalises men and often implicates them as 'the guilty ones'.

We now turn to specific policies that affect the fatherhood discourse.

Taxation and employment

It is through the design of its taxation and employment regimes (backed up by labour-market policies) that a government most clearly sets out the roles men and women are to play in families; specifically, the degree to which parents of either sex should contribute cash or care in the maintenance of their households. Most nations provide few, if any, positive incentives through taxation or employment policies for men to take up active, involved fatherhood ('care'). Furthermore, research in the industrialised world indicates that fatherhood is, by and large, invisible in the workplace. Very little consideration is given to children's relations with their fathers and the need to place a priority on them. Indeed, work organisations in most societies are structured as if people have no other life and as if no fathers work there (Haas, 2002).

At the same time, mothers do not have equal access to the full range of jobs at the same rate of pay as fathers. This means that couples decide rationally that fathers should spend more time in the paid labour force than mothers.

What we have attempted to do in this section is to analyse current approaches to taxation and employment to identify policies and practices that affect active fatherhood.

Policies that support the gender division in labour

Sole or main breadwinning incentives (or compulsions) have been, and in most places still are, legion (Knijn and Selten, 2002). Even in countries such as the US, with a reputation for leaving families at the mercy of market forces, examination of federal policy reveals substantial state interference over many generations. Policies are often developed in alliance with trade unions and amount to social

engineering, as the state seeks to ensure that (male) citizens earn sufficient cash to keep their families independent of public assistance and, often, to finance their personal at-home carer to take responsibility for raising the next generation of workers.

Around the world, taxation incentives and compulsions to confirm men as the sole or main breadwinner in two-parent families have included:

a) Taxation

- couple (rather than individual) taxation, such that the earnings of the second-earner partner (usually a woman) are added to those of the first-earner, with tax incurred at a higher rate;
- married men's tax allowances (tax benefits to men for women's caring duties);
- child tax allowances, paid to the primary breadwinner;
- loss of tax privileges for men if their wives work;
- tax credits paid to the main wage earner (usually a man) if the second wage earner does not enter the paid workforce.

b) Pensions

- payment of retirement benefits to full-time, life-long workers, usually men, and sometimes only to men;
- tax allowances for pension payments (particularly relevant to higher rate taxpayers, i.e., mainly men);
- reduced national insurance contributions for married women;
- pension benefits for wives who survive their husbands.

c) Labour legislation

- standardising the minimum wage (for males) at a level sufficient to provide for a married man, his wife and two children below the age of 16 (e.g., Germany 1947);
- setting women's wage levels lower than men's;
- failing to introduce or enforce equal-opportunities legislation, such that women's earnings remain less than men's;
- failing to address gendered workforces, such that women's earnings remain less than men's;
- legislating against married women working (one effect of which is to ensure that male wages are not eroded by female employment);
- legally tolerating racial discrimination, which, like sex discrimination, excludes another large, potentially cheap, pool

of labour (black/immigrant males) from the marketplace and keeps the father-breadwinner's wage higher than market forces would otherwise dictate.

It is often said that such taxation benefits 'privilege' male breadwinners. Insofar as earnings are correlated with power, this is undoubtedly so. However, if 'privilege' in parenting is defined as the *opportunity to parent* (Hobson and Morgan, 2002), as it is by many fathers' rights groups today, it could equally be said that a system designed to promote sole (or main) breadwinning by fathers *under*privileges them.

In industrialised countries over the last 30 years, new forms of taxation have sought to empower women as breadwinners. In Sweden in 1971, the joint taxation system was replaced with a system whereby individuals became taxed separately from other adults living in the same household. This encouraged married women to participate in the labour force because wage earning by women would not raise the family's tax rate. This system assumes that women should be economically independent of men and that mothers as well as fathers are responsible for income provision. Individual taxation has since been adopted in most Western countries.

However, policies supporting women in the paid workforce may not always support father-child relationships. For example, when mothers of very young children work full-time, it may not be the bond between mother and child that is most negatively affected, but the bond between father and child. This is thought to be so because mothers who have been away from the children all day, take over when they come home, whereas mothers who have spent a lot of time at home, hand the children over to their fathers. Boys' negativity towards fathers is also more marked in families with employed mothers. Awareness of such issues, as well as further research, might help policy makers and families understand these processes and identify strategies to safeguard and optimise the quality of the father-child relationship in dual-earner households.

Childcare policies

The childcare debate is usually father-blind, referring to daycare for the children of working mums as if all these women were single parents. However, in some industrialised countries, there has been a concern to develop and implement policies to enable fathers either to be involved in the care of their children (e.g., parental leave policies in Scandinavian countries) or to achieve a work-family balance (e.g., by using flexible work practices). This focus comes from a range of perspectives: (1) an emphasis on gender equity in childcare and employment, (2) a belief that children do not live by their fathers' breadwinning alone, but also need other evidence of their love and approval, mainly through direct personal involvement with them

and (3) a view that there are potential positive benefits for fathers, themselves, to be more involved with their children and to have a more balanced life.

Policies in the workplace

Workplace demands, a lack of workplace flexibility and men's strong identification with paid work and career success are the major barriers to active father involvement and involvement in the care of young children. This assumption has been a dominant theme in discourses about fatherhood in Western societies; however, little systematic research has been conducted on the contribution of workplace policies (Russell and Hwang 2003).

Employment policies and practices actually render fatherhood invisible. Men are expected to construct their self-identities as men through participation in paid work. While paid work helps fathers contribute economically to their children, the demands and expectations of paid work also prevent fathers from spending time with their children.

Industrial law and policies: Workers with family responsibilities

Does the nature of industrial laws and policies address work and family issues for fathers, either explicitly or implicitly? Many countries are signatories to International Labour Organisation recommendations (e.g., ILO 165) that require governments to develop policies that enable workers with family responsibilities to have equal access to employment opportunities (ILO, 1981). This has led either directly or indirectly to the development of government policies that enable parents to reconcile work and family life. These policies have the potential to influence the extent to which fathers are involved in family life.

Paternity and parental leave

While mandatory unpaid paternity leave is now widely available in many Western countries, mandatory paid paternity leave is much less common. Deven and Moss (2002) reviewed statutory leave arrangements (maternity, paternity and parental leave) in the European Union (15 countries), Norway, Central Europe (4 countries), Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA. The most striking trend in recent developments is the emerging emphasis on fatherhood and increased flexibility in taking leave (e.g., working part-time and extending the period of leave; having a choice about when the leave is taken in relation to the age of the child). In terms of fatherhood, this has involved either the introduction or enhancement of paternity leave or the provision of inducements to fathers to take parental leave (Sweden, Italy and Norway). Ten of the 24 countries have entitlements for **paternity leave**, ranging from two days to three weeks. For eight of these countries, it is paid leave.

All countries included in the study provide some form of **parental leave,** which theoretically could be taken by fathers, and in 17 of these there is some form of payment. In Italy the total period of **parental leave** is extended from 10 to 11 months if the father takes at least 3 months of the leave. In Sweden two months are specifically designated for fathers, and in Norway (where one month is designated for fathers) fathers have an independent right to obtain a financial benefit if they take parental leave (irrespective of the mother's employment status).

In countries where paid paternity leave is not mandated, very few organisations offer it. In the US, only 1% of fathers in either the public or private sectors are eligible for at least some paid paternity leave (Tamis-LeMonda and Cabrera, 1999) and in Australia the figure recently reported was 18% (Morehead *et al.*, 1997).

Policies in Scandinavian countries appear to be the most highly developed, and for many there are recent data available on rates of use. The analysis of these policies and data provide useful information to guide the development of policies in other countries to enable higher levels of father involvement.

