

fatherWorld

The magazine for everyone working with families

Vol 3 Number 2

The paternal revolution goes global

Facts, fictions + futures

Also

Kasse Mady, Mali's tearjerker • Gangster dads
Mandela on children • Islamic ideals
Aka pygmies battle Swedes for top prize

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'The glory of children are their fathers' – Proverbs



Thailand

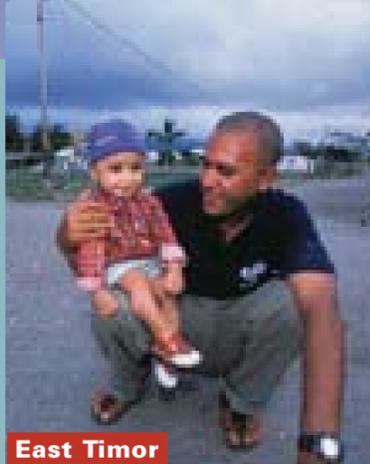
A review of ethnographic reports from 156 cultures concluded that only 20 per cent of cultures promoted men's close relationships with infants, and only 5 per cent with young children. Globally, men are not generally seen as caregivers.

A Chilean father is 17 times more likely to contribute to his child's maintenance if he and the mother were married. Further, if he was working, he was five times more likely to provide financial support than if he were unemployed. Those fathers who felt they could make a significant contribution to the family in financial terms were more present and confident about their role within the family.

Fathers' motivation to end violence to their children's mothers is substantially enhanced when the impact of domestic violence on their children is explained and explored (many countries).

In the UK, men with second families are sometimes provided with 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. In Costa Rica, a paternity law requires a man to submit to DNA testing or publicly acknowledge his parental role if a child's mother names him as father.

Caring and caregiving relationships (including fatherhood) serve as disincentives to certain risk behaviours (including criminal activity) according to Latin America evidence. For some young fathers, fatherhood is a pathway out of involvement in delinquency or personal chaos (Brazil) Fatherhood leads some men to end or reduce extramarital relationships (Mexico).



East Timor

Between 10 and 30 per cent 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 can range up to 50 per cent.

Few countries have provision for leave or financial considerations for fathers on the birth of their children. In Egypt, women receive leave to care for their children and their parents; men only get leave for parent care.

Some 60 to 80 per cent of prospective fathers came forward for sexually transmitted infection testing when the benefits of programme participation were communicated in terms of infant health and well-being (Zambia)

A study of fatherhood in Lao revealed that fathers do not get involved in any childcare until the child is three to four years of age. The father's task is to provide food, clothes and general support during this time. At times the father will carry the child, but he is not involved in feeding, bathing or "watching" the child. As the child grows older the father takes a dominant role in teaching and disciplining the child. The father makes decisions related to illness, attendance at school, division of work within the household. Fathers are also involved in making toys for the children. (Phanjarunithi, S. 1994. Traditional Child Rearing Practices among Different Ethnic Groups in Houphan Province, Lao)

Studies from diverse settings find that on average fathers contribute about one third to one fourth as much time as women to direct child care (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).

In a breastfeeding project in Jordan, fathers, sons and mothers-in-law were chosen as messengers in an advertising campaign. Quotes from the Koran recommending breastfeeding were used to lend religious legitimacy. (USAID 1993) In one state in India, about 20% of fathers made the decision about when children would get their first food, but all of the messages are directed towards women.



Botswana

UK evidence indicates that child-father attachment predicts academic success at 16, whether or not a child has a criminal record at 21 as well as crucial indicators of adult psychosocial adjustment such as psychological distress and marital satisfaction in adult life.

In Nicaragua and parts of the Caribbean the father's loyalty is to his own mother first and then to his wife and family. (Engle, P. L. *Men in Families* UNICEF, 1994.)



Around the globe, interest in men's actual and potential contributions in families and communities is growing. It is stimulated by, among other things, labour market restructuring plus earlier and more frequent separation and divorce.

There is growing affirmation in the field of gender studies and gender equity projects that studying and targeting women alone is not enough to redress gender inequalities.

Increasing attention is being paid to the impact of family men on gender equity, child development, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS etc. in a number of major international institutions, including UNICEF, World Bank, WHO, USAID, DAW, UNESCO, the Population Council, and the Commission on the Status of Women.

There is strong consensus among developmentalists, who have reviewed the father-involvement literature, that having multiple supportive caregivers is a key protective factor for child well-being, and that *whatever* a father does – positive or negative – affects his child.

The research consensus recognises that the more extensive a father's emotional investment, attachment, involvement and provision of resources, the more his child benefits in cognitive competence, school performance, empathy, self-esteem, self-control, well-being, life skills and social competence.

At the same time, male-focused strategies are rapidly emerging in "on the ground" programmes addressing children's and women's health, status and wellbeing. As an example, in 2002 only 10 of the 73 countries where UNICEF supports parenting interventions included father-specific strategies; twelve months later, this had leapt to 28.

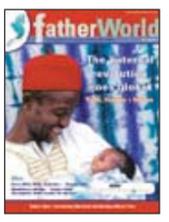
Added value from such mainly showcase interventions includes: increased father involvement with young children (Malawi, Honduras); less expenditure by

fathers on themselves, and more on their families (Cameroon); improved infant and young child feeding practices (Ghana); increased school participation and success for girls (Uruguay, Maldives); increased maternal confidence, status and family and community participation (Macedonia, Cameroon); improved maternal access to ante-natal care (Israel, Sri Lanka); increased birth-weight (Peru); improved breastfeeding rates (the Gambia, South India); record immunization coverage (Vietnam); HIV/AIDS prevention (Zimbabwe, Uganda), and so on.

We also know that men's concern for their children is emerging as a powerful motivator for personal change, in terms of personal health, reducing domestic violence and cutting criminality and risky behaviour.

It is in this context that Fathers Direct, the UK National Information Centre on Fatherhood, hosted the International Fatherhood Summit at Christ Church, Oxford. Funded by the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, it brought together pioneering agencies and experts from more than 20 countries, involved in strengthening the relationships between children and their fathers in a wide variety of contexts.

We decided to celebrate the tenth edition of *FatherWork*, our quarterly journal for people working with families, by publishing this special expanded 24-page magazine and changing the title, on this occasion, to *FatherWorld*. We hope you enjoy it and that it provides the impetus for the creation of important networks and greater global cooperation in this fast-growing field.



Jack O'Sullivan
 Editor

Picture credits Thailand - returning from the fields: Jim Holmes/Bernard Van Leer Foundation. East Timor - father and son: Jim Holmes. Botswana - San father with two pre-school boys from D'kar: Mattias Hofer.



Thailand



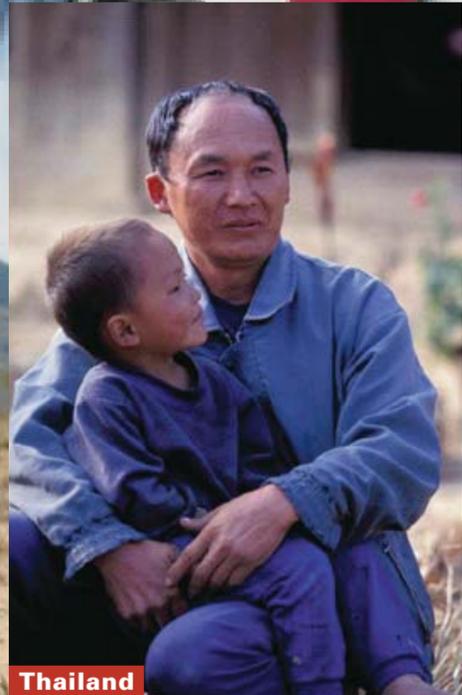
Spain



Zimbabwe



Kenya



Thailand



Ireland



Tanzania

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**

International Fatherhood Summit Participants

Picture credits
(clockwise) **Thailand** – father and child visiting neighbours; Jim Holmes/BVL Foundation. **Spain** – first-time father: courtesy Preescolar na Casa. **Ireland** – a father feeds his infant: Derek Spiers. **Zimbabwe** – going to the playcentre: Parke Wayiswa/Inter-Country People's Aid. **Tanzania** – caring for the child while mother is at school; Jim Holmes/BVL Foundation. **Kenya** – Samburu grandfather fetching water: Tanja van de Linde/ BVL Foundation. **Thailand** – Hmong father and son: Jim Holmes.



USA

Paul Hackett

apparent impact that childhood father-involvement has years later in the psychosocial well-being of those children when they become adults.

Professor Lamb's research on early family relationships has highlighted the role of fathers and the importance of secure relationships between parents and children. He has explored fatherhood in traditional and nontraditional families, studying single fathers, families in economic difficulty, and families at risk of violence. He has written compellingly of how custody arrangements can enable or undermine continuing paternal relationships with offspring and the importance of shared parenting after divorce, emphasizing that the needs of children are paramount in custody decisions.

Thus his work has offered groundbreaking insights from developmental science into what is needed from public policy. His research has addressed central issues of policy and practice concerning divorce and child custody, the investigation of child maltreatment, and the effects of child care experience on socioemotional development. His work has had a major impact on legal authorities, forensic investigators, policymakers, and others concerned with the well-being of children.

Professor Lamb's program of research on forensic interviews with children in the context of child abuse investigations also has international significance. In field studies and laboratory research, he has developed innovative and developmentally appropriate procedures for child interviews that have now become the standard in several countries, and, in doing so, he has integrated a sensitive understanding of young children's perspectives and needs into forensic investigations. As a result of this work, he has helped create international recognition of the importance of fatherhood, grounding it in children's experience rather than in over-contested gender debate or anecdote. Thus, in his disciplined approach, he has brought light to an area of huge debate that is often characterized merely by a surplus of heat.

When it comes to understanding the world of fatherhood, Michael Lamb is the man to read.

