

THRIVE

**EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT,
GENDER SOCIALIZATION
AND MEN'S ENGAGEMENT:
AN ANNOTATED
BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Written by Hadijah Nandyose, Louise Ruskin, Melanie Swan
and Sophie Tanner



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ACRONYMS

CHW – Community Health Worker

ECCD – Early Childhood Care and Development

ECCE – Early Childhood Care and Education

ECD – Early Childhood Development

HIC – High Income Countries

LMIC – Low and Middle-Income Countries

MNCH – Maternal, Newborn and Child Health

RWAMREC – Rwanda Men's Resource Center

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Emergency Fund

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

The following terms are used in this report as defined here:

Early Childhood Development (ECD): the process of change in which a child masters more and more complex levels of physical activity, thinking, feeling, communicating and interacting with others. Through this process of physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, the child acquires the knowledge, behaviours and skills that enable him or her to be happy, build relationships with others, learn, function effectively and independently, and adapt to changes in the environment.

Nurturing care: the care that children's brains and bodies need to develop and grow. It encompasses responsive caregiving, practices to promote good health and attention, provision of opportunities for play and early learning, protection from violence, abuse, neglect, accidents and other sources of toxic stress. Parents and other primary caregivers are the first and most important providers of nurturing care to young children, but many need support from communities and public programmes and services to do so.

Men's engagement (in ECD): entails more than the father/male caregiver adopting specific practices for their children's healthy development (though these are important). Men who are fully engaged are emotionally involved. They equally share responsibility with their partner for promoting the health, well-being and development of their children. They communicate and resolve differences of opinion and potential conflict without violence. They share decision-making, control over household resources and the workload – including care work – with their partner.

Parents/ caregivers: refers to the mother or father (biological or step-parent), partners and other relatives, including grandparents, uncles, aunts, or siblings that play a key role in childrearing and have primary responsibility for the care and protection of the youngest children in the family.

Gender and social norms: Social norms are the shared, informal understandings, beliefs, expectations or customary rules of a particular group, community, or culture about how people should behave in specific situations. Gender norms are the shared expectations or rules about how each gender should behave. They are usually underpinned by values and ideologies related to masculinity and femininity and reflect gendered inequalities of power and gender discrimination. Gender norms that place limitations on girls and women – and on their mobility, education, decision-making power and their expectations for the future – are means of upholding the social order and not only reflect – but also reinforce – inequalities of power.

Gender socialisation: The process through which girls and boys learn about the gendered norms, attitudes and expectations of their community and society: how they are supposed to behave, what their future role will be, and how they are valued differently. Children learn these norms, attitudes and expectations, from birth, from parents/caregivers, educators and other adults – through the way these model different roles and behaviours for men and women; treat girls and boys differently; encourage specific activities for girls and boys; communicate different expectations for the ways girls and boys should behave; and explicitly teach girls and boys different things in preparation for success in adult life.

INTRODUCTION

Plan International's new Global Strategy 2017-2022 frames our commitment to work with vulnerable children and especially girls, so they can learn, lead, decide and thrive. The strategy is formed around six 'Areas of Global Distinctiveness' designed to transform the lives of 100 million girls globally: one of the six areas identified is Early Childhood Development (ECD). While the overarching goal of Plan International's ECD work will be to enable girls and boys from excluded groups to survive and thrive during early childhood, Plan International's agency-wide commitment to gender-transformative approaches mean that ECD programming and influencing will also place particular emphasis on:

- promoting equal opportunities for girls and boys to the nurturing care, supports and services that are essential for their early years' development
- ensuring that girls get a good and fair start to life – and encouraging gender-equal socialization processes
- influencing for improved conditions and social position of women that are mothers and caregivers
- transforming the unequal gender relationships and the gender and social norms that underpin harmful or discriminatory practices: in this respect, a particular priority will be to support parents/primary caregivers to provide their young children gender-responsive, nurturing care.

Ensuring linkages with priorities under other other Areas of Global Distinctiveness, ECD programmes will focus on adolescent mothers as a sub-group of parents and caregivers.

This annotated bibliography has been developed to support this work. It aims to i) assess what evidence exists in relation to parenting and gender socialization, men's engagement and gender norm change and their linkages to ECD, identifying key knowledge gaps to inform Plan International's research agenda, and ii) identify tools and resources for programming promoting men's engagement and gender-responsive parenting/care-giving.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the wider scope of the topic and the dearth of literature on many aspects of ECD, this review is focussed on just two key questions:

- 1 What evidence is there on how important parents and primary caregivers are as actors in the gender socialisation that occurs during early childhood, especially in low / middle income countries? Is there any evidence around effective parenting interventions that promote positive gender socialization processes and enable children to grow up free of unjust, limiting gendered norms and expectations?
- 2 What is known about effective interventions promoting men's engagement in the care and development of young children in low and middle-income countries?

The annotated bibliography includes a selection of recent papers, reports, publications and tools that address these research questions.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Role of parents as actors in early childhood gender socialisation, and effective parenting approaches for promoting positive gender socialization (question 1).

Key findings

- Evidence suggests that what parents do, rather than their gender ideology or attitudes, is most impactful in influencing how children form gender role attitudes. This is an important finding in terms of the design of interventions as it suggests that starting with changes in parents' behaviours – potentially an easier process than changing belief systems, unless entrenched and strong gender norms are in place and are drivers of these behaviours– can be impactful.
- What parents say and do does influence children's learning and internalization of gender attitudes and expectations and potentially from an early age. Findings from some of the studies indicate that parents are more influential actors in the gender socialization process than children's peers.
- Mothers appear to have more influence over how children learn gender attitudes than fathers, though it is unclear whether this is because usually children spend more time with the mother. At the same time the attitudes and behaviours of fathers are influential, particularly so for their sons.

Research recommendations

Overall there is a lack of rigorous evidence in this area, particularly from low and middle income countries (LMICs) and particularly regarding effective gender-responsive parenting interventions. The following areas have emerged as areas where further research is particularly needed:

- Role of fathers/male caregivers' behaviours and attitudes on gender socialization
- The importance of parents/primary caregivers as actors in the gender socialization process in LMICs, compared to other actors (peers, teachers, the media and other children)
- The degree to which whether a single parent is involved in paid or unpaid work influences children's learning and internalization of gender attitudes
- Effective parenting interventions promoting positive gender socialisation and equal treatment of girls and boys.