Haas (2002) provides a summary of the workplace factors that make a difference to men accessing parental leave. Men will be more likely to access parental leave if:

- It is a universal, individual non-transferable right of fathers, thus increasing the possibility that

Case study: Parental leave in Sweden

Since the 1960s, the Swedish government has been the major force in helping parents combine paid employment with raising children (Haas and Hwang, 2000) by ensuring equal employment opportunities for women, subsidising childcare and mandating paid parental leave for both fathers and mothers (funded by employers' payroll taxes, with pay compensated to 80%). It was also declared that women and men should have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities in the areas of breadwinning, childcare, household work and participation in public life (Haas and Hwang, 2000). The intention was for fathers to share parental leave with mothers, and two months is reserved for each parent (the remaining 10 months can be taken by either parent). As a way of encouraging more fathers to take parental leave, after 1994 it was not possible to allocate the reserved months to the other parent. If fathers did not use their time, couples lost it.

Swedish parents are also able to access temporary paid parental leave. This compensates working parents when they stay home with sick children, care for children when their caretakers are sick, accompany children to receive health care or visit daycare centres or schools. Parents may take up to 60 days of temporary leave per child per year until children reach age 12. In 1998 parents received 80% of their salary in compensation. Included in temporary parental leave are 10 'daddy' days that fathers can take within two months of childbirth.

employers will actively enable the men who want to take leave to do so;

- It involves job protection, full benefits and substantial pay;
- Fathers' rights to take leave are promoted in the workplace;
- The benefits for the organisation for supporting fathers' rights to paid leave is studied, articulated and disseminated. This would include a systematic analysis of the potential individual performance benefits through the development of additional skills while caring for children;
- It is flexibly administered to enable parents to take turns taking leave so that leave can be taken on a part-time basis.

It also needs to be recognised that the design of parental leave policies has the potential to have a negative impact on the opportunities for fathers to be active in caregiving. This appears to be the case for recent developments in the UK, where there are now highly gendered parental leave policies. In the first year of a baby's life, mothers have access to six months paid and six months unpaid maternity leave plus one month unpaid parental leave; fathers have two weeks paid paternity leave and can take one month of unpaid parental leave. If a father takes even one day of parental leave, the whole week in which he takes it is considered to be an unpaid parental leave week. There is none of the flexibility of, for example, Sweden, where parental leave can even be taken in partial days – a design that has proven to be very popular with fathers. In the UK, the resulting inequity in the balance of leave rights between women and men means that mothers can stay out of the workforce for up to 13 months and still have their jobs held open for them. Fathers cannot do this, and parents cannot make a choice to share the leave. Although leave entitlements encourage mothers to remain connected to the labour market (which can ultimately support involved fatherhood when mothers again become workforce participants), it also means that gendered parenting roles are more likely to develop within the family in the first year of the child's life, which could remain entrenched because of the tendency for couples to specialise in aspects of family work according to skills and self-confidence.

Substantial leave entitlements for mothers can also make young women and mothers less attractive as employees. Meanwhile, a father's continued involvement in the paid workforce has a spin-off in terms of improving a father's career capital vis-à-vis that of his child's mother, making future gendered role decisions within the family more likely.

Family leave

Workplace policies and practices with regard to parental leave, of course, are limited in their application to father

involvement in the very first stages of a child's life. It is ongoing flexible work practices and policies that provide the greatest opportunities to enable father involvement over the entire period of a child's life. Family leave involves designated time for an employee to take leave when family needs arise (e.g., caring for a sick child, attending a child's activity at school). In many industrialised countries this is mandated as an entitlement.

The provision of flexible work practices (e.g., flexible work hours, part-time work, tele-working) is usually optional and varies widely from one organisation to another. Studies demonstrating either the impact of specific practices or their possible role in enabling motivated fathers to be involved are rare.

For instance, several national studies indicate that a significant number of fathers have access to flexible work options that theoretically could enable them to be involved with their children. In a study in the United States, 43% of the respondents were able to vary beginning and ending times and 63% said it was relatively easy to take time off during the workday to address family or personal matters. Fathers in dual-earner couples who had this option were more likely than fathers without this option to take time off to attend to their children's needs (Bond *et al.*, 1998). In an Australian Bureau of Statistics (1999) study of childcare arrangements (data collected in 1999), it was found that 26.7% of fathers reported that they used some type of flexible work arrangement to enable them to care for their children. While this was up from 24.4% in 1993, it was considerably lower than the figure for mothers – 67.8%.

In some countries, laws have been developed to compel employers to ensure that work practices do not discriminate against employees on the basis of their family responsibilities or caring status. Much of this legislation has been interpreted to protect women with childcare responsibilities. However, legislation recently introduced in the UK mandates that employers have a legal 'duty to consider' requests for flexible working arrangements from employees who are parents with responsibility for children under six years of age (or under 18 in the case of disabled children) and who have worked for the organisation for six months or more.

Conclusion: What needs to change

Summit participants have suggested that significant changes are needed in national frameworks. First, taxation systems and labour organisations need to be structured around the assumption that both fathers and mothers are responsible for children's economic well-being and for meeting their children's physical, cognitive, social and developmental needs. Policies need to be based on the fundamental principle that everyone should have the right to give care and to receive care. This means

that fathers should have opportunities to care for children and children should have the opportunity to receive care from fathers.

Second, everyone should have the right to paid employment. Equal employment opportunities for women are a prerequisite for fathers' opportunities to develop close relations with children. At the same time, the opportunity for care should achieve the same status in society that opportunity for paid employment now has in industrialised societies.

The development and implementation of policies and practices that are consistent with these principles will vary from one country, culture and sub-culture to another.

Education policies and practices

Fathers and fatherhood are also relatively invisible in educational contexts. Although there has been very little systematic analysis of fatherhood and educational policies and practices, it is the experience of the participants at the Summit that educational systems are active in their engagement of mothers, and many practices are based on the assumption that the mother is the parent who is primarily concerned with her child's education. Fatherhood has, however, begun to appear on the educational agenda in some Western countries because of a concern about findings that the achievement levels of boys are lower than those of girls. Also, in some countries, fathers are gatekeepers in terms of their children's access to education.

Educational curricula

The educational curriculum can influence fatherhood issues in several ways: first, in the ways in which families and the roles of mothers and fathers are portrayed in relevant parts of the curriculum. There is an obvious opportunity here to look for ways to portray the diversity of roles adopted by fathers, including a model that assumes mothers and fathers have equal responsibility for their children and for childcare.

A second potential influence concerns the opportunities that schools provide for students to learn childcare and parenting skills, e.g., in health-education classes. Some research shows that when boys are provided with this opportunity, they take it up with considerable enthusiasm.

A third possible influence is the approach taken to sex and relationship education in schools. There is an opportunity here to ensure that curricula in these areas focus on fatherhood and that boys are provided with the opportunity to reflect on their potential roles as fathers. It is also critical to ensure that a diversity of fatherhood role models is also presented in this context, including fathers who are highly responsible and involved.

Engaging fathers in the education of their children

Although systematic research has not been conducted in the West, it is clear that in educational policies, there is no obvious concern to actively engage fathers in their children's education. Indeed, the policies, structure and training of staff tend more to operate as barriers to fathers having an active involvement. Yet, the active engagement of fathers with their children's education has the potential to improve educational outcomes for both daughters and sons. In the case of daughters, for example, this could lead to greater value being placed on their education, leading to improved educational outcomes for women. This could have a major impact on gender equity in later life in many countries.

