Men’s involvement in a parenting programme for reduction of gender based violence and child maltreatment: formative evaluation in Uganda


Child Health & Development Centre, Makerere University
Introduction

Most parenting programmes find it difficult to recruit fathers:

– if programme is presented as being for ‘parents’ it is widely interpreted as intended for mothers
– failure to draw from specific motivations by fathers
Introduction

We tested a 21 session manualised intervention that draws on pre-existing motivation among parents (fathers) to reduce violence and child maltreatment:

– parents concern for family respectability (Siu et al 2013)
– actively targets recruitment of fathers
– highlights the positive gains to the fathers from their involvement
The intervention

*Parenting for Good Behaviour and Respectability programme (2013-2016)* is pilot parenting programme with a core of 10 single sex and 11 mixed sex group sessions, led in a semi-participatory way by a trained local facilitator.

Long term goal is to modify familial process that predict SGBV and child maltreatment:

- poor attachment and parental bonding
- inequitable gendered socialisation
- harsh parenting
- spousal conflict and disrespect
Key questions for the pilot

We sought to clarify several questions:

• How can community groups be mobilised and recruited?
• What is the best way to recruit and involve fathers in a parenting programme?
• How can we involve parental couples at some stage?
• How is engagement between fathers’ and mothers’ groups structured?
• What is the best way to select and train facilitators?
• How is the intervention perceived in terms of relevance and acceptability?
Stages in the development of programme

Stage 1: intervention drafting and manual development

Stage 2: formative evaluation with six groups in Wakiso District, in two stages:

- first with two groups in one village and then, following revisions,
- in another village with four groups

Stage 3: large scale pilot with before and after outcome evaluation
Programme content (21 sessions)

- Bonding and attachment: 5 sessions
- Gender socialisation: 4 sessions
- Achieving good behaviour and respect through positive discipline: 5 sessions
- Spousal relationships: 4 sessions
- Introduction and benefits (to father)
Structure and mode of delivery

Piloted the programme with

- 4 parental groups (15-28 members) in two communities in Wakiso district near Kampala
- first with 2 groups and then following revisions, in another village

Problematic sessions revised and tested again

The first 10 sessions are single sex, and the other 11 mix sex
Number of parents in the programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total no of parents</th>
<th>No attending as couples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bweya</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kigungu</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>17</td>
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Activity 3 vignettes: Positive and sensitive interaction with children

Sam, abade okomowa awoka nga ova okuzanywa ne bano nga buzibya.

Kya bulube nyo mukiyo nga enzikiza ekutte. Okswo leno, etezzika hya wakawano liimti etsheka okolokomowa nga abudde tebunuzibiza, akitegedde?

Sam, webale okomowa awoka nga abudde tebunuzibiza. Enkyu katugende iku mupila fena.

Power Poster
Discussion Questions

1. Deteza nga tu tamba akhul yu tenu mazita yu tiwir?
   How do you feel about the families in this picture?

2. Simpangiri yu mabe kumguva wotanera?
   The children? Are they different?

3. Zviri mabanda mukukosha kubadzirira kubva chiviri kwevive kwechivo iyi?
   What are the benefits of this way of working with children?

4. Zvinoreva vaviri vako vinogona vakakosha kubva kugadzirira?
   What are the barriers that they are busy in?

5. Zviri mabanda mukukosha kudzidzisa kusingawo zvevive?
   The children? Are they different?

6. Zvinoreva vaviri vako vinhumwe vakakosha kudzidzisa kusingawo?
   What are the barriers that they are busy in?

Kimbili

Sarah, bambilu mwebvi akubana kwechivo.

Wasa...Wasa...Mama
Recruitment and retention of fathers

We designed the programme to start with single sex groups, with men recruited to a fathers group.

Fathers valued starting in single sex sessions - they were safe for discussing gender issues:

“The fact that we first attended as single sex it was good before joining together. We could easily bring up a challenge in the home and could be discussed with other men.”
Acceptability and motivation by fathers

Two main motivations for men to join programme:

– it addressed their pre-existing concern that children should grow up well behaved and respectful.

– helped them realise that increased involvement in children's upbringing is positive for both the child and the father.

“It is terrible, you know we are fisher men and keep moving around the lake… as a result, we produce so many children and sometimes take five years seeing them. What can we do for the children and our selves to have those benefits, to achieve respect? We want good children in future.”

(Father, Men's Group)

“For me and my family, we are going to put holes in the culture to pick the relevant things for my family. Because indeed how can I name my child of my own clan but am not involved in her/his growing up.”
Favourite sessions for men

Participants liked the sequence of sessions as they each reinforced each other. Like session 10 about alcohol use also built on the one on marital relationship. Someone can even be surprised that the baby in the womb hears (session 3).

Men particularly valued topics that focused on talking with children, children's respectability, and marital relationships.

“We managed to learn what annoys the wife, and each of us could know our mistakes.”
Men’s participation in the programme

More open discussions in single sex sessions than in mixed sex groups, with fathers discussing in detail.

In mixed sex groups, due to the presence of partners/ the opposite sex, participants needed some means to avoid being identified with the views they expressed.

However, men and women shared their experiences better if exercises started in single sex sub-groups and views subsequently fed back to whole group.
Engaging couples and integrating men’s and women’s groups

We aimed to recruit parental couples to promote programme as a programme for both male and female parents

- 9 couples initially recruited and they welcomed being recruited to start in single sex groups
- no man objected to mixed sessions that started midway through the programme
- 4 additional men joined the programme when some participants requested to bring their spouses

Couples found it helpful to attend mixed sessions together

"It was better that our partners be around and we could learn together. If I attend alone, we cannot kukwatagana bulungi (understand each other well). If I study alone the other cannot change. But if together you can remind the partner..."
More positive relationships with spouses

Men resolved to communicate better with their wives, and husbands realised the value of respectful relationships.

“We managed to learn what annoys the wife and each of us could know our mistakes. We used to air them out during the sessions.”
Use of positive discipline

Fathers seemed to find it easier to adapt alternative to corporal punishment, e.g. ‘grounding’ than mothers.

Fathers competence to adopt alternative might relate to fathers having less domestic work to complete and greater control over other important needs by children.

“I only knew corporal punishment as a means of discipline but now we know that we can relate well and explain things clearly to children, take time with them and they will do the right thing.” (Father).
Challenges to resolve

Potential to further disempower mothers

- Male participants thought they were more receptive to the programme messages and complained that their partners tried to avoid harsh parenting for a day or two after attending the programme. "The mothers change for only a day or two. After that they return to their normal behaviour of shouting and beating the children as if they are not attending the lessons".

- Might the programme unintentionally encourage men to monitor and criticise their partners' behaviour in an area of domestic life in which women had autonomy?
Challenges to resolve

Entrenched norms of masculinity

– despite father’s readiness to get more involved in children’s upbringing and improve their relationships with their spouses, they still experienced social pressure to adhere to conventional masculinity.

“My brother, don’t you think you need to make a will because you are about to die? Are you yourself any more? What are you trying to do?
(Woman who found her brother involved in children’s games)
Conclusion

• Recruitment and retention of men is one of the main contribution of the programme

• Promising to draw from pre-existing motivation among fathers to involve them in programme

• However, there’s need to explore mechanisms for wider dissemination beyond the participants in the programme to address the entrenched norms of masculinity
Next steps

1. Continue testing the intervention with two more groups of men and women

2. Collect more process data

3. Finalise the programme

4. If funding becomes available implement stage 3: **large scale pilot** to evaluate the effectiveness of programme in reducing SGBV
Acknowledgements

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Parents

• Facilitators