Men's engagement in the care and development of young children (question 2)

Key findings

- When working to promote men's engagement, it is important to take a comprehensive approach, implementing strategies that address both individual attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, skills and behaviours for men's engagement alongside interventions supporting changes in gender norms and policies that favour and support their involvement. In many communities this requires work also with men's partners, families and community traditional and religious leaders.
- Critical points in the child's life course (such as before birth, birth, entry into preschool) can be leveraged as entry points in programming aiming to increase father's engagement in caregiving. Getting men involved as early as possible – for instance through maternal health interventions – can be useful in promoting their sustained engagement.

- Policies which mandate paternity leave can increase fathers'/male caregivers' engagement. Likewise, ensuring that micro-credit and conditional cash transfer programmes are available to men as well as women can be important facilitators of men's engagement.
- Specific interventions for men – such as men's groups, reaching men through home visits or male mentoring programmes – have been shown to result in positive outcomes in different studies. However, alternative routes that may be more feasible include training professionals that reach families directly, so that they reach out to men as part of their routine work and use their contacts with men to promote their engagement in childcare, as well as tapping into existing sectorial structures and initiatives. In this respect, engaging men through the health sector has been shown to be an effective strategy, as well as the training and employment of male Community Health Workers (CHWs).
- Interventions with one parent are not recommended as by default they tend to only reach the mother. Likewise interventions with men only will not address the fact that women may act as gatekeepers and barriers to men's increased engagement. The general recommendation is to work with both parents as co-parents; though in some contexts including fathers-only sessions, during which men can discuss more sensitive topics together, has also be found to be beneficial.
- In all contexts, but particularly those where women have limited decision-making power and autonomy, men's engagement initiatives have to be designed carefully and within the framework of a gender transformative approach, in order to avoid the unintended negative consequence of increased control by men of issues usually considered the 'woman's domain' and a further loss of female autonomy.

Research recommendations

Again, much of the literature highlighted the gap in evidence and rigorous evaluations of programmes across the board, and especially in LMICs. The following areas requiring further attention in terms of new research and evidence gathering were highlighted:

- Ensuring gender-disaggregated data collection and reporting for all parenting interventions
- Evaluate beyond process and output data, investing in robust and long-term evaluations of outcome-level results, including parenting quality, co-parenting quality and family functioning
- Enquiry into what works with respect to gender norm change for men's engagement and with engaging the wider community, so that this supports, rather than obstructs changes in men's behaviour and male engagement
- Formative research to understand what is important to the men and what might be motivators for their engagement, thereby generating information for programming
- Assess the effectiveness of gender-synchronised approaches – working with men and women separately with some joint sessions – compared to approaches which involve working with men and women together as a couple
- Implementation research that will help us to understand: the differences in effectiveness between different men's engagement initiatives and to explain why some appear to have zero or negative results; as well as to identify what the core components of effective programming are that can potentially be replicated across different contexts and what are the aspects that will need to be culturally adapted.

ROLE OF PARENTS IN GENDER SOCIALIZATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

What evidence is there on how important parents and primary caregivers are as actors in the process of gender socialisation that occurs during early childhood, especially in low and middle income countries? Is there any evidence around effective parenting interventions that promote positive gender socialisation processes and enable children to grow up free of unjust, limiting gendered norms and expectations?

Dhar, D., Jain, T., Jayachandran, S. 2018. “Intergenerational Transmission of Gender Attitudes: Evidence from India.”

This study examines the intergenerational transmission of gender attitudes in a state in India. It begins by arguing that gender gaps favouring males are disproportionately larger in poorer countries and that, amongst these countries, India stands out in terms of the severity of gender discrimination and the unequal opportunities and outcomes experienced by women compared to men. While acknowledging that religious, cultural and economic factors play a role in reinforcing discrimination against women, the paper suggests that deep seated gender preferences and attitudes are equally important in shaping the status quo and states the purpose of the research is to find out where these preferences and attitudes come from and whether intergenerational transmission plays a role. The paper highlights the lack of research in this field from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), with most studies coming out of high income countries (HICs); a crucial gap, given that social, cultural and economic factors will differ considerably in these different contexts.

Survey data on gender attitudes, with specific reference to the roles and rights of women and girls, were collected between 2013-2014 from almost 5500 boys and girls aged 11 – 12 years, attending grades 6 and 7 of 314 schools in the state of Haryana. In addition, surveys were conducted with one of the parents of a sub-set of these students. Information was collected on family characteristics, parents' attitudes to education, employment and gender roles within the household and public life, and the children's gendered attitudes, expectations and behaviours.

The study found a child's gender attitudes were more likely to be influenced by the attitudes of their parents than the attitudes of their peers. When a parent reported a particular gender attitude (discriminatory or equitable), his or her child was 11 percentage points more likely to also hold that attitude, suggesting that though “parents are an important factor in shaping adolescents' attitudes” their views are not perfectly replicated by their offspring. Mothers had greater influence on the gender attitudes of both sons and daughters compared to fathers: the authors suggest that this may be caused by the higher amount of time mothers spent with their children relative to fathers, who are often working or seeking work and absent from the home. Interestingly, children are more likely to have gender equitable views if their mother is in full-time employment, suggesting the importance of a female role model. There was also a link between a student's positive gender attitudes and the extent to which they interact with children of the opposite sex.

Whilst this study does not focus research attention on infants and young children, the findings are current, around parenting and gender attitudes, and specific to a LMIC. The study calls for further research on how these gender-based attitudes are developed and what can be done to reduce potentially limiting and damaging gender norms.

Endendijk, J.J., Groeneveld M.G., Bakermans-Kranenburg M.J., Mesman J. 2016. “Gender-Differentiated Parenting Revisited: Meta-Analysis Reveals Very Few Differences in Parental Control of Boys and Girls”. *PLoS ONE* 11(7): e0159193.

This meta-analysis of 126 observational studies sought to determine the extent to which parents treat sons and daughters differently, reviewing their controlling behaviours and autonomy-supporting behaviours. The rationale for the study is based on the theory that differentiated parenting of boys and girls might be one mechanism to explain gendered differences in children's behaviour. The authors note that while there are several theoretical models which might explain differences in parenting behaviours towards girls and boys – including controlling behaviours – there is a lack of consensus in the literature about the extent to which parents do treat boys and girls differently, in which areas of parenting this mostly occurs, and whether fathers and mothers differ in the extent to which their behaviours are gender-differentiated. The paper provides a framework for analysis based on several theoretical perspectives that might explain gender-differentiated parental control strategies:

- **self-determination theory:** outlines types of parental control that promote optimal or less optimal child development, notably autonomy-supportive (providing the child with appropriate levels of choice and control over their own behaviours and actions) and controlling strategies (which undermine the child's ability for autonomous regulation, and press the child to think, behave, or feel in particular ways, e.g. corporal punishment, harsh discipline, manipulation)
- **biosocial theory of sex differences:** provides a rationale for differential control of girls and boys, based on societies' division of gender roles – particularly in regards to the female role of homemaker and the male role of economic provider – which in turn leads to different expectations of the behaviours of men and women, girls and boys and to differential treatment of girls and boys, men and women.
- **gender-schema theories:** explain that a parent's individual gender-role stereotypes will influence the strategies they use with girls and boys. When parents have traditional attitudes about gender roles, they are more likely to show gender-differentiated parenting that reinforces gender-role consistent behavior (e.g., more harsh or physical control of boys than girls, more gentle control and guidance of girls than of boys) – even if this differs from the wider society's views or strategies.