Zimbabwe: a father takes his child to the ECD playsite. Photo: © Parke Wayiswa/ Inter-Country People's Aid

The concept of fathers as home educators of both boys and girls is also emphasised in some contexts, with encouragement to fathers to read to their children, specifically at bedtime. Buchanan and Flouri (2001) found that English children (both boys and girls) whose fathers read regularly to them had better academic outcomes, and the experience also seemed to foster emotional security, aid relaxation and act as a vital means of transmitting shared values from one generation to the next. The researchers also found that the higher a father's level of education, the more likely he was to be closely involved with his children.

When considering gender roles and work and family responsibilities, the emphasis in educational policies in most Western countries has been towards improving the options for girls in terms of the curriculum (e.g., science and information technology) as well as encouraging girls to combine paid work and family as a feasible option. There has not been a parallel emphasis on broadening the curriculum for boys and in presenting a diversity of options for combining fatherhood and paid work (e.g., seeing part-time work as an option). Indeed, it is very rare either for fatherhood to feature in analyses of educational policies or for concerted efforts to be made to improve the presence of fatherhood in educational contexts. Educational policies have the potential to influence the active involvement of fathers in a range of ways. These are discussed below.

Another approach that could have an influence is through the recruitment of men into careers in education, especially in the early years of education. An argument sometimes made is that the absence of male role models in schools is also linked to the lower levels of achievement by boys. In the UK, the Department for Education and Science is investing in the recruitment of male carers in early childcare and is supporting father-focused initiatives to encourage men's practical participation in the education of their children.

Conclusions: The way forward

Summit participants have provided a clear message about the way forward. First, all children have a right to education and both parents need to be passionately involved in this. How this involvement looks (e.g., whether it is financial or active involvement in schools) will vary from one country to another. There does seem, however, to be an overriding set of principles.

- Ensure that the diversity of fatherhood, including fathers as responsible and active participants in their children's lives, is portrayed in all relevant parts of the curriculum.

- If sex education is offered for boys, it should include a substantial focus on fatherhood.

- If childcare and parenting skills are part of the curriculum, encourage both

boys and girls to actively participate in these classes; if not, look for ways to include these skills in the curriculum.

- Assume that mothers and fathers have equal responsibility for their children's education and recognise that they have the potential to influence educational outcomes for both sons and daughters. This needs to be reflected in the training of all staff involved in schools, and in ways in which relationships are established with parents.

- Develop policies and practices that recognise the barriers to fathers being actively involved and develop appropriate engagement techniques, e.g., for homework, meetings with teachers and attendance at school functions and activities.

- Develop father-inclusive language in all communications with parents.

- Inform fathers of the value of their involvement in their children's education (both informally, at home, and formally, at school) and support this whether fathers are living with their children or not.

- Where government policy already dictates that schools are to communicate with both non-resident as well as resident parents, support these polices. Where they are not in place, lobby for them.

- Ensure that educational institutions are themselves father-friendly workplaces.

- Schools should take active steps to engage all parents, both resident and non-resident, in their children's education.

- Recognise that involving fathers with their children's education can be a route to further education for the fathers. Teen fathers have low educational attainment: education and training should be a particular focus for this group.

- Recognise that fatherhood can be a powerful motivator for self-improvement. This can be harnessed in education and training programmes for low-income or unemployed men.

Health policies and practices

As with employment and education policies, fathers and fatherhood are again largely invisible in the area of health. Health policies can be differentiated in terms of child health and well-being, the personal health of fathers (e.g., sexuality, psychological and physical well-being) and family health and well-being (including couple relationships). One policy area that has a highly significant potential impact on father involvement is related to ante-natal education, childbirth and early childhood development. This is the area that has received most attention in research and

practice. Little of this, however, has had any impact on broader policies.

Of particular concern are approaches to ante-natal education and hospital and healthcare practices surrounding the birth and the early care of newborns (e.g., support provided for new mothers, home visits). The particular policy context in which this occurs is usually controlled or influenced by health policies, directed by a concern for the health and well-being of the mother and baby without any recognition of the fact that fathers' motivations, behaviours and experiences also influence this. For many fathers, the approach taken serves to exclude them. This approach also misses an important opportunity to engage fathers and provide the foundation for continuing active involvement.

From our analysis, it appears that there are isolated cases within countries where attempts have been made to change these practices to be more inclusive of fathers. However, it is clear that there is an absence of any systematic or broad policy change.

What is the way forward?

It is clear that while the types of health issues faced differ widely from one country to another, radical changes are needed in approaches to health policies worldwide to ensure that health outcomes are improved for children, mothers and fathers. Our analysis indicates that the following points should direct future policy discussions aimed at making fathers and fatherhood more visible in the health sector.

- Finding better ways of preparing men for the births of their children and to be fathers needs to be given priority. It is now commonplace in many countries for fathers to be present at the birth; yet, little appears to have been done to ensure that men are included as genuine partners in this process. This issue needs to be addressed at the highest level of policy if there is to be any systemic change in approaches taken to fathers.

- Emphasising the possible impact that fathers can have on the health and well-being of mothers and babies needs to be given priority. Fundamentally, we need to work with men if we want to improve women's and children's health. Issues that are especially relevant here are the following:

  - In the pre-natal period, men can influence women's accessing of health services;

  - Men's health behaviours during pregnancy (e.g., smoking, diet) can also have an impact on partners' and babies' health;

  - Men are influential in the decision to breastfeed; they should be informed about the advantages of

breastfeeding and provided with information and skills to enable them to support their partners;

- Fathers' physical health can have a profound impact on their babies' and children's well-being. Men's health policies -- particularly those that address men as fathers -- are needed to ensure that this issue is addressed effectively;

- Men need to be mentally healthy if they are to be good fathers. Their mental health, therefore, is an important policy issue;

- Policies and practices relating to post-natal depression should be inclusive of fathers. Men may contribute to the development of the condition in their partners or may provide valuable support in its treatment. Data also show that some men experience post-natal depression as well;

- In some countries, many women die in childbirth and, therefore, there is a need to develop policies to support fathers as carers of children.

- Policies need to be developed to ensure that an inclusive approach is adopted during the peri-natal period: services and resources should be directed at mothers, fathers and babies.

- Greater emphasis needs to be given to developing policies to support couple relationships, for instance, by giving funding priority to agencies that develop creative ways to engage men in this process since men traditionally are less likely to access relationship education or therapeutic services. The quality of the couple's relationship is central to parents' physical and mental health and well-being, as well as the health and well-being of their offspring.

- Priority needs to be given to engaging men and fathers in policy initiatives concerned with both increasing and decreasing birth rates. (More broadly, public health systems need to include men in sexual and reproductive health services, for instance, by targeting men with materials developed specifically for them.):

  - Birth control is a men's issue, as well as a women's. In countries where there is a need to limit family size, professionals need to work with men as well as with women;

  - The timing of pregnancies is also important, particularly where young parents are concerned, and especially in communities of multiple deprivation. Interventions should work not only with young mothers and potential mothers, but also with young fathers and potential fathers.

- Given the situation with HIV/AIDS, policies need to be developed to target men – as current or future fathers.

This includes policies that ensure men are fully informed about safe sex.

- HIV/AIDS is orphaning many children or, since women die more quickly from AIDS, leaving them in the care of their fathers and other male relatives. We need to support such men as carers of children.

Overall, there are two key issues that stand out in this analysis and which are likely to have the greatest impact on ensuring that fathers and fatherhood are visible in the health system. The first includes policies that address training and professional development for those who both deliver and administer health services. Greater account needs to be taken of the knowledge, attitudes, preconceptions and prejudices of health personnel. Policies need to be developed as part of the overall health system to ensure that there is appropriate training and professional development to facilitate sustained changes in practices.