Currently, Professor of Psychology in the Social Sciences at Cambridge University, he has spent most of his career in the United States, where he has been at the forefront of fatherhood research since social scientists began to take dads seriously three decades ago.

His research has an enormous span beyond simply fatherhood, concerned with social and emotional development, especially in infancy and early childhood; the determinants and consequences of

adaptive and maladaptive parental behavior, including child abuse; children's testimony; applied developmental psychology; and the interface of psychology and biology.

However, the South African-born, father of five has edited several books on fathers and father-child relationships, including "The role of the father in child development", (Chichester; Wiley) now in its fourth edition, which has become the bible of the field, each new edition pulling together the very latest research in a subject area that continues to throw up surprises. In his latest edition, for example, there is fascinating new detail about the increasingly

No Mickey Mouse professor

Michael Lamb has revolutionised thinking on fatherhood thanks to his decades of academic research

Sweden may be leading Europe in developing father-friendly policies and practices ...

Sweden has the most father-friendly employment policies in Europe. Every Swedish father is entitled to months of paid paternity leave – by law, mothers and fathers can take up to 12 months off between them without the risk of losing their jobs. But do Swedish men take off the time – and do their employers play by the rules?

The man who has most faithfully chronicled the fatherhood revolution in Sweden is C Philip Hwang, professor of psychology at Gothenburg University. He has followed the fortunes of Swedish fathers roughly in line with the ages of his own four children, all boys now aged between 12 and 22.

"Sweden is certainly a very progressive society when it comes to both men and women taking care of children," he says. "From a European standpoint, it is the most pro-active at enabling fathers to be with their children. In fact, fathers are virtually obliged to take leave.

"Any father, even in the most competitive company, can go to his boss and say something like: 'I'm entitled to two months paid leave, and I'm going to take it.' There isn't any argument."

But do men do so? About 70 per cent of Swedish men do take some leave, according to Hwang's research. Even though the men take only around 14 per cent of the time that could be available to them, it still represents a very high level of dads' involvement compared with most other countries.

Taking into account Sweden's excellent state-subsidised child care from the age of one, Sweden begins to look like a paradise for dads where there is every opportunity to spend time with the kids, take on a share of the child care and have fun without necessarily putting one's career in danger, or being written off as someone who is not a proper man for wanting to spend time with his child.

But does it make them better dads – or the children better-adjusted kids and adults in turn? That's harder to tell. "In some ways, this is an enormous social experiment. The degree of gender equality with regard to children has increased, yes. But I wouldn't necessarily say that fathers become better fathers as a result – though they certainly do take more responsibility and spend more time with their children."

In 1981, when Hwang had his first child, he does not think most Swedish men would have seen any reason to spend time with their children. By 1993, mothers were doing 60 per cent of the child-care and fathers 40 per cent. Today the amount of childcare done by men has grown to 45 per cent, compared with 55 per cent by mothers.

Swedish companies have, in general, accepted and gone along with the parental leave rules although, as with fathers' own take-up, their enthusiasm has certainly

not been 100 per cent. About a third of companies are positive, but another third are 'passive resistant' – they do not make it easy for fathers to stay at home.

Even so, today many Swedish dads cheerfully expect to share the chores. "One of my students with a new baby recently told me: 'Of course, it's not a question of who is going to stay at home – we both are. It's a question of how we divide up the responsibilities.' That's the way people think these days," says Hwang.

"Swedish parents definitely have an easier time of it in the sense that they are much more able to integrate work and family. The two leading spheres of life are not totally separated, as they are in many other societies. Mothers and fathers can negotiate between themselves to create an arrangement that suits them. It is much less stressful. That can only be a good thing."

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...but Aka Pygmies know why men have nipples

The Aka Pygmies, who live in a tropical forest region on the northern border of the African Congo, have proved to be the "stars" of paternal involvement.

Aka fathers do more infant caregiving than fathers in any other known society. On average, they hold, or are within arms' reach of their infants 47 per cent of the time. They often take the child along when they go drinking palm wine and may hold it close to their bodies for up to two hours during daylight hours. At night, if the baby cannot be comforted by nursing, they are often the ones to settle it.

Aka fathers clean their babies and wipe their bottoms, and if their mothers aren't around and the infants want to nurse, will offer their own nipples for a soothing, if temporary, suck. Could this provide an answer to the vexed question: why do men have nipples?

Aka babies seek out their fathers. They crawl or lean towards them and ask to be picked up, and their fathers seem to enjoy looking after them. Aka women preparing the evening meal do not carry babies on their hips as women do in other similar societies. The fathers take charge even when mothers have their hands free and are sitting idle or are chatting and, unlike fathers in Western society, Aka fathers do not say they prefer toddlers or older children.

Barry Hewlett, an American anthropologist, who carried out a 15 year study of the tribe, suspects that the high level of infant-caretaking by fathers is connected with the Aka's main subsistence activity – the net hunt. This family-based, year-long venture to trap small animals is highly cooperative between men and women, so babies come along too, meaning that men's



Congo

They are holding or close by their babies nearly half of the time

and women's lives are entwined in hunting and in childcare.

Hewlett suggests that the more infant caretaking the Aka father does, the more attached to the child he becomes, and the more caretaking he wants to do. Like a Western mother, the Aka father responds to the baby's

initiatives, his lack of playfulness reflecting the extent of his intimate involvement. Like a Western mother, he takes his cues from the baby. Hewlett comments: "Among the Aka, it is not uncommon to wake up in the night and hear a father singing to his fussing infant."

'They are forgotten contributors to child development ... one of the world's great unused resources'

Research into motherhood has been going on for years, but fatherhood is a relatively recent matter. Perhaps psychologists assumed there was nothing much to study: men were at work, while women did the childcare. Mothers, obviously, did the parenting while men brought home the bacon. But has this ever really been true? As long ago as 1975, Michael Lamb, a leading figure in fatherhood studies said fathers were the "forgotten" contributors to child development. And latest research, reviewed by UK expert, Professor Charlie Lewis of Lancaster University, bears him out. Some 700 academic studies published internationally every year on fatherhood point to much that has been hidden until now in terms of the impact of dads on children's lives.



Colin Wheeler

Historical evidence suggests some fathers have always been highly involved in child-rearing. Friedrich Engel, visiting Britain's nineteenth century textile towns found many "home dads" with wives working in the factories. A nursery song from 1805 demonstrates that even in earlier times some fathers could – and did – take on caring roles.

*Hush thee, my baby
Lie still with thy daddy
Thy mammy has gone to the mill
To grind thee some wheat
To make thee some meat
Oh my dear baby, lie still*

Men are potentially no less effective as intimate parents than women.

- When handed a bottle of milk, men feed a baby as sensitively as

women do, and their babies ingest no less milk.

- Like women, men adjust their vocal pitch to communicate with infants; and are as sensitive and responsive to infant-distress.

- When blind-folded, father are no less able than mothers to recognise their own baby's face by touch.

Mothers rapidly increasing skills, self-confidence and sensitivity to newborns develop not from innate gifts but from the steep learning curve in which they are engaged. Typically, in many cultures, they spend dozens of hours with their (awake) infants, much of it alone. Whereas, it is usually the case that the new father is seldom, if ever, alone with his infant or finds himself primarily responsible for the baby's welfare.

There is now a strong consensus, among developmentalists who have reviewed father-involvement literature, that the more extensive a father's emotional investment, attachment, provision of resources, and involvement with his children, the more the children benefit in terms of cognitive competence, school performance, empathy, self-esteem, self-control and well-being, life skills and social competence.

However, it would be a mistake to present one model of fatherhood as the ideal, outside a particular context. For example in some poorer societies, the best off children may be those whose fathers are absent for much of their lives - migrant workers sending income home that can make all the difference to children in terms of physical survival, general health

In Northern Pakistan there is strict Muslim adherence to differentiation of sex roles. Men have to be involved in their children's lives. Women cannot take the child to visit the doctor. They cannot take the child to school. The father is the interface for the child between the home and world. To play this role the father needs to have an understanding of the child's needs and take appropriate actions to support the child's development. A parent education program in this part of the world should focus on providing the father with appropriate child development information and support him in his role as caregiver.

and educational opportunity.

Wider social conditions clearly have a big impact on the extent and style of fathers' care involvement. Predictors of high care involvement across the world include lack of material accumulation (such as land or money); regular cooperation and participation of husband and wife in

The role of the father in sharing activities with his daughter is so marginal that it reflects one of the great tragedies of Indian family life... The tasks of providing for food, education and marriage are in a sense the economic duties of the father, but beyond what is the basic minimum the father steps out of the scene, surrendering his socialization role and losing the opportunity to develop emotional closeness with his children. *The Girl Child and the Family: An Action Research Study.* (S. Anandalakshmy 1994)

economic, domestic and leisure activities; low population density; low polygamy and infrequent warfare.

There is, at least in Western society, a huge cultural shift taking place. Across Europe, 86 per cent of men and 87 per cent of women think fathers should be closely involved in childrearing from the children's earliest years. In the UK, as in Australia and North America, almost all new fathers want to "do fatherhood" differently from previous generations. They don't think that caring for children compromises their masculinity and they believe fathers can be just as competent as mothers.

The time fathers spend with their children has increased in many countries. In the United States, research shows father's engagement

(close communication) with their school age children, and accessibility (being nearby during waking hours) has risen. Similar, accelerating, trends are evident in other countries such as Canada, the Netherlands, Finland, Norway, Australia and New Zealand.

In other countries the situation is different. In Japan and South Korea,

for example, paternal involvement is still relatively low. But involved fatherhood is slowly beginning to be promoted as an ideal in these countries. In Japan, increasingly numbers of fathers are witnessing the births of their children. In China, the motto common across South East Asia – "strict father, kind mother" – is beginning to be questioned. And it is believed that the one-child policy will inevitably erode old notions of authoritarian fatherhood, as families become more focused on affection towards their only child.