The analysis controlled for child behaviour, clinical or at-risk samples, age, socio-economic status and culture, as these are all thought to be factors which may affect the observable gender-differentiated parenting strategies. The literature search was global, including articles in English, French, Spanish and German, though most available literature included appears to be from HICs. The study found that parents were more likely to use controlling strategies with boys than with girls, though the effect size was small. Further, the study found that little difference in how mothers and fathers treat boys and girls; both were more controlling with their boys than with their girls. There was no significant difference in how parents use autonomy-supportive strategies with boys and girls. These surprisingly few differences were found in parents' use of control with boys and girls oppose the biosocial theory of sex differences. Interestingly, there were significant differences based on when the study was conducted: papers reviewed in the 70s and 80s indicate boys received more autonomy-supportive parenting than girls; papers published after 1990 find positive effect sizes indicate that girls received more autonomy-supportive parenting than boys, suggesting important cultural shifts over time.

Halpern, H.P., Perry-Jenkins, M. 2015. “Parents' Gender Ideology and Gendered Behaviour as Predictors of Children's Gender-Role Attitudes: A Longitudinal Exploration”. *Sex Roles*, 11-12: 74.

This longitudinal study explored how parent's gender ideology and gender-based behaviour impacted comparably on their sons' and daughters' gender-role attitudes at the age of six. The study was carried out on 109 dual-earner working-class couples in the United States. The inclusion of fathers in the research was reported as significant compared to previous studies which tended to rely on mother's reporting of fathers' behaviour or omitted fathers entirely.

Although this study was carried out in a high-income country, participants were low and middle-income earners, a factor identified as a limitation to the methodological approach of the research as economic hardship may have shaped the way in which parents divide household and paid labour.

In summary, findings indicated that overall, parents' behaviours were better predictors of children's gender-role attitudes at the age of six years than were the parents' gender ideologies. Specific findings related to the respective impact of mothers' and fathers' behaviours and gender ideologies on the gender-role attitudes of sons and daughters were also examined. The study showed that when mothers were engaged in more traditional activities, such as housework and childcare, their daughters demonstrated more knowledge of feminine gender stereotypes – indicating that girls were more attuned to what they see their mothers doing rather than what mothers might be saying about gender equality – while their sons showed less knowledge of masculine behaviors. These findings suggest that mothers are the primary imparters of knowledge about feminine behavior for girls, and masculine behaviour for boys. In contrast, fathers' ideology, rather than their behaviours, was found to be most impactful on their sons' gender identity and stereotypes about girls, especially when fathers held more traditional views. Interestingly, relationships were found between both the behaviours and ideologies of mothers and children's knowledge of their own gender behaviour, but not of stereotypes of the opposite gender.

Recommendations for parenting aimed at raising children with flexible gender ideology included starting in the first year of the child's life, and recognising that mothers' behaviour has significant impact on both sons and daughters and fathers' early ideology is particularly important for their sons' gender development.

The study identified research gaps based on the findings, including fathers' early ideology as a predictor of boys' stereotypes about girls; it was reported that there is little evidence on the impact of fathers' gender ideology on gender socialization, and suggest a hypothesis driven longitudinal research study that follows fathers and their children.

Kågesten, A., Gibbs, S., Blum, R., Moreau, C., Chandra-Mouli, Herbert, A., Amin, A. 2016. “Understanding Factors that Shape Gender Attitudes in Early Adolescence Globally: A Mixed-Methods Systematic Review.” *PLoS ONE* 11(6).

The objective of this review is to explore the factors that shape gender attitudes in early adolescence across different cultural settings globally, including both HICs and LMICs. It presents a systematic review of literature from 12 databases from 1984-2014, resulting in the inclusion of 82 studies spanning 29 countries.

The findings of the review suggest that young adolescents across different cultural settings commonly endorse norms that perpetuate inequalities, and identify parents and peers as being key agents in the formation of these attitudes. Detailed findings indicate that boys and girls differ in the way they endorse gender norms, and that these differences seem to be due to the socialisation processes experienced by each sex. Girls' attitudes are more likely to be shaped by how parents, siblings, peers and teachers manage their mobility, freedom, sexuality and appearance, while boys' attitudes are more strongly shaped by how their peers reinforce stereotypically masculine attributes and behaviours. However, it was reported that girls are less likely than boys to accept stereotypical inequitable gender norms.

Whilst this review focuses on adolescence rather than young children and while it does not provide detailed findings on how parenting shapes gender norms in their children, it *does* confirm that parents are key actors in the process. In addition, the paucity of data on this topic from LMICs (90 percent of the studies reviewed stemmed from North America or Western Europe) clearly indicates a need to develop an evidence base on parenting and gender socialisation in these countries.

Kilsby, D. 2014. “Synthesis Report: Research into Gender in ECCD in six countries”. Plan International.

This is a summary of recent research studies undertaken by Plan International in Bolivia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Pakistan and Uganda into the gender dimensions of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) programmes. All six studies used mixed methods, with an emphasis on qualitative data, and used different tools and analytical frameworks. Overall, the research finds that girls and boys were being prepared for becoming women and men with narrow, culturally prescribed gendered roles. Women were primarily defined as wives and mothers, and as a result take on caregiving and domestic duties; generally, they also had a lower status. Men were viewed as leaders and fathers, with decision-making and protective responsibilities. Women were more likely to attend parenting classes and participate in ECCD centres.

Unsurprisingly, parents' aspirations for the children's futures reflected these norms, with career or adulthood goals aligning to traditional male or female jobs. While in some cases parents and children aspired to non-traditional roles for girls, their expectations for boys were always that they would eventually enter traditional male professions. The children's own aspirations for their future likewise reflected these norms, with the study in Mozambique finding that children aged only 3–6 years had internalized these attitudes and expectations. Across all countries, girls listed things they could not do or behaviours that were inappropriate for them, and outlined their emerging duties in domestic labour. Girls' bodies were more likely to be seen as 'public property', and they were more likely to be subjected to rights violations (early marriage, sexual abuse, denial of education, etc.). In some contexts, while mothers were seen to be responsible for both sons and daughters during the early years, fathers became responsible for sons (only) once these reached early adolescence. The studies also found that adults reproduced the gender socialisation practices they themselves had received during their upbringing.