The second key issue is the recognition by key policy makers of the importance of fathers and fatherhood to enabling effective health outcomes for mothers, fathers and children. Given this recognition, it would be much more likely that fatherhood issues would be included at every stage of policy development, thus ensuring that the necessary systemic changes are made. This would include both the human and physical aspects of health systems that can communicate a powerful message to fathers about whether or not they are included.

Separation and divorce

A group grievance

The issues described thus far in relation to married fathers tend to enter public discourse in terms of individual fathers. On the other hand, the rights of non-resident fathers, and the notion that they are unjustly treated by the legal system, tend to be viewed as a group grievance. For instance, there are now 235 non-resident father lobby groups in 34 countries in both the minority and majority worlds: in, for instance, Japan, Sweden, New Zealand, Uruguay, Russia and South Africa, all of them members of SOS PAPA's 'Worldwide Fathers Coalition against Discrimination', all more or less pursuing a 'fathers' rights' agenda (see http://www.sos-papa.net).

No country in the Middle East, the Indian sub-continent or the Far East (other than Japan) is listed with SOS PAPA at the time of this writing. Perhaps the injustice discourse and non-resident fathers' organisations are rare where children are regarded as the property of their father after separation and divorce. However, neither Turkey nor Israel appears on the SOS PAPA list, either, although the injustice discourse is found in both those countries (Kimmet, 2003; Kaitz, 2003). In Korea a non-resident fathers' organisation

closed recently, not because the injustice discourse is not relevant, since Korean wives are normally awarded custody, but because membership in the organisation 'was too risky for the men involved [since] in Korea divorce has a huge stigma attached to it' (Durham, 2003).

The injustice discourse in the fatherhood field

To date, the non-resident fathers' injustice (or fathers' rights) discourse has been problematic for the development of the fatherhood field. The discourse has often been naïve, anti-woman and socially conservative, expressing the view that 'feminism has gone too far' (e.g., Municio-Larsson and Algans, 2002). It has alienated those aware of gendered social inequalities, caused non-resident fathers to be dismissed as self-serving (particularly in light of the substantial amounts of child maintenance still owed) and has spawned such vociferous controversy that it has effectively taken ownership of the word 'father' to the extent that any organisation with 'father' in its title is perceived as being hostile to the advancement of women. This is interesting in light of the potential argument that if non-resident fathers were to take more day-to-day care of children, lone mothers would be relieved of a serious burden and their advancement in the world of work would be facilitated.

Despite (and partly because of) the hostility it generates, the social protest inherent in the non-resident fathers' injustice discourse has put fatherhood onto the political agenda. While there is still great hostility to the fathers' rights agenda, it is nevertheless our impression that this discourse is beginning to achieve respectability in many countries, strengthened by the spiralling costs of family court operations, as well as the perception that too many separated fathers are losing touch with their children, resulting in a generation of delinquents. There is also a growing realisation, vis-à-vis human rights legislation, that in many minority world countries, fathers have almost no rights in law: their rights are almost entirely contingent on the rights of their children's mothers (Henricson, 2003). There is a growing perception that the law, as it applies to non-resident fathers in an increasing number of countries, is not reasonable.

Non-resident fatherhood

It is not only earlier and more frequent separation and divorce that is propelling the non-resident fathers' agenda forward. A rapid rise in non-marital childbearing in many countries is also contributing to a growing number of the world's children living mainly with their mothers, and this, if only because of the cost implications, is a major issue for any country with a welfare safety net. In addition, there is clear evidence that many children who live apart from their fathers feel they do not spend enough time with them (McDonald, 1990), and

that not only fathers but many mothers and children too, feel that father and child do not spend nearly enough time together (Parkinson and Smyth, 2003).

Preventing the breakdown of relationships

Thus, attention is turning to preventing relationships from breaking down, and in majority-world countries, the hunt is on to find new ways of improving the quality and stability of couple relationships. These include providing training in relationship skills in school settings or, most commonly, in marriage preparation. Some countries have growing networks of couple counsellors, and innovative ways of offering couple support (e.g., targeting men in the workplace) are being piloted. However, funding for this is insubstantial, and targeting people on the point of marriage misses those couples who have children without marrying. Also, the discourse is predominantly *personalised*: strategies for sustaining positive couple relationships are not conceptualised in terms of seeking to reduce some of the known societal risk-factors: social inequality, poverty, racism, poor housing, dangerous neighbourhoods and so on.

Supporting non-resident fathers

What strategies are in place to pick up the pieces in terms of father-child relationships after separation and divorce? Throughout the majority world, governments are beginning at least to think about post-separation father-child relationships, if only because it is now known that fathers who experience a greater sense of responsibility are more likely to pay child maintenance (for a review, see Graham and Beller, 2002).

Research has found no simple correlation between the amount of father-child contact and the child's well-being; however, there are significant measurement problems involved. Researchers have commonly failed to distinguish between positive, negative and neutral father-child contact. Also, contact levels are generally so low that the impact of contact versus no contact cannot be expected to be high. In addition, the way contact is currently designed may contribute to the weak correlation. For example, contact every two weeks (a common design) may have a neutral or even a negative effect in some cases. It is now thought that babies and very young children need to see their non-resident father much more often, for relatively short periods (Lamb, 2002b), and that older children with two-week contacts may inhabit something of a 'halfway house', which may not support their positive development. In a study of young adult children of divorce, Laumann-Billings and Emery (2000) found that children on a two-week contact schedule showed relatively poor adjustment compared with children who had little contact (who may have come to accept the situation and get on with their lives)

and children with substantial contact (who may have benefited from quality relationships with their non-resident fathers).

Some fathers' (and mothers') personal qualities (e.g., lack of commitment, neuroticism) make it unlikely that sustained and extended contact can be positive. It is estimated that between 10% and 15% of fathers who lose or avoid contact with their children fall into this category (Greif, 1997, as cited by Lamb, 2002b); and that a further 10% of separating couples engage in such prolonged and severe conflict as to destroy the value of father-child contact (Johnston, 1994 as cited by Lamb, 2002b). Yet this means that even among these very difficult cases, no more than one father in four is likely to be a negative presence in his child's life. However, courts are typically permitting overnight contact in fewer than 50% of cases. It therefore seems likely that while some of the 'bad' dads are being successfully prevented from seeing anything (or much) of their children, so are very many good dads (studies by Maccoby, 1995 and Maccoby & Mnookin, 1992, as cited by Lamb, 2002a).

Experts now agree that for contact to enhance the child's adjustment, father and child need to take part, regularly, in *a range of everyday activities* together, not only recreational but also educational (e.g., helping with homework, going into school) and care activities (cooking, putting to bed, talking through problems) (Lamb, 2002a). In sum, many researchers now suggest that joint legal custody and *substantial* (though not necessarily exactly equal) time with both parents appears to be an ideal solution for most children (Braver and O'Connell, 1998, cited by Smyth, Caruana and Ferro, 2003). However, fewer than one-third of families currently achieve this (e.g., studies cited by Lamb, 2002a).

Joint custody

Judicially, in Western countries, there has been a growing trend to order joint legal custody when parents separate. In most jurisdictions, this does not refer to where children should live or how much time they should spend with each parent, but to joint decision making on key issues.

However, since most of the children of divorce live mainly with one parent, joint decision making is, in practice something of a chimera unless relations between the parents are highly cooperative: most life decisions will be taken by the resident parent (usually the mother), and to challenge these decisions, the non-resident parent will need to go back to court – a financial impossibility for many fathers. The big issue, for the non-resident father (and for policy makers) is how much time the child will spend with him.