Do fathers matter? They are critical, according to Patrice Engle, Unicef's lead official in this field. "Many fathers are the primary source of financial support for their children, but they are an important resource in other ways: through time and skills they bring into the household, through the support they provide to mothers, through the networks (friends, workmates and extended family) attaching to them. Fathers can protect and educate their children, play with and care for them, tell them stories, settle them to sleep, worry about them every day and love them for life. Fathers' involvement and father investment is one of the greatest under-used sources of support available in our world today."

Fathers must be included in the picture if the . . . [global goals for children] are to be most effectively met in sustainable ways. For almost every goal [e.g. immunisation, health, children's rights, nutrition, education] the father's role makes a difference.

UNICEF

We also recognize the need to address the changing role of men in society. We will further promote the shared responsibility of both parents in education and in the raising of children, and will make every effort to ensure that fathers have opportunities to participate in their children's lives.

United Nations

Fathers and men in families represent one of the most important—yet in many cases untapped—resources for children's well-being.

Society for Research in Child Development

Men's roles in families and as fathers continue to be clouded by normative ideas of what men should do . . . Promoting gender equity requires engaging men in the needs of others. But men can . . . have a self-interest in change. Positive engagement as fathers and caregivers is a powerful, often overlooked, motivation for men to become more involved in positive ways in the lives of their families.

World Bank



"Children are a treasure, the wealth of any country. They are the future leaders of society and the entire nation. But in order to play that role they must be given support. They must be given education. Their health must be looked after. And, above all, they must be given love."

Nelson Mandela, "Father of the Nation"

Photo: The Fatherhood Project, South Africa www.hsrc.ac.za/fatherhood

Invisible dads who are allowed no sign of their own existence

Fathers do not behave the way they do because that's just how they happen to be. Very little in a complex modern society is left to chance. So men, on becoming fathers, are surprisingly often nudged into adopting attitudes or behaviour by public policy – from paid paternity leave to tax breaks.

Wars. There are parts of the world where fathers seem to be esteemed principally as figures of authority, or as sperm banks, or “walking wallets” whose main function is as breadwinner.

But there also are many parts of the world and areas of public policy where fathers seem to be simply invisible. Being invisible is just as likely to have an impact on how a father behaves as being singled out for special treatment. How does all this matter to children? And should we be doing it differently?

In the health field, the invisibility of fatherhood is aptly described as the “third chair” syndrome. It happens in doctors’ consulting rooms and, most significantly, in midwives’ and antenatal clinics. There is a chair for the doctor or midwife, a chair for the mother-to-be – but no chair for the father. He is not expected to attend and, if by some chance he does, he is scarcely made welcome.

The “third chair” effect is paralleled (although perhaps less literally) in a host of situations outside medicine, where fathers’ involvement is barely expected or encouraged. There are cultures where fathers do not cross the threshold of their children’s school or where welfare, tax and employment situations are devised as if they did not exist.

Worse, some family legislation and policies actually treat men as if they are inherently incapable of normal loving relationships, irresponsible and venal, and perhaps irredeemably bad for families, partners and children – the deficit model.

Child care at home is one area where fathers are often well below the radar – or viewed with distaste if they are seen at all – as far as official bodies are concerned. This can happen in even the most supposedly enlightened and advanced societies, such as Sweden, which otherwise pride themselves on giving gender equality a fair crack of the whip.

Sometimes policies set up to support women can undermine

sharing of care by parents. For example, while the availability of full-time affordable childcare is a great blessing for hard-pressed families, can be good for children and can support mothers to be effective breadwinners, it can also prove a disincentive to couples who would otherwise “box and cox” care in a more equitable way. Professional childcare should not be seen as care-relief for mothers, but as an ancillary to shared parental care.

Certainly that is what is intended in Sweden – with the hope that more women will be able to go out to work, men and women will share more of the wage-earning, leading to gender equity in both jobs and child care. But it does not always work out like that. When professional childcare replaces mothercare, fathers can actually end up being marginalized, seeing less of their children and taking on less child care.

It is the problem of the old invisible father again. Daycare is arranged with mothers in mind – does enough effort go into asking how fathers can play a part? Are they encouraged to do so? As far as the daycare authorities are concerned, the working mothers might as well be single mums for all the effort put in to involving dads.

The lesson that well-meaning, progressive-minded legislators and administrators need to take away from this is that creating child-friendly arrangements that suit mothers might not suit fathers equally well. In fact what helps fathers get involved most is flexible, often brief, patterns of childcare, not all-day care in a community centre. Social engineering does not always achieve the desired results.

Employment policies are a case in point. Western societies have tended to develop a whole raft of family-friendly policies, office directives, employment regulations and legislation to support women’s roles as mothers. But they have been far less effective in supporting fatherhood.

How can governments, administrators, officials and the people who frame public policy avoid getting it wrong in future? A good start would simply be to ask more clearly and comprehensively how family policies will affect men and whether or not they will actually involve men more closely with their children,

before putting them into effect.

If the carrot and stick are to be used more effectively, as they are in so many other areas of life, to achieve social ends, more thought needs to be given to how men and their children will benefit. And there needs to be far greater recognition that men are not just breadwinners to

be manipulated by tweaking the purse strings – that they are also fathers, with a unique capacity to influence society and family life through fatherhood.

It is not enough to imagine that by promoting gender equality, men and women will work together and men’s talent will somehow be released.

Men need to be given an opportunity to show they can be fathers. The third chair has to be brought into the consulting room. When that happens as a matter of course, public policy on fatherhood will enter a totally new dimension.

International Fatherhood Summit

The International Fatherhood Summit (IFS) was hosted by Fathers Direct at Christ Church, Oxford, in the United Kingdom during March 2003, and brought together specialists working on fatherhood issues in the UK, Mexico, Brazil, New Zealand, Jamaica, Australia, USA, Sweden, Egypt, Israel, Turkey, Russia, Netherlands, South Africa, Cameroon, Chile, Belgium, Peru and India.

The conference concluded that politicians and policymakers have been slow to recognise the effects of a wide range of public institutions and policy on fathering.

The past decade has seen the emergence of expertise and best practices to support father-child relationships. This work has usually been embedded in mainstream programmes to enhance outcomes for children, women and families. However, most of this work is poorly funded and has operated at the margins of mainstream services, rather than as part of an integrated strategy to support father-child relationships. Nevertheless, innovations in practice show encouraging outcomes for child development and gender equity.

Programmes supporting father involvement include reproductive health and teen pregnancy prevention, wider peri-natal services, infant and child health and nutrition, early years services, parenting education and employment programmes that support men’s relationships. There is an increasing emphasis on involving fathers in children’s learning (for example, in schools) and on working with the fathers of young offenders.

Domestic violence and substance abuse programmes are recognising the value of engaging men in their parenting role. There has been a lot of work with fathers in prison (which is beginning to extend to the resettlement of offenders) as well as work with refugee fathers and some resettlement support for fathers returning from war. Children who are living apart from their fathers (due to separation or divorce, migrant working, imprisonment or war) are seen as a particularly high-need group.

Technical expertise for helping agencies to develop strategies for engaging fathers are emerging. Very often, relatively inexpensive adjustment to mainstream practice suffices, rather than creating dedicated service streams. In the UK, Fathers Direct has published “Working with Fathers: a guide for everyone working with families” (Burgess & Bartlett 2004: London, Fathers Direct) and this organisation, along with others in the UK, USA, Caribbean, Latin America and Europe offers training and strategic development in father-friendly practice. Attempts at influencing professional training (for example, for social workers or midwives) have begun. In the United States, the first textbook about working with fathers, written for students working with young children and their families, has been written (“Fatherhood and Early Childhood Programs” Fagan & Palm, New York, Delmar).

In 2004, Fathers Direct (UK) launched “The Charter for Father Friendly Britain” in an attempt to realise change across a broad range of social programmes and policies. The Charter promotes policies, services and practices that support the active engagement of fathers in caring for children. The Charter creates a partnership with the national government and UK NGOs in maternity services, schools, business and employment, child protection programmes, domestic violence services, prisons and youth offending teams, youth services, mental health services and social services supporting separated families. Working groups in each sector are developing practical tools for change (benchmarks, audit tools, core skill specifications, specialised training), publicly promoting good practice and developing a policy framework that articulates both the changes required within individual sectors and an overarching policy narrative on active fatherhood.

Links: The full report from the International Fatherhood Summit (“Supporting Fathers”), is available from the website of the Bernard Van Leer Foundation (www.bernardvanleer.org). More details: p22



Experts: Jeff Johnson, NPCL (USA); Gary Barker, Promundo (Brazil); Dumesani Nqina, Embizweni Voluntary Association (S Africa); Tom Beardshaw, Fathers Direct (UK); Rajalakshmi Sriram, Maharaja Sayajirao University (India)



‘It’s the “third chair” syndrome - one for the doctor or midwife and mother-to-be, but none for the father.’

Institutional practices and policies, for example in the workplace or in the services that engage with families, are vital determinants of how fathers behave. Cultural supports and constraints are important. They all contribute to the skill and self-confidence of a father and thus the extent to which he perceives himself to be a capable parent.