Of concern, this stereotypical division of gender roles was found in ECCD centres, with men in management positions and women in caregiver roles; in few cases were staff aware of gender inequalities or how to challenge them. However, the studies found that Plan International's ECD programming had influenced some positive changes in girls' school attendance rates, the level of awareness on issues such as harmful traditional practices and in awareness amongst men of their role in child rearing and that young children themselves were also showing a willingness to challenge discriminatory gender norms.

The report recommends engaging men and boys as positive change agents; working with women and girls on awareness and empowerment; and harnessing opportunities to challenge embedded beliefs and gender norms, including through early learning programmes offered through ECCD centres.

Leaper, C. 2014. "Parents' Socialization of Gender in Children". In Martin, C., 2014. "Gender: early Socialization". *Encyclopaedia on Early Childhood Development*.

This paper was funded by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and published by the Encyclopaedia on Early Childhood Development. The paper explores influences on gender socialization of children under three categories; parents, peers and teachers/school. Regarding parental influence on children's gender development, four research questions were posed:

- Do parents tend to have gender-stereotypical expectations for their children?
- Do parents tend to model traditional gender-role behaviours to their children?
- Do parents tend to encourage gender-stereotyped behaviours and to discourage cross-gender stereotyped behaviours in their children?
- Do gender-related variations in parents' expectations and behaviours have causal influences on children's gender development?

The findings, drawn from HIC contexts, suggest that there are several parental attitudes and behaviours which are likely to reinforce gender stereotypes in young children. These fall under five broad themes: language, expectations, encouragement of certain tasks or activities, types of play and play materials, and role modelling. It was noted that in industrialized nations, more egalitarian views are found in some sections of society, with parents attempting to raise their children in a more 'gender neutral' way.

Parenting behaviours that were found to reduce the likelihood of young children learning gender stereotypes included the father's involvement in childcare; this modelling demonstrates to the young child that an adult male role may include nurturing. The paper also reports that fathers are more likely than mothers to reinforce gender stereotypes. It could be argued that both findings reinforce further the argument for increased engagement of men in unpaid care work.

Practical recommendations for parents to foster more flexible gender roles in children are offered: encourage play with a combination of feminine and masculine stereotyped toys and play activities; organize mixed-gender activities in which girls and boys learn to work together as equals; and hold discussions with children which challenge gender stereotypes. Research gaps in the field are identified and include: exploration of the extent and means by which parents influence gender development and understanding the relative importance of parents, compared to other socializing agents (peer groups, media, teachers, etc.).

Plan International. 2017. “Synthesis report: research into gender equality and early childhood development in eleven countries in Asia.” Plan International.

This report summarises findings from assessments conducted in 2014-15 on the gender dimensions of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) initiatives in 11 countries – Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste. The research, primarily qualitative and using similar measures across countries, sought to assess how ECCE and parenting interventions need to be strengthened to become gender aware, and in time, gender transformative. Similar to the Kilsby (2014) paper, the research found that women were primarily defined in the role of wife and mother, responsible for care work including domestic chores and care for their young children; men's role in the family was income generation, decision-making and discipline. Girls were valued for qualities of quietness, obedience, discipline and good manners; boys, meanwhile were expected to be noisy, independent, active and naughty in order to learn how to take risks, be strong and become leaders and providers in the future. Aspirations for boys in the future centered on their role as economic providers, in professions such as engineering; for girls, the aspiration was either that they would work in care professions (nurses, teachers), or become good wives and mothers.

The differing parental beliefs and aspirations for girls and boys resulted in them treating and caring for sons and daughters differently. Young girls were required to spend more time at home – both because of safety concerns and domestic responsibilities – while even young boys were allowed more time for play and discovery outside the home. The report notes that this freedom of movement, or lack of it, has “lasting consequences on boys’ and girls’ ability to create social networks, to build social capital, to feel confident and to develop a healthy sense of self-esteem: all necessary qualities for children to reach their full potential.” While parents were equally likely to want to send their daughters to preschool as their sons (supported by gender parity in attendance rates) their motivations for doing so were often different. Staff in ECCE centres also reported similar gendered beliefs and aspirations to parents and treated girls and boys differently in the classroom, promoting different activities and communicating different expectations for girls and boys with respect to behaviours, the children's participation in activities and areas in which each might excel. Finally, those attending parenting groups were primarily mothers, and a significant majority of all educators and teachers working in ECCE centres were women, something which was largely unchallenged due to gender norms which set out that caregiving is the woman's role and low status.

The report recommends that ECCE and preschool interventions should be designed to identify and support changes in norms, expectations and behaviours which negatively impact on young girls and boys. There should be direct work with parents/ caregivers to promote male engagement that include opportunities for critical reflection on gender socialisation processes and their implications. Monitoring and evaluation should measure the changes in gender norms, roles and relationships.

Platt, L., Polavieja, J. 2016. “Saying and Doing Gender: Intergenerational Transmission of Attitudes towards the Sexual Division of Labour.” *European Sociological Review*, 6: 32

This research investigates how children's developing attitudes toward sexual division of labour are impacted on by parental behaviours and personal attitudes. The study was implemented in the United Kingdom, and uses data collected from around 4,600 children aged 11 to 15 years. Data were gathered through a self-completed youth questionnaire from the UK Household Longitudinal Study. The focus of the study was primarily children living in two-parent families, to provide opportunities to investigate the independent influence of mothers and fathers on their sons and daughters.

The findings of the study firstly challenge the suggestion that intentional attitudinal transmission is the main driver of cultural reproduction: instead the findings suggest that what parents do – intentionally or unintentionally – is at least as important as what parents say for gender role transmission. Following on from this, the study stresses the importance of conceptualizing behavioural and attitudinal gender-role transmission as two distinct modes of cultural reproduction.

The differential impact of mothers' and fathers' behaviour and attitudes were examined. The study found that the share of time the mother spent as housewife and **out of the labour force** was more important than parental attitudes in influencing children's attitudes with respect to the sexual division of labour. The study also found that fathers' attitudes affect children, particularly sons. Indeed the study suggests that transmission channels are in the main sex specific: fathers affect sons regardless of the mothers' attitudes – but only influence daughters if their attitudes are in line with the mothers' attitudes – and vice versa with mothers and their daughters. Parental influence is stronger towards children of the same sex. Finally, the study confirmed that attitudes formed in childhood do persist into adult life and have measurable consequences for behaviours.