Legal remedies and other interventions

The current norm in divorce cases in most jurisdictions is that children reside

with their mothers and fathers get visitation rights (Bartlett, 1999).

In order to achieve what is in the best interests of the child, some activists are calling for early interventions that will keep parents away from the courts. Some of these interventions are working effectively in a number of jurisdictions, such as Sweden, Norway and, in the United States, in states such as Florida. Referrals to early intervention programmes may arise from collecting child maintenance or may originate in the welfare system, schools or other services. Some countries mandate counselling when parents cannot agree; others either mandate or encourage divorcing parents to attend mediation and/or information-giving sessions: even minimal mediation has been found to be positively linked to the amount and continuation of father-child contact.

Since the quality of the father-child relationship is powerfully dependent on the quality of the mother-father relationship, and since fathers may become alienated from their families (physically and/or emotionally) during the separation, many father-child relationships are in serious trouble by the time parents reach divorce (Cummings and O'Reilly, 1997). This means that after separation, these relationships may need repairing as well as supporting. Fathers who find themselves caring for their children alone for the first time may also need special support. However, the resource implications are substantial (Nicholson, 2002) and may discourage innovative policy and practice.

A fair deal for fathers?

Does this confirm the allegation that fathers are being unjustly treated by the legal system? Personal values influence the assessments of parenting fitness made by court personnel (Collier, 1995), and since family professionals in most arenas construe mothers' behaviour and intentions more positively than fathers' (Hawkins and Dollahite, 1997), it seems likely that court personnel will also do this. However, it is simplistic to blame the system in isolation from cultural norms, which, while they may idealise mother-child relationships, also reflect substantially more pre-separation real-time caretaking by mothers. The reluctance to order substantial post-separation time with fathers may also stem not from a simple bias against fathers, but from resistance to the idea that children can live in two homes: when a father is nominated as the resident parent, the court is usually reluctant to allow the non-resident mother much contact, even when she is perceived as fit (studies by Maccoby, 1995 and Maccoby & Mnookin, 1992 as cited by Lamb, 2002a). The reluctance of policy makers to support both parents as carers after separation may also result from a fear of the cost implications – such as the requirement to provide housing for two households.

Some commentators (e.g., Bartlett, 1999) believe that until social norms change, divorce policy and practice will continue to prioritise the mother-child relationship, but changes in workplace attitudes towards fathers, as described earlier, may be one way to influence the access children have to their fathers after divorce. For instance, Smyth, Caruana and Ferro (2003) found that a key element facilitating equal or near-equal parenting after separation and divorce was the father's ability to arrange flexible or reduced working hours.

The case of Norway is telling in this sense. In Norway (as already mentioned) parental leave policies specifically foster gender equity – not just in the workplace, *but also in the home.* Perhaps as a result of this, Norwegian men and fathers now make a substantial contribution to family work. Young, childless Norwegian couples are particularly gender-equitable in sharing earning and household work. Furthermore, whereas in most other countries the advent of children brings more traditional roles for parents, that is not the case in Norway: Norwegian men's already high contribution to family work *does not decline after their children are born* (Craig, 2003). Small wonder, then, that in this cultural atmosphere of shared earning and shared caring, divorce mediation results in unusually high contact levels between non-resident fathers and their children.

Unfortunately, the law, policy and practice in most Western countries still assign non-resident parents (usually fathers) almost exclusively to the role of breadwinner and provide active support only for resident parents (usually mothers). As a result, the father-child relationship emerges, in practice, as not merely of slightly lesser importance to a child than its relationship with its mother (which is probably a fair representation of the reality of parent-child bonding in many families, in many countries) but as of almost no importance.

Conclusions: Policy directions

In order to move forward, the following steps should be taken:

- Promote involved fatherhood as the norm from a baby's earliest days, via father-inclusive practices in all health, education and family services;
- Develop and support parental leave and other employment policies that enable more equal sharing of earning and caring, where parents are employed;
- Ensure that parental rights and responsibilities are not only the prerogative of married fathers;
- In recognition of the importance to children of their biological parents, provide support, wherever possible or desirable from the point of view of the child, for a child's relationship with his or her biological father, while at the

same time supporting positive relationships with stepfathers and other father figures;

- Develop culturally appropriate, systemic interventions in families with dependent children, to provide active support for the mother-father relationship whenever necessary;

- Continue this support after families break down, particularly at key transition points (e.g., geographical relocation, re-partnering, birth of half-siblings);

- Develop systems to identify separating parents early in the process, perhaps via school, welfare or child maintenance entry points, and immediately provide information, counselling and/or mediation services;

- Devise methods to support parents in practical and emotional terms to devise post-separation parenting routines (including appropriate housing in nearby locations) that will optimise the chances of children spending substantial quality time in both parents' households;

- Recognise the fact that fathers' relationships with their children may need particular support during separation and divorce;

- Develop systems for immediate intervention when a parent is not maintaining contact as promised, or is being prevented from seeing her or his child;

- Draft primary national legislation in such a way that the expectation of substantial parenting time with both parents after separation or divorce is made clear and cannot be easily compromised;

- Provide routine (and in-service) training in working with fathers for court and other personnel working with separating, separated and blended families.

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children and their fathers

The primary cause of vulnerability in children around the world is poverty. Poverty affects every aspect of family life, including interpersonal relations, the ability of families to solve their own problems, and the services to which families can turn in times of need. Father-child relationships can be particularly affected by poverty because money worries often lead to couple conflict, and where parental relationships are hostile, father-child relationships often suffer. The link between poverty and unemployment also often leads to health problems, depression and low self-esteem and substance abuse, which particularly affect men when they are perceived as the main, or even sole,

breadwinner in the family. In this instance, programmes to alleviate or reduce poverty, which address the inherent causes of poverty, are the most effective lines of attack in alleviating the child's vulnerability and facilitating father-child relations.

The children of teenage parents are also seen in many countries as being particularly vulnerable. Early childbearing is strongly correlated with poverty, and with parental separation. Young fathers are at a very high risk of becoming disengaged from their children, but in many countries the focus on preventing teenage pregnancies has been primarily on young mothers. However, in the last few years, some programmes have extended their interest to young fathers. For instance, pre-parenting education helps young people understand and separate the demands of their sexuality from the demands of child-rearing and to develop self-confidence in affirming choices. There is increasing awareness of the value of teaching young people relationship skills, such as conflict management and communication.

Vulnerable children and social policy

In Western countries, the primary thrust of social policies targeted to vulnerable children is directed at another set of social policies. In many countries, it is translated into government policies in three main areas: individualised services (often known as child protection), community services (where services are provided to vulnerable groups of people, usually geographically based) and welfare regimes, through which mainly financial support is allocated, usually on a state-wide basis.

How are fathers addressed in these three areas? It is worth noting that child welfare policies vary in the extent to which they take parents' (versus children's) rights into account. At some times, and in some places, children are readily removed from parents (or groups of parents) deemed not good enough; in other jurisdictions, parents' rights to treat their children as they like are upheld. Today, in majority-world countries, the mother's relationship with her child is often given substantial protection in both law and practice; not so the father's, particularly when he is not married to the mother of his child.

Welfare regimes

We pointed out in the second section of this chapter (on taxation and employment) that the way in which a government designs taxation policies and labour laws sets out its intentions as to the roles men and women are to play in families. The same is true of welfare regimes.