A carrot and stick approach by governments and all kinds of official agencies seems to be universal – and influential. The effects, though, vary dramatically from country to country and across cultures. In some nations, fatherhood is valued as an investment in a stable society, but in others as a means to fight and win

Photo: Darryl Lennel/“Fatherhoods”/Great Yarmouth SureStart UK

Photos: Paul Hackett



Mali

Weeping Father

Kasse Mady Diabate, Mali's acclaimed World Music star, tells Sarah Castle about children, family and song

Kasse Mady is one of West Africa's greatest voices and one of the most cherished singers in Mali. He is known for his profound knowledge of Mali's deepest oral and musical traditions, for the sheer beauty and ethereal quality of his tenor voice. He was raised in western Mali's tradition of griots or jelis – the singers and story tellers of west Africa – and his family were the singers for the emperors and their descendants. He is now acclaimed internationally and has recorded with master kora player, Toumani Diabate, as well as releasing his own immensely successful albums. His

most recent CD 'Kassi Kasse' (EMI/Hemisphere) won third prize in the BBC Radio 3 World Music Awards. In the Bamana language Kasse Mady means "Weep Mady!" (Mady is a variation on Mohammed). The name was first given to his grandfather whose beautiful voice moved listeners to tears. Kasse Mady has inherited not only the name, but also the talent. In a shady area, Kasse Mady settles down into his chair, as his brother sits beside the road selling tea, sugar, batteries and cigarettes to passers-by. "My father played the traditional guitar (ngoni) and taught

me," he explains. "Even though he wasn't a singer, when I sang our traditional songs he could correct me. It was my uncle who trained me – he not only knew how to sing but he taught me how to play his modern guitar." Today, Kasse Mady, 55, is married to three wives with whom he has 10 children. Many, particularly in the West, would disapprove of polygamy, considering it oppressive of women. It is, however a feature of Malian culture and has important impacts on Kasse Mady's fatherhood role. He shares his time equally between his spouses and is proud of the harmony and cohesion

in his household. Part of this he attributes to distributing the children among his different wives. He explains: "If a woman adopts the child of her co-wife it allows a love to develop between the child and the woman and between the child and his other half brothers and sisters. My first wife said that she would implement the plan. She gave one of her boys to the second wife and took two of the second wife's girls and raised them as her own. The third wife's children are always with the children of the other two and this has strengthened the love between all of them." Music helps seal Kasse Mady's own relations with his children. "I taught my second boy to play the traditional guitar – now he plays better than me. Even now this same boy continues to learn traditional stories from me. I get on well with him – the same way I did with my father. The boy has been to school so he can write down the songs in order to learn them. It really interests him and he is really motivated. My youngest son is learning the traditional guitar already and knows

how to play the modern guitar." His daughters have, like their father, adapted the jeli tradition for the modern world: "When I was in Mexico I bought an amplifier for my oldest daughter who sings. Often this girl goes with me when we go on tour." However, he shows no favouritism - "I love all my children. I don't favour those who can play music over those who cannot". Kasse Mady is sceptical about "modern" models of fathering. "These ideas," he says, "where a man commits himself to looking after the daily needs of his children, will never take off here in Mali because men are just not used to doing this kind of thing. A man who adopts this kind of behaviour in Mali is labelled as a weak man in front of his wife – people would tease him. He gives the appearance of a man who is under the thumb of his wife." However, Kasse Mady's own experiences outside Mali mean that he can see why such roles may be necessary if not desirable. He thinks that shared parenting might be a good thing. "I like this kind of behaviour



Music helps Kasse Mady's relations with his children: "I don't favour those who can play music over those who cannot."

because I have been to Europe a lot and I see how couples live together there. In Europe the man works and the woman works and there are no domestic servants to help them. Seeing as their working hours may often overlap, the first one home looks after the kids. In Europe I even learnt to cook – whereas here men don't cook at all "

Youssef's story

Youssef Traore, 28, earns just £40 a month in a hotel laundry in Bamako, Mali's capital. As we sip glasses of green tea outside the small room he shares with four other young men, the sounds of Alpha Blondy's reggae beat nearly drown our conversation. "Marriage is very expensive now," explains Youssef, a single father.

"Even if you want to get married – you have to give kola nuts to the bride's parents on three separate occasions. The third time it costs a lot of money - it costs £40 for a basket and then you give a payment to her parents to compensate them for losing her labour - this can be up to £100 or £150. Then you have to give the bride-to-be luxury fabrics which can cost up to £150. Then you need to buy her shoes and all the things she needs. Before it was not like this. Life has become more sophisticated. That's why getting married costs more".



Never having got enough money together to marry, Kadiatou and Youssef split up when Amadou was four years old. She

moved in with a new fiancé leaving Amadou, now aged five, with his maternal grandmother. Youssef only lives up the road, but he sees Amadou irregularly. "I can go a month without seeing him, because I never have any money to give his grandmother. I can't just go like that, just to see him. I need to give the grandmother money.

"When I am not with him I feel really bad. I keep thinking he will forget me and if I go a long time without seeing him, I feel that there will be no bond between us. If we were together all the time we would develop strong feelings for each other. We'd eat together, we'd talk to each other – he'd say things like 'Daddy, I need a bicycle!'

"I did buy him a bike but it broke. Amadou kept asking me for another but I couldn't afford one. Eventually I found a second hand one. It is a bit battered and has no saddle. I am saving up for a saddle. I can't even show him the frame now as he will get so excited. So I am hiding it at my place and when I have enough money to buy the saddle I will give it to him."

Despite not being married, Youssef says fatherhood has changed him completely. "When I think about the fact I have a son I am really happy – even if I am young and unmarried that is not a problem. If you have a boy you know that he will replace you. Even if I die, my son is here. I am really proud of that."

Patrice Engle leads UNICEF's work supporting child-father relationships in the developing world. She describes (below) a growing field. **Adrienne Burgess** picks three stars in the world of fatherwork, starting with innovative work in maternity services in Australia (opposite). Overleaf, she sketches five UK projects for young fathers and (page 16) reports on one of Latin America's leading projects from the Papai Institute in Brazil

Money, time, food, caring – men in families could redirect them all to children

In 2002, 10 countries involved in UNICEF programmes reported activities to enhance the role of fathers in children's care. This number rose dramatically to 28 in 2003. Of these, 11 have identified the problem and are searching for strategies to increase fathers' involvement with children. 17 have developed programmes.

Namibia, Bangladesh, and Togo have collected data to find ways to increase men's participation, and El Salvador, Guyana, the Gambia, Lebanon, South Africa, Chile, and Jamaica are using surveys, focus groups, previous experience, and networks to developing strategies for reaching fathers.

Although most countries report difficulties getting men involved, in two countries fathers demanded a more active role: in Caribbean Region fathers sought more active roles in child care but said that they were constrained by non-father-friendly services and by women's attitudes; in Bosnia and Herzegovina, fathers wanted to be included in pregnancy classes (and they were).

A variety of approaches have been used to increase fathers' roles. Nicaragua, Belarus, Bolivia, Macedonia and Jordan developed strategies to increase men's role in parent education and support programmes. Maldives held workshops for fathers who were separated from their children due to work, and Sri Lanka worked with 30,000 families when the mothers migrated for work, leaving the fathers to take care of children.

In several countries, interventions made fathers a specific focus; for

birth registration in Benin and Bolivia, pregnancy classes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for health and infant and young child feeding in Honduras and Ghana, and to help girls enter and stay in school in Uruguay and Maldives.

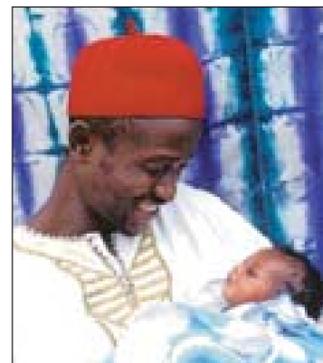
Guyana used Fathers' Day to highlight children's issues, Panama encouraged the government to support a Responsible Parenthood law. Bolivia used male adult literacy classes to teach parenting.

Getting men involved with young children, particularly in patriarchal systems, was a challenge across the board. Exceptions were the parenting classes in the Maldives, in which attendance was twice what was expected.

Based on focus group research, Jordan developed strategies for men: shorter modules specifically for men, specific to their role. For example, the better parenting manuals targeting women (which were used also to train the fathers) went into great details about the physical changes women experience during pregnancy. This was found too detailed in the male sessions. Instead the focus was shifted to the support that should be given to the mother at this stage. Mothers were taught how to transfer what they learn to the fathers, so fathers will know they have a role in the care of their children beyond discipline in the early years.

In the fathers' training manuals, alternative disciplinary methods are suggested to replace spanking and other forms of punishment reported by the fathers. The percent of fathers involved in parent education increased from negligible to 16 percent.

In six countries, significant changes in fathers' behaviour were observed, and these changes seemed to have a positive impact on children. In Malawi, in 9 districts, a community IMCI programme that stressed the role of men in supporting children's survival, growth and development (including encouraging men to make toys for their children) found a significant change over a two year period in fathers' reported involvement with young children.



'They control perhaps the largest single set of resources that could be used to benefit children'

Infant and young child feeding practices in Ghana improved significantly in part because fathers, as well as mothers, were the targets of the communication strategy. In the Maldives, the result of the father orientation was increased success in school for girls.

In Peru, nutrition indicators and practices improved in four marginalized districts as a result of using community interaction, dialogue and improved integrated training of the health care workers. Effect indicators include improved access to quality services for pregnant women and children; exclusive and continued breastfeeding, complementary feeding and psychoaffective practices at family and community level; the father's participation in care for women and children.

Finally, the Lifestart programme, a community-based early learning programme, reached 10,000 families in Macedonia and increased men's involvement. The evaluation showed that children's entry and performance in the first grade was significantly improved and families as a whole benefited from the greater involvement of all family members, especially fathers, in raising their children.

It is not easy to reach fathers and men in families, but innovative strategies, such as using religious leaders or the military, can work. Where it has worked, the pay-off is substantial; perhaps the largest single set of resources (money, time, food, caring) that could be re-directed toward children are those controlled by men in families. When father behaviour has changed, significant improvement in outcomes for children are reported. Fathers often make the key decisions regarding care of the women during childbirth emergencies, and may influence whether and for how long a woman will breastfeed.

'I'm a Dad' Project

Maternity Services Case Study 4

After the baby, wear the t-shirt



What: Community/perinatal services project
When: Multiple activities throughout the year
Where: Coffs Harbour, Mid-North Coast NSW, Australia

Coffs Harbour features white sands, ridiculously aqua-marine waters, high unemployment and a substantial ethnic minority population, many of South Asian origin. 'Coffs' also features visibly active fathers. On the beaches, in the cafes, in the botanical gardens you see them, frequently in their trademark 'I'M A DAD' cap or T-shirt.