In conclusion, the study asserts that the parent-to-child intergenerational transmission of attitudes toward sexual division of labour is influenced both by parental attitudes (their stated gender roles) and parental behaviours (their enacted gender roles): moreover that attitudes formed in childhood persist into adult life and are likely to be part of the cause of persistent inequalities in paid and unpaid work. The way in which the dynamics of paid and unpaid work play out in lone-parent families, and their role in influencing children's attitude formation, is identified as an area for further study.

MEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN THE CARE AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN

What is known about effective interventions promoting men's engagement in the care and development of young children in low and middle-income countries?

Ashburn, K., Kerner B., Ojamuge, D., Lundgren, R. 2016. "Evaluation of the Responsible, Engaged, and Loving (REAL) Fathers Initiative on Physical Child Punishment and Intimate Partner Violence in Northern Uganda." *Prev Sci* (2017) 18:854–864

This paper outlines the findings of the REAL Fathers Initiative evaluation in Northern Uganda, which compared outcomes amongst fathers who had and had not been exposed to the intervention. Though the primary outcome measured in this study was a reduction in intimate partner violence, the target group was married/ cohabiting fathers of young children (aged 1-3) and the Initiative included outcomes amongst men in terms of their positive parenting (praise and affection), spending time with their child, and positive discipline (non-use of physical discipline). The intervention's theory of change was grounded in 'social cognitive theory' which 'posits that gender differentiation is a social phenomenon' which is learnt during the early years of childhood, with individuals adapting and modelling their behaviours based on how they observe others playing out these roles. At a critical juncture in their lives (that of becoming fathers), the intervention sought to provide alternative models for these men in relating to their children, including nonviolent discipline and conflict resolution to improve their parenting and communication skills and confidence. The intervention used a mentoring approach: selected male mentors and mentees met twice a month in individual and group sessions over a six-month period with some of the sessions also including the man's partner. The sessions followed a standard format and a curriculum covering fatherhood, parenting, and couple communication, and fathers were issued with assignments to practice new skills between sessions. In addition, awareness raising posters were placed around the community, which depicted a father displaying a positive parenting behaviour (such as reading to his child).

The study found reductions in the reported use of physical punishment and violence; increased attitudes rejecting violence; increased positive parenting; improved confidence to using nonviolent discipline; and better couple communication amongst men in the intervention group. In addition, men in the intervention group were significantly more likely to demonstrate positive parent-child interactions and positive parenting practices, such as rewarding or praising the child for good behaviour, showing the child affection, taking the child somewhere special, and engaging in activities like playing, singing songs, naming and counting things. However, the intervention did not result in significant changes in the proportion of men agreeing with or rejecting traditional gender roles, indicating that there are challenges in addressing these entrenched, underlying norms within a family context and in a short time-frame.

Burgess, A. 2014. "Reaching out to fathers: 'what works' in parenting interventions?". *Early Childhood Matters*. Bernard Van Leer Foundation.

This article reviews the global evidence base on working with fathers – including in LMICs – and identifies approaches to programmes and initiatives which are most effective for men's engagement. The article notes that undertaking the review was challenging for several reasons, including the paucity of evidence (from LMICs in particular) and lack of rigorous evaluations, along with the tendency for evaluations to refer to 'parents' without disaggregating parental outcomes by gender. These challenges provide useful orientation for future research in the area, including a need for more research into father's engagement in parenting programmes and better disaggregation by gender in data collection and analysis when monitoring and evaluating programmes.

There are two key findings from the review, drawn from 10 programmes. Firstly, strategies for including fathers do not require new, specific 'parenting programmes' for men – and indeed it may be hard to attract men in sufficient numbers to parenting programmes or costly to reach them through home visits. The article instead recommends raising awareness amongst professionals who routinely interact with families with young children, so that they work to “bring men in” to the service in which they work and encourage men's involvement in the care of their children. The report notes that training professionals/staff in why including father's engagement matters for the well-being of mothers and children, and addressing their attitudes and beliefs about men's engagement, are essential if this is to be effective. Secondly, relating to programme design, the article outlines evidence from existing literature which supports targeting both parents as a more effective approach, rather than fathers separately from mothers.

Comrie-Thomson, L., Davis, J., Luchters, S., Mavhu, W., Makungu, C., Khan, R., Nahar, Q., Hamdani, S., Stillo, E. 2015. “Men Matter: Engaging Men for Better MNCH Outcomes.” Burnet Institute and Plan International.

This is a primary qualitative research of two existing Plan Canada supported maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) programmes implemented in three LMICs: Bangladesh, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. It also includes an introduction with information based on a literature review regarding male engagement. The study investigates the relationship between male engagement and MNCH outcomes and identifies effective strategies for engaging and retaining men in MNCH programmes.

Findings from the study provide useful guidelines for the design and implementation of similar programmes. The study identifies the following eight key strategies for men's engagement programming:

- **Ensure appropriate messaging:** balancing the need to challenge gender norms without being offensive or inappropriate – or inadvertently impacting negatively on female autonomy
- **Home visits to men and women:** delivering messages at home through community health workers
- **Reach men where they gather:** target common meeting places frequented by men during their leisure time
- **Deliver messages through existing leaders or institutes:** engage community or religious leaders to deliver messages and/or call meetings
- **Edutainment and entertainment:** deliver messages in an entertaining way, for example through music, theatre or dance – activities which are likely to draw people in
- **Work with local health clinics or staff to engage men:** direct invitations to men are found to be more effective than messages passed through the mothers or to parents generically.
- **Community-initiated bylaws and regulatory mechanisms:** These can be a mechanisms to promote behaviour change (for example, pregnant women must be accompanied by the expectant father and a fine is levied for non-compliance), though care needs to be taken to avoid unintended negative consequences
- **Train and support male peer educators and community health workers:** many men display a preference for receiving information from other men

The following four factors are highlighted as effective to sustain male engagement in MHCH

- **Reduced stigma and shaming at the community level:** Both men and women reported stigma or negative perceptions as a common barrier to male engagement in MNCH. Supporting those who are willing to change and encouraging engagement can gradually erode this stigma, though the study also identifies this as a research gap.
- **Support from older generations:** When men engage and challenge expected behaviours and gender roles, this can result in conflict between them and other family members. Older people and community leaders should be engaged in the design and implementation of culturally sensitive innovations to support changes in male behaviours.
- **Motivation from positive personal experience:** males who engage in and benefit from MNCH are likely to feel motivated to encourage their peers to do the same.
- **Male engagement perceived as progressive:** where social change and modernity is seen as positive, male engagement in MNCH could be perceived as progressive or modern and so desirable.