When offered to two-parent families, welfare payments (e.g., unemployment benefits, child allowances, temporary illness/disability benefits, tax credits) can confirm one partner as the breadwinner. This happens when such benefits are

paid to the household head (i.e., father-provider) or only to full-time workers (mainly men). This has been, and still is, the norm in some jurisdictions. Today in most majority-world countries (and in an increasing number of minority-world countries) child-linked benefits are paid to mothers and welfare policies for families with dependent children are largely developed *without* fathers in mind.

Tax credits

Tax relief, in the form of tax allowances/rebates or tax credits are a type of welfare benefit popular with governments because they (usually) do not discourage low-paid people from working. If a low-paid worker loses welfare benefits by taking a job, their incentive to work is reduced. However, if no, or low, direct benefits are payable when a parent is out of work, but their tax burden is reduced when they do work, then the incentive to work is strengthened. Sometimes a childcare tax allowance or tax credit is provided: working parents (usually mothers) can get some of their childcare costs paid – either 'up front' (a tax credit) or through a tax rebate at the end of the tax year. Tax/childcare relief can motivate parents not only to come off benefits but to work full-time, since if they work part-time, their tax burden may be so small that the tax benefit isn't much use to them.

You would think that tax benefits would be gender-neutral, that is that they would equally inspire low-paid men or women (fathers or mothers) to enter the workforce. This can be the case. However, a tax benefit can also act as a disincentive to dual-earner families if it is only paid when one parent works. Then, it has the effect of discouraging the lower-paid partner (usually the woman) from working and thus continues to support split roles for parents and sole breadwinning by fathers.

Welfare regimes and the primary carer

To what extent do welfare regimes support fathers as primary carers? Welfare regimes in majority-world countries are built on the polarised concept of a primary carer and a secondary parent, with benefits such as housing and medical benefits attached to primary carer status. This is still the case even in Sweden, where other state policies support the notion of equitable parenting.

In countries with highly developed welfare regimes, primary carer status is usually conferred on mothers at the birth of their child, purely on the basis of gender. In both the UK and Australia, payment of state support to mothers is the default position right through childhood, and while a mother can agree to pass this status over to someone else who is the primary carer of her child, she cannot be forced to do this – even if, for example, she is working full-time and her partner is caring for the child full-time, or if the child is living mostly with

its father, after separation or divorce. Thus, a father cannot usually be identified as a primary carer unless his partner takes formal steps to relinquish this status.

Welfare regimes and breadwinner fathers

Where welfare benefits are paid to unemployed or disabled males, or attendance at employment preparation programmes is required as a condition of state benefits, there are no policy guidelines for taking the caring responsibilities of such men into account, or even for identifying men who are fathers, although both unemployed and disabled fathers often have quite substantial caring responsibilities. By contrast, when unemployed or disabled mothers are being prepared for employment or assessed for benefits or other support, their caring responsibilities are routinely identified and taken into account, not only when they are lone parents but when they are living with a healthy male – employed or unemployed. Some programmes for low-income fathers (notably in the US) are built on the notion of reconnecting low-income fathers with their children at the same time as developing their employment-readiness. Such programmes may have local success in persuading employment services to work with low-income men as fathers; however, wider policy initiatives to make this kind of practice the norm are not found.

Where there is no welfare safety net, or this is time-limited, labour-market participation by both mothers and fathers is increasingly supported (even mandated) through welfare regimes. Labour-market participation is not always possible for fathers, any more than it is for mothers, but no policies anywhere, to our knowledge, have been developed to encourage unemployed men (or any men) to find satisfaction and life-purpose in providing care to their children as an alternative to paid employment. This is despite the fact that, where paid work is not an option, providing care to children can fill the time, deliver an alternative source of self-respect and be of immense value to the next generation. It is worth noting that some unemployed fathers play a substantial positive role in their children's development. (Warin *et al.*, 1999)

Child maintenance regimes and father-child relationships

Child maintenance regimes (also known as child support) are becoming an integral part of the welfare systems in some countries. They are designed to ameliorate child poverty by adding a reliable contribution from a father to the income of an employed lone mother, the better to support their children, and where the mother is not employed, to lessen the state's welfare burden by substituting fathers' payments for welfare payments. Child-maintenance regimes can also be interpreted as an attempt to bolster the family model of the male breadwinner in

the absence of stable marriage.
Some documented effects of child-maintenance payments on the father-child relationship include the involvement of some fathers in other aspects of their children's lives and an increased influence over their children. Better outcomes for children receiving child support, compared to when an equivalent income is received from other sources, have also been recorded. In fact, child adjustment is consistently correlated with the amount of child support received, although in some circumstances, this is associated with the amount of contact between child and father (studies cited by Lamb, 2002a).

All these factors undoubtedly interact. When there's joint custody, more child support is paid; when fathers are more involved in decision making and see their children more often, more child support is paid. Better-adjusted fathers may be more willing to pay child support; and some mothers may look more favourably on fathers who pay child support – and may be happier to facilitate contact. Adequate contact may make non-resident fathers feel more involved and thus be more willing to make the payments that, in turn, enhance their children's well-being. And well-adjusted, happy children may make non-resident fathers want to be with them and support them financially (Lamb, 2002a).

Most industrialised countries have had child-maintenance regimes in place for many decades. What is new is the publicity being given to them, the emphasis on enforcement and the systemic nature of the new regimes. Instead of orders being individualised and relatively unpredictable (as is the case when they are made by the courts) a universal formula (administered by a government bureaucracy) is applied.

Thus the law still constructs non-resident fathers primarily as walking wallets. However, this originally punitive discourse (which perceived non-paying fathers as deadbeat dads) may be giving way to a marginally more holistic approach, which recognises that facilitating other forms of paternal engagement is likely to bear fruit and that barriers to payment (e.g., the poverty of the father – the 'dead broke dad') need to be addressed.

In the US, thanks to the debate around child support, low-income fathers are emerging as a group with particular vulnerabilities (Carlson and McLanahan, 2002Nelson *et al.*, 2002). In low-income families, stronger enforcement of child support is associated with increased mother-father conflict. And where mothers are not employed, poor children may get less money because their father's formal child support obligation reduces his capacity to provide informal support, such as nappies, clothes or cash (Carlson and McLanahan, 2002).

There is a growing recognition of the need for employment-based services and other social support to enable such fathers

to meet their child-maintenance obligations, and of the need to design flexible systems for them, so that child maintenance does not act as a disincentive to paternal involvement. This can be the case where there is a fixed-rate child-support baseline. Low-income fathers, in particular, need their contribution to increase along with their income. Passing part of the fathers' payments directly to the children or their mother (instead of the whole payment being used to reimburse the state) can also encourage payment. Another possibility is child-support incentive payments, where the government matches the child-support payments made by low-income fathers.

Fathers who fail

In some countries, when mothers are perceived to fail, an often-impressive multi-disciplinary team gathers to provide support strategies; whereas, when fathers fail, these same services may move to exclude him (indeed, they may also move to exclude him when it is the mother who has failed). Once interventions are instituted, child-protection teams usually do not engage abusive males, concentrating their attention instead on mothers and children. And non-abusing men are rarely engaged as an asset for abused children (Ryan, 2000). Not only practitioners but also researchers have failed to distinguish between biological fathers, stepfathers and mothers' boyfriends, to the extent that one researcher describes fathers as 'the missing figures in research on family violence' (Sternberg, 1997).

Since there has been relatively little research into, and public discussion about, the behaviour or aspirations of fathers in low-income families (although in the US, African American fathers have received some attention) it is mainly when abuse breaks open the black box of the family that fathers' behaviour becomes visible (Samuels, 1985). Thus, the public discourse relating to low-income fathers, in particular, is dominated by notions of absent (deadbeat) fathers, or by violent or abusive fathers.