It's astonishing how often, in different countries at exactly the same time the same issue raises its head. At the very moment, five years ago, when the UK Government launched its first funding stream for fathers' projects, the Australian Federal Government also produced funding for 'Men and Family Relationships'. In both countries projects that later were to delight their funders by seemingly "getting it right in one go" in fact rose out of the ashes of earlier, unsupported and unfunded (or virtually unfunded) initiatives. These had rendered workers exhausted and discouraged, and had rarely been sustained. But they had left "pawprints" which were to make the later successes possible.

When the Australian funding was announced, Coffs-based psychologist Tony White was NSW Mid-North Coast Regional Manager with Burnside (a large NGO).

Obtaining two years leave-of-absence from his management job, he hit the funding running. This was his chance. For 25 years he'd tinkered at the edges, working (often evenings and weekends, usually unpaid) to engage fathers in health and early childhood settings in Sydney and rural New South Wales. He knew what he wanted; he understood the challenges; he had seen the benefits – to fathers, mothers and babies.

Five years on, White is back in his management job, and "I'm a Dad" is solid, with three permanent part-time staff: two men, one woman – all parents who came up through the programme. One focuses on events and fundraising, another on engaging with fathers, the third on mainstreaming the work. The Coffs approach is couple-focused (the sexes are not separated during birth-preparation) but with special strategies to engage the fathers. A male worker contributes to ante-natal classes, offering a wider focus than the birth-experience; and, later, meets each new father either at the hospital or at home, giving him a locally-sponsored "I'm a Dad" goodie-bag – and his contact-details.

It doesn't stop there. There are post-birth ante-natal class reunions (most dads attend); dads' only

events (including regular barbecues at the local DIY Superstore) and family functions ('The Biggest Fathers Day Breakfast in the World'). The staff work with local services and individual fathers and couples; and produce the local father-aware newsletter Parentalk, which is hugely successful in sustaining parent networks.

'I'm a Dad' fathers have gone on to accredited courses in, among other things, child welfare. Advocacy training has equipped some to lobby for more father-friendly hospital processes: a request that fathers be called "fathers", not "labour partners"; and a place for the father's name on the baby's hospital records. Incredibly, this last has not yet been achieved – but they're not giving up. Five dads, now accredited mentors, are developing their own projects including a playgroup for "sole charge dads", who often have their children for part of the week (10-12 dads regularly attend). A second playgroup in a different location is being organized.

The work is spreading. White and his colleagues presented to NSW state funders, who have now made involved fatherhood a priority within an early years state-funding stream ('Families First'). As a result, there are now Family Support Worker Fathers (often ex-youth-workers who have become dads) right along NSW's Mid-North Coast.

And 'I'm a Dad'? While government funding was recently increased by 30 per cent, White is nervous about relying on this one source. He's now seeking corporate support – not only in Coffs but to replicate the programme elsewhere.

Links: Project Director: Tony White: +62 (0)2 6651-9876; twhite@burnside.org.au
 Evaluator: Dr Graeme Russell, Macquarie University: russellg@bigpond.net.au
 Full evaluation available.

Evaluation results

The experiences of parents who'd had babies before, and during, the 'I'm a Dad' programme, were compared.

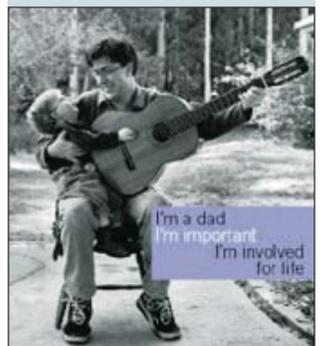
'I'm a Dad' fathers

- found the father-inclusive ante-natal classes more relevant
- felt more included in the hospital setting
- said the 'I'm a Dad' gift-bag made them feel proud and important in their child's life
- felt more competent and confident as parents
- were more satisfied with family life, their relationship with their child, and their 'performance' as fathers.

'I'm a Dad' mothers and fathers

- were more satisfied with related services including Maternity Home Visiting, Early Childhood Centres and the Early Childhood Home Visiting Nursing Service
- were more likely to attend post-birth ante-natal class reunions
- recognised the gift-bag message as being 'dads are important too' 'dads should feel proud' 'support is available'.

To the evaluator's and project manager's deep sadness, insufficient funds have been made available to measure the outcomes for mothers and babies.



The Young Fathers Project (YFP)

Young Fathers Case Study 5

Lessons from programmes in wide range of settings in Britain's multicultural society

The first national UK Young Fathers Project set out to record systematically lessons learned from a variety of interventions with young dads from different ethnic groups, in urban and rural settings, in Britain. The Project wanted to help young fathers consider their personal attitudes and behaviour both as men and as fathers, while improving their life-skills, and their skills in practical child-care.

Day-to-day project management was local, with a specialist young dads' worker employed part-time by a "host" agency in each site, to recruit at least 50 young fathers (minimum 15 per cent teenagers). He or she was expected to use group work, one-to-one work, and peer support. Programme design, support and evaluation were provided by the respected Trust for the Study of Adolescence, with additional training and support from Fathers Direct. The host agencies brought their own strengths: Norwich, for example, had been working with young fathers for more than a decade.

TSA Assistant Director Kevin Lowe began by commissioning outline plans from the five pilot sites. Once

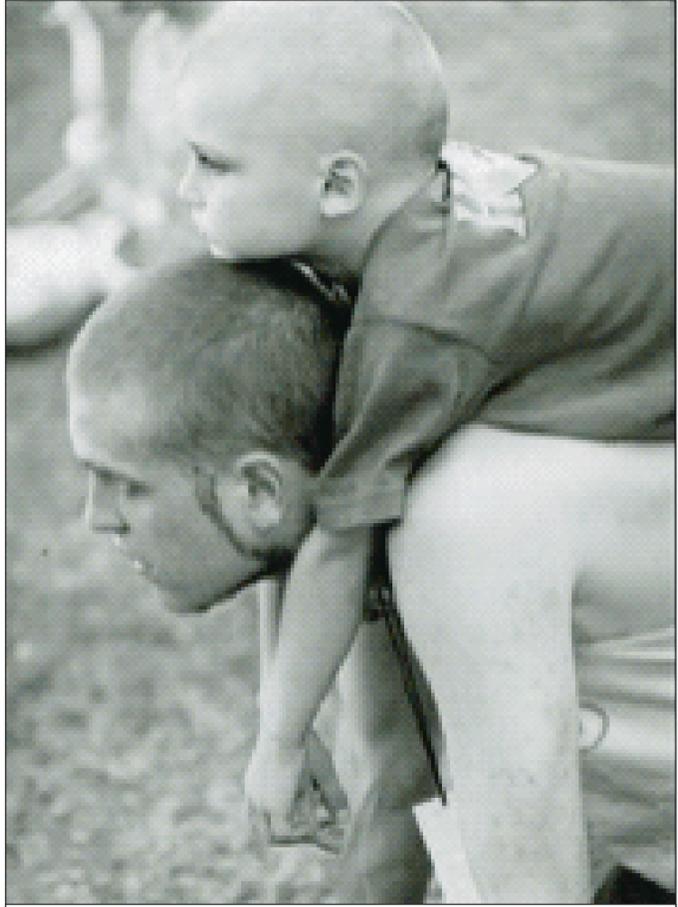
he'd accepted these, painstaking local planning began. The first lesson learned, was that success in recruitment was not random: sites recruiting the most young dads operated a well-designed, carefully executed plan of campaign with local agencies. This exercise:

- ⇒ raised the profile of the project
- ⇒ placed young fathers on local agendas
- ⇒ introduced the worker; and
- ⇒ began the long process of building links across a diverse range of agencies dealing with the young fathers.

The sites used a range of approaches: therapeutic; educational/social; behaviour-based. One worked with couples, not just with young men. One-to-one work, though time-costly, proved a huge strength, as did peer support. This was sometimes informal, as when one Newcastle young father helped a young Afghanistani dad learn English. Peer support could also be quite formal, often where a young man was making the transition from project-client to volunteer worker. This was generally a transforming experience for the young man concerned, though not (organisations discovered) a cheap alternative to a paid worker, due to the training, support and supervision involved.

The expectation that each site would develop group work was met, in the end, at four sites. The "sense of someone being alongside you and going forward together and they're not above me" was seen to give this approach its power. Group members grew in confidence and developed a sense of security as group-relationships broke their isolation and their dependency on group leaders.

There was no expectation for sites to provide every service a young father might require. Some offered advice on housing and benefits, but, in the main, emphasis was placed on



Christabel Bangley

What: a five-site pilot to increase father-involvement among socially excluded, vulnerable young fathers in England
Where: London, Norwich, Birmingham, Sheffield, Newcastle
When: 2002 – 2004 (now finished, but ongoing at some sites)
Funding: £42,000 per site in total for the two years

signposting to other local services. This worked well in three ways: it provided the young men with the specific services they needed; it fulfilled another YFP aim – of acting as advocate for young fathers; and in some cases, helped the outside services become more young-dad-friendly. With just a part-time worker, impacting on service development locally was tough. In Newcastle, where the YFP was embedded in the larger Fathers Plus project, a strategic

model (the "Men Friendly Organisations" programme) helped; and in some sites, fathers' workers sat on local committees or management groups or attended local meetings. By the end, opportunities did seem to be emerging (for example, with Sure Start Plus). And one worker was able to suggest that the local Teenage Pregnancy Task Group enter the young fathers' names on antenatal records, and invite them to attend the scans.