In addition, the report recommends that policymakers and programme designers consider how couples might be supported to decide together how men can best engage in MNCH. Additionally, it is recommended that care is taken to promote a holistic understanding of male engagement that extends beyond actions alone, and instead includes also changes in attitudes, values and relationships.

Doyle, K., Levtov, R.G., Barker, G., Bastian, G.G., Bingenheimer, J.B., Kazimbaya, S., et al. 2018. “Gender-transformative Bandedereho couples’ intervention to promote male engagement in reproductive and maternal health and violence prevention in Rwanda: Findings from a randomized controlled trial.” *PLoS ONE* 13(4): e0192756.

This paper outlines the findings of a randomised controlled trial (RCT) conducted in four Rwandan districts, with the goal of assessing the impact of a gender-transformative couples’ intervention. The intervention sought to “transform norms on masculinity by demonstrating positive models of fatherhood”. Men who were fathers of a child under five, or were expecting a child, were invited to 15 small group sessions and their partners to eight sessions. The curriculum covered issues including gender and power; fatherhood; couple communication and decision-making; intimate partner violence; caregiving; child development; and male engagement in reproductive and maternal health. It encouraged critical reflection and dialogue to allow men and women to reflect on gender norms within the home and how they affect their lives, and rehearse and internalise equitable and non-violent attitudes and behaviours. The training was carried out over five months by trained facilitators who were local fathers, supported where relevant by local police officers or nurses.

The RCT, including data collection 21 months after the intervention started, found positive change in indicators for each of the outcomes. Women in couples which had been exposed to the intervention were significantly less likely to experience intimate partner violence than those in the control group. Both men and women in the intervention group were more likely to participate in ante-natal visits and more likely to report using modern contraception than those in the control group. Importantly, women in the intervention group reported higher levels of partner support during pregnancy, and higher male participation in childcare and housework. Reports of physical punishment of children were lower (intervention women reported 68% compared to 79% control, and intervention men 58% compared with 67% control). Men and women in the intervention group were also less likely to report that men hold all the decision-making power with respect to use of household finances or when to have children.

The study concludes that these findings contribute to the existing evidence on the importance and impact of male engagement approaches which use a gender transformative approach. There are positive health-related behavioural outcomes which affect the wellbeing of both women and children in the family.

Levtov R, van der Gaag N, Greene M, Kaufman M, and Barker G. 2015. “ State of the World’s Fathers: A Men Care Advocacy Publication.” Promundo, Rutgers, Save the Children, Sonke Gender Justice, and the Men Engage Alliance. Washington DC.

This advocacy publication was the first-ever State of the World’s Fathers report and offers a global view of the state of men’s contributions to parenting and care giving, based on international research and data from various countries. Fatherhood is explored in relation to care giving, sexual and reproductive health and rights; MNCH; violence prevention and child development. The report sets out evidence on the positive impact of involved fatherhood on children’s development and wellbeing; its important role in enabling women and girls to achieve their full potential; and how being an engaged father also brings benefits for men themselves. It highlights that while men in some contexts may be increasingly interested in engaging in childcare and development, women continue to shoulder the burden of childcare in most contexts. The report emphasizes the importance of engaging men as early as possible – preferably before the child is born – and in ways that female partners are in agreement with, and emphasizes that promoting men’s engagement must include efforts to break the cycle of domestic violence. It proposes that ensuring adequate paternity leave represents an effective policy mechanism to promote men’s engagement, bringing positive benefits for children, women and the men themselves. Chapter 5 on the role of fathers in children’s development concludes with a series of recommendations for enhancing fathers’ influence in the lives of their children including:

- Ensure that early child development policies and other social policies fostering children and adolescents' growth and development promote the involvement of men as fathers and caregivers
- Strengthen the capacity of institutions that provide early childhood services to promote and support fathers' involvement
- Extend parent-training programmes to mothers and fathers across economic levels to encourage their involvement, to support positive parenting practices, and to strengthen co-parenting relationships
- Increase public awareness of the role of fathers in child development and promote changes in social norms related to caregiving.

This report also notes that there is the need to improve the evidence on fathers' involvement in early child development, by conducting more extensive research and by collecting data on fathers' participation in policy and programme evaluations.

Kato-Wallace, J., Barker, G., Eads, M., and Levto, R. 2014. "Global pathways to men's caregiving: Mixed methods findings from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey and the Men Who Care study." *Global Public Health: An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice* 9 (6):706-22.

This study sets out to explore what factors influence the extent to which men engage in unpaid care work. It is a mixed method study including a survey of 1169 men with children aged 0–4 years living in six countries (Bosnia, Brazil, Chile, Croatia, India and Mexico), and in-depth interviews with 83 fathers engaged in atypical care-giving practices – such as involvement in caregiving chores and playing with children.

Quantitative results outlined the levels of engagement of fathers in these countries, and found men mostly reporting highly unequal divisions of domestic work, though some participation in prenatal care visits and during the children's birth. Overall, and with important and interesting variations by country, the study found that having a mother with higher levels of education, having gender equitable attitudes and accompanying one's partner to at least one prenatal care visit were all positive predictors of a higher level of men's involvement in caregiving. The qualitative findings suggested that diverse factors may lead to high levels of male engagement, including: a) positive experiences in early life, such as when fathers and male relatives "model" being involved caregivers, b) adverse childhood experiences such as violence in the home and economic insecurity, leading to a desire to behave differently from other men, and c) life circumstances that force men to be more involved, such as having a single mother, illness of a partner and unemployment. The study also found that men with positive gender attitudes were more likely to engage by "playing and interacting with their young children, rather than care-related chores," the latter being seen as more laborious tasks. The findings suggest that "gender practices are non-linear and inconsistent".

The authors recommend a dual approach to increasing men's participation in care giving: i) implementing programmes and initiatives which support change in attitudes and beliefs around gender roles and ii) policy and structural changes to support a shift in behaviours. Effective programmes should support attitudinal change around men as caregivers, focus on the positive childhood experiences of men, target males early in life to increase effectiveness and leverage "opportune moments in the cycle of parenthood" (e.g. birth, preschool and school readiness). Policy reforms might include provision of mandated paternity leave and childcare services, and ensuring that public health sector interventions are adapted to engage and include men.