Similarly important publicity has been given to domestic violence, with recent emphasis being placed on the impact on a child of witnessing this. It is important that policy makers design initiatives to recognise, and respond to, violence within families, but also that they not use exaggerated fears of violence as a reason for not engaging with the vast majority of fathers – who are not violent within their families. Commitment to fatherhood is beginning to be recognised as a positive indicator of abusive men's compliance with treatment regimes.

Conclusions: Supporting vulnerable children and their fathers

In many Western countries, there is a growing awareness that family and community services are not only failing to engage with fathers, but are actively (if

often unconsciously) erecting barriers to fathers' involvement with vulnerable children. A key finding is that family professionals may not record the biological father's name, even if he is co-resident with the child, and typically fail to seek clarification of the relationship to the child of men living in the child's household or visiting regularly (Ryan, 2000). In other words, fathers are essentially invisible.

Policies that could enable providers of family and community services to engage effectively with fathers and other male carers, without putting children or women at risk, include:

- centrally proscribed policies that define support for strong and positive relationships between men and their children as a core objective;
- emphasis on collecting data about local fathers: their names (and other contact details), their needs, their aspirations;
- instituting quality standards for father-friendliness in family, children's and community services;
- targets to increase the numbers of men employed, and volunteering, in such services;
- routine (and in-service) training for family service workers in working with men;
- routine (and in-service) training for family service workers in working with couples;
- design and implementation of validated risk assessments when abuse is suspected;
- developing and evaluating a range of innovative services to work with abusive fathers;
- more research on children's perceptions of their fathers – as the basis for shaping more effective parenting education programmes for both mothers and fathers;
- developing workshops/materials to help men and women examine the roots of distrust in their relationships, violence in relationships, and the implications of relationships that include children;
- mainstreaming father friendliness in agency policies and practice, as well as developing father-specific services – for example, resource centres for information, training and support, to include father-child activities and networking activities for men;
- life-cycle approaches to males, addressing different fears, realities and challenges about fatherhood at different stages.

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Appendix

International agreements as a basis for fatherhood interventions

Compiled by Tom Beardshaw

It is in the context of these following international agreements on gender equality, children's rights and development priorities and areas of international and national programming that the International Fatherhood Summit wishes the content of this report to be considered.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

- In the Beijing Declaration, adopted in 1995 by the Fourth World Conference on Women, governments declare their determination to encourage the full participation of men in all actions towards gender equality (paragraph 25). It emphasises that the equal sharing of responsibilities and a harmonious partnership between women and men is critical to their well-being and that of their families, as well as to the consolidation of democracy (paragraph 15).

- The Platform for Action emphasises the principle of shared power and responsibility between women and men at home, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities (paragraph 1). It also stresses that gender equality could only be achieved when men and women work together in partnerships (paragraph 3).

- It noted that the boundaries of the gender division of labour between productive and reproductive roles are gradually being crossed as women have started to enter formerly male-dominated areas of work and men have started to accept greater responsibility for domestic tasks, including child care. However, it also noted that changes in women's roles have been greater and much more rapid than changes in men's roles. In many countries, the differences between women's and men's achievements and activities are still not recognised as the consequences of socially constructed gender roles rather than immutable biological differences (paragraph 27).

- The Platform of Action also recognises that women play a critical role in the family and that the family is the basic unit of society and as such should be strengthened. It establishes that the upbringing of children requires shared responsibility of parents, women and men, and society as a whole (paragraph 29). It stresses that the principle of equality of women and men has to be integral to the socialisation process (paragraph 40).

Netherlands: Turkish father helps son get ready for school. Photo : courtesy Samenspel op Maat

- It sets out specific actions in a number of areas including the need for governments to create social security systems wherever they do not exist, or review them with a view to placing individual women and men on an equal footing, at every stage of their lives (paragraph 58).

- The Platform for Action also establishes the need for Governments, educational authorities and other educational and academic institutions to develop training programmes and materials for teachers and educators that raise awareness about the status, role and contribution of women and men in the family and society. In this context, equality, cooperation, mutual respect and shared responsibilities between girls and boys from pre- school level onward should be promoted. In particular, educational modules to ensure that boys have the skills necessary to take care of their own domestic needs and to share responsibility for their household and for the care of dependants should be developed (paragraph 83).

- It noted that young men are often not educated to respect women's self-determination and to share responsibility with women in matters of sexuality and reproduction (paragraph 93). It emphasised the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility which are not against the law. It also states the right of access to appropriate health-care services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant (paragraph 94). It describes the need for equal relationships between women and men in matters of sexual relations and reproduction, including full respect for the integrity of the person, mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for sexual behaviour and its consequences (paragraph 96). It stressed that shared responsibility between women and men in matters related to sexual and reproductive behaviour is also essential to improving women's health (paragraph 97).

- With regard to the spread of HIV/AIDS, the Platform emphasises that the social, developmental and health consequences of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases need to be seen from a gender perspective.

- It also sets out the responsibility of Governments, in cooperation with non-governmental organisations, the mass media, the private sector and relevant international organisations, including United Nations bodies, in educating men regarding the importance of women's health and well-being. It places special focus on programmes for both men and women that emphasise the elimination of harmful attitudes and practices, including female genital mutilation, preference for having a son (which results in female infanticide and prenatal sex selection), early marriage, including child marriage, violence against women, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, which at times is conducive to infection with HIV/AIDS and other sexually

transmitted diseases. Other issues include drug abuse, discrimination against girls and women in food allocation and other harmful attitudes and practices related to the life, health and well-being of women. It recognises that some of these practices can be violations of human rights and ethical medical principles (paragraph 107a).

- In terms of specific actions, the Platform sets out activities aimed at encouraging men to share equally in child care and household work (paragraph 107c). It also describes actions to promote programmes to educate and enable men to assume their responsibilities to prevent HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) (paragraph 108e).

- With regard to gender based violence against women, the Platform emphasises that men's groups which mobilise against gender violence are necessary allies for change (paragraph 120). It called for Governments to adopt all appropriate measures, especially in the field of education, to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, and to eliminate prejudices, customary practices and all other practices based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes and on stereotyped roles for men and women (paragraph 124k).

- The Platform set out in particular, actions aimed at promoting harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for men and women, including ensuring that full and part time work can be freely chosen by both men and women, the provision of parental leave to both men and women, promoting the equal sharing of responsibilities for the family by men and women, and developing policies that change attitudes that reinforce the division of labour based on gender in order to promote the concept of shared family responsibility for work in the home, particularly in relation to children and elder care. Governments committed to examine a range of policies and programmes, including social security legislation and taxation systems, in accordance with national priorities and policies, to determine how to promote gender equality and flexibility in the way people divide their time between and derive benefits from education and training, paid employment, family responsibilities, volunteer activity and other socially useful forms of work, rest and leisure (paragraph 179).

- The Platform also called on Governments, the private sector and non-governmental organisations, trade unions and the United Nations to design and provide educational programmes through innovative media campaigns and school and community education programmes to raise awareness on gender equality and non-stereotyped gender roles of women and men within the family; provide support services and facilities, such as on-site child care at workplaces and flexible working arrangements (paragraph 180).

- It is within the context of these strategic objectives and principles of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action that the current work on the role of men as fathers within families is developed.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Summit Participants recognised the agreed international standards of children's rights as set out in the Convention of the Rights of the Child, and noted the position, roles, and potential contributions of fathers to securing these rights for children. A number of individual articles of the Convention set out the International legal context within which the issues of fathers and their children are set. A selection of these articles are reproduced below.