EMANUEL'S STORY

Emanuel, aged 20, had not seen Holly, his six-month-old daughter, for almost five months. He had been present at her birth: "I went to every single antenatal class". During the first weeks, living in the maternal grandmother's house, he had changed her nappies and played with her. While he watched TV he had shown her colours: "I know she couldn't see them properly but ..."

The maternal grandmother, described by the social worker as aggressive and intimidating, was identified as the reason Emanuel was barred from seeing his baby, and as the main cause of the young couple's break up. Emanuel explained he was making every effort possible to see his daughter: "It's just a case of I have to go through the courts to do that."

The social worker (although she was the baby's worker, the service had had long-term involvement with both parents) considered Emanuel had shown astuteness and clarity of understanding, because he knew his baby was at risk in the household and wished to take responsibility for her safety. While he had never had any therapeutic support to enable him to deal with aspects of his own dreadful upbringing, she found it very moving to work with him. Despite a learning disability, he had set out to learn about parenting skills and child development. He now knew more than his baby's mother. He had also set very clear ground rules about not wanting his own mother to have anything to do with his child. The baby's social worker considered this to be a sound attitude.

His solicitor (whose firm had also had contact with Emanuel some considerable time previously) said: "It's amazing to see the transformation ... He's already setting up a bank account for (his baby) ... Having discovered computers, he's now on the internet and is discovering much more ... the impression I have is that for him a world has opened up." The social worker had also seen how he was now "aiming to improve himself in just about every conceivable area and he's recently started to attend ... classes ... [at] a college. His course was to improve his basic subjects so he could apply for other training later."

Both professionals had no doubt that the YFP's impact had been enormous. The solicitor said: "[It has] offered him ... a wide range of experience as a young father ... Fathering skills in general, learning how to budget, the practicalities of having a child ... Confidence ... The key thing about him now is that he is able to ask the questions that he needs to ask so that he can identify what it is he wants to do."

The impact of the YFP project leader, in particular, was perceived as crucial. The social worker commented that Emanuel had been "quite bereft" on an occasion when the project leader had been on sick leave. The solicitor pointed to the careful support the project leader had offered when Emanuel had first attended for interview, enabling him to explain succinctly what he wanted to achieve. "The first few hearings, [the project leader] took him to court, just to get him on his way, which was a huge help as well ... [The project leader was] able to explain in every day language the sorts of options open to him but without saying - this is what you need to do ... For us their work is absolutely brilliant."

The names in this Case Study have been changed

TSA researcher, Dr. Enid Mordaunt, noted that the approaches that were the most successful with the young fathers drew on youth work approaches. Was this, then, a youth work project? "In a sense yes," says Dr Mordaunt, "but with one fundamental difference: the good of the children

of these young men was at the centre of everything".

Links and outputs: The full report of the National Young Fathers Project can shortly be downloaded from www.dfes.gov.uk or purchased from www.tsa.uk.com. A user-friendly "tips for practitioners" guide,

building on lessons learned, is also in preparation. Kevin Lowe klowe@tsa.uk.com. To find out about the Fathers Plus/ContinYou "Men Friendly Organisations" model, go to www.continyou.org.uk/downloads/vents/menfriendly.pdf

Being a dad can change a young man

Drinking, drugs, sex:

I was very, very immature. I used to go away weekends with the lads, go out every night with mates, didn't really care. Soon as I was a dad ... no more going out getting plastered with lads, no more going on trips to Amsterdam. [Sheffield]

Criminality:

I used to be a very nasty man ... I was always in trouble with the police ... but not any more. I've had a clean record for over 18 months now. ... Everybody thinks I'm dull. [Newcastle]

Employment:

Made me think about things ... not doing the things I was before ... like ... messing around on the streets doing nothing all day. It was only me then. [Birmingham]

Developing maturity, becoming responsible:

Before I was selfish; just think about myself and actually I don't care, I'm going down the road, I've got some money, I'm spending it, I don't care about tomorrow. But as soon as my daughter came along, there's somebody else, that's what's constantly in my mind. ... I look at things differently; I'm not like negative no more. [Birmingham]

Reason to live:

My child is ... [a] central motivation. ... She comes into everything ... you live your life around her. [London]

'PAPAI' ('Dad')

Young Fathers Case Study 6

Brazilian clown captivates carnival, giving country its first centre for dads



Paul Hackett

What: a non-profit civil institution with strong links with the Federal and State Universities of Pernambuco
When: first programme developed 1997 (teen dads)
Where: Recife (and surrounding areas), North East Brazil
Clients: boys and men of all ages; policy makers and practitioners
Activities: research; social action; education and training; media and communication; documentation and information; networking

The Papai Institute (Papai stands for Programa de Apoio ao Pai – Father Support Program) is located in the Brazilian northeast, a region where machismo still very strongly defines male image. Reflecting this scenario, Papai is driven by two main concerns: commitment to gender equality (in particular, to end male violence against women) and support for men in their caring role. This last can be translated by one word: fatherhood.

Fatherhood in Brazil is nearly invisible. "There are a lot of absent fathers. But it's not just men's unwillingness to get involved", says Papai founder and director Jorge Lyra. "Fathers' absence has been virtually legitimised by social and state institutions."

Jorge, 36 years old, started his professional career as a performing clown, and ten years ago, qualified as a psychologist, he went on to develop research on fatherhood in Brazil. Wherever he looked – health, education, the army, NGOs and government bodies – he found no information or activities about fathers, or people who had any experience

working with them. "Most of the professionals I contacted didn't understand the question," remembers Jorge. "They thought I was asking them about their own fathers."

'The 3.5m inflatable man holding a child in his arms dominates street parties'

Today, Papai's strong team runs the only father support centre in Brazil – the first of its kind in South America. Its interventions were developed out of a programme for adolescent fathers, and young men and young fathers are still the institutions' major concern. Now, however, Papai works with fathers and father-figures of all ages. In the eight years of its operation, Papai has had direct contact with more than 10,000 men. Its approaches are grounded in research, and driven by an action-research approach, so documentation is a key part of the process. The organisation manages an impressive information-centre, and publishes reports and evaluations.

Papai's outreach is impressive. "We don't wait for them to get in touch with us," says Lyra. "We work directly in hospitals and contact them where they are." Young partners of pregnant teenage girls meet weekly for pre- and post-natal classes on pregnancy, childcare, contraception and even discussion on abortion (which is still illegal in Brazil). Papai also reaches fathers who bring their children to hospitals or health clinics for check-ups. Home visits are common and, working in partnership with community organisations, Papai conducts events (including condom distribution) in community-spaces and in male social spaces (bars, domino game groups, soccer games). Preventive work in local schools also identifies young fathers (and boys who later become young fathers) and often leads to informal neighbourhood visits.

Sexual health is an important focus: adolescent boys in Latin America face high rates of STIs and STDs, including HIV/AIDS. Many ignore symptoms, or rely on home remedies or self-treatment. An estimated one in four of all persons infected by HIV/AIDS is a young man under age 25. Papai's team runs health fairs and works in partnership with other institutions, such as the Army, where workshops are undergone with officers and recruits, discussing male health and male socialization.

Another big issue for Papai has been sexual and other violence that happens in relationships. Papai works with men who use violence, developing its own approaches to

stopping their violent and controlling behaviour and is a key sponsor in the Brazilian White Ribbon Campaign to end violence against women, coordinated by Benedito Medrado.

Papai is now expanding its work, tackling institutional and cultural barriers to involved fatherhood. Jorge has helped draft government legislation on family policies, and the organisation is successfully introducing into the Brazilian media the hitherto incredible notion that fathers can play some part in their children's upbringing. Wherever there is a carnival – and there are always plenty of street parties in Brazil – Papai takes along its a 10ft (3.5m) mascot, which represents a figure of a man holding a child in his arms.

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Papai funders
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Note: In Chile NGO CIDE has developed a curriculum ('Paternidad Activa') for engaging ordinary men and social service professionals on the roles of fathers.
 http://www.cide.cl/campos/fam.htm

Which dad do you wish to be? Jamal, Khalid or Hafez, asks Humera Khan

In his youth, Jamal used to dream of how many children he would have, the names he would give them and what games he would play with them. He was the ideal uncle – indulgent, generous and good for a laugh. Then, one day, he married the girl his family expected him to marry.

Jamal's bride was a good sort of girl, but they had nothing in common. Not long into the marriage it was obvious that the couple were not compatible. Jamal eventually spent less and less time at home though he did spend enough time during the next six years to produce four children. But, rather than bringing him the joy he expected, he found it all too daunting as the difficulties he faced with his wife spilled over into his relationships with his children. Frustrated, he increasingly stayed away from home and became an absent father.

Khalid on the other hand was very particular when he chose his bride. He studied scrupulously the Islamic references to the "ideal wife and mother" and diligently chose a wife whom he felt could meet all these virtues. Having made all this effort, Khalid felt his job was done. As far as he was concerned, he had safeguarded the upbringing of his children by providing a good mother, absolving him of any paternal responsibility.

He was now free to work by day and indulge in dawah activities in his leisure hours. As was to be expected in such circumstances, his poor wife fell short of his expectations and began to feel unworthy and to suffer depression. Since Khalid was not around much he could not see what was happening to his wife

and the impact it was having on their children. By the time he realised it was already too late. His children had gone their separate ways and were not keen to have the interference of a father they did not know and could not communicate with.

While the experiences of Jamal and Khalid are perhaps extreme cases, aspects of their stories are increasingly mirrored in Muslim families. For decades the burden of family life and nurturing children has been seen by Muslims as being the sole domain of the mother. Choosing a bride for most prospective families and husbands alike has become an ever-increasing shopping list of what is expected of the woman, while the expectations of the man have been limited as long as he provides the income and some strict counsel.

With such expectations of parenting, the emotional and nurturing aspect of family life becomes a distant memory. Meanwhile, the predicaments facing Muslim fatherhood have been slowing creeping upon us. Wars, changing economic infrastructures and the impact of large-scale migrations have all played a role.