McAllister, F., Burgess, A., Kato, J. and Barker, G. 2012. "Fatherhood: Parenting Programmes and Policy- A Critical Review of Best Practice." *Fatherhood Institute, Promundo, Men Care.*

This paper was produced by the Fatherhood Institute in association with Promundo. The purpose of the paper was to review policies and programmes designed to promote and/or facilitate the involvement of fathers and father figures with children from before birth to aged eight, and establish evidence of the potential impact of these programmes on family violence, child abuse, children's health and learning outcomes. The review included thirty-five projects, with an in-depth study of twenty, predominantly (but not exclusively) from the Global North. The authors highlight the paucity of evidence overall and particularly from

the Global South citing as causes of this the fact that there are few parenting interventions which: a) address fathers' engagement or men's roles in parenting and/or child maltreatment, b) have undergone systematic and robust or long-term evaluation, c) have reports in which findings are disaggregated by sex. Despite this limitation, the report does outline evidence around: what are the predictors of fathers' maltreatment of children; effective interventions for reducing maltreatment; the impact of fathers' participation in programmes on their children's health and learning outcomes; what works in terms of policy supporting men's engagement, looking in detail at policies on parental leave and on parenting interventions.

The paper calls for more impact evaluation research studies on parenting interventions in LMICs, and pilot study research on engaging men in existing large-scale initiatives. On the programme and policy side, recommendations include: engaging fathers early, with programmes that encourage involvement in their child's life starting in the pre-natal period through the early years; basing programmes on formative research into the needs and perspectives of the men themselves, so informing entry-points for engagement; and investing in advocacy campaigns which address attitudes and belief systems.

Finally, the paper makes policy recommendations: these are focused on parental leave and the benefits of establishing and/or expanding equal access to parental leave for men. Although the authors detail a myriad of benefits from fathers taking parental leave, this policy represents a challenge for resource-poor countries and examples of how this could be implemented in these contexts should be explored.

Panter-Brick, C., Burgess, A., Eggerman, M., McAllister, F., Pruett, K., Leckman, J.F. 2014. "Practitioner Review: Engaging Fathers – Recommendations for a Game Change in Parenting Interventions based on a Systematic Review of the Global Evidence." *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 55, 1187–1212.

This systematic review of father-inclusive and co-parenting interventions around the world addresses questions of how are fathers currently involved in parenting interventions; the main obstacles to the engagement of men; and the improvements that could be made in the design, implementation and evaluation of parenting programmes to effectively engage with fathers. 199 papers from 21 countries met the criteria for the review, presenting evidence on father participation and impact in parenting interventions. The majority of papers were from the US, with limited data from the Global South. Again, the authors note that a limitation of the review was the lack of rigorous evaluations.

The review includes examples of interventions designed to engage mothers and fathers, or work with couples and co-parents, including programmes for high-risk families. Some programmes leverage stages in the child's life cycle as entry points to engage men – such as preschool, or access fathers through health sector. However, overall the review found parenting interventions commonly target just one parent, most often the mother, with fathers being excluded by default. The review found seven barriers to father's participation in parenting interventions: cultural, institutional, professional, operational, content, resources, and policy biases, with gender biases in "cultural, institutional, and professional practices predicated on a deficit model that sees fathers as ineffective or neglectful as parents."

The review recommends that interventions engage exclusively with co-parents, rather than just mothers or just fathers. It notes that men may be unwilling to attend men-/father-only groups, and that men-only services are often an add-on to other programmes and are therefore unsustainable when resources become constrained. In addition, it argues that behavioural change within families is unlikely when only one parent, whether father or mother, is engaged. Practical suggestions include programmes and initiatives that are targeted at co-parents reaching these through home visits or group-based parenting programmes in health, community or employment settings. The review also calls for research into the comparable benefits of engaging with one parent versus co-parents.

Noting the overall lack of rigorous evidence on this area, particularly from the Global South, the review proposes two key recommendations for future research; a) pay attention to the necessity of gender-disaggregated data collection and reporting and b) evaluate beyond process data toward robust and long-term evaluation of outcome data, to include parenting quality, co-parenting quality and family functioning.

Roopnarine, J. L (ed.). 2016. “Father – Paternity”. *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood*. UNICEF

This series of the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood, produced with the support of UNICEF, consists of a set of short essays, each of which summarises existing evidence on a topic whilst drawing overall conclusions and recommendations for further research. All of the essays are focussed on father's engagement with childcare, but from a different perspective or specific contextual setting. Collectively, the essays highlight how variations in laws, policies and cultures affect the levels at which men are able to be engaged in their child's upbringing, and how social and financial factors are also of fundamental importance. The introduction outlines how father's involvement can look very different depending on circumstances, and how fathers may be involved even when not resident with the children – citing evidence that when fathers are not co-habiting with their children, this doesn't necessarily mean a lack of engagement and, therefore, poor outcomes for the child, “and by the same token, mere presence does not always guarantee father engagement” (Roopnarine, 2016).

The first two essays, by Gray and Anderson (2015) and Chaudhary, Tuli, Sharda (2015) respectively, look at global evidence on fatherhood. Gray and Anderson focus on the impact of father's involvement in their children's lives, and conclude that fathers play an important role, either through direct care or through financial support and social modelling, with impacts on their child's survival, health, socio-emotional outcomes, social competence, and educational attainment. However, rigorous research on outcomes, including research assessing the impact of different levels of involvement, is lacking. Gray and Anderson highlight the need for flexibility in how we approach interventions and assessments of fatherhood, and the importance of recognizing the social and individual context. Similarly, Chaudhary, Tuli and Sharda examine how concepts of fatherhood shift and change across societies, cultures and across time – and outline how understanding parenting and fatherhood in different settings is an essential basis for any research or policy on the topic.

The following five essays are focussed on specific topics in particular settings. Karberg and Cabrera (2016) look at Latino father involvement in the United States, and find evidence to suggest that Latino fathers in the US are highly involved in their child's upbringing, are mostly living with their partner and child, and as a result, have a positive impact on their children. However, while the presence of fathers can be protective to a certain extent, Latino children face a number of challenges including those related to the negative repercussions of poverty, and policy must recognise these wider structural and social issues in addition to the involvement of the father. In contrast, South Africa has one of the highest rates of non-resident fathers in Africa, often due to migrant labour, yet evidence suggests a minimal negative effect on the child. The paper suggests that this is because the extended family often live within the same household; and fathers stay involved through remittances and in many cases maintain contact and emotional involvement. The essay by Adamson (2016) also looks at the issue of non-resident Black fathers in South Africa, and compares them to the same group in the US. Again, the author finds important contributions from non-resident fathers: financial, emotional and in terms of identity and belonging. Both papers highlight the need for policy and programming to recognise and adapt to diverse and often complex family structures, particular where father's absence is driven by financial necessity rather than choice.