- The Convention preamble sets out that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community (preamble).

- The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and. as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents (Article 7).

- States Parties shall ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when competent authorities subject to judicial review determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures, that such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child. Such determination may be necessary in a particular case such as one involving abuse or neglect of the child by the parents, or one where the parents are living separately and a decision must be made as to the child's place of residence (Article 9).

- States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child (Article 14).

- States Parties shall use their best efforts to ensure recognition of the principle that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child. Parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. The best interests of the child will be their basic concern (Article 18).

- States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child (Article 19).

- To ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, the advantages of breastfeeding, hygiene and environmental sanitation and the prevention of accidents (Article 24).

- The parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development. States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing (Article 27).

The World Development Goals

The International Fatherhood Summit proposes that a consideration of the roles of men and fathers in families, and an integration of understanding of these roles, and the technical expertise developed in working with men and fathers can make a contribution to a number of the World Development Goals, which all 189 United Nations Member States have pledged to fulfil by 2015.

The first goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, including the reduction by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, can be strengthened by a recognition of the role of men and fathers' financial contribution to family life. This includes a consideration at policy and programme level of how to improve the financial commitment of men and fathers to the provision of a good quality diet for their family.

Goals 2 and 3 concern ensuring that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary education and the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education. In many societies, men and fathers are key decision makers within households about the attendance of their children in schools. The development gender analyses of household decision making structures relating to education are of vital importance.

Goals 4 and 5 concern the reduction of mortality rates of mothers and infants. The presence of a man or father in a family at times of high risk to women and infants around the birth and in the early years of a child's life may have an impact on these mortality rates. Here, the roles of men and fathers in the area of reproductive health can have an important impact on the achievement of these goals.

Goal 6 concerns the halting and reversing of the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases. The transmission of HIV/AIDS is highly gender related issue. The consideration of the

role of men in the spread of the disease can and should lead to differentiated strategies for men and women in the pursuit of this goal.

A world fit for children

"A world fit for children" was adopted by the UN General Assembly at the twenty-seventh special session, 10 May 2002. It represents a reaffirmation by governments of their commitment to complete the unfinished agenda of the World Summit for Children. It also addresses other emerging issues vital to the achievement of the longer-term goals and objectives endorsed at recent major United Nations summits and conferences, in particular the United Nations Millennium Declaration, through national action and international cooperation.

The Plan For Action stresses the need for children to get the best possible start in life and have access to quality basic education, including primary education that is compulsory and available free of charge. All children, including adolescents, should have ample opportunity to develop their individual capacities in a safe and supportive environment (paragraph 14). Again, fathers play an important role in the access to schooling for their children.

It also expresses the determination of governments to promote access by parents, families, legal guardians, caregivers and children themselves to a full range of information and services to promote child survival, development, protection and participation (paragraph 17). By incorporating strategies that ensure men and fathers are integrated into this dissemination work, governments will strengthen the support and care available to children.

Paragraph 20 of the Plan For Action stresses the commitment of governments to the elimination of discrimination, including when based on parent's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

The Plan expresses the commitment of governments to the elimination of discrimination against the girl child (paragraph 23). It will be vital to integrate the role of fathers and men within families in the decision making processes about children's work and education in order to eliminate this discrimination.

Governments also recognised the need to address the changing role of men in society, as boys, adolescents and fathers, and the challenges faced by boys growing up in today's world. They committed to further promoting the shared responsibility of both parents in education and in the raising of children, and to make every effort to ensure that fathers have opportunities to participate in their children's lives (paragraph 24).

Paragraph 36 lists goals for promoting healthy lives. These could potentially be strengthened by integrating and developing an understanding of the roles that men and fathers play in the lives of families and children, and incorporating this knowledge and developing the technical expertise to engage fathers within programmes to support these aims. They include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Reduction of the infant and under-five mortality rate (paragraph 36a);
- Reduction in maternal mortality (paragraph 36b);
- Reduction of child malnutrition (paragraph 36c);
- Development and implementation of national early childhood policies and programmes (paragraph 36e);
- Development of national health policies and programmes for adolescents (paragraph 36f);
- Access through the primary health-care system to reproductive health for all individuals of appropriate ages (paragraph 36g).

Furthermore, paragraph 37 sets out number of strategies in support of these goals above which can also be strengthened by incorporating and developing the knowledge base on men and fathers in families. These include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Providing access to health-care services, education and information to all children (paragraph 37/2);
- Promoting child health and survival, reducing disparities and eliminating disproportionate mortality among girl infants and children (paragraph 37/4);
- Promoting and supporting breastfeeding (paragraph 37/5);
- Ensuring full immunization of children (paragraph 37/6);
- Strengthening early childhood development (paragraph 37/7);
- Intensifying proven, cost-effective actions against diseases and malnutrition (paragraph 37/11);
- Improving nutrition of mothers and children (paragraph 37/13);

- Reduce childhood injuries (paragraph 37/16);
- Ensuring effective access by children with disabilities and special needs to integrated services (paragraph 37/17);
- Promoting health among children through play, sports, recreation, artistic and cultural expression (paragraph 37/19);
- Paying greater attention to building family and community capacity for managing water and sanitation systems and promoting behaviour changes through health and hygiene education (paragraph 37/23).

As with those for healthy lives above, there are a number of goals and strategies for providing quality education. The goals include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Reducing the number of primary school-age children who are out of school (paragraph 39b);
- Reducing gender disparities in education (paragraph 39c);
- Helping children who have dropped out or are excluded from school and learning, especially girls and working children, children with special needs and disabilities, to enrol, attend and successfully complete their education (paragraph 40/2);
- Strengthening early childhood care and education (paragraph 40/8);
- Enabling pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers to complete their education (paragraph 40/10);
- Increasing the enrolment and attendance of children from low income families (paragraph 40/12);
- Meeting the learning needs of children affected by crisis (paragraph 40/16);
- Providing accessible recreational and sports opportunities (paragraph 40/17);
- Harnessing information and communication technologies (paragraph 40/18).

Furthermore, there are goals and strategies set out for protecting children against abuse, neglect, exploitation, child labour and violence in the Plan For Action including:

- Development of systems for the registration of children (paragraph 44/1);
- Ending harmful traditional or customary practice, such as early marriage and female genital mutilation (paragraph 44/9);
- Encouraging measures to protect children from violent or harmful websites, computer programmes and games (paragraph 44/19);
- Elaborating and implementing strategies to protect children from economic exploitation and hazardous work (paragraph 44/35);
- Encouraging support for social and economic policies aimed at poverty eradication and at providing families, especially women, with employment and income-generating opportunities (paragraph 44/36).

The Plan For Action sets out governments' commitment to build and strengthen family and community capacities to provide a supportive environment for orphans and children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS (Para 46c). As with the above goals on health, education and child protection, this goal could be strengthened by incorporating and developing the body of knowledge and technical expertise on the roles of men and fathers in families:

- Addressing gender dimensions of the epidemic (paragraph 47/1);
- Ensuring access to information and education and developing services necessary to develop the life skills required to reduce young people's vulnerability to HIV infection (in full partnership with youth, parents, families, educators and health-care providers) (paragraph 47/2);
- Strengthening family and community based care (paragraph 47/3);
- Increasing the capacity of women and girls to protect themselves from the risk of HIV infection through prevention education that promotes gender equality (paragraph 47/4);
- Involving families and young people in planning, implementing and evaluating HIV/AIDS prevention and care programmes (paragraph 47/5);
- Engaging men as fathers in international and national programmes.