Muslims dealing with their dishevelled lives by imagining themselves in some past Islamic Golden Age have failed to recognise and act upon our disintegrating social systems.

We have allowed unjust patriarchal systems to suffocate the ability of Muslim men to play a more hands-on fathering role. A father is typically expected to be a tough, distant disciplinarian. The Muslim father has found this role to be

advantageous as it enables a stress free quiet life. If the children are scared off, he can sit in his favourite

chair, read the paper and not be interrupted before dinner. That is until they rebel, break away and choose to live their lives distant from their parents.

A new generation of Muslim men is painfully acknowledging the cycle of paternal neglect and the psychological damage it can wreak. When re-evaluating Islam, they have found that there is a tremendous amount of scope for developing themselves into more pro-active husbands and fathers.

Hafez is one such man. His relationship with his own father was difficult and consisted of continuously being put down and criticised. Yet Hafez loved his father and continued to try to please him in vain. It was not until Hafez was close to emotional breakdown that he found that the only way he could survive was to change his life dramatically. Unsure what to do, he went through a long and traumatic period of failed relationships and lost opportunities.

Eventually he came across new insights into Islam, in particular, he came to understand the Prophet in a way that had not previously been explained to him – the loving husband, the nurturing father, the tolerant grandfather – an image so removed from his own experience of his dad. Armed with the compassionate and fatherly aspects of the Sunnah he has come to believe that the best example he can give his children is be a good example himself.

Hafez has been deeply moved by much of the Prophetic way, but one hadith has challenged him more than any. Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, when asked what the Blessed Prophet did at home, replied: "The Prophet used to mend his shoes, sew his clothes and work in his household just as one works in one's own house." If fathers really want to come home, there is no better example to follow.

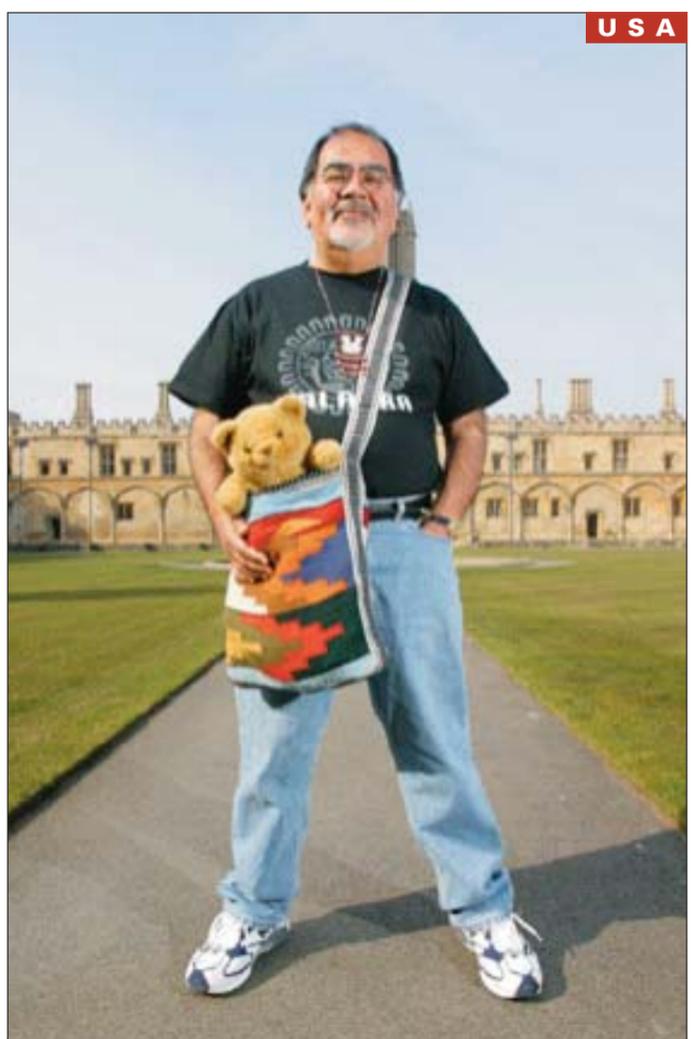
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Humera Khan of the An Nisa Society, a community organisation for Muslim women.

Gangster dads

Bobby Verdugo (below) opens a special 4-page section, describing his work with rival Latino gangs in Los Angeles as he tries to help them to escape from violence into involved fatherhood. Michael Durham (opposite) details parental struggles in Korea against a dominant work culture



'It's an unwritten rule that if a gang member has a baby ... he can get out of the gang.'

Work in the East Side of Los Angeles with Latino gang members. It's about as tough an area as you can get and as Third World as it comes in the United States. *Con Los Padros* – With the Father – works with rival gangs like Cerco Blanco, Barrio Nuevo and the Hazards – sometimes at the same time.

Most of these kids don't have any relationship with their fathers. Their fathers either left or are in prison. It means nobody has talked to them about fatherhood before. They are usually between about 16 and 25 and they suddenly find they are fathers themselves.

Many programmes working with teenage parents in the inner city give help to mothers, but they don't include fathers. That's why we started *Con Los Padros* in 1999. We found that a lot of these tough young street kids are not allowed to be in their babies' lives – very often it's the girl's parents who don't want them around, just don't think these young boys are ready to be fathers. There is a lot of pressure on them to get a job and act in a good way. Or the relationship breaks up. It ends up there is no communication between the fathers and their children. They feel powerless.

But these are really tough kids, young fathers who are violent, who are in gangs, who have all kinds of drug and alcohol problems, who have what we call in Spanish *cargas* – baggage. But we tell them they also have the capacity for *regalos* – gifts. Their own dads had baggage and gifts they handed on to them too.

For a lot of these kids, becoming a father is a big problem. It's not something you admit to in a gang. They don't announce to anyone else in their group that they are a father because it's not cool.

But at the same time it's the only way out of being in a gang – you can't just leave a gang. The only other way is to get jumped out. It's an unwritten rule that if a gang member has a baby and he is really sincere about wanting it, he can get out of the gang – though all the same he has to leave the neighbourhood.

So there are some guys who find that by being a father they can change their lives. Others want to leave a legacy and having children is

a way to do it. These are guys who normally don't look more than ten days ahead. Having a baby means they have something to leave behind.

We run parenting circles for between eight and 13 young fathers at a time over 20 weeks, when we teach parenting skills, how to change a diaper, about baby care, how to hold a baby. We talk about what it means to be a father and all the obstacles to being a good parent.

We tell them that being a father is being a man of your word. They understand that. Often they know how it felt when their own fathers let them down. We tell them that one of the big rules is never to harm anyone in your circle – anyone who may affect your life, the baby's mother, her relatives. A lot of what we do comes from Native American teaching.

It always makes a big difference when the men re-enter their babies' lives, even if there was bad feeling and animosity before. There's hope. A lot of these men call us up to say they need help. It makes a difference to their lives.

I'm 52. I was a night bus driver in Los Angeles for 15 years, so I'm street smart and I know my way around. I work with young men who do stupid things at young ages and get in trouble. I did my stupid thing when I was 31. I was charged with grand theft. I did time. I became a felon. I lost my job. I almost lost my family.

I went to jail for less than a year, but when I came out I was suicidal, depressed. But I couldn't let it break me. About the same time, my brother died in a drug-related auto accident. He was a teen father. I remember going to the hospital and watching him die. At that moment, I decided I was going to be a social worker. I didn't want any other family to go through what I did.

Now I've got two daughters, aged 21 and 23. I had them to live for. My family backed me all the way. I wish I could work myself out of a job, though I know I never will. But I feel safe in this job, because I am something like what these young kids never had – a father figure. I don't have my dad in my life any more, but at least I have what he taught me.

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Company slaves

When Mike Na founded the Korean Fathers Club 12 years ago, it was almost unheard of for a man to spend time with his children.

A man's place is in the office, earning the cash. A child's place is with his or her mother.

Like Japan, Korea is a country of the "company man", typically working 10 or 11 hours a day and unable to head for home until the boss leaves the office. As a result, the majority of hard-working Korean men rarely see their children, let alone form a relationship with them. All that is changing, but slowly.



'Of course dads get angry. But what can they do?'

Mike, 43, a trader in women's clothes and accessories, decided men were being denied the opportunity to express their fatherhood. The Korean Fathers Club sprang from a conviction that, if they were only given the opportunity, dads could successfully challenge the social conventions barring them from getting close to their kids. Today the club is widely known, with more than 1,000 members.

"We have a company-man culture like in Japan. If the boss is still in the office, you just can't go home. Of course they get angry. But what can they do?"

Seven or eight times a year, the Korean Fathers Club organises

outings for fathers and their children who can spend one or two days together on a trip. Often, it is the first time the fathers have spent any time alone with their children. "Korean men often don't really know their children at all. We give them the chance."

The club also runs men's groups, where fathers can meet with other dads to discuss the pressures they are under. In such a macho culture, the events are surprisingly popular. "If a man feels sorrow he may want to cry, but in Korea he can't do it in front of his children. He is not allowed to show any weakness. But in the groups, this all changes. In this way lots of fathers find their identity." In the world's most Internet-wired country, Mike also offers one-to-one consultancy to nervous dads, by email.

The fathers' club is well known in Korea through the media and interestingly, 70 per cent of the enquiries they get are from wives wanting their husbands to join. "Every wife knows the kids need some kind of father. But if they try saying that to their husband, he'll say there's no time, no opportunity, he has to earn money." Many Korean wives, too, are chary of pushing their men folk beyond traditional boundaries.

Five years ago, Mike launched a branch of the club aimed at divorced and single fathers struggling to keep in touch with their children or raise them alone. The venture opened in a blaze of publicity but closed down soon after. "It was too risky for the men involved." Divorce has a huge stigma attached to it in Korea and it was a challenge too far for most singleton fathers.

Even so, Mike Na hopes to change the climate for men in Korea. As more women take jobs and men increasingly find themselves forced to hold the baby, Mike believes the need will increase. "Korea is a small country and there isn't a single person who has not heard of our club," he says.

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'In many families, the mother has died.'

The Altay Regional Crisis Centre for Men opened in Barnaul eight years ago. Alcoholism and domestic violence are big problems in this part of Russia and we have a lot of work to do. There is a full-time staff of 12 and last year alone we gave assistance to more than 6,000 men and their families.

We are facing a male crisis. There is a very high level of unemployment here in Siberia. When a man is unemployed, he becomes aggressive and he doesn't know how to break the cycle of aggression. The result is often drinking and domestic violence against women.

Domestic violence results in new social pressures, more divorce, psychological trauma, violent teen behaviour and more alcohol misuse. In the Altai region of Siberia, there are about 7,000 marriages annually, but about the same number of divorces.

The men's counselling programme has been going longest. Most of our clients are aged between 25 and 40, about 90 per cent of them are married and many have children. We run self-help groups where we offer counselling for men who batter and to their victims, plus special training for very young husbands. Yes, many of these men want to change, but they can't help themselves. They do get upset when they are divorced and of course, the wives usually take the children with them.

We have a special programme that we call "incomplete fathers' family", for men who are trying to

look after children on their own. We have about 400 men who fall into this category. In these cases, about 80 per cent of the mothers have died. Their biggest problem is a lack of any kind of child care. Less than a third of these children have grandparents who can help look after them. In Russia school hours are short – only three to six hours a day. A lot of children end up on their own.

Because of the self-help groups, fathers can find ways of networking and giving each other mutual aid. We work with men on their own like this in groups of ten or 12 people, once a week, for two or three months. We work with the children as well. Very often, fathers and their children understand each other better afterwards. I think the men often learn better ways of communicating. Many of these men are not highly educated.

I am a psychologist. I've read all the literature. But maybe I have some personal reasons too. I'm 27 and I have a son of two years old – but I haven't a father. My mother and father were divorced when I was just one year old. I was brought up by my grandfather. My father was not a strong man. He died of alcoholism three years ago. That was terrible. I want to stop other people going through what I did. Our motto is: "You may lose, but you should not give up!"

Maxim Kostenko
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'The nicest feeling is having your children cuddle into you like little snugly koalas'



Greg Telford (right) co-ordinates the Rekindling the Spirit programme: 'We have good and bad spirits within us all. What we try to work with is to bring the good spirit to the forefront.'

belong to the Midjuanbal clan. We were the first black family in Kingscliff. At times I was envious of white kids because I saw dads supporting their kids to do the best they could, whereas my Dad was like: "You get out there and fuckin' hurt somebody and if you don't fuckin' hurt somebody I'll hurt you".

Through that negative relationship I have to keep working really hard to maintain the positive connection I have with my boys today. I had a little spin the other night. My eldest fella

challenged me about it. He said, "You shouldn't bring your attitude home from work and take it out on Mum, and take it out on us." We had a bit of a blow up but we've got a meeting planned for tonight so that mum and me and the two boys can talk.

I never experienced anything like that growing up although I used to talk with my mum about her living with the violence. I always had a dream that there's got to be more to life than this, that we're not put on this earth to just keep hurting one another and keep feeling hurt, you know, and sadness. I'm pretty sure that's not what life's about. Today I'm lucky that I've been able to work through my stuff and find out what that actually is.

I am the co-ordinator of the Rekindling the Spirit program. I like to feel that we have good and bad spirits within us all. What we try to work with is to bring the good spirit to the forefront. What I talk to the men about is if you don't like your life and where you're going and you don't want your children to go down that same track, maybe you need to be looking at changing your behaviour because what our kids see is what our kids will be.

Our program was set up and staffed by Aboriginal (Koori) people to empower our own brothers and sisters to take more control of their own lives, without blaming others. We can make up nice glossy

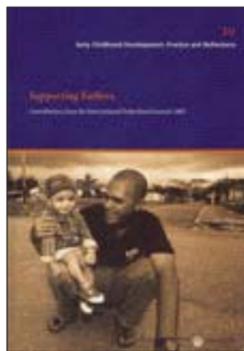
certificates that say I completed this course but for me the benefits come when your kids reach up to you and want to be around you. One of the nicest feelings I've ever had is sitting in front of the telly, having your children cuddle into you like little snugly koalas on either side.

I shared that in a men's group, and one of the guys - he was not long out of prison - came in the next week and he said: "Greg you know how you talked about your kids snuggling in to you either side of you and how it's such a nice feeling, well I tried that and I'd never had a feeling like that."

The vision for me around our Indigenous people is to see dads take a lot more of a role all the way through from their birth to their death. Part of our work is we run camps with the men and their boys. With our mob I'm really hungry to see what can happen. When kids are loved and supported and encouraged, it just blows me away what they achieve. It took me a while to realise that sort of stuff. I make a lot of mistakes but mistakes are about learning. Now what I do is, I share it with others. And the good part is, I share it with my kids.

Greg Telford first told his story to Susanna Freymark. The full interview is in www.byronchild.com

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Supporting Fathers, the Bernard van Leer Foundation/Fathers Direct International Summit Report is available free from the Foundation's website. A pdf can be downloaded from <http://www.bernardvanleer.org/page.asp?pid=25#Supporting>. Some free, printed copies are also available if you email the Bernard van Leer Foundation on pub-english@bvleerf.nl



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Photo exhibition communicates message of caring and protective fatherhood

South Africa has a shockingly high rate of child abuse, perpetrated mainly by men. More than 25,000 children are sexually abused each year and few, if any, programmes to reduce child sexual abuse in South Africa are engaging men.

Many fathers are absent from the lives of their children, providing neither material nor social support for their offspring, and leaving men disconnected from the benefits of family life. The AIDS epidemic is having a devastating effect on children's care networks, exposing them to additional trauma, displacement, neglect and abuse.

All these factors prompted the Child Youth and Family Development programme at the Human Sciences Research Council to launch the Fatherhood Project, an action research project to increase men's care and protection of children.

With funding from the Ford Foundation, the project has brought

together a group of people to develop three related sets of activity - awareness raising and advocacy, information dissemination and research (including monitoring and evaluation).

In a land with 11 official languages, the challenge of communicating effectively about the importance of caring and protective fatherhood is considerable, and one of the first activities was the development of a photo exhibition. This approach has enabled the project to speak about the issues using compelling visual materials that connect with people emotionally. The travelling photo exhibition has been to six South African cities where the project has worked with local NGO's and men's groups to profile their activities. The exhibition has recently travelled to UNICEF's headquarters in New York, and has been presented to UNICEF ambassador and star of "The Matrix" film trilogy, Laurence Fishburne. (Check out the website



The old stereotypes of iron men are being questioned by modern images

www.hsac.za/fatherhood)

"We can't keep up with number of journalists who want to develop the issue," says Linda Richter who leads the project. "There have been some really good articles debating African fatherhood".

A new book, "Baba? Men and fatherhood in South Africa", (HSRC Press) explores the demographics

and media representations of fatherhood, the experiences of fathers and their families and the emerging agenda for fatherhood in the country.

There are signs that a public debate on fatherhood is beginning in South Africa. The Department of Social Development and the Presidential Office have hosted meetings on positive involvement of men in programmes for women and children and work has begun to identify the policies that could help.

As for the Fatherhood Project itself, Linda hopes that in the future the task of researching and disseminating information on fatherhood can be moved into a strong child rights and advocacy organization - "for me, the Fatherhood Project has always been about children".

Tom Beardshaw

Links: The South African Fatherhood Project: www.hsac.za/fatherhood

Pioneer raises men's involvement in childcare

Jan Peeters became a convert to hands-on fatherhood early on. When his first child, was just three years old, her mother died of cancer at only 30, leaving Jan to raise their daughter alone. He took on all the childcare himself.

Today, that daughter is 27 years old, and Jan, 50, runs a programme for men at the Training and Resource Centre for Child Care in Gent, Belgium. Part of his job is to encourage more men to take up working professionally with children. He is launching a national network for male childcare professionals.

"If men are going to take on more responsibility for children, fathers need role models," he says. "They need to be able to see other men doing it well. They ought to find male role models in services for young children, where men work professionally in child care roles - nurseries, schools, crèches, clinics and health centres, adoption services."

In Belgium - which might be considered relatively enlightened in terms of gender equality, and where male carers are supposedly viewed sympathetically - only about 0.33 per cent of professionals who work with young children are men.

"My daughter was 13 before she had a male schoolteacher," Jan recalls. "If things are to change, it's vital that boys and girls expect men to care for

children just as much as women. And before that happens, men themselves have got to have the feeling that it's perfectly normal to care for children.

The Training and Resource Centre, part of the University of Gent, has already run several campaigns to promote positive role models for men. With a staff of 32 it serves a population of four million in the Flanders region, and is the leading childcare training centre in Belgium.

Jan recently launched a campaign to involve men. He used poster showing men in typical male professions - business managers, accountants and builders - playing and working with children. They have appeared in day care centres and employment offices all over Belgium.

He hopes to set up Belgium's first professional network of male child carers, provisionally titled "Men for Child Care". Women will be able to take part - but the focus will definitely be on how men can get more involved, and support each other doing it.

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Father

PITAJI

Appa

Dad

AYYA

Père

Bapuji

Papi

Baba

Pop

AB

El Obuja

Papacito

Vater

Da

The Old Lad

Daddy

Tata

Ntate

Vader

Papa

International Fatherhood Summit



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about Us...

Fathers Direct is a charity established in 1999. Our staff have qualifications and expertise in family support and social care, research, training and consultancy, communications and business development.

We aim to create a society that gives all children a strong and positive relationship with their fathers and other male carers and prepares boys and girls for a future shared role in caring for children.

transforming fatherhood: transforming children's lives

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