According to the essay by Ball and Moselle (2015) unique historical factors affecting aboriginal generations in Canada have influenced the role of fathers: many were raised by “parents who were first or second generation survivors of residential schools and consequently lacked parenting role models,” and, therefore, many men describe fatherhood as a set of skills to be learned. Here too the evidence suggests there are a number of institutional barriers to men's engagement.

Fagan and Palm (2015) look at interventions with fathers, primarily from the US perspective, and divide programmes into primary interventions (encouraging healthy parenting skills from the outset) and secondary interventions (targeting fathers and families where there are issues or the risk of problems). Again, the authors highlight the lack of rigorous research on these topics.

Overall, these essays provide a useful overview of some of the conceptual and cultural issues of fatherhood, particularly the diversity of experiences and family structures, which serve as a useful reminder to consider in designing tailored programming and policy. They all highlight that more evidence is required to unpick the nuances and evolving nature of parenting in various cultures. However, they tell us little about what works or how it works, and overall there is a lack of gender analysis in terms of family structures or effects on children's outcomes.

Siu, G., Wight, D., Seeley, J., Namutebia, C., Sekiwunga, R., Zalwango, F. and Kasule, S. 2017. “Men’s Involvement in a Parenting Programme to Reduce Child Maltreatment and Gender-Based Violence: Formative Evaluation in Uganda.” *The European Journal of Development Research* (2017) 29, 1017–1037.

The high retention of men throughout the pilot was taken as a proxy indicator of programme success with respect to the goal of father engagement. Several factors were attributed to this success: firstly, the intentional targeting of fathers, which the paper argues is not an approach commonly used in the Global South. Secondly, framing of the programme around important pre-existing motivations for men regarding parenting, that is, the concern to raise well-behaved and respectful children. Finally, delivering the programme initially to men-only groups, which reportedly allowed for more open discussions on gender roles between the fathers.

In terms of design this study presents an interesting model which combines both a father-targeted and co-parenting programme. However, the strategy of engaging the fathers by harnessing pre-existing priorities, whilst ensuring the programme was contextualised and relevant, might also have inadvertently reinforced male gender roles and missed opportunities for gender transformation. Unintentional reinforcement of male power in parenting relationships was acknowledged in the paper: not in relation to the engagement strategy, but linked potentially to the act of bringing men into a parenting space which has traditionally been the domain of women.

Finally, the paper notes a key challenge to engaging fathers is the barriers men face in changing their conventional practices within wider social networks. Further research is proposed to address the question of how programme goals can be shared beyond the fathers directly involved, in order to help them overcome the social pressure to conform to traditional beliefs and attitudes about masculinity.

Tokhi M., Comrie-Thomson L., Davis J, Portela A., Chersich M., Luchters S. 2018. “Involving men to improve maternal and newborn health: A systematic review of the effectiveness of interventions.” *PLoS ONE* 13(1): e0191620.

This systematic review sought to comprehensively assess the effectiveness of male involvement in improving maternal and newborn health in LMICs, and assessed both health outcomes amongst mothers and newborns as well as the effects on key factors on the pathway to change: care-seeking, home care practices, and the couple relationship. The review included maternal health intervention studies conducted in LMICs between 2000-2012, with 13 studies meeting the criteria for the review, all of which aimed to increase the involvement of men in maternal and newborn health. Across the areas of focus, the review found mixed results. In some studies, there was clear evidence that interventions with men (in some cases alongside other community members) increased birth preparedness and complications readiness, maternal nutritional intake and newborn feeding practices. However, in some cases there was zero or even a negative change in these areas: for example, one study found decreased exclusive breastfeeding and another study reported more women ceasing breastfeeding due to advice from family members. Effects of male involvement on mortality and morbidity are less clear: again in some studies there were results which found interventions decreased risks, in others there was no significant change. There were effects on couple’s relationships, with many studies reporting increases in communication on various issues, however two studies found detrimental effects on women’s autonomy.

The review highlights that studies show overall that male involvement interventions can have positive effects on maternal and newborn health, but that the “findings also indicate that interventions must be carefully designed and implemented in order to support women’s autonomy and avoid reinforcing unequal gender relations.” In settings where clear power differences already exist between men and women, care must be taken not to bring these inequalities of power and decision-making into domains traditionally considered “women’s” thereby disempowering them further. The review also concludes that there are large gaps in the evidence base: few studies met the criteria of this review, and of those that did, few were specifically designed or powered to test the effect of engaging men. Further, the review identifies the need for additional high-quality qualitative data on women’s autonomy, gender roles and norms, and power dynamics within couple relationships and households.

Van den Berg, W., Manyati, T., Le Mottee, S., Thomson-de Boor, H. 2016. “A Comparative Scorecard on Policy Support for Positive Parenting in Ethiopia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.” Sonke Gender Justice.

This report combines a series of policy scans completed by Sonke and MenEngage in Africa. It focuses on parenting policies in five LMICs (Ethiopia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe) and provides recommendations relating to the development of policy and frameworks for positive parenting and targeting male engagement.

The report findings indicate that, whilst many of the countries have policies that address parenting, none had specific policies or frameworks on positive parenting, and there was an absence of a coherently articulated approach in relation to men's engagement. The report suggests that transforming traditional gender roles is challenging in contexts where they are upheld by religious and traditional practices, legal frameworks, policy implementation plans and budgets. It argues that policies and laws are an important starting point for changing social values and constructs.

The policy recommendations outlined in this report may support the articulation of programme goals aimed at the engagement of men in parenting and caregiving.

Policy recommendations include:

- **Promote father's early involvement in their children's lives:** from pregnancy men should be educated on, for example, danger signs in labour, and how to support women's health
- **Improve parental leave:** laws and policies related to employment, health and education should more explicitly encourage shared parental responsibilities between men and women
- **Policies and programmes that create opportunities for men's participation in caregiving:** these include, as examples, more flexible or part-time working arrangements for men and women and expansion of child care provisions
- **Legal provisions to support marginalised men's engagement in parenting:** in order to include fathers who are not legally married to the mother, homosexual men and teenage fathers.

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This annotated bibliography was written by Hadijah Nandyose (independent consultant), Louise Ruskin (independent consultant), Melanie Swan (Plan International) and Sophie Tanner (Plan International). Thanks to Xianyu Meng and Kate Ramsey for background research, and to Amy Ashlee for support throughout the process.

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We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. We recognise the power and potential of every single child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected. As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood, and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For over 80 years we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in over 75 countries.

Plan International

International Headquarters
Dukes Court, Duke Street, Woking,
Surrey GU21 5BH, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 1483 755155

Fax: +44 (0) 1483 756505

E-mail: info@plan-international.org

plan-international.